Social Control and Deviance within the South Asian Muslim Female Community: An Exploratory Study

by

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Abstract

The relationship between acculturation into mainstream society and problematic youth behaviour is well documented, with a number of studies linking experiences of culture conflict to delinquency. However, the scholarship examining the relationship between culture conflict and delinquency among the South Asian Muslim population in Canada is understudied. Recognizing the risk of deviance within Canada’s South Asian Muslim communities, this study explores the influence of culture conflict on culturally specific forms of deviance. Culture conflict here is examined through behaviours considered immoral by many South Asian Muslim families within Canada but acceptable by mainstream society, including: pre-marital sex, alcohol consumption, dating and social outings/clubbing. Data was collected and analyzed from eight self-identified South Asian Muslim females from the University of Ontario Institute of Technology in Ontario, Canada. The results of this study reveal that despite the influence of the dominant society, participants refrain from engaging in culturally deviant female behaviour. I argue that with a growing South Asian population, ethnic and religious identities become strengthened. By identifying with a South Asian Muslim identity, culture, religion, and gender intersect to govern the lives of these participants.

Keywords: social control, deviance, identity, South Asian, Muslim, female
Dedication

For my parents Farah and Shameer Hussain: I will never be able to repay you for your love and support throughout my educational career; I can only offer you my sincerest gratitude. Thank you for always encouraging and supporting my decisions to challenge myself and become more.
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List of Abbreviations

South Asian Muslim Community (SAMC)
Chapter One: Introduction

The growth of minority groups throughout North America (Phinney, 1990; Bhatia, 2002; Maiter & George, 2003; Gibson, 2001) has created culturally plural societies characterized by various ethnic groups positioned to live and work together (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Phinney, 1990). Inevitably, immigrants enter a shared environment with members of the host society, sometimes without shared values (Gole, 2012). Within this realm, immigrants often receive conflicting messages between the host society and their ethnic community regarding conventional behaviour. Some of the norms and values that are acceptable to the host society may be considered unacceptable in the ethnic community. Sometimes, minority groups subsequently live in a sphere of culture conflict. Culture conflict is defined here as a negative experience resulting from the internalization of contradictory values from both, ethnic and host cultures, producing feelings of distress and anxiety (Inman, Ladany, Constantine, & Morano, 2001; Sellin, 1938), and can lead to physical and psychological tensions (Wirth, 1931), as well as family conflict (Farver, Narang, & Bhadha, 2002).

Research on immigrant youth in North American societies has linked these negative effects of culture conflict to an increased risk of deviant behaviour (Bui, 2009; Khondaker, 2007; McQueen, Getz, & Bray, 2003; Spencer & Le, 2006; Wirth, 1931). However, there is no single definition of deviance among these studies. Certainly deviance is not static; what is considered conventional behaviour in one society may be considered deviant within the other (Hutter & Williams, 1981; Tittle & Paternoster, 2000). Recognizing the risk of deviance within Canada’s immigrant communities, it is important to understand deviance from the perspective of various cultural groups and
how it relates to the dominant society. For the purposes of this study, deviance will be operationalized from the perspective of South Asian Muslim females in Canada.

With an increasing South Asian and Muslim population in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2011), it is necessary to understand how culture conflict is experienced and negotiated by some members of South Asian Muslim communities (SAMC). Existing research suggests that females in particular face challenges acculturating into the dominant society (Dasgupta, 1998; Inman et al., 2001; Varghese & Jenkins, 2009; Hermansen & Khan, 2009; Dwyer, 2000). Regardless of the internal diversity of South Asian Muslims, South Asians share social customs that are inconsistent with the dominant notions of “normal” female behaviour, such as dating and partying (Rajiva, 2006; Handa 2003). Rather, many South Asian girls are pressured by their families and ethnic communities to maintain traditional behaviour (Dasgupta, 1998; Khondaker, 2007; Rajiva, 2006; Hermansen & Khan, 2009; Roy, 1998; Gilbert, Gilbert & Sanghera, 2004; Inman, 2006; Naidoo, 2003). Consequently, culture conflict may contribute to perceived deviant female behaviour for some South Asian families (Khondaker, 2007).

Religion also shapes experiences of culture conflict for many young South Asians in Canada. The South Asian group within Canada is diversified by religion, with a substantial amount of South Asians identifying themselves as Muslim (Statistics Canada, 2011). Similarly, many norms that are considered acceptable by mainstream society are prohibited for Muslims; examples include alcohol consumption and pre-marital sex (Ali, 2008; Mohammad-Arif, 2000). Consequently, the cultural values of many South Asian Muslim families in Canada are in conflict with some normative Canadian values.
Therefore, the focus of this study is on first and second generation South Asian Muslim females in Canada, an understudied group with respect to deviant behaviour. This study seeks to examine culture conflict with respect to behaviours considered immoral for most South Asian Muslim females within Canada but acceptable by mainstream society, including, pre-marital sex, alcohol consumption, dating and attending nightclubs/social outings. The purpose of this study is to expand on the existing research of culture conflict and adaptation, through the understanding of culturally deviant behaviour. The goal of this thesis is to explore if young South Asian Muslims, specifically females, engage in culturally deviant behaviour (behaviour that conflict with South Asian Muslim values) to negotiate a sense of belonging within the dominant Canadian society.

Background and Need

While academic interests have expanded on examining the factors that shape the lives of young South Asian girls, it is worthwhile to specifically examine the influence of culture conflict. The way in which culture conflict is experienced may change over time. For example, recent studies on South Asians and Muslims have addressed the effect of culture conflict over various life stages (Mohammad-Arif, 2000; Peek, 2005; Ali, 2008). As Mohammad-Arif (2000) found, adolescence is characterized by a desire to conform to mainstream values, whereas young adulthood (university years) symbolizes an identity quest and search for roots (p.71). On a larger scale, culture conflict may change as the dynamic of the SAMC changes with communal growth. For instance, recent scholarship has found while South Asians attempt to adapt and become “modernized,” they are able to retain traditional values through the existence of their cultural communities.
(Mohammad-Arif, 2000; Naidoo, 2003; Inman, 2006; Yahyaoui, El Methni, Gaultier, & Lakhdar-Yahyaoui, 2013). This study expands on existing research by exploring the factors influencing the lives of South Asian Muslim females with a focus on culturally deviant behaviour.

Recently, media messages regarding Islam and Muslims in Canada have flourished. Since the attacks of 9/11, Muslims have received increased media and public attention directed at Islam’s values and practices. This attention has intensified and highlighted the conflicts between value systems. Muslims face an increased challenge with racism, particularly in Ontario and Quebec (Nesbitt-Larking, 2007). Muslims are consistently reminded that they are of a foreign and backward religion, one that needs to be fixed. It is important to take into consideration the impact these messages may have on young South Asian Muslim female’s behaviour.

The experience of conflicting value systems places immigrants in a liminal position – a state of in-betweeness and ambiguity - they are not fully assimilated to either society (Purkayastha, 2000; Beech, 2011). This liminal position can produce both effects of engagement and alienation to and from communities. So what happens to conformity when individuals are exposed to diverse cultural beliefs? How is conformity to one group over the other attained? Is conformity to either attained? To better examine this issue this thesis attempts to understand two problems: (1) the factors that shape identity and adaptation and (2) deviance within the cultural context of South Asian Muslims. In shaping my argument, this thesis will examine how religion, culture and gender inform the identities and experiences of South Asian Muslim females.
Research Questions

Data was collected and analyzed from eight qualitative semi-structured interviews with young females from SAMC’s. Recruitment and interviews were administered at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology in Ontario, Canada. These interviews allowed for the discovery of information regarding the participants attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours as it relates to the following research questions:

1) Are young females of the South Asian Muslim community pressured into engaging in culturally deviant behaviours in order to negotiate a sense of belonging within the dominant society?
2) Do young South Asian Muslim females shed cultural values to fit into a Canadian society?
3) How is deviance understood for some females within the South Asian Muslim community?
4) What are some of the consequences for violating culturally defined normative behaviour?
5) How are individuals affected by the differences in value systems?
6) What factors influence the perception of normative female behaviour?
7) Is there a difference in behavioural expectations of females versus males?
8) How does religion, culture, and gender shape the experiences of participants?
9) How do South Asian Muslim participants identify themselves?

Conducting interviews revealed how gender, culture, and religion inform the lives of South Asian Muslim females, providing a foundation for future research. In addition,
This thesis will illustrate how some members of SAMC’s perceive deviant behaviour, and how deviance varies from mainstream society. Conclusions drawn from this research can provide an initial discussion for policy makers, educators, social service agencies, and other stakeholders in determining how cultural, gendered, and religious influences impact their institutions. This research can further serve as a preliminary guide for further research on immigrant communities.

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter one is the introduction to the research problem. Building on this chapter, chapter two provides a brief review of the literature on South Asians, Muslims, and South Asian Muslim females within the context of mainstream society, and illustrates the dichotomy between the pressure to conform to the dominant society and efforts to resist conformity. In the third chapter, I outline the interview process used to gather and analyze the data, and continue to describe the selected sample and sample space used for this research. The fourth chapter proceeds to interpret the empirical analysis of participants testimonials. The focus here is to relate the interview data to understanding whether participants assimilate into the norms of the dominant society, or if they retain their traditional values. The fourth chapter is divided into two parts, identity and deviance (including informal social control). In chapter five, I continue to discuss the presence of social control in deterring deviance. Here I discuss how culture, religion, and gender influence participants behaviour and are used as mediums for control. To help gain a deeper understanding of sources of control in participants lives, I introduce and briefly address similarities to Hirschi’s (2002) theory of social bond. Chapter five is concluded by a presentation of the study’s weaknesses and a synthesis of the findings.
Definitions

Throughout this thesis reference is made to a number of terms that may vary in interpretation. Therefore, below is a list of terms defined within the context of this research.

*Culture*: Culture here refers to values, attitudes, habits, and customs (Handa, 2003, p.7). Culture is used in this thesis regarding two groups: primarily the “traditional” South Asian culture and the dominant “modern” culture.

*Culturally Deviant Behaviour/Deviant Behaviour*: Regarded as behaviour that is perceived as unacceptable and immoral, and often receives a collective negative response by members of the SAMC.

*South Asian*: An individual identified as being born in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, or Sri Lanka, or whose parents are born in these countries (United Nations, 2011).

*Second Generation*: native born children of foreign born parents or foreign born children who were brought to Canada before adolescence (Portes & Rumbaut, 2005, p. 987).
Chapter Two: Establishing a Context

In this section I review the literature on the issue of culture conflict and how South Asian Muslims in Canada might respond to it. The first section will provide an understanding of Canada’s mosaic of South Asian Muslims, supporting the relevance of this study. Following this overview, the factors influencing experiences of culture conflict will be examined. This section is divided into two parts: (1) pressure from the dominant society to assimilate and (2) influence from SAMC’s to maintain traditional values.

South Asian Muslims in Canada

Canada’s current population includes individuals from more than 200 ethnic groups occupying the nation’s major cities including Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal (Statistics Canada, 2011). Inside these cities, South Asians, combined with Chinese and Blacks, represent the largest visible minority group (Statistics Canada, 2011). As of 2011, 1,567,400 individuals identified themselves as South Asian, accounting for one-quarter of the visible minority population and representing 4.8 percent of the Canadian population, making them an important group to study (Statistics Canada, 2011).

South Asian’s are further diversified by nationality and religion. According to the 2006 Census, Canadians of South Asian origin are represented by a number of different ethnic or cultural origins; two-thirds reported that they were East Indian, while 9.3 percent were Pakistani, 8.5 percent were Sri Lankan, and 4.7 percent were Punjabi (Statistics Canada, 2011). Of this large visible minority group, 30.7 percent were Canadian born and 65.1 percent were born outside of Canada (Statistics Canada, 2011). Though South Asians have a long history of migration to Canada, recent increase in
immigration has kept the percent of foreign born South Asian’s relatively high (Statistics Canada, 2011).

In addition to various ethnic origins, South Asian’s are also divided based on faith. Similarly, Canada’s religious diversity is moving at an even faster rate (Statistics Canada, 2011). According to the 2001 Census there were 580,000 Muslims representing two percent of the Canadian population. This number increased to 1 million, accounting for 3.2 percent of the population in 2011. The majority of these Muslims identify themselves as belonging to a visible minority group, with 37 percent specifically identifying themselves as South Asian (Janhevich & Ibrahim, 2004). It is important to note here that with this diversity of South Asians and Muslims, there can be no single interpretation applied to the experiences of a South Asian Muslim or a South Asian Canadian Muslim, as similarly suggested in Ammar, Couture-Carron, Alvi, and San Antonio (2013). Nevertheless, as the South Asian Muslim population increases, the challenges and experiences they share become increasingly relevant to study. As South Asian Muslims begin to gather and build cultural communities, the acculturation process may change (Williams, 2011).

A Multifaceted Identity

Although South Asians are a large part of Canada’s minority population, many of them continue to face challenges in a liminal setting. Some South Asian Muslim immigrants are positioned between two cultures: the dominant Canadian culture and traditional South Asian culture (Williams, 2011; Hermansen & Khan, 2009; Mohammad-Arif, 2000; Dwyer, 2000; Farver et al., 2002; Inman et al., 2001; Khondaker, 2007;
A common challenge among young adults within this environment, is balancing multiple identities. In adapting to a pluralistic environment, immigrant youth often negotiate what being South Asian, Muslim, and Canadian mean (Hermansen & Khan, 2009).

The building of South Asian communities kindles the emergence of a South Asian identity (Mohammad-Arif, 2000). At home and within the community, individuals learn what it means to be South Asian and Muslim (Maiter & George, 2003; Farver, et al., 2002; Hermansen & Khan, 2009). For many South Asian Muslim parents, it is their responsibility to socialize their children into South Asian and Islamic values and traditions from early stages in life (Handa, 2003; Farver et al., 2002; Dasgupta, 1998; Maiter & George, 2003; Roy, 1998). Beyond the bounds of the SAMC, immigrant youth attend North American schools and spend a substantial amount of time outside the home. In this sphere, cultural differences are learned (Williams, 2011; Rajiva, 2006; Ali, 2008; Khondaker, 2007; Shariff, 2008; Handa, 2003). Some members belonging to SAMC’s are faced with an identity crisis, because values from both cultures are internalized and exhibited, with neither the host society nor ethnic community being inclusive of these individuals (Shariff, 2008; Rajiva 2006; Handa; 2003; Jiwani, 2006). According to previous research, second generation South Asian youth cannot be fully accepted as South Asian because of their North American influence, yet the dominant society refuses to view them as Canadians given their ethnic heritage (Shariff, 2008; Rajiva 2006; Handa; 2003; Jiwani, 2006). Consequently, identifying with a particular group and gaining a sense of belonging becomes very difficult.
Pressure to Assimilate/Acculturate

**Exclusion.** The exclusion of South Asian’s from Canadian society dates back to the period of 1850-1920. During this time South Asian men were only accepted as temporary workers (Dua, 2000; Knowles, 2007). Permanent settlement was restricted in fear of ethnic communities being developed (Dua, 2000). Though immigration policies have advanced since the 1960’s to welcome non-European immigrants for settlement, alternate forms of exclusion persist today. South Asian’s continue to be “othered” by a dominant culture which categorizes them as “visible minorities,” “ethnics,” immigrants or foreigners (Shariff, 2008, p.72). Such labels remind immigrants that they do not fit into mainstream society.

Muslims specifically, are faced with overcoming the imposition of orientalist influences in a post 9/11 context. Members of SAMC’s are consistently reminded of their “ancient” and “barbaric” religion by the dominant society. Islam is framed as a religion that needs to be modernized, primarily when it comes to the alleged oppression of women (Razack, 2004; Hermansen & Khan, 2009; Van Der Veer, 2004; Werbner, 2007). This submissiveness of Muslim women has occupied the media’s attention since 9/11. Rather than focusing on oppression as a result of male dominance, the dominant society assigns the oppression of women to culture and religion (Razack, 2004, Zine 2009, Jiwani, 2006). News coverage of issues pertaining to arranged marriages, honour crimes, and conservative dress codes, have heightened to display Islam as backward and irrational, and plays a role in framing Muslim women in need of liberation (Dustin and Phillips, 2008).
In addition to the alienation from the Canadian public, many South Asian Muslims become stigmatized within their own ethnic communities (Hermansen & Khan, 2009; Ajrouch, 2004; Handa, 2003). Ajrouch (2004), found that the Arab participants in her study distinguished themselves from a “boater.” “Boater” was a term used to describe a purely Arab identity, and participants refused to be mistaken for “this type” of Arab. Similarly, Handa (2003) found that participants resisted stereotypical representations of South Asianness, when being compared to other South Asians. They rejected the idea of being identified as a “typical Indian,” “ref” (refugee), or “FOB” (fresh off the boat) and distinguished themselves from such statuses. Therefore, exclusion extends beyond the dominant society and into some SAMC’s. The attempt to avoid stereotypical labels illustrates first and second generation immigrant’s desire to be seen as modern or Canadian, as represented by mainstream society.

Educational institutions have also been found to reinforce the overt display of multicultural differences for young immigrants (Jiwani, 2005b; Shariff, 2008). The interaction with peers from divergent backgrounds fosters awareness of cultural differences (Rajiva, 2006, Khondaker, 2007; Handa, 2003; Ali, 2008). Within the institution there is a desire to conform to the norms of peer groups. According to Rajiva (2006) and Ali (2008), youth often sacrifice familial expectations and respect, to associate with peers whose behaviour reflects that of the dominant society (Rajiva, 2006; Ali, 2008). For some, the bond with peers from the dominant society minimizes feelings of alienation, and creates a sense of belonging (Rajiva, 2006). Furthermore, research has suggested that some South Asian youth try to maintain parental approval by leading double lives (Ali, 2008; Khondaker, 2007; Handa, 2003; Dasgupta, 1998; Mohammad-
As Ali (2008) concludes, Muslim youth influenced by peers in high school or college, engage in deviant behaviour according to Islamic standards, but maintain pleasing parents by veiling such behaviour.

The influence of the dominant society allows immigrants to become aware of their cultural differences (Shariff, 2008; Rajiva, 2006; Handa, 2003). Media messages and interaction with members from the host society illustrates the dominant society as superior (Handa, 2003; Jiwani, 2006; Zine, 2009; Haque, 2010; Jiwani, 2005a), which might motivate immigrants to conform to mainstream society. While Canada prides itself on being a multicultural society, limits are put in place to develop and maintain a homogeneous national identity (Handa, 2003; Haque, 2010). However, the lives of many South Asian immigrant youth are shaped by competing institutions. Although pressured by the dominant society to assimilate and integrate, many South Asian immigrants are simultaneously affected by their ethnic and religious communities. As the South Asian population increases there is an effort to maintain traditional values. Within many SAMC’s, parents and community members seek to regain control of their children, by maintaining and enforcing cultural values (Jiwani, 2005b; Varghese & Jenkins, 2009).

Influence of South Asian Muslim Community

**Collectivism.** Between the “traditional” South Asian culture and the “modern” Canadian culture, there are often conflicting values (Handa, 2003; Ali, 2008; Dwyer, 2000; Khondaker, 2007; Shariff, 2008; Ali, 2008; Hermansen & Khan, 2009; Inman et al., 2001; Varghese & Jenkins, 2009; Dasgupta, 1998; Inman, 2006; Rajiva, 2006). The primary difference rests in the value of community and a network of acquaintances. A
common belief among South Asians is that the individual is responsible for maintaining a collective identity; the self is viewed in association to the larger community. Whereas the dominant culture appreciates the value of autonomy (Dasgupta, 1998; Farver et al., 2003; Varghese & Jenkins, 2009; Hickey, 2004; Inman et al., 2001; Suzuki & Greenfield, 2002; Maiter & George, 2003; Roy, 1998; Wardak, 2000; Hermansen & Khan, 2009). The collective identity places an obligation on the individual to conform to the norms of their SAMC. Thus, collectivity functions as a control mechanism for maintaining traditional values (Wardak, 2000; Shaw, 2007).

**Informalism.** A considerable amount of research on South Asian and Muslim youth found that modes of informal social control can be used to mitigate the acculturation process. According to Shaw (2007), informalism is the use of non-state institutions to control behaviour. Order is maintained through interpersonal bonds such as family, school, and community networks (Laub & Sampson, 1993; Hirschi, 2002). On the other hand, formalism occurs when the state intervenes in response to deviant behaviour (Shaw, 2007; Hagan, Simpson, & Gillis, 1979). While North American societies are dependent on formal methods of control, Asia is reliant on tradition, social custom, religion, family mediation (Jang, 2002), and communal interrelatedness as informal methods of control (Shaw, 2007, p.15). The collective nature of the South Asian community permits issues to be handled informally (Shaw, 2007).

**Shame and Honour.** Deeply situated in the collective identity and South Asian culture are the concepts of shame and honour (Toor, 2009; Gilbert et al., 2004; Wardak, 2000; Gill, 2004; Varghese & Jenkins, 2009; Roy, 1998; Purkayastha, 2000; Werbner, 2007). Shame, as defined by Braithwaite (1989), can be either reintegrative or
disintegrative. Reintegrative shaming is, “the expressions of community disapproval which may range from mild rebuke to disintegration ceremonies, and are followed by reacceptance into the community. Disintegrative shaming (stigmatization) in contrast divides the community by creating a class of outcasts,” (p.55). Though this definition of shame implies a universal approach, researchers have argued that shame is shaped by culture (Braithwaite, 1989; Gilbert et al., 2004).

According to scholars of South Asian culture, shame is an effect of self-interest. To avoid shame brought to one’s self, family, and community, one must act in the collective interest (Gilbert et al., 2005; Gill, 2004; Toor, 2009). For instance, Suzuki and Greenfield (2002), found Asian Americans, more than European Americans, chose to sacrifice individual desire for family (especially parents). Thus, the desire to assimilate into the dominant society may be barred through conformity of South Asian Islamic norms. Young immigrants may forfeit desires to engage in culturally deviant behaviour to maintain the integrity of the family, community, and themselves (Inman et al., 2001; Varghese & Jenkins, 2009; Farver et al., 2002; Roy, 1998; Gilbert et al., 2004; Gill, 2004). As found in Yahyaoui et al. (2013), adolescents fear of being judged and fear of harming family reputation mediates sexual experimentation. In this context fear of shame operates as an informal control mechanism for maintaining conformity and moral obligation to traditional values (Yahyaoui et al., 2013; Wardak, 2000).

Honour also bears culturally specific meanings (Gilbert et al., 2004; Toor, 2009; Vandellos & Cohen, 2003; Werbner, 2007). Though most cultures define honour as virtuous behaviour, morality, integrity, and altruism, honour is seen to carry additional social significance in some cultures over others (Vandello & Cohen, 2003). According to
Gill (2004), for South Asian men, honour represents toughness, whereas honour norms for females include modesty, shame, and avoidance of behaviours that might threaten family integrity. Most women are tasked with the responsibility to maintain family honour through traditional sex role expectations (Roy, 1998). Consequently, shame and honour work simultaneously to control female behaviour and enforce conformity to normative and traditional feminine behaviour. Therefore, embedded in shame and honour are issues of patriarchy (Toor, 2009; Gilbert et al., 2004).

**Patriarchy.** Feminine behaviour is relative, “normal” and “deviant” vary from society to society (Hutter & Williams, 1981). However, in discourses surrounding the control of women, research suggests that women who fail to meet the feminine ideal are often sanctioned for their behaviour (Hutter & Williams, 1981; Innes, 2003; Pasko, 2010). The feminine ideal is closely linked to sexuality (Innes, 2003; Durham, 2004; Handa, 2003; Abraham, 2001; Hutter & Williams, 1981; Dasgupta & Dasgupta, 1998; Hermansen & Khan, 2009; Werbner, 2007), where femininity is represented by symbols of “purity” and “chastity,” (Roy, 1998; Vandello & Cohen, 2003). Females are often expected to obey specific behavioural expectations outlined by the society to which they belong. Hence, failure to maintain gender roles create the perception that females have become deviant individuals (Toor, 2009). In this patriarchal defined justice, female sexuality is seen as a way of producing at risk or deviant behaviour.

A number of South Asian Muslims believe that sexuality has much to do with “Americanization,” (Dasgupta & Dasgupta, 1998). For instance, behaviours that are seen as shameful include, defying parental authority, becoming assimilated through dress, pre-marital sex, use of drugs and alcohol (Toor, 2009; Wardak, 2000; Handa, 2003), and
Many of these behaviours, which are common among North American youth, place women in sexually vulnerable situations (Sharpe & Gelsthorpe, 2009). Furthermore, the aforementioned behaviours oppose several customs common to South Asian culture. Women are expected to be maternal, accommodating, self-effacing, serving, kind, chaste and are brought up to be a “good woman” for the sake of her family and community (Roy, 1998). Therefore, the more one identifies with their culture of origin the more associated with femininity they become (Abu-Ali & Reisen, 1999).

To maintain such traditional values, parents, specifically mothers, are expected to socialize their daughters into traditional South Asian feminine roles (Roy, 1998; Maiter & George, 2003; Mohammad-Arif, 2000; Abraham, 2001; Rankin & Quane, 2002). Pressure is placed on parents from the community to monitor children intensely (Rankin & Quane, 2002; Simons, Simons, Burt, Brody & Cutrona, 2005). Consequently, the collective culture enforces parental authority which mediates deviant behaviour (Rankin & Quane, 2002; Simons et al., 2005). Cultural norms are reinforced through the community, through parents, and passed onto children to maintain order.

While female sexuality is controlled in the interest of the family, some males are held to a different standard. For instance, Yahyaoui et al., (2013) concludes, girls more than boys, receive greater parental control over intimate relationships. The female body is accused of being uncontrollable; women are both dangerous and are in danger. Thus, engagement in risky behaviour produces threat to social order (Abraham, 2001; Roy, 1998; Yahyaoui et al., 2013). Unlike men, many South Asian women are viewed as
gatekeepers of cultural values, represent the community in the way they behave, and are responsible for passing cultural values onto their children (Dwyer, 2000; Bolognani, 2009; Roy, 1998; Dasgupta & Dasgupta, 1998; Maiter & George, 2003). With this expectation, women bear the burden of maintaining family honour. As Toor (2009) suggests, “honour and shame interact to impose a sense of cultural responsibility and moral regulation upon Asian females, which in turn demand that they abstain from culturally defined deviant and criminal activities, whilst also having the potential to place them in positions of marginalization,” (p.241).

**Religiosity.** Further influencing the maintenance of traditional South Asian and Islamic values is the institution of religion. Islam, as with many faiths, includes a number of legal guidelines to be followed. In the interest of human life, regulations are placed on female dress, consuming the flesh of swine, pre-marital sex, adultery, alcohol consumption and gambling (Quraishi, 2005; Maqsood, 1998; Ali, 2008; Hermansen & Khan, 2009). These restrictions are defined by the religious term *haram*, otherwise known as forbidden acts, whereas *halal* is defined as permissible (Bolognani, 2009; Hermansen & Khan, 2009). However, these terms may bear a cultural connotation when used to intensify negative labelling and punishment (Bolognani, 2009). What is *haram* may be further intensified and reformed by culture. As stated in Stewart and Lozano (2009), religious history, traditions, styles of worship and values, are often deeply integrated into peoples’ understanding of their particular racial/ethnic cultural identity. As such, “religious identity may not be seen as a separate identity facet at all, but rather as one aspect of how they make meaning of their racial/ethnic identities,” (Stewart & Lozano, 2009, p.23). As found in Inman (2006), religiosity promotes the retention of
ethnic cultural values for many South Asian women. Thus, religion can be understood as an informal source of control, when it intersects with culture (Maiter & George, 2003; Stewart & Lozano, 2009).

Research examining the role of religion among Muslim youth concludes that Islam can be an effective barrier to culturally deviant behaviour (Wardak, 2000; Yahyaoui et al., 2013; Ajrouch, 2004; Wardak, 2002). For instance, Yahyaoui et al., (2013) found that adolescents influenced by Islam, displayed greater restraint of sexual behaviour than youth from other religious backgrounds. Similarly, Wardak (2002) found that belief in Islam to be a controlling factor over behaviour. The mosque along with the institution of the family produces a moral and social order of conformity. The socialization process of young Muslims into an Islamic belief system, morality and rituals, has worked to instill an element of what social and behavioural scientists call internal control (Wardak, 2002, p.217).

For many youth, parents become the primary socializer for which religion is understood (Peek, 2005; Hickey, 2004; Wardak, 2000; Scourfield, Taylor, Moore, & Gilliat-Ray, 2012; Alvarez-Rivera & Fox, 2010). In a collective culture, parents are pressured to ascribe a religious identity during their offspring’s childhood (Peek, 2005). Accordingly, Scourfield et al., (2010) found that intergenerational transmission of Islam from parent to child is at a higher rate compared to other religions. Expanding on this finding, Hickey (2004) and Peek (2005), conclude that Islamic practices are often enforced by parents, and may be obeyed out of parental respect. However, Peek (2005) explains, regardless of whether restrictions are parental impositions or the individual refrains from deviant acts by choice, a Muslim identity is reflected. In time, individuals
learn what being Muslim means and may choose to believe in the restrictions imposed for themselves (Peek, 2005; Ali, 2008). Therefore, religion has an indirect relationship to deviant behaviour, through the direct control of parents, reaffirming religion as an informal control mechanism.

**Summary of the problem**

There is a common practice, among many South Asian Muslim communities in Canada to socialize youth into cultural, religious, and traditional values. The collective nature of some SAMC’s reinforces cultural values. With an increasing South Asian population in Canada, this collective culture may be elucidated. The increase in the South Asian population provides a source of strength for group solidarity; thus, an ethnic identity is easily enforced. Nevertheless, young immigrants are positioned in a place of marginalization from the dominant society. Immigrant youth are reminded through media messages and members of the dominant society that they are of a foreign culture. In this spatial environment immigrant youth experience a set of push and pull factors. There is a push from the dominant society to conform to a “modernized” way of life, yet a pull from their SAMC to retain cultural values and tradition. Consequently, immigrant youth struggle with the need to feel a sense of belonging in both the SAMC and Canadian society.

The organization of the geographical space in North America, places many South Asian Muslims face to face with a host of conflicting messages. While a number of behaviours symbolizing a rite of passage are encouraged in North American societies, such as alcohol consumption, these behaviours are generally perceived as immoral within
South Asian Muslim society. Therefore, it is necessary to determine if immigrant youth from SAMC’s mitigate their experience of conflicting value systems by shedding cultural values and engage in deviant behaviour to adapt to Canadian society.
Chapter Three: Methods

To investigate whether young South Asian Muslim females engage in culturally deviant behaviour to gain a sense of belonging within the dominant society, the following research questions were proposed:

1) Are young females of the South Asian Muslim community pressured into engaging in culturally deviant behaviours in order to negotiate a sense of belonging within the dominant society?

2) Do young South Asian Muslim females shed cultural values to fit into a Canadian society?

3) How is deviance understood for some females within the SAMC?

4) What are some of the consequences for violating culturally defined normative behaviour?

5) How are individuals affected by the differences in value systems?

6) What factors influence the perception of normative female behaviour?

7) Is there a difference in behavioural expectations of females versus males?

8) How does religion, culture, and gender shape the experiences of participants?

9) How do South Asian Muslim participants identify themselves?

To answer the proposed research questions this study employed an exploratory qualitative approach. Data was gathered from eight self-identified South Asian Muslim females using one-on-one semi-structured interviews. A synthesis of these young women’s voices allowed me to understand how the dynamics of the dominant society and their SAMC shapes their lives, examine the characteristics that govern participants lives, and
understand how deviance varies from the norms of dominant society. The objective of conducting interviews was to examine and explore participant testimonials to answer the research questions in this study. Following the interview process the data was then transcribed, coded, and categorized into relevant themes.

This study took place at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, in Oshawa, Ontario. Founded in 2003, the University is fairly new, with a population exceeding 5,500 as of 2011 (“UOIT,” 2009). Being easily accessible from the Greater Toronto Area, the University hosts a diverse population, with students from more than 54 countries (“UOIT,” 2009). Fittingly, this educational institution was used to recruit female participants with a South Asian Muslim identity.

Interviews were conducted privately in a closed room with each participant. Participants were given a consent form to confirm voluntary participation (see Appendix B). After ensuring that all questions were answered and confirming that participants understood the procedures, the consent form was signed and collected. I proceeded to request permission from the participant to audio record the interview. Following this authorization, interviews commenced and were conducted in one session per interviewee lasting between one and two hours.

The participants in this study were selected based on a combination of purposive and convenience sampling techniques. As suggested in Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011), more than one sampling procedure can be utilized as necessary for a study. Participant selection was restricted to students attending the University of Ontario Institute of Technology for convenience. Furthermore, individuals were selected based on criteria of
gender, religion, ethnicity, and age. The sample included women whom identified themselves as South Asian Muslims, whose parent’s country of origin included, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, and who were between the ages of 18 and 30. Below are tables illustrating the demographic characteristics of participants included in this study.

Table 1: Ethnicity by Generation Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>First Generation</th>
<th>Second Generation</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Age of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants Age</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants were recruited by placing recruitment posters around the university’s campus and on blackboard (a student – professor communication website). A mass email
was also sent to all students attending the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, through their university email addresses. Interested participants were asked to contact me via email if they wanted to volunteer for the study and met the participant criteria. As an incentive and appreciative gesture participants names were entered into a draw for a 100 dollar gift card. The draw was performed after all eight interviews were completed.

Data was collected using in depth one-on-one semi-structured interviews. The collection process took a total of six months. Participants were given the ability to speak in their own words, bringing their voices forth (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011). Interviews were conducted individually with each participant, allowing interviewees to expand on conversation topics of primary interest. The interview guide was divided into the following thematic areas to guide the discussion (see Appendix D):

- Background information
- Identity
- Sense of Belonging
  - Prejudice/Discrimination
- Deviance
- Culture
- Religion
- Patriarchy
- Generational conflict
Data Analysis

Upon completion of each interview I transcribed each audio recording. Data collection and data analysis were done simultaneously, and transcriptions were carried out after each recording. The interview text was coded by hand (as opposed to the use of a computer software system). Transcriptions were condensed into relevant categories and further analyzed. It is important to keep in mind that the interview was segmented into thematic areas prior to the analysis process in order to structure the direction of the interview.

Adopting the method of Luker (2008), I began the analysis process by making multiple copies (usually three) of each participants interview transcript. The first transcript being a reference copy and the subsequent copies used to code and analyse the information. Next, I read through the second copy of each transcript to gain a holistic understanding of the content, followed by a second reading of the transcript noting relevant quotes to help answer the research questions. During this phase I simply understood the text’s natural meaning. Using the third copy of the transcript I reviewed the relevant quotes that I made a note of earlier to understand the deeper meaning or underlying theme of these quotes. Condensing the data in this way allowed me to themematize statements from the participants point of view based on my interpretation. During this time I began to record the recurring themes being discovered, allowing me to eliminate any irrelevant data. Different coloured markers were then used to highlight and separate each theme. I then cut the quotes out of their original transcript and placed similar codes from all eight transcripts together. By placing similar codes together, what Luker (2008) terms as sub-codes began to emerge.
Following this step, I tried to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning, in relation to the purpose of this study, by connecting the themes to the purpose of the research. The goal was to understand what constituted deviant behaviour within the SAMC and determine if deviant behaviour was engaged in, to gain a sense of belonging within the dominant society. By consistently examining many of the codes and sub-codes of my data, what Luker (2008) describes as the “hook” or the theme tying the data together became apparent, this theme being social control. Below is a diagram of the hook and how sub codes helped to connect the data.

Figure 1: Intersecting characteristics of informal social control
The primary theme, informal social control, revealed three smaller themes within: culture, religion, and gender. Under these three themes, a number of sub-codes emerged linking them to the larger theme of informal social control. It appeared that culture, religion, and gender worked to influence the notion of control over the behaviour of the participants in this study.

However, prior to the “hook” of this research, the theme of identity was developed at the beginning of each interview process. Under the theme of identity, two themes emerged: fitting in/belonging and positive view towards Canada, each of these themes encompassed sub-codes, as well. This theme accounted for a large portion of the data, and provided a frame in understanding who these participants were. It allowed me to understand the participants point of view.

Limitation

Researcher Bias. According to Fawcett and Hearn (2004), issues related to the epistemological position and value base of those engaged in the research have to be fully explored and incorporated into the research (p.216). Similarly, Schwandt (2003), argues that researcher bias should be considered, as it is difficult for one to ignore their own bias. Researcher bias should be acknowledged and altered to interpret the data. Therefore it is necessary for the researcher to acknowledge personal bias in their work.

As the primary researcher of this thesis, I recognize that my own personal bias may have influenced my findings. Similar to the participants in this study, I am a second generation immigrant, female, and Muslim. In addition to sharing this identity with participants, I share many of the experiences and challenges these respondents described.
living in a pluralistic Canadian society. As the primary researcher, I used my experiences to help me understand the voices of these participants. However, I was conscious not to apply my own experiences to participants' experiences. Rather, I tried to incorporate a critical reflexive approach to avoid hindering the data with my own experiences. It is also important to keep in mind the effects of sharing a religious identity with participants. Participants' choice in responses to interview questions may have been affected as a result of a shared religious identity. Given the sensitive nature of the research topic, I am aware that participants may have adjusted their responses to avoid judgement. To minimize this risk I stressed to each participant that their information would remain confidential.
Chapter Four: Results

This analysis will begin by providing a thick description of the sample. This description will provide a foundation in understanding participants' experiences. Following this overview, there are two major parts to this analysis. In the first section of this analysis I will discuss how participants identify themselves. Within this section, experiences of difference, racialization, and exclusion will be addressed. The second part of this analysis is centered on deviance and informal social control. Within the latter part of this analysis the intersection of culture, religion, and gender are examined in relation to deviance and control.

A Sample Sketch

There were eight participants included in this study, all of whom identified themselves as South Asian, Muslim, and female. The average age of the participants was 21. There were six participants who identified themselves as second generation immigrants. According to Portes and Rumbaut (2005), second generation refers to native born children of foreign born parents or foreign born children who were brought to Canada before adolescence (p. 987). The remaining two participants were born outside of Canada and immigrated during their teens. Four of the participants identified their parent’s heritage country as Pakistan, two from Bangladesh, one from India and one from Afghanistan. The majority of participants currently live in the Greater Toronto Area. However, four of the participants lived away from their parents’ home. Two of these four participants lived away temporarily while attending school; the remaining two participants moved away after marriage. Two of the eight participants were married. Of
the eight participants in this study, three wore the hijab (head scarf). At the time of the interview each participant was pursuing a post-secondary education.

**Identities**

In a culturally plural setting, where the host and ethnic cultures interact, participants identities were ascribed, chosen, transitional, and negotiated depending on the situational context. Participants described having to negotiate between being Canadian and South Asian across different spheres, mainly between the Canadian public and at home. Consistent with previous research (Maiter & George, 2003; Farver, et al., 2002; Hermansen & Khan, 2009), from home and the ethnic community, participants South Asian identity was elucidated. Yet their appreciation for, and integration into values of the dominant society provided them with a Canadian identity. This bricolaged identity is unfolded in the following paragraphs.

**Internal segregation.** When participants were questioned about their South Asian identity, they described a feeling of cultural dissonance from other members of their SAMC. Participants perceive themselves as different from other members of their SAMC. This sentiment is reflected in Rabia’s statement below:

> So they (Pakistani Student Association) have this big like semi-formal and this formal every year and like me and my friends went this year, and for some reason I just felt like I wasn’t part of it like at all, Like I’m Pakistani, I’m born in Pakistan, and a lot of those people aren’t and I just felt like I was so out of place, like completely different from everyone that was there, like I don’t know why, but I personally felt like I just got dropped in a situation I wasn’t supposed to be in.

Similarly, Farah described being different from other Bengali’s since immigrating to Canada.
I’m not a FOB (fresh off the boat) anymore, I would say yea I am thinking more open, like I am acceptable to things I would have never been acceptable to if I had, if I were back home right now. Like I was a homophobic but now homosexuality is something that is normal.

Farah’s testimonial reflects an internalization of values common to the dominant society. Her willingness to accept common mainstream norms, she believes separates her from other community members. Farah’s effort to distinguish herself from a newcomer asserts a negative undertone towards those who are more conservative. This perception of being “open minded” is also reflected in Sadaf’s comment:

*I am a little bit of both, like Indian and Canadian, like I was born and raised in Canada, so I think I am more independent, and more like – well I guess compared to some of my family members, or culture I am a little bit more liberal.*

Similar to previous studies (Hermansen & Khan, 2009; Ajrouch, 2004; Handa, 2003), the results here indicate that some immigrants learn to see themselves as different from members of their own ethnic communities. For instance, Sadaf’s appreciation for autonomy, a North American ideology (Dasgupta, 1998; Farver et al., 2003; Varghese & Jenkins, 2009; Hickey, 2004; Inman et al., 2001; Suzuki & Greenfield, 2002; Maiter & George, 2003; Roy, 1998; Wardak, 2000; Hermansen & Khan, 2009), she believes separates her from her family members. Furthermore, viewing herself as “a little bit of both” illustrates how multiple identities are balanced. Sadaf’s Canadian identity becomes particularly salient when compared to some of her other family members, thus, her Canadian identity is situational.

**Exclusion.** Though participants were able to identify themselves as Canadian within some parameters, analysis of the data indicates that participants are also aware of their inability to be accepted as Canadian by the public. Many participants described
feeling alienated from mainstream society in some way. This experience is described by Sadaf, Hafsa, and Sana. Sadaf explained:

*I was in a white community so I was always picked on, it was even before I wore the scarf, and when I put on the scarf it became worse, and as I got older because I guess wearing a scarf you are out there.*

The scarf (a head covering) is a visual representation of Sadaf’s connection to Islam. This article of clothing positioned her as an outsider from mainstream society. Hafsa also described her discriminative experience when wearing the head scarf in the following testimonial:

*I started wearing the hijab and everything so I was like, I really stood out, and people would treat me really different, and it was starting to get to me. Why does everything feel so weird and why do I stand out so much, it’s so awkward.*

In response to her experience of being seen as the “other,” Hafsa decided to remove her hijab to fit into mainstream society. The above statement illustrates how Hafsa’s religious identity is limited by those around her. However, Hafsa explained that this experience went beyond the issue surrounding the hijab as she stated:

*Actually there are some instances where they make you feel, like I feel disadvantaged being a Muslim, for example I had a business class in high school, and it was international business so they were teaching us about foreign cultures and I don’t know they described Islam in this way, and everyone just stared at me like oh so you are this person that got described, and everyone started making fun of the description and it was really awkward for me cause I was like one of the only Muslims in the class at the time, so yeah that was kind of awkward I guess, and it’s not like anyone asked me, they just started making fun of the stuff and like this is so weird.*

Sana also described her feeling of isolation when living in Montreal:

*Montreal wasn’t as diverse, um I was like the only South Asian person in my entire school. So I mean I was looked at like where did she come from I’ve never*
seen anyone like her before, um...people were very closed off and narrow minded, and to them I was out of place completely. So I internalized how they made me feel.

The previous statements representing exclusion, illustrate the experience of discrimination, racialization, and isolation that the participants in this study encounter within a pluralistic society. According to participants, they are not considered reflective of a Canadian identity and described feeling “othered” by society. Consistent with previous research participants face difficulty identifying with Canadian society as well as their SAMC (Shariff, 2008; Rajiva 2006; Handa; 2003; Jiwani, 2006). Experiences of alienation from both societies are often internalized.

**Negotiated Identities.** Given participants feelings of isolation from both societies, they described having to balance multiple identities. The data here indicates that participants viewed themselves as more South Asian than Canadian in some instances. However, their idea of a Canadian identity was highly valued in other contexts, mostly with regard to liberalism. This is reflected in the following statement by Rabia:

*I really like to partake in South Asian stuff, like cultural events and movies ...like I have a friend and me and her can recite every old brown song that ever existed, but then when it comes to it I can sit here and still be Canadian if that makes sense like ...I don’t know? When it comes to school and everything I am very Canadian esque. And I have the freedom too, because my parents aren’t like you know you have to stay home kinda thing, but when it comes to my family itself then I have to be cultural and dress in like brown clothes and stuff like that.*

Similarly, Sana explained:

*I mean um if I compare myself to the people who live there (Pakistan), like my cousins and stuff like we are different but obviously there are similarities. Um like I do identify as a Pakistani, but not like (hesitates) entirely so. I would say more of a mixture.*
Sana continued to explain the similarities between her and her Pakistani cousins in the comment below:

"ummm, similarities just like normal girl things, like we like to watch movies and listen to music, that kind of thing, or I even like Pakistani food so we have those similarities. The differences are kind of the way we’ve been brought up and our attitude, so like you mentioned the patriarchal society kind of thing, so they have more of um, like more perspective that they don’t think they can do as much because they are women, whereas I am like no, I can do anything, the sky is the limit for me kind of thing."

The previous three testimonials are indicative of an eclectic identity. Through their families and South Asian community, participants are able to connect and identify with South Asian culture. Yet, analysis of participants testimonials illustrates their awareness of the differences between themselves and their SAMC when placed in the public of the dominant society. This negotiated identity was also noted earlier by Sadaf, where she stated:

"mmm I think I am a little bit of both, like Indian and Canadian, like I was born and raised in Canada, so I think I am more independent, and more like – well I guess compared to some of my family members, or culture I am a little bit more liberal, I guess I am kind of moderate but I do have some of my culture and religion as well."

In the above testimonials respondents described identifying with South Asian culture through clothing, food, and music, but identified with, and attributed Canadian values to liberal views and opportunity. As Handa (2003) concludes, freedom is woven into the fabric of Canadian culture. In the analysis here each participant expressed their appreciation for “freedom” in Canada. They viewed Canada in a superior manner, rather than focusing on their experiences of isolation, racialization, and discrimination participants appreciate the value of liberalism that Canada has to offer.
Though participants expressed appreciation for some of the “liberal” values offered by the dominant society, an in depth analysis of the data suggests that participants attachment to their South Asian identity is prioritized here. This particularly salient South Asian identity is expressed by Farah, Hafsa, Sana, Nura, and Asma. For instance, Farah described herself as Bengali first, as she stated:

*Interviewer: okay, so you consider yourself Bengali first?*  
*Farah: Yeah, and then Canadian*

Similarly, when Hafsa was asked about where she feels a greater sense of belonging she replied:

*I think to the South Asian community, in the end my beliefs more match up the South Asian community than with people here.*

It is important to consider that Farah, Nura, and Hafsa were not born in Canada, thus their primary attachment to a South Asian identity is clear. However, participants like Sabah, who was born in Canada, also expressed primary attachment to her South Asian identity in the following statement:

*Well if someone asked me where I am from, I say Pakistan, but I was born here.*

Sabah’s statement illustrates her inclination to identify as a Pakistani, though she was born in Canada. Her testimonial here also reinforces her alienation from the dominant society. Though Sabah is Canadian, she recognizes that society might not see her as Canadian. Analysis of Sabah’s statement here suggests that this feeling of “otherness” may have caused Sabah to see herself as primarily South Asian. Similarly, Wardak (2000), found that discrimination imposed by dominant society causes some SAMC
members to identify with their ethnic and religious community. Equally, Asma who was also born in Canada explained:

"like my first culture and what I am predominantly around is my Afghan culture, with my family, with my friends, um my parents and, it’s just all Afghans Afghans Afghans so I’m just kind of like mixed into that, but it’s not like I don’t fit - I find myself like, like an outcast within the Canadian culture."

**Peer Groups.** Asma’s statement illustrates the reinforcement of a South Asian identity through peer groups. Similarly, the majority of participants described their peers as South Asian or “brown.” As Farah explained:

"Well I think culture wise ye, I’m different from everyone else, but I would say...well obviously you pick friends who are just like you and stuff..."

When Rabia was asked who her peer groups were made of, she responded:

"South Asians, purely, I have like one white friend."

Hafsa, expressed the same experience:

"when I have the choice like all my friends mostly, I interact with girls, and I actually didn’t notice this until recently, and most of my friends are brown, so I mostly interact with brown females."

With an increasing presence of South Asian’s in Canada, identifying with South Asian culture may become easier, as illustrated through the above testimonials. Immigrants can begin to build ethnic enclaves where cultural norms and commodities are shared. For example, Nura described the demographics of her classmates as largely South Asian in secondary school, and mentioned seeing others from her village “back home,” at her apartment building located in Toronto. Sadaf also described Ajax as becoming increasingly “multicultural.” In this sphere identifying with South Asians may provide a
sense of belonging for young immigrants. Sharing experiences with other South Asian Muslims may mitigate feelings of alienation.

Analysis of the data thus far confirms that participants identities are selected, transitional, and negotiated. However, participants South Asian identity appears to be prominent. This strong identification with participants SAMC is found to play an influential role in their lives. Identifying with their SAMC appears to support conformity to traditional norms through culture, religion, and gender. Participant involvement in deviance is therefore limited through their religious, cultural, and gendered identities.

**Perceptions of Deviance**

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, there is no static definition of deviant behaviour. What is conventional to one community may be perceived as unconventional in another (Hutter & Williams, 1981; Tittle & Paternoster, 2000). Therefore, the term *deviance*, in any society, can be understood as behaviour that the majority of members belonging to a particular group agree to be unacceptable and immoral, and often receives a collective negative response (Tittle & Paternoster, 2000). Based on this understating of deviance, participants were asked to characterize deviance as it is understood within their SAMC; the majority of participants mentioned alcohol consumption, dating, attending night clubs, going out, and wearing revealing clothing. For instance, when Rabia was asked what she considered to be deviant for South Asian Muslim women but acceptable in Canadian society she responded:

> Well there is dating obviously, smoking, drinking, wear short clothing, being disrespectful, not being timid, not knowing household duties –

Hafsa was more focused on going out as a deviant act. For example, she stated:
Well, they’re (white Canadians) allowed to go dating and stuff like that, and uh, I guess like sleepovers, brown girls aren’t allowed to do sleep overs – ever - and white girls are always doing that.

Similarly, Sabah explained:

*I guess there are things like going out ...some South Asian families don’t want their kids going out at all, like especially girls cause I guess they want to protect them.*

Sabah continued:

*Obviously in Islam you are not allowed to drink, for like really good reasons.*

The above testimonials include behaviours that the majority of participants classified as deviant within their SAMC. For example, six of the eight participants mentioned alcohol consumption as deviant without being probed about it. Moreover, most of the participants described that much of the disagreements they encountered with their parents are regarding going out, especially late at night. Relationships with the opposite sex were also frequently discussed as problematic. Although not every participant specifically mentioned dating, every participant made some reference to socializing with the opposite sex as inappropriate behaviour. Synthesis of participants perceptions of deviance suggests that the former behaviours - dating, drinking, going out, and wearing revealing clothing - were the commonly mentioned deviant behaviours by respondents without having to delve into questioning. In other words, participants brought these behaviours to my attention without being probed about them. This would suggest that participants may have experienced, or know others who have experienced challenges with these forms of deviance. However, wearing revealing clothing was not specifically defined by participants and therefore, will not be included in the definition of deviance in this thesis.
Additionally, many of the respondents mentioned pre-marital sex as being condemned within their SAMC, but only when specifically questioned about it. Most of the women did not bring pre-marital sex to my attention on their own, suggesting that pre-marital sex is an uncomfortable subject matter. As indicated in Roy (1998) and Yahyaoui et al., (2013), sexuality is often repressed in the South Asian community. Analysis of the data suggests pre-marital sex was taboo for these participants. Pre-marital sex was resisted and viewed as strictly prohibited by most respondents. The following statement provided by Nura illustrates the objection of pre-marital sex within her SAMC:

*Interviewer: In terms of sex before marriage?*

*Nura: That’s a big no, like NO!*

Many of the participants shared similar opinions. Pre-marital sex was rarely discussed willingly by participants, but when the topic was raised in conversation this behaviour was viewed as immoral.

As the statement above demonstrates, some forms of deviance were weighted heavier with negative attention than others. Indeed, all participants described stronger oppositions to pre-marital sex and alcohol consumption. This can be understood through dialogue with Sana:

*Interviewer: I know we talked about drinking, partying, and sex but is there anything else beside the three that you can think of that really is typical to Canadian society but is really not allowed in South Asian community?*

*Sana: Those are the two big ones (drinking and pre-marital sex)*

On the other hand, interpretations of dating, attending night clubs, and clothing restrictions were diverse. The following statement provided by Sana highlights this grey area:
Well I’ve gone clubbing in the past. Like I wouldn’t say that is something that is extremely disliked but obviously that is not something my family would want me to do.

Sana described that although she informed her family about her club attendance, they discouraged this behaviour. Additionally, Sana advised that it is important to keep this behaviour hidden from her SAMC to avoid judgement of herself and her family. Though her parents were understanding, she feared the opinion of community members. Therefore, while some forms of deviance may receive a higher tolerance from some families, there is consensus from their SAMC that the previously mentioned forms of deviance are unacceptable.

The data here also reveals that participants perceptions of deviance varies. For example, Farah mentioned homosexuality as deviant, and Sana discussed the act of gambling as restricted. However, given that the concept of deviance extends beyond an individual’s perception and represents the views of the larger community, deviant behaviour in this thesis will include only the frequently agreed upon, and specifically defined, immoral behaviours. Overall, there was considerable consensus among participants that South Asian Muslim females, who consume alcohol, date, go out socially/party and engage in pre-marital sex, would be considered deviant. Restrictions of these deviant behaviours seems to emanate from religious, cultural and gendered expectations.

**Islamic Guidelines.** Many of the participants explained that their understanding of the reasoning behind forbidden behaviours stems from Islam. For example, two of the

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1 Deviance in the analysis of this thesis will refer to the following behaviours: alcohol consumption, pre-marital sex, dating and social outing/clubbing.
eight participants made reference to the concept of haram. As discussed earlier in this thesis, haram is that which is forbidden in Islam (Bolognani, 2009; Maqsood, 1998). The term haram was contextualized by Sana when discussing the prohibition of alcohol in the following statement:

I would say it (alcohol) is viewed worse, because in Islam it’s not allowed, like it’s haram.

According to Sana, alcohol consumption is perceived immoral to a greater degree than dancing at a night club. Contributing to participants interpretation of this restriction are Islamic guidelines. Sana felt that behaviours specifically outlined as immoral by Islam should be weighted with more consideration, as opposed to behaviours that were just considered immoral by members of the South Asian community. This may have been a consistent thought among participants, as alcohol consumption was the most frequently mentioned Islamic restriction. For example, Sadaf similarly expressed:

I guess mainly it goes down to the religion maybe, because in the religion like alcohol is forbidden, these things are forbidden, not to be around men before marriage, so I think that has a lot to do with it.

Nura and Sabah provided the foundation of restrictions against alcohol. Both participants explained that Islam forbids alcohol consumption because of intoxication to the mind. The former statement illustrates Sadaf’s interpretation of the restriction against alcohol consumption. Participants testimonials suggest that they understand and appreciate the ban on alcohol without blindly complying to it.

Participants expressed multiple opinions on what Islam proscribes. Participants also explained there are religious restrictions against dating, clothing requirements, and
pre-marital sex. For instance, when Nura was asked about why pre-marital sex was restricted she simply responded:

*Because of religion*

In a similar tone, Asma expressed her concern where she felt that family members forfeit their value of religion by engaging in deviant behaviour, as she stated:

*For example, how they look like, appearances, the whole relationship with guys and girls, within Islam like it’s really, like to a level where guys and girls don’t interact on a level, where like if you are not related to him in a certain way, you don’t interact with him in such a manner. Whereas when I go to gatherings and stuff, guys and girls are always together, they are dressed totally like inappropriately.*

**Influence of culture.** Asma’s statement illustrates how Islam outlines rules of appropriate communication between males and females, and indirectly limits the behaviour between the sexes. However, she mentioned that the limits placed on the interaction between males and females are intensified by culture. Asma explained that though religion may limit conduct, the interpretation of Islamic restrictions is often misunderstood. For instance, Asma stated:

*Religion has points in it where it will say to do something, and it will say to not do something, but then culture will come in and maybe distort that. So for example, with dating I kind of feel like there is a proper way to get married and Islam shows it to you in a wonderful way and it tells you for example, whenever you find someone who you feel is compatible then this is the steps you need to take, in order to – in a proper way acquaint with each other and get married. Whereas culture now it might be like you know oh don’t ever talk to them, don’t do this just – you never allowed to see the girl until the day you get married, like that come in, it’s all culture.*

Hafsa and Sana also discussed how restrictions are simultaneously understood through religion and culture. For instance, Hafsa stated:
I think people use religion as an excuse to sometimes make like their- to force people to follow their beliefs, and that kind of falls into culture slowly over time.

Likewise, Sana explained:

Definitely culture has a big impact on it, because religion on its own may tell you not to do something, but then religion doesn’t tell you that if you do this, you’re going to hell, there is no forgiveness for it, culture definitely plays into that. And I think if you engage in certain things that are not accepted by religion or by culture, society is much more likely to engage in punitive measures whereas religiously, yes there might be certain things laid out that if someone does this you should do this but they’re not as extreme as culture makes it seem.

The previous statements suggest that culture can intensify the consequences of restricted behaviour. The data indicates that culture is used, by some South Asians, to ensure that religious requirements are followed. In this case religion and culture intersect to govern participants lived experiences.

Gender Expectations. Analysis of the data also indicates that culture and gender are used to redefine what is acceptable and unacceptable in Islam. For instance, participants explained that while Islam proscribes much of the deviant behaviours for both males and females, they felt that there are double standards held within their SAMC. For example, when asked whether restricted behaviours such as drinking alcohol and smoking only applied to females, Rabia responded:

It’s definitely only for females because, like most, 90% of paki guys smoke and everyone is cool with it nobody really cares, you know what I mean, and most of them hang out with girls, and nobody really cares, like....as far as restrictive, like the girls are just viewed like on a high pedestal than a guy is, because a guy gets married and he has his own wife and kids, whereas a girl is somebody from what I’ve understood from cultural difference, you are giving her away. That’s like your pride and joy that your, somebody that you’ve instilled everything into and you’re giving them away to someone else so now you want to make sure everything you’ve instilled into them is good.
Rabia’s statement suggests that because a female is adopted into the male’s family upon marriage in some South Asian communities, she must maintain a good image. She is a reflection of the values her parents have instilled into her and a representation of her family. Therefore, the data suggests that a woman bears greater responsibility for her actions than a male. Consequently, participants explained that parents often implement restrictions based on the reasoning that they are females. For instance, Rabia stated:

*Oh no they’ll (parents)- like, ok like – basically a lot of the reasons they don’t want me to do things is through religion – religion does not permit it – that and you’re a girl you shouldn’t be doing that.*

Similarly, Hafsa stated that though her parents justified their restrictions against behaviours perceived as common to the dominant society, she thought the rationale to be unreasonable, as she stated:

*Like uh, sometimes, like for example, I told you the excuse is just that you are a girl and that is just not really a reason that doesn’t make any sense at all.*

These findings indicate that participants are socialized to believe that females are prohibited from engaging in deviant behaviours partly because of religious and cultural expectations, but also because of their gender, and the consequences females would bear. Therefore, participants internalized appropriate behaviour based on gender and culture, which once again intersect to govern the lives of these individuals.

To gain a greater understanding of the differences in expectations between the sexes, participants were asked to discuss some of the traditional expectations of South Asian Muslim females. The following five traits were the most frequently mentioned: to be sacrificial, dress conservative, take part in household chores such as cooking and
cleaning, be shy or reserved and to maintain a family. This sentiment was expressed by Farah:

You’re supposed to be homely, like you have those um..., you know qualities to maintain a family, and you should know- you shouldn’t be hot tempered, you should be patient.

Similarly, Sana explained:

My dad would be like okay you’re getting older now you need to learn how to cook, what are you going to cook for your family in the future. Whereas my brothers could be in a family where they are doing the cooking but that is not typically what my parents have in mind.

Supported by Dasgupta and Dasgupta (1998), the participants in this study are expected to maintain the home, maintain family values, possess feminine qualities and reflect parental culture. According to Dwyer (2000), because of the aforementioned expectations female behaviour is highly monitored. Unlike men, women are expected to place the needs of their families above their own desires. Violation of traditional gender expectations are perceived as selfish acts and deviant.

Data analysis concludes that restrictions against common mainstream norms results from religious, cultural, and gendered expectations from the SAMC. Each participant provided an example of Islamic regulation against deviant behaviours. However, Islamic guidelines were reinforced through South Asian culture. Participants felt that culture was used to intensify consequences, limiting their behaviour. The data here further concludes that participants behaviour was circumscribed based on gender. Participants felt that females were monitored more closely than males. Stemming from these restrictions, participants continued to explain their choice to conform to the expectations of their SAMC.
Avoiding Deviance

Though few participants expressed tolerance toward culturally deviant behaviours, most participants advised that they resisted the temptation from engaging in the following four deviant behaviours: alcohol consumption, pre-marital sex, attending night clubs and partying/socializing late at night. Participants prioritized the values of their SAMC above desires to assimilate into the dominant society. Subsequently, participants informed me of their efforts to resist deviant behaviours. For instance, because alcohol consumption was considered a “big no,” many of the girls refrained from drinking alcohol. Granted, these efforts are challenging. Participants described the difficulty of resisting alcohol when in the company of peers who consume alcohol. Despite these challenges, participants managed to avoid this behaviour. Farah provided an example of her resistance:

\textit{So yesterday we went to Pickle Barrel and we were picking out drinks and couple of my friends they got alcohol and stuff and then I thought well I could order the same thing but then again I shouldn’t, and I just held myself back and I got a non-alcoholic drink.}

Only one of the eight participants, Nura, disclosed that she participated in alcohol consumption. Nura expressed her tolerance for alcohol so long as consumption in moderation is exercised. For example, Nura explained:

\textit{Personally I don’t think there is anything wrong with it. I mean if you’re only enjoying just a few drinks and you’re enjoying it, I mean that is fine but if you’re like an addict then there is definitely a problem.}

Though Nura expressed her acceptance towards alcohol consumption, there were limitations to her acceptance. Nura favoured the consumption of alcohol only in moderation, but viewed overconsumption unfavourably. Nura is the only participant that
expressed this feeling towards drinking. The remaining seven participants view this behaviour as completely unacceptable.

Similar feelings were expressed toward pre-marital sex. The majority of participants claimed that though they would not judge individuals who engaged in pre-marital sex, they would abstain from this behaviour. For example, Sana stated:

Um sex before marriage I do think there is something wrong with that. I think that is a level of intimacy that you should only save for the person you want to spend the rest of your life with, for the person that has made that commitment to you, don’t think it’s fair to just be, like to sleep around with anyone or everyone, like I have no problem with you if you make that decision that is completely personal but um, like personally I wouldn’t want to make myself available to everyone.

Only two of the eight participants, Nura and Sadaf, disclosed their engagement in pre-marital sex, but described reservations to this behaviour. When discussing pre-marital sex, both Sadaf and Nura described a future with their potential partners. In this case, Sadaf and Nura maintained the view that sex was something sacred, and only to be shared with a potential life partner. For Nura, she married her partner; though Sadaf did not marry her first sexual partner, she explained that her original intention was to get married.

Though some participants expressed a more tolerant view toward attending night clubs, the majority of participants advised me that they avoid this environment. Only three participants stated attending a night club. Two of the participants advised that they kept this hidden from their parents. For instance, with regard to clubbing, Sadaf stated:

I’m glad I did it, I was just kind of fighting myself for so long, just oh like go clubbing and hang out and like I always wanted to do that but then I never did because I just kind of stopped myself, but then it just kind of kept eating me up, and I was like you know what I just want to get this out of my system and just do it and I just tried it a couple times and I got over it I guess.
Similarly, Rabia stated:

No I love it, like I have the most fun. I don’t know there’s not really guilt involved, sometimes I double think myself but not really, like sometimes I’m like should I really be doing this, but it’s mostly because of school.

The above statements illustrate an increased tolerance for clubbing compared to other forms of deviance discussed in this thesis. However, both Rabia and Sadaf did not want their parents or community members to become aware of this behaviour. Aside from Rabia, Sadaf and Sana the majority of participants resisted attending a night club. According to participants testimonials resistance was needed to avoid the negative influences of the club environment. For example, Sabah explained:

…it’s kind of like putting yourself out there for something that um, could go wrong. So if you’re clubbing and dancing you’re going to be exposed to like, guys and girls mixing and there is going to be drinking.

The only form of deviance that the majority of participants participated in is dating. Five of the eight participants admitted to having a boyfriend. However, analysis of the data indicates that reservations are made to dating as well. It is important to understand how dating was interpreted by participants. Dating was only considered acceptable if the end result was potentially marriage. For participants who admitted to having a boyfriend, their boyfriends were considered potential life partners and someone their parents would approve of. For example, in the statement below Sana described her family’s acceptance toward dating with limitation:

I know my family personally um their okay with it but to a certain extent. Like they wouldn’t be okay with um me dating someone of another religion or even like someone of another culture would be hard for them to accept. But if it was someone that I have a prospect of being in a long term relationship with and it has a future and they’re involved in that decision as well, it’s not looked upon as negatively. Like, with my parents like, they had an arranged marriage but then
they still went out during the time that they were engaged. So there was - it was kind of socially acceptable, but there are also families that are like no not at all, it will just be us who decide who you are with, and you’re not allowed to engage with anyone.

Participants explained that they are careful to avoid casual dating, rather they date only with the intention of marriage.

The findings indicate that deviance is circumvented by the majority of participants. The few participants, who did sample forms of deviant behaviour, did so with their own reservations. Deviance is limited to participants interpretation of morality. For example, some participants justify engagement in pre-marital sex if the intention is to get married. Below is a summary of the most common forms of deviance and the frequency of engagement.

Table 3: Frequency of engagement in culturally deviant behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Dating</th>
<th>Alcohol Consumption</th>
<th>Clubbing/Partying</th>
<th>Pre-Marital Sex</th>
<th>Going Out</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summarizing the data on the engagement of deviance, 87.5 percent of respondents said no to consuming alcohol, 57.1 percent responded no to clubbing and partying, and 75 percent responded no to pre-marital sex. Though participants were split between admitting to going out and being confined to the home, “going out” was only discussed briefly, and was not defined by all participants. For participants who are permitted social time with peers, strict restrictions are placed on curfews and others are restricted from socializing with the opposite sex. Therefore, “going out” cannot be conclusively
interpreted. Furthermore, while the majority of participants admitted to dating (62.5%), their definition of dating differed from that of the dominant society. Similar to the findings from Yahyaoui et al., (2013), boyfriends are only acceptable if they shared cultural values with participants. Dating was only acceptable if the intention is to get married. Therefore, dating must be understood based on participants' interpretation.

**Informal Sources of Control**

The previous section indicates that the majority of participants choose to conform to the conventional norms common to their SAMC’s, and resist any desire to become tangled in deviant behaviour. The data here suggests that conformity to traditional values is based upon the castigation of participants' behaviour through their SAMC’s. Religion, culture, and gender appear to be the underlying source of control over participants' behaviour. Embedded within religion, culture, and gender, is participants' bond to their SAMC’s. Therefore, there are multiple layers of control to be unpacked.

**Familial Relationships**

**Respect for parents.** Though control theories vary, consistency remains in the thought that deviance and conformity are largely dependent on an individual’s social bond to other members of a group (Tittle & Paternoster, 2000; Britt & Gottfredson, 2003; Hirschi, 1969; Nye, 1958; Durkheim, 1973; Reckless, 1962; Reiss, 1951). Analysis of the data here reveals that participants' strong attachment to family members mitigates deviant behaviour. Though some participants did not perceive all forms of deviance as entirely immoral, restrictions prescribed by members of the SAMC are accepted. Participants' cooperation with restrictions is grounded in the respect they hold for their family. Each
participant described some level of respect that they hold for parental figures. For example, Rabia stated:

> If they (parents) birth you and then they work hard to raise you and teach you everything and teach you good morals and make you happy and then you go and basically flush it down the toilet like how are you gonna feel? Right? Like I’m going to be pissed off, incredibly pissed off and that’s just my personal perspective, and I’m not saying I’m the most respectful daughter in the world and that I do everything my parents say but there’s a limit and boundaries to everything and some people just don’t know when to stop.

Rabia’s statement, similar to that of the other participants, emphasizes the importance of obeying parental restrictions out of respect. Her words reflect a sense of admiration for her parents; as caregivers they have worked hard to mould her into an individual with “good morals,” as she states, and it is important that she practices what she has been taught. Similarly, Nura’s testimonial below is illustrative of the respect afforded to her parents:

> I mean, I got married. I’m married. So I wouldn’t go – like it was a love and arranged marriage both. If my parents probably did not agree to it, then I probably wouldn’t – I would take the time and make them understand, I wouldn’t go beyond what they said.

This level of respect was found to be the product of cultural and religious obligations. The strong belief in these cultural and religious expectations are illustrated through Hafsa’s statement:

> ...in my religion, like you’re a Muslim too right? In Islam it is really encouraged to like treat your parents really well, and you know how mother rights and all that, and then it makes me realize that she has done a lot for me and she has the right to be how she is, and so I give her the respect cause I care for her.

Similarly, Farah mentioned:
It's just culture, like you have to talk to an elder person in certain ways and stuff. Like he’s in a higher level just respect him to that point.

The above testimonials indicate that participants offer their parents the respect that is required of them in Islam and through South Asian culture. Though participants may disagree with the restrictions imposed by parental authority, it is expected that these restrictions are obeyed. Respect for elders as indicated by Farah, as well as genuine concern or care for parents as expressed by Hafsa, illustrate participants close relationship with parents. Review of participants testimonials also suggests that respect was given based on immigration status. Some participants mentioned the many sacrifices made by family members upon immigrating to Canada. Participants felt partially responsible for these sacrifices. Participants explained that the migration to Canada was to provide them with better opportunities and for that they owe their families so much. For instance, Farah said,

*Um because I think we owe them (parents) so much. For them we have a good life, a good education, and especially as an immigrant family every mom and dad they have that reasoning, that we are here for your better education and that itself is such a big binding on yourself. Because you just keep thinking that they sacrifice their career, they’re just here to see you in a better position, and all we are doing is just disappointing them so yeah.*

According to the previous statement, offering respect to parents is also unique to the immigrant experience. Witnessing the differences between participants countries of origin and Canada, participants are afforded the opportunity to see what their parents have forfeited for their wellbeing. For example, Sana described her luxurious life left behind in Pakistan for educational opportunity in Canada. The results indicate that the participants who were not born in Canada but immigrated at a young age, are more inclined to feel this way.
Supported by Mohammad-Arif (2000), conformity to traditional norms is a testimony to participants recognition of familial authority. The above analysis reinforces the firm bond within South Asian Muslim families, specifically between parents and children. In accordance with social control theories, the results indicate that the connection between participants and family members is an expression of genuine care and concern for family (Hirschi, 2002). The data here suggests that respect for parental restrictions is offered out of emotional attachment to parents, in addition to religious and cultural requirements. Participants explained not wanting to hurt parents by defying their wishes.

**Family Honour.** The bond that exists between participants and parents can also be understood through family honour. According to previous research (Dwyer, 2000), children are considered a reflection of their parents in South Asian culture. Therefore, avoiding deviance is essential in preserving family honour. Shame would be bestowed upon the family if participants choose to engage in deviance, causing harm to the entire family unit. To avoid negative perceptions of parents by other members of the community, avoiding deviance is important. This concept was illustrated in Sadaf’s statement below:

*It just makes my parents look bad, it looks like they don’t – and people have told my parents can’t you raise your kids, like who are you to be like leading other people to be good Muslims when you can’t control your own kids, it really impacts my parents you know*

In the same tone, Rabia explained:
well if you’re doing it (drinking and smoking) then most people will see you as like, obviously not a good, Muslim, not a good South Asian, your parents haven’t raised you properly, you’re a corrupt girl.

The statements provided by Sadaf and Rabia, indicate that conformity to cultural norms on the part of the participant may be in effort to protect her parents from judgment and shame. Participants feared that their parents would be critiqued on their ability to discipline, and would be perceived negatively by other members of the community. Though few participants such as Sadaf, explained that they are indifferent to how they will be perceived by other members of the community, participants are nervous about parental judgement. Again, the effort to avoid shame and hurt brought to parents represents the close connection participants had with their parents.

**Fear of Isolation.** The data also indicate that deviance is resisted in fear of isolation. Isolation was addressed as a potential consequence of deviance. Participants believe that they will be alienated from family members if they place their family’s honour at risk by engaging in deviance. Though none of the participants actually experienced this form of punishment, they assumed, or were made to assume by parents, that isolation is a result of deviant behaviour. Hafsa’s statement reflects this sentiment:

> If they disown me that probably would be the reason like they’re ashamed that they have raised a daughter who would do something like that, so they would just be like no.

Likewise, Farah stated:

> My parents might just abandon you for being their daughter, and they wouldn’t bother about you and your career. But I know, but that’s what they say. I haven’t experienced that right, but I’m pretty sure even if you’re in that situation (pre-marital sex) and they’re your actual family they will be with you. But they just say
it, so far what I have heard from any South Asian girl who got pregnant they were helped by their parents, but the parents were really disappointed.

Hafsa’s and Farah’s use of the terms “disown” and “abandon” illustrates their fear of being alienated from family members. As previously mentioned, parents are usually held accountable for their children’s behaviour. Consequently, individuals who fail to obey cultural expectations risk being isolated by family members because of the shame brought to their family. The fear of being separated from family members reinforces the bond participants have with their parents. As a result of the close connection between parents and children, participants refused to risk losing something so important to them. Thus, deviance may have been avoided to maintain a harmonious relationship and avoid disappointing family members.

Analysis of the data revealed that isolation is not only feared as a physical consequence but also a mental one. Many of the participants here described the emotional trauma they would experience from disappointing parents. For instance, Rabia stated:

   My dad would never, like my parents have never hit any of us. It’s just, you know – you know how certain people you look at and you just feel that they just feel disappointed in you and that just kills you inside. Like my dad is like that, like he’ll look at you and he will say things that aren’t directly related but you feel it. And mentally and emotionally you just kind of like ohhhh.

   Oh yea there would be yelling and screaming and crying and disappointment and like, I should have killed myself.

Additionally, Farah expressed:

   uhhh, I don’t even want to think about what my dad is going to do, he’s just this violent man and will yell at me a lot, and sometimes I feel like he is never going to talk to me
The testimonials here indicate that participants would encounter difficulty in facing their parents if they disobeyed cultural rules. Participants are concerned about their parent’s opinions and reactions. The fear of guilt and disappointment might create psychological stress for participants, suggesting that deviance is better avoided.

Supported by Yahyaoui et al., (2013), analysis of the data indicates that the girls in this study have a strong bond to their parents. Subsequently, participants accept being controlled by parental authority. The strength of their relationships can be understood through the care for parents and belief in cultural and religious values. Participants are sensitive to their parent’s opinions and look for acceptance as well as approval. Thus, to maintain a good relationship participants resist deviance. Consistent with previous research (Dwyer, 2000), women are expected to put their familial needs above their own and sacrifice individual desires.

**Community Network**

In addition to a familial bond, participants described their connections to their SAMC, including extended family, friends, and community members. As discussed in chapter two of this study, the South Asian culture considers the self as an extension of the ethnic community (Dasgupta, 1998; Farver et al., 2003; Varghese & Jenkins, 2009; Hickey, 2004; Inman et al., 2001; Suzuki & Greenfield, 2002; Maiter & George, 2003; Roy, 1998; Wardak, 2000; Hermansen & Khan, 2009). Likewise, the participants here described being socialized into a strong collective culture. To illustrate this collectivity, some participants described aunts, uncles, and grandparents playing a role in their childhood; others described the preservation of friendships with other families who had
also migrated to Canada from shared villages back home. Sadaf specifically described her close affiliation to other members of her SAMC through attendance at mosque. This community network can be understood in Rabia’s statement below:

_We chose Oshawa (to live) because a lot of our family friends were here, like our really good family friends_

Similarly, Nura explained,

_I think the way I was brought up there (country of origin), it was more like a homely environment, I was brought up in a joint family, like big family with all my uncles, aunts, grandparents and everyone so …_

The testimonials provided by Rabia and Nura, illustrate the attachment to extended family and friends. Both statements reflect a positive attitude toward collectivity. Participants seemed to value this connection to a larger family or community. Yet, this collective culture is viewed negatively by participants when community members act as a source of control.

Being actively integrated with extended family and other members of the ethnic community, means that in addition to being monitored by parents, participants are monitored by other community members. Participants described their fear of constantly being watched. Surveillance from community members may have allowed participants to reconsider their desire to engage in risky behaviour. Though participants are opposed to this form of control, they are mindful of their behaviour in the presence of others. For instance, Nura stated:

... they would be like “oh this is what your daughter is doing, oh she’s going to school, oh she doesn’t go to school, is she working,” Like I would come home and work after school, so my shift would be from 5-10 and by the time I got home it would be 11. And they would be like “oh why is your daughter out so late and she
is only 16 and what is she doing?" Like there were times when they assumed I was something, which I was not, and it played a big difference in my life, it just turned it upside down for a time period.

Similarly, Sadaf commented:

my dad was the president of the mosque so everyone knew us so like if I was speaking to a guy or anything, and not even like anything more than just friends, my dad would get a phone call like oh I saw your daughter with this guy and then my dad would be like “who is this guy (aggressive tone)” and I would be like what! Who is calling you?

The former testimonials suggest that the community plays an active role in the lives of participants. Attachment to participants SAMC acts as a control factor to keep them from engaging in deviant behaviour. Though participants made it a point to inform me that they are not concerned with the opinions of SAMC members, their actions suggested otherwise. To clarify, participants refrained from deviant behaviour for the sake of their family’s honour and their own reputations.

Judgement, Shame and Gossip. During the interview, participants were given hypothetical situations where they were asked to describe the consequences they would face if other members of the community witness their engagement in deviant behaviour. Participants described being subject to judgement, shame, and gossip. Each of the former negative consequences was perceived to bring harm to the family as well as the individual. Judgement affecting the individual was expressed by Sana in the following statement:

There would be this negative impression of who I am, they would probably judge me as a person. Um... and think that I am either a bad person or whatever they might think related to that behaviour, and I think that I probably would not be as accepted in society, um you’d have more of that exclusion happening.
The data provided by Sana indicates that once an individual’s moral character has been labelled or stigmatized, their position within the community would be jeopardized. This is evident in her reference to being excluded. Again, participants fear of ostracism seems to mediate their decision to partake in deviant behaviour.

In addition to participants being judged, the ability to provide adequate parenting by mothers and fathers would be questioned. As illustrated earlier, Rabia explained:

“Well if you’re doing it (drinking and smoking) then most people will see you as like, obviously not a good, Muslim, not a good South Asian, your parents have raised you properly, you’re a corrupt girl.

Similarly, Farah stated:

yeah their scared of being judged like their parenting style was not proper.

Rabia’s and Farah’s comments above suggest that parents are also subjected to criticism. Both participants and parents are made to feel ashamed for their children’s unconventional behaviour. The data indicates that shame is a product of judgement, and is found not only to affect the individual but impact the family. In coherence with shame, participants also expressed feelings of guilt, further controlling their behaviour. Participants appeared to be worried about their own reputation, but more concerned about the reputation of the family as previously explained.

Though shame is an effect of judgement, the data suggests that it is the act of gossiping that places family honour in a vulnerable position. Gossip is, “talk among a group of people concerning wrong done, or presumed to have been done, by an individual who is not present,” (Tittle and Paternoster, 2000, p.533). All participants felt that if they are caught engaging in deviant behaviour, in addition to being perceived negatively by
the witness, the witness will proceed to inform others within the community. Gossip perpetuates shame and guilt; as more people within the community become aware of the participants deviant behaviour, the more likely family honour will be placed at risk. This form of gossip can be understood through Rabia’s testimonial:

> Like you know if I’m hanging out with a guy, I have guys friends and my parents know I have guy friends, but if I’m hanging out with a guy and some random lady sees me, she will go and start talking to other people and is like oh my god, she’s like a bad girl, she hangs out with boys and stuff in that sense yes there’s a lot of oppression.

Equally, Nura discussed how gossip affected her family:

> I think they (parents) are more shameful of it than myself because the community is talking, how are they going to look at us because the whole picture perfect family is gone down. I know a lot of people believe in the picture perfect family and my parents do to, and so it’s like yeah it’s going down, oh my god they are talking about us.

Again, analysis of the data revealed that this collective role is a value adopted out of South Asian culture. Participants described that in South Asian culture, relations with extended family is common and important. Furthermore, participants perceive gossip and judgment as a product of the collective nature of their SAMC. For instance, Hafsa explained:

> Canada is pretty individualistic and back there (Pakistan) it’s more like people mind each other business and I don’t know? When I talk to, like, people from there, they’re more like all about how people will view you and respect and whereas here it’s just like do what you want who cares about anything.

Likewise, Asma explained:

> ...they live right next to each other that they constantly see each other every day, then problems are going to happen. Like, and, it’s all based on like the culture itself that we have, Afghan culture it’s just, it’s what allows them to kind of have
that attitude towards each other. Like, for example so and so husband, so and so wife, and they just kind of pick and choose at different issues and that cause drama and creates problems, whereas I feel like I’m kind of pulled away from that whole situation for one reason, we live uh... further away from them, because they are all in Kitchener, and it’s just me and my family, like my family lives in Toronto.

Given the bond between members of this group, shame and gossip are quickly formulated as the result of inappropriate behaviour. Perhaps this network allows for the spread of gossip, as members of the community are often acquainted with one another. Gossip acts as a source of informal control for participants, as illustrated by Arno (1980). The findings here indicate that judgement, shame, and gossip work together to function as control mechanisms over female behaviour particularly.

**Controlling Women**

The data in this study revealed that specific cultural and societal beliefs about women prevented deviant behaviour. As discussed in chapter two, women are required to maintain traditional feminine behaviour. Granted, those who deviate from traditional gender roles are considered deviant. As the current study suggests, women who are unable to maintain their female character will sustain threat to their integrity. For example, Rabia explained the stigma she would receive if she were to socialize with the opposite sex. Rabia stated:

*Basically girls, and that goes back to every culture, girls get judged like that, girls who hang out with a lot of guys are very like masculine girls, they’re not girly anymore they have lost their purity, they’re not like you know...the first guy you’re supposed to be with is like your husband kinda thing, not be with, but hang out with kind of thing.*
Rabia continued to talk about drinking alcohol and smoking, which would receive the same response. The following comment is reflective of the threat to her integrity:

well if you’re doing it (drinking and smoking) then most people will see you as like, obviously not a good Muslim, not a good South Asian, your parents haven’t raised you properly, you’re a corrupt girl.

Rabia’s use of the phrase “loss of purity,” and “corrupt girl” illustrates the stigma that is associated with socializing with the opposite sex, drinking, and smoking. This fear of stigma appears to prevent participants from considering any involvement in culturally deviant behaviour.

Asma also discussed the threat to a woman’s integrity. Though she did not discuss any personal fear of labelling or stigma, she explained how women would be viewed by others within their SAMC if they digressed from the traditional expectations. Asma explained:

So a certain way a woman dresses says a lot about her and how the South Asian community would portray it so – like the more modest the more covered the more you keep yourself um, like don’t draw so much attention to yourself towards your physical appearance they see that as better than for example someone who would dress really um, like exposing a lot of their body parts, and wearing for example tight fitted clothing lots of make-up jewelry, they would look down upon.

Asma’s comment illustrates the negative reputation participants will garner if they become involved in unconventional behaviour. Participants are made to feel ashamed for behaving immorally. The labels that might be assigned to participants appear to be internalized as a sense of disgrace or embarrassment to themselves. The risk of shame, and the fear of being stigmatized, once again deters deviance.
It became apparent that there is a level of uncertainty of the threat brought to an individual’s integrity. Participants assumed that they would be painted with labels such as “bad girl” or “corrupt girl”. However, none of the girls actually experienced this stigma of being labelled a “bad girl” given that they were not involved in deviant behaviour. For two participants who did admit to briefly being involved in some forms of deviance, their behaviour remained hidden. Therefore, the uncertainty of threat seemed to act as a greater source of control. The fear of punishment becomes more effective in controlling the participant.

Additionally, most participants felt that their integrity is more vulnerable compared to a male’s integrity. Though restrictions applied to both males and females, participants believed that females face greater consequences, including feelings of shame, guilt and gossip. The following statement provided by Hafsa is suggestive of this belief:

When guys do it (clubbing), it’s considered completely acceptable but if a girl does it, it’s like how could you, you’re such a bad girl.

According to the above statement, despite deviance being impermissible for either sex, participants felt that girls are more likely to be labelled for becoming involved in deviant behaviour.

Data analysis also reveals that participants may avoid involvement in deviant behaviour based on the perception that females are vulnerable beings. All participants expressed some understanding of the harm associated with deviant acts. For instance, Rabia stated:

well because usually when you go partying you get into influences that you probably shouldn’t be in. Obviously when you go partying you’re going to want to
dress really nicely, right. So you might not be wearing the most appropriate clothes, and then when other people are drinking you’re like oh hey why not. Personally I don’t drink but for other people they might end up drinking or trying different drugs, and then so many outcomes have come with girls end up getting raped, or you know people get into a fight, someone gets hurt.

Similarly, Farah associated alcohol consumption with being sexually assaulted. Farah stated:

*um well, to drinking I know, she’s (mother) like, you’re going to knock out and no one is going to take care of you, and despite the religious fact there is this factor too, like health issues and stuff, and I need to always trust people when I am getting drunk. I have heard of people just raping other people just because they are drunk and stuff, just taking benefits of your senseless mind or delusional mind.*

In both Rabia’s and Farah’s statements, alcohol consumption is understood as being used in an excessive manner. In this case participants are strongly advised to avoid alcohol, because of the potential danger it poses. The data suggests that parents use this perception of vulnerability to communicate to participants that it is in their self-interest to avoid such deviant behaviour.

The fear of pregnancy was also discussed as a potential risk to participants integrity. Participants discussed that socializing with the opposite sex or dating, is often viewed as a threat to their sexuality. For example, Farah discussed the fear of pregnancy below:

*I would say physically getting involved with someone is what they’re scared of. Like I remember before I had a boyfriend my grand mom always use to tell me you’re having a boyfriend means you have to give up your body to that guy blah blah blah, and I’m like what the hell what is she talking about. But it’s just like ummm, yeah she’s basically mean that I love you doesn’t really mean I love you here it means let’s just go have sex, so that part of it they are scared. What if a*
mistake turns into be... you know leads to a point where you are pregnant. And yeah

Though this did not pose any direct harm to the individual, it did threaten their integrity, as well as the integrity of the family. For example, Asma explained:

so coming from a females point of view I think that if someone were to commit that (pre-marital sex), and then their parents let’s say for example find out, and went to the community, it’s something to be known, I would think it would bring a lot of shame to that person’s family to know that you know your daughter has been doing something like this, it would kind of like deter her any future possible marriages, everyone would just see her in a really bad way.

She went on to explain:

...like you know a female loses her virginity, but a male they are not going to lose their virginity, kind of thing.

Supported by previous studies (Innes, 2003; Durham, 2004; Handa, 2003; Abraham, 2001; Hutter & Williams, 1981; Dasgupta & Dasgupta, 1998; Hermansen & Khan, 2009; Werbner, 2007), the above testimonials illustrate much of the behaviours that are considered deviant for participants, had to do with their sexuality. Sexuality places these women in vulnerable positions, hence, the female body is seen as in need of control. For example, fear of being sexually assaulted and fear of engaging in pre-marital sex, are related to participants sexuality. Control of female behaviour is inherent through the control of their sexuality.

Given their vulnerable position participants, are seen as in need of protection. Participants expressed their understanding of parental restrictions, based on the fact that females experience greater risk of harm and need to be protected. For example, when asked the reasoning behind restrictions Sana stated:
it is a mixture um like culturally, because like, it’s not liked for the girl to be so liberal that her parents don’t have a handle on her kind of thing, she is supposed to be more obedient, and obey that perfect role of a good girl that stays home and doesn’t do anything, but also for protection based on the fact that they think that cause you’re a girl you won’t be able to protect yourself as much so it is not good to be out late, the right kind of crowd doesn’t go out late, and that kind of thing.

Similarly, Sadaf expressed:

my dad has always been pretty like protective of us, just – also because he has seen a lot being a cop, and he is just always so worried about us so I mean – my brothers I don’t see him calling and checking up on them as much as he calls us girls.

This perception of the vulnerable female is a common belief among all participants. For some, this perception may have generated from their experiences in their country of birth. For example, Farah, who was born in Bangladesh, described the lack of safety for women who want to go out in public. These findings are supported by Abraham (2001) and Yahyaoui et al., (2013), which found that sexuality is perceived as dangerous. While all participants described feeling a greater sense of security in Canada, they believed that women are vulnerable and in need of protection.

Belief in Islam

As previously discussed in chapter two of this study, Islam provides guidelines on what is permissible, and what behaviours are unacceptable within the religion. Observed through participants testimonials is the strong belief in Islam. Participants choice to curb behaviours normative to the dominant society rested in their devotion to Islam. For some participants strength in belief was expressed more as a spiritual connection to god, while others expressed their faith in commitment to Islamic requirements.
Almost all participants made reference to the importance of having a spiritual connection to god. Participants stated that being religious for them is more about their intentions, rather than having to follow the specific rules outlined by the religion. For instance, Rabia explained her love of Islam and what it teaches, but confessed her absence of practice in the following statement:

*Like I personally love my religion and I like what it is teaching, but at the same time I believe I have to pray and I have to wear a scarf and everything when I’m personally comfortable. Like I’m not gonna start wearing a scarf when I know I’m only going to wear it for a day or two, and then just take it off after…do you know what I mean?*

Nura also discussed her lack of practice, when asked if she considers herself religious:

*Somewhat, like even the belief- I don’t pray 5 times a day, because I don’t have the chance but when I have the chance I pray, so somewhat. But in my belief I’m really strong in my belief.*

Nura continued to explain that though she believes in the restrictions imposed by Islam, it is about her intentions first. Nura believes that the most important thing is that there is no intention of harm, and eventually practice of rituals, such as prayer, will follow.

Asma also expressed her strong belief through maintaining a connection to god spiritually, and added her willingness to abide by Islamic regulations. Her strength in faith is beyond maintaining a connection with god, and applying Islam as a way of life, as illustrated in her comment below:

*It has a lot to do with my beliefs and values, being a Muslim and I just value my religion a lot. I don’t even know how to explain it to you, how much I believe this is the one, true way of life, and whatever it requires of me I feel like there is no, nothing that can kind of surpass that or have a higher authority in saying, so if it says you know for example, this type of partying or this type of drinking, and*
behaving is like you know inappropriate you know, then that I just don’t- just totally avoid it.

Similarly, Sabah expressed her willingness to comply:

Well you should always follow what god has said for you to do, right, and that would like, bring you closer to him

The former testimonial by Asma illustrates that she could completely identify with her religion. Asma described Islam as a way of life rather than a constitution. Her compliance was further intensified when she explained that she did not need Islam to provide reasoning behind restrictions, rather she considers Islam a logical religion and understands restrictions are for her betterment. Similarly, Sabah’s statement reflects an understanding that following religious guidelines are in her best interest; reasoning is not necessarily needed.

Asma’s statement, similar to the testimonials of other participants, demonstrates how participants internalize moral values outlined to them by Islam, and tried to place them into practice. Even for those who were lethargic in practicing Islam, they critiqued themselves and acknowledged that they could be “better Muslims.” As Sadaf stated:

I am not like a perfect Muslim, and people think I am wearing a scarf, so when people come up to me or look up to me and they are asking me all these things I’m like uh I don’t know I can’t tell you, and I kind of feel bad because people assume I would know these things but I don’t.

Similarly, Rabia commented on her lack of practice:

I consider myself moderately religious, like I said, I don’t follow everything to the T, but yes, like my overall beliefs are what Islam believes and there are certain things that I don’t do or do because of my religion, but um I don’t follow every single thing.

Sana also stated:
I’m not religious to the extent to where I am satisfied with myself. I would like to pray more and do all that wonderful stuff but I don’t and that’s probably not a good thing but I don’t, you know what I mean. But if somebody asks me I can stand up and say I’m a proud Muslim like I’d fight for my religion no matter what and I believe in god.

The self-critique provided by participants further illustrate their internalization of religious belief. Participants were remorseful for their lack of practice, but expressed justification by stating their good intentions. The above testimonials and criticisms reconfirm participants firm belief in their religion.

Participants provided an explanation as to where their strength in belief stemmed from. Religion could be considered an ascribed status for participants; parents are the original source in instilling values of Islam into respondents. For example, Asma explained:

*I mean like for me my father is really religious so in that sense he’s instilled a lot of morals and values that I find really good within our religion.*

Sabah also stated that her father was her source of knowledge in the following statement:

*Well my dad would always like, when I was young he would tell me stories about the prophets and stuff and they taught me to read the Quran (religious text) when I was young*

Consistent with Alvarez-Rivera and Fox (2010), parents appeared to have a positive effect on some participants attachment to religion. The former statement suggests that being Muslim is accepted by Asma, as her attachment to Islam emanated from what she was told as a child. It could then be assumed that some participants may have obeyed restrictions because of what their parents expect of them religiously.

However, their individual strength in belief is reconfirmed as participants matured. For instance, participants were specifically questioned about whether they
follow Islam because they were born into it, or if they genuinely believe in Islamic teachings. All participants affirmed that they firmly believe in Islam. They confirmed that Islam was not only forced upon them, rather it was a chosen path. For example, Sadaf explained that they were raised as Muslims, and as her and her siblings grew older the practice of Islam became a choice. Sadaf explained that while her parents expected her and her sisters to wear the *hijab* (head scarf) it became a choice as they got older. After educating herself Sadaf chose to continue to wear the hijab as she grew, whereas her sister did not feel the same way. Sadaf’s feeling toward the *hijab* is expressed below:

*I think if I, if the scarf and hijab wasn’t in my life I probably would have gotten pregnant when I was younger or something, or like I didn’t know anything at that point.*

Similar sentiments were expressed by Sabah. As participants age they became more aware of Islamic values, and are able to make decisions on their own. For example, Sabah explained:

*well this year I actually rediscovered myself I guess you could say, and I was like reflecting about myself a lot -like during the summer – and like that’s when I um, actually began to feel more connected to Allah, and I don’t know I just felt really good, and just started wearing the hijab too.*

This illustration of individual choice further exemplifies participants strength in their religious belief. Their belief in these conventional values seems to further control the behaviour of participants. Belief in Islamic rules allowed participants to avoid acts prohibited by the religion.
Summary

The analysis of the data collected for this study indicates that the majority of the participants refrain from the aforementioned behaviours common among the youth of the dominant society. According to the participants here these behaviours include dating, alcohol consumption, attending nightclubs/going out, and pre-marital sex. Rather, there appears to be a strong presence of a South Asian identity in participants working to motivate conformity to traditional values. Through participants testimonials, it is evident that culture, religion, and gender are used informally as control mechanisms to limit their behaviour. In the following section of this thesis, these forms of control are explored deeper through the theoretical lens of social control.
Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusions

Canada’s major cities are becoming culturally plural where various cultures, religions, and beliefs encounter one another. In this context, immigrants are at risk of experiencing culture conflict where they simultaneously inherit the values of the dominant society and their ethnic communities. One of the largest ethnic groups in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2011), found to endure the effects of culture conflict are South Asians (Farver et al., 2002; Inman et al., 2001; Varghese & Jenkins, 2009; Khondaker, 2007). More specifically, females with a South Asian heritage are often expected to maintain traditional feminine roles that may be inconsistent with behaviour endorsed by mainstream society, creating experiences of culture conflict (Inman et al., 2001; Varghese & Jenkins, 2009; Dasgupta, 1998; Handa, 2003). Additionally, with a large number of South Asians identifying with the religion of Islam (Janhevich & Ibrahim, 2004), it is necessary to explore the role that religion plays in culture conflict. As the data here indicates, a number of important values to Islam are threatened by the norms of the dominant society.

There are a number of factors shaping the experiences of South Asian Muslim females. Many women identifying themselves as South Asian Muslims are consistently reminded through media and public attention that they are of a foreign culture, which can function as a source of assimilation (Dustin and Phillips, 2008; Razack, 2004; Hermansen & Khan, 2009; Van Der Veer, 2004; Werbner, 2007). However, many South Asian Muslim females are simultaneously affected by their SAMC. Within their SAMC they are often socialized into traditional values to maintain a South Asian and Muslim identity. Consequently, women of this cultural community are placed in a liminal position, where
they are unable to fully identify with the South Asian Muslim community or the dominant society.

Expanding on previous research, this qualitative study sought to explore how the issue of belonging might be tied to culturally deviant behaviour. In other words, do young adults, specifically females from SAMC’s engage in culturally deviant behaviour to negotiate a sense of belonging within the dominant society? While South Asian research has increased, the current study expands on the existing research to understand how gender (females), religion (Islam), and culture contribute to understanding this issue.

In this chapter, I discuss the results of this study in relation to social control and deviance. However, it is important to remember that the findings here cannot be generalized to the entire South Asian Muslim population. I begin by explaining how participants see themselves in relation to others. This section provides a foundation in understanding how order is maintained within some SAMC’s. Next, I describe culturally deviant behaviour, and discuss conformity to conventional South Asian Muslim norms. Here, I discuss how culture, religion, and gender shape participants behaviour. Though culture, religion, and gender are used to explain participants conformity to traditional South Asian Muslim values, I briefly discuss Hirschi’s (2002) theory of social bond to assist in illustrating the multiple layers of social control in this study. Finally, I conclude this discussion by addressing the limitations of the present study and present a synthesis of the findings.
Prioritizing a South Asian Identity

The findings from this study confirm previous scholarship suggesting that many South Asian Muslims in North America learn to negotiate between various identities (Dwyer, 2000; Farver et al. 2002; Handa, 2003; Shariff, 2008; Ali, 2008; Bhatia, 2002). Supported by Hermansen and Khan (2009), participants described being positioned to negotiate between a South Asian/Muslim and Canadian identities. For instance, participants described themselves as Canadian because of their acceptance of some mainstream values. In comparison to “other” South Asian Muslims, they label themselves as liberal. Each participant noted something about themselves that they feel reflects a Canadian identity, usually referring to liberalism, tolerance, and open-mindedness. This internalization of a Canadian identity illustrate participants desire to identify with the dominant society. Though participants expressed tolerance toward mainstream values, the reluctance to engage in culturally deviant behaviour by the majority of participants reveals a South Asian Muslim identity. Indeed, the results here indicate that attachment to participants ethnic and religious identity is particularly salient.

Participants South Asian Muslim identity may take priority for two reasons. As indicated earlier, the South Asian population in Canada has increased (Statistics Canada, 2011). Such an increase may contribute to the development of a SAMC, as suggested in Williams (2011). The emergence of SAMC’s in Canada is illustrated through participants testimonials. Participants are able to identify with other South Asians through their schools, community, and peer groups. Thus, socializing with family members and peers with similar identities provides a network where identifying with the heritage culture and maintaining tradition becomes easier, as confirmed in Naidoo (2003).
Additionally, as Wardak (2000) suggests, the experience of exclusion, otherness, and discriminatory practices inflicted by the dominant society, may cause participants to identify with other South Asian Muslims. Though participants considered themselves Canadian within some dimensions, they described experiences of discrimination and othering. Perhaps identifying with their traditional culture provides a greater sense of belonging, empowering participants to resist negative experiences of conflicting cultures. Identifying with their SAMC seems to provide a network of social relationships working to promote the maintenance of traditional values.

**Deviance**

Despite participants feelings of exclusion, the results of this study indicate that the experience of living in-between cultures did not result in the violation of cultural norms. The majority of participants avoided engagement in culturally deviant behaviours. Consistent with previous literature (Ali, 2008; Khondaker, 2007; Dasgupta, 1998; Handa, 2003; Hermansen & Khan, 2009), participants described a number of behaviours they feel are normative to many youth within the dominant society but commonly opposed by their SAMC. In this thesis, deviance is categorized as dating, alcohol consumption, attending night clubs/going out, and pre-marital sex. Participants asserted that restrictions against culturally deviant behaviours emanated from gendered, religious, and cultural guidelines. Interpretations of religion, culture, and gender intersect to guide participants understanding of what it meant to be a “good” South Asian Muslim female. The data here suggests that interpretations of religion, culture, and gender are used to control participants behaviour.
Social Control

Consistent with social control theories (Hirschi, 2002; Vold, Bernard, & Snipes, 2002; Traub & Little, 1999; Janowitz, 1975; Tittle & Paternoster, 2000), participants testimonials did not indicate why participants may deviate; rather the focus was on what kept participants from deviating. Control theory assumes that humans are naturally deviant beings. Subsequently, the concern of control theorists is what motivates conformity (Hirschi, 2002)? Perhaps the most widely discussed theorist that has addressed this concern is Travis Hirschi (2002). Hirschi introduced his theory of social control in 1969, stressing that individuals conform based on their attachments and investments in society (Hirschi, 2002). The thought that social relationships bind a person thereby decreasing the motive to deviate has remained consistent among the theory’s scholars (Tittle & Paternoster, 2000; Britt & Gottfredson, 2003; Hirschi, 2002; Nye, 1958; Durkheim, 1973; Reckless, 1962; Reiss, 1951). Synthesis of the literature suggests that some of the most important relationships to societal institutions include family and communities, containing churches, peers, and schools (Hirschi, 2002; Reckless, 1961; Reiss, 1951; Nye; 1958; Tittle & Paternoster, 2000). Similarly, the findings here suggest that participants families and SAMC play a dominant role in their resistance to culturally deviant behaviour.

In this study, the influence of family and the community can be understood through interpretations of culture and religion. Indeed, culture, religion, and gender are found to be sources of informal social control in this research. Granted, there are also resemblances to Hirschi’s (2002) idea of social control which can be used to help understand the role of culture, religion, and gender in participants lives. Like Hirschi’s
(2002) theory of social bond, the participants here discuss avoiding deviance based on familial and communal ties².

**Parent-Participant relationships.** The findings in this study indicate that culture and religion help shape the interaction between participants and parents. Consistent with previous literature (Maiter & George, 2003; Inman et al., 2001; Hermansen & Khan, 2009; Dasgupta, 1998; Mohammad-Arif, 2000; Peek, 2005; Maiter & George, 2003), culture and religion are used as mediums to communicate to participants that parent’s should be obeyed and respected. Participants explained that treating their parents with respect is recommended in Islam, and regardless of religious guidelines, respect for elders is reinforced through South Asian culture. Compliance with conventional South Asian Muslim female behaviour appears to be a symbol of respect that participants hold for parents.

Related to Hirschi’s (2002) theory of social bond, participants also described obeying parental restrictions because of their emotional ties. The affection participants had for their parents can be understood through their testimonials. To illustrate, participants expressed appreciation for the sacrifices their parents made upon migrating to Canada. Participants feel that they are obliged to be obedient for the opportunities their parents provided them with by immigrating to Canada. Moreover, participants described resisting deviance to avoid consequences of disappointment, shame, and isolation thereby resisting deviance. Participants expressed that by disappointing their parents, they risk being isolated physically or mentally from parents. This fear of disappointing or hurting

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² Hirschi’s theory includes four elements of social bond: attachment (emotional bond to parents and community), commitment (to conventional behaviour), involvement (in conventional activities) and belief (in conventional values). The weaker an individual’s bond is, the more likely they will become delinquent (Hirschi, 2002).
parents seem to have an indirect control over participants' behaviour. Though the physical presence of parents may be absent, participants were concerned about how their parents would react to their involvement in deviance. As stated in Hirschi (2002), those who are considerate towards their parents become sensitive to their parent’s opinions. Similar to the conclusions drawn by Sevensson (2004), Sullivan (2006), Hirschi (2002) and Jang (2002), the findings here indicate that participants' relationship with their parents mitigated engagement in culturally deviant behaviour.

Transmission of Islam. Analysis of the data here suggests that religion also plays an important role in deterring deviance. Despite conflicting values between Islam and the dominant society (Ali, 2008; Mohammad-Arif, 2000), most participants expressed a strong belief in Islamic teachings and practices. Supported by Hirschi (2002), participants' belief in Islam shapes their perceptions of right and wrong. Granted, participants in this study internalized and obeyed restrictions prescribed by Islam.

The obedience and love towards parents appears to play a role in how Islamic values are internalized by participants. Supported by Alvarez-Rivera and Fox (2010), attachment to parents seems to encourage participants' belief in Islamic values. For instance, it was asserted by some participants that their fathers nurtured their knowledge of Islam at an early age. As indicated in previous studies, parents become the primary socializer into religious values (Peak, 2005; Hickey, 2004; Wardak, 2000; Scourfield, Taylor, Moore, & Gilliat-Ray, 2012; Alvarez-Rivera & Fox, 2010). Similarly, Hirschi (2002) suggests that a child will accept parental guidance and restrictions as long as they respect their parents. Consistent with Peak (2005), although participants were ascribed a religious status at an early age they eventually begin to self-identify with Islam over time.
Participants inherent belief in Islamic ruling is observed through their spiritual connection to god, as well as the practice of religion. Participants love for Islam was first understood through “good intentions”. Participants who confessed to defying some Islamic requirements, expressed their desire to improve. Furthermore, many participants demonstrated remorse and guilt for being lethargic in religious practice. Participants expressed future goals of gaining a richer religious identity. For instance, some participants stated their desire to start wearing the *hijab* (head scarf) and dressing modestly. These feelings of guilt and remorse illustrate participants belief in Islamic teachings. Though participants overlooked some Islamic requirements, they believed in the religion’s guidance.

The data here also suggests that Islam is viewed as a way of life by some participants. Participants avoided deviant behaviour because they believed Islam restricts these behaviours in human interest. Participants stated that regulation of deviant behaviours from an Islamic perspective is to protect individuals from harm. Therefore, Islam is not seen as a constitution, rather Islamic rules are considered a guideline for a good life and central to the maintenance of social order. All sentiments toward religion represented a positive attitude. As previous research concludes (Wardak, 2000; Yahyaoui et al., 2013, Inman, 2006), Islam here is found to be an effective source of control that limits participants involvement in deviant behaviours.

**Collective Identity.** Participants also described how culture and gender affect their behaviour. As mentioned in chapter two, many South Asians value the collective identity (Dasgupta, 1998; Farver et al., 2003; Varghese & Jenkins, 2009’ Hickey, 2004; Inman et al., 2001; Suzuki & Greenfield, 2002; Maiter & George, 2003; Roy, 1998;
Wardak, 2000; Hermansen & Khan, 2009). Similarly, the participants here described their relationships with extended family, friends, and community members. Participants appreciated this connection at times, but viewed the network negatively when the community becomes as a source of control. In addition to being sensitive to parental opinions, participants seem to be concerned about the opinion of other members within their SAMC, including extended family and friends. Supported by Hirschi (2002), participants bond to other SAMC members seems to create a network of acquaintances that works to aid in regulating and monitoring their behaviour.

**Shame and Honour.** Supported by Toor (2009), Gilbert et al., (2004), Wardak (2000), Gill (2004), Varghese and Jenkins (2009), and Roy (1998), shame and honour are situated within this collective identity. Being placed in geographical space with other members of their SAMC requires maintaining honourable reputations at times. According to participants, engagement in deviance would pose a threat to the honour of the entire family. To avoid disappointment and hurting the family, participants choose to circumvent deviant behaviours. Participants explained that parents would be labelled as inadequate and unfit in raising proper South Asian Muslim children, by some community members, as children are considered a reflection of their parents. To protect parents from being judged, participants conformed to important cultural values. The data presented in this study reflects the existing scholarship highlighting the tendency of many Asian’s to self-sacrifice in the interest of family (Suzuki & Greenfield, 2002). Thus, consistent with Kim and Markus (1999), Simons et al., (2005), and Wardak (2000), this collective culture, or as Hirschi (2002) described, the bond to the community, functions as a source of control, discouraging deviant behaviour.
For South Asian Muslim females, a respectable status is closely linked to shame and honour. As discussed in chapter two of this study, honour for South Asian females include modesty, shame, and avoidance of behaviours that might threaten family integrity. Therefore, women are expected to maintain femininity. A common belief is that South Asian Muslim women should be maternal, accommodating, self-effacing, serving, kind, chaste, and should be brought up to be a ‘good woman’ dedicated to her family (Roy, 1998). According to participants, females who are not committed to this feminine role ran the risk of being stigmatized, having their family stigmatized and being placed in sexually vulnerable positions -sexual vulnerability here is described by participants as physical and emotional harm resulting from deviance. Multiple participants also mentioned the fear of becoming pregnant from behaviours such as dating and pre-marital sex. The findings here suggest that participants conformed to conventional lines of action to maintain a respectable status within their SAMC. For the participants in this study, the threat posed to themselves and their families is not worth the temporary satisfaction of the deviant act. As suggested by Hirschi (2002), individuals are committed to conventional behaviour when there is a risk of losing something of importance. Therefore, fear of stigma and sexual vulnerability acts as direct sources of control over participants behaviour.

**Gender Inequalities.** In this study, commitment to a feminine role may be partly a patriarchal influence. Consistent with existing literature (Hagan et al., 1979; Bolognani, 2009; Toor, 2009), participants in this study feel that they are held to different standards than males with respect to deviant behaviours. Supported by Yahyaoui et al. (2013), participants felt that they are subjected to greater parental control, and assume that the
consequences would be harsher for females, though restrictions applied to both sexes. For example, stigma and fear of vulnerability are consequences described by participants used to control behaviour and place women in subordinate positions. The participants felt that males on the other hand would be free of judgement and are secure from harm if they are to engage in deviant behaviour. Thus, the female body specifically becomes the site of control.

Engagement in Deviance

Though the majority of participants stated their resistance to deviant behaviours, there were a few violations of traditional behaviours that should be briefly considered. For instance, three of the participants mentioned attending a night club. However, two of these participants discussed the importance of keeping this behaviour hidden from their parents. This effort to conceal their behaviour reinforces Hirschi’s (2002), idea that individuals are sensitive to the opinion of their parents. However, unlike the other six participants, the absence of parental presence may have played a role in their willingness to attend a night club. Nevertheless, the majority of participants refrained from attending night clubs.

Additionally, only Nura advised that she had consumed alcohol and engaged in pre-marital sex, behaviours that were perceived as “big no’s” by their SAMC. However, Nura’s testimonial reinforces the earlier mentioned findings of this study. Unlike the other participants, Nura described a more physically and emotionally distant relationship with her mother specifically. She advised that she never saw much of her mother growing up, and after moving to Canada her relationship with her mother reflected a friendship.
Nura’s engagement in deviance therefore reinforces the role that strong parental bonds play in limiting deviant behaviour (Hirschi, 2002).

**Limitations and Recommendations for future research**

Though many of the findings here are supported by existing scholarship, there are several limitations that should be addressed. This study contained a relatively small sample size. There are only eight self-identified South Asian Muslim female participants, limiting the generalizability of the study. However, based on the semi-structured nature of the interviews, participants were able to provide detailed and meaningful responses, bringing forth their voices. Participants were asked open ended questions and were allowed to expand on their responses. Perhaps, to expand and strengthen the conclusions drawn from this study, future studies should consider using a larger sample size.

Though the sample here was small, it included a diverse representation of South Asians. Participants are representative of four South Asian countries. While this study focuses on South Asian Muslims, Muslims are a heterogeneous group of people in themselves, represented by various ethnic origins, languages, and sects (Ammar et al., 2013). As the findings here suggest, experiences are shaped by multiple identities. With such diversity, the findings in this study cannot be generalizable to all Muslims or all South Asian Muslims. It would be useful for future studies to explore this diversity and how various sects and ethnic origins might influence the findings here.

As noted earlier, I share the same religion, gender, and generation status as most of the participants in this study. I am aware that participants may have been resistant in their responses to the proposed interview questions. As the results of this study suggest,
these participants are from collective cultures, valuing the opinion of others. Therefore, participants may have been hesitant in providing their experiences in fear of my judgement. Furthermore, I recognize that my own personal bias may have been interjected into the analysis process. However, I tried to use my experiences as a second generation female Muslim immigrant to help understand participant testimonials rather than apply my experiences.

Moreover, the results from this study conclude that the female participants perceive males to be held to different standards. To clarify, males are free from the same direct sources of control as the female participants. To determine the strength of this claim, it would be necessary to include male participants from SAMC’s to conduct a comparative analysis. This study did not intend to interview male participants. However, when participants began to discuss their perceptions of double standards I realized that it would have been useful to conduct a comparative analysis. Future research can include both male and female participants which would allow the researcher to examine a gendered approach to forms of control.

The participant selection criterion in this study was originally geared to second generation immigrants. However, given the lack of response, I decided to expand my study to include first generation immigrants. Thus, I did not separate my findings based on generation status. Indeed, findings may vary based on the segregation of first, second and third generation status immigrants. With the emergence of a South Asian Muslim population, third generation immigrants may become increasingly visible within society. Therefore, there is value in determining if the findings from this study hold true for future generations. Additionally, the average age of participants was 21, with each participant
being currently enrolled in university. However, as Mohammad-Arif (2000), Peek (2005) and Ali (2008), explain the experiences of culture conflict changes over multiple live stages. Thus, interviewing younger youth may have produced different results. Future studies might consider including a broader age group in their sample selection.

Summary

Despite the limitations mentioned here, the results from this study yield several conclusions. Consistent with previous research (Hutter & Williams, 1981; Tittle & Paternoster, 2000), the findings here suggest that South Asian Muslim’s perceptions of female deviance vary from that of the dominant society. Supported by Dwyer (2000), Dasgupta (1998), Varghese and Jenkins (2009), Hickey (2004), Abraham (2001), Durham (2004), Ali (2008), Handa (2006), and Quraishi (2005), dating, pre-marital sex, and alcohol consumption, all acceptable coming of age behaviours within the dominant society are confirmed as unconventional South Asian Muslim female behaviour by the participants in this study.

Regardless of the conflicting values surrounding pre-marital sex, alcohol consumption, dating, and attending nightclubs/social outings, the findings here indicate that the majority of participants avoid culturally deviant behaviour to meet the traditional expectations of South Asian Muslim females. It can be assumed that identifying with religious, cultural, and gendered values provides a greater sense of belonging for participants within their SAMC’s. As Wardak (2000) suggests, the connection of South Asian Muslims to their cultural communities may allow participants to overcome experiences of racialization and discrimination. Therefore, the challenge of belonging can
be reduced by identifying with members who share similar experiences. Similarly, with a growing South Asian and Muslim population in Canada, identifying with others who share cultural values becomes easier. Consistent with earlier research on South Asians (Zine, 2009; Hermansen & Khan, 2009), religion, culture, and gender informed the lives of the participants in this study. Indeed, they intersect to govern and guide the lives of these participants. The findings here indicate that interpretations of religion, culture, and gender are inherent to the conformity of traditional values and deter culturally deviant behaviour.

However, social control is revealed through multiple layers in this study. It is important to unravel these layers of control to understand how behaviour is dictated. For the participants in this study their experiences are shaped by multiple characteristics. To summarize, strong parental bonds, which appear to be motivated by culture, religion, and affection, seem to play the principal role in deterring deviance. Similar to Hirschi (2002), this parental attachment initiated participants belief in Islamic values, which they later internalized. Here, religious beliefs and parental bonds appear to work together to deter deviant behaviour. Furthermore, the attachment to parents and other members of participants SAMC encouraged commitment to traditional values. The collective culture reinforced the importance of maintaining a respectable status for the sake of one’s family as well as themselves. In attempt to maintain a respectable feminine status in the interest of the family and the self, participants avoided deviance. Thus, there is no single avenue to understanding the role informal methods of social control play in the lives of these participants. Rather, it is the intersection of these sources of control which seem to govern participants behaviour.
Research examining the relationship between acculturation and delinquency should move beyond a narrow interpretation of culture conflict and consider the multiple avenues that inform the lives of immigrant youth. The findings from this study suggest that other factors such as religion and gender should be considered in the aforementioned body of knowledge. Similarly, research focusing on the social control of female youth from minority groups, need to also consider the intersections of culture and religion. Furthermore, the findings here might be a resource in understanding the absence of South Asian Muslim women in the mainstream justice system according to Toor (2009). With the an emerging South Asian Muslim population and expanding academic interest, the findings here can be considered and applied to future studies focusing on this population. Additionally, policy makers and other stakeholders can consider and incorporate cultural, religious, and gendered differences in their practises.
References

Abraham, L. (2001). Redrawing the Laskshman Rekha: Gender differences and cultural constructions in youth sexuality in urban India. *South Asia, 24*(1), 133-156.


Appendix A: Research Ethics Board Approval

Date: October 24th, 2012
To: Anisah Hussain (PI), Shahid Alvi (Supervisor)
From: Amy Leach, REB Chair
REB File #: 12-024
Project Title: the Labeling and Criminalization of Female Behaviour within the South Asian Muslim community: an Exploratory Study
DECISION: APPROVED
START DATE: October 24th, 2012 EXPIRY: October 24th, 2013

The University Of Ontario Institute Of Technology Research Ethics Board has reviewed and approved the above research proposal. The application in support of the above research project has been reviewed by the Research Ethics Board to ensure compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2) and the UOIT Research Ethics Policy and Procedures.

Please note that the Research Ethics Board (REB) requires that you adhere to the protocol as last reviewed and approved by the REB.

Always quote your REB file number on all future correspondence.

Please familiarize yourself with the following forms as they may become of use to you.

- Change Request Form: any changes or modifications (i.e. adding a Co-PI or a change in methodology) must be approved by the REB through the completion of a change request form before implemented.

- Adverse or unexpected Events Form: events must be reported to the REB within 72 hours after the event occurred with an indication of how these events affect (in the view of the Principal Investigator) the safety of the participants and the continuation of the protocol. (I.e. un-anticipated or un-mitigated physical, social or psychological harm to a participant).

- Research Project Completion Form: must be completed when the research study has completed.

- Renewal Request Form: any project that exceeds the original approval period must receive approval by the REB through the completion of a Renewal Request Form before the expiry date has passed.

All Forms can be found at http://research.uoit.ca/EN/main/231307/Research_Forms.html

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REB Chair</th>
<th>Ethics and Compliance Officer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Amy Leach, SSH <a href="mailto:amy.leach@uoit.ca">amy.leach@uoit.ca</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:compliance@uoit.ca">compliance@uoit.ca</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

University of Ontario, Institute of Technology
2000 Simcoe Street North, Oshawa ON, L1H 7K4
PHONE: (905) 721-3668, ext. 3693
Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

The purpose of this interview is to explore what the South Asian Muslim community views as unacceptable behaviour, and to determine if young adults violate cultural norms as a way of dealing with the challenges faced by adapting to a Canadian society. The study further examines the stigmatization of Muslim female behaviour as a reaction to those who fail to adhere to appropriate gender roles. The questions in this interview are created to determine and understand what is deemed as appropriate behaviour in a cultural and religious context. This interview should last between 1-2 hours.

There are no physical, social, or economic risks associated with this study. However, emotional stress may be experienced as a response to sensitive questions. These questions may include issues of gender bias, parental conflict, or stigmatization of an individual character. Your participation in this interview is voluntary. You do not have to participate in this study if you do not want to. You may choose to withdraw from the interview at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study there will be no consequences. You do not have to answer any question that you do not want to. Upon completion of this study your name will be entered into a draw for a prize of a 100 dollar gift card. Your name will be entered whether you complete the interview or not.

The information recorded from this interview will be coded and stored in a locked safe. Only the researcher and her supervisor will have access to this information. Your name and any identifying information will not be attached to your answers. No one will be able to attach your name to this study, nor will they ever know what you said. All information attained from this interview is confidential and will not be released.

The main researcher of this interview is Anisah Hussain, and her supervisor is Dr. Shahid Alvi. If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints you may contact Anisah Hussain via email: Anisah.hussain@uoit.ca

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Board, University of Ontario Institute of Technology, file number 12-024. Should you have any further concerns or questions regarding your rights as a participant please direct your inquiries to the Ethics and Compliance officer at compliance@uoit.ca, quoting file number 12-024. Please be reminded that as a participant in this study you are not waiving any of your legal rights.
I have read and understood the information presented in this form about the research being conducted by Anisah Hussain at the University Of Ontario Institute Of Technology. All my questions have been answered, and I consent to participation in this study.

Name (Please Print): __________________________ Date: __________________________

Signature: __________________________

_________________________
Appendix C: Verbal Consent

The purpose of this interview is to explore culturally deviant behaviour within the South Asian Muslim community and determine whether it is a response to the challenges of adapting to Canadian society. I also seek to understand the reaction to culturally deviant behaviour, looking at the labelling and stigmatization of females.

To ensure that I understand your words correctly, I would like to record the interview. Your name or any other identifying information will not be attached to your answers, so no one will know what you said. Only my supervisor and I will have access to this audio recording. Recordings will be stored under lock and key. For the purposes of my thesis, direct quotes may be used when presenting the findings, however again there will be no identifying information attached to your quote; rather I will use false names. If you request it, I will provide a copy of my thesis to you.

Given the topic of discussion, culturally deviant behaviour of South Asian females, if you are uncomfortable with any question, you have the right to refuse to answer. You may also choose to end the interview at any point, without consequence. You may also refuse to answer a question but continue to participate in the study. If you decide to withdraw from this study this audio recording will be erased and destroyed.

Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin?

Before we begin, would you confirm that you have understood what I have discussed with you and would like to voluntarily continue with the interview?
Appendix D: Interview Guide

Background Information

How old are you?

Were you born in Canada?
  • If you were not born in Canada how old were you when you came to Canada?

Where in Canada do you currently live?

When did you parents/ family immigrate to Canada?

What South Asian Country did your parents/family migrate from?
  • Was there a smaller village/city your parents came from? Can you describe the village/ city?

Identity

How do you identify yourself?
  • In regards to National Identity (Canadian/ South Asian/ both)?
  • What is Canadian about you?
  • What is South Asian about you?

What is your religion/ faith?
  • Do you believe in your religion?
  • Do you just follow it because you were born into it?

What does it mean to be religious?
  • Ex. Mosque, prayer, dress code, morals, belief in god etc?
  • Are you religious?
  • What does religion mean to you?
  • Does religion shape the way you live your life and the decisions you make in life?

Who do you live with?
  • Mom/dad
  • Grandparents
  • Extended family
• Siblings
• Who were you raised by?

Are you part of a large family?

Tell me a little about yourself?

• Hobbies, siblings, friends, family?

**Sense of Belonging**

**Discrimination**

What comes to mind when you think of the word Canadian?

• Culture, lifestyle, weather etc? Anything you can think of
• Do you think you fit into that definition? Why or why not?
• Are you proud to be Canadian?

Do you consider Canada a multicultural society?

• If so how?
• If not why?
• Do you think you or your family can practice their beliefs to the full extent? (Can they dress the way they want, say the things they want, go to religious outings freely?)

Do you think the media/government/dominant society, accurately portrays your religion or culture to the rest of society?

• Ex. Do you think the media makes women appear to be submissive in Islam? Do you think this is true?
• Does the media accurately portray issues of forced marriages, honour crimes, or Muslim dress? Again is the portrayal accurate?

As a woman do you ever feel oppressed?

• By whom?
• Give me an example where you felt you were disadvantaged because you were a woman?

Do you ever feel disadvantaged being South Asian and Muslim in Canada?

• By whom?
• Can you give me an example?
Are you ever embarrassed or ashamed by your culture/religion?

- Give an example when?
- Do you like explaining cultural/religious rituals or do you prefer to keep quite?

Do you ever feel the need to conceal your cultural/religious identity?

- If so on what occasions? (when/ where)
- Why do you conceal it?
- Do you think by concealing your religion/culture it could be advantageous to you? How?

Do you ever feel different?

- Different from the norm?
- What makes you different?
- How do you notice these differences?
- Do you ever feel like you do not belong? When? Why?

Where do you fit in more, South Asian community or Canadian community?

When people ask you, what are you, how do you respond?

- Are you ever offended by this question?

Who are your peer groups made up of? Who do you socialize with?

- For example: Male/ Female
- South Asians/other
- Muslims/other

How do your peers identify you?

- Gender
- Culture
- Religion
- Status in school?

How influential are your peers?

- Do you ever feel pressured by your peers, or the people you interact with on a daily basis, to engage in behaviours that your family disapproves of?
- Ex. Clubbing, Drinking, Dating - What are the behaviours?
• By whom do you feel pressured by, and how?
• Do you ever feel that if you do not engage in these social activities, you will not be recognized by your social circle?

By engaging in these behaviours do you think you lose some of your cultural or religious beliefs?

• What do you lose?
• Do you break cultural norms or expectations to fit in?

Are you different at school than at home?

• If so how?
• Dress, behaviour, etc?

Were you different in high school than University?

• If so how?

Now that you are in University are you more social?

• Do you live on campus?
• Do you attend University parties?
• Now that you are of age to drink, do you drink?
• Who do you socialize with on campus?
• Are you part of any groups/clubs?

Deviance

What behaviours of young adult females are common in Canadian society but unacceptable in the South Asian Muslim community?

• What is defined as deviant in the South Asian Muslim community?
• Coming of age behaviours, drinking, partying, dating etc.
• Do you consider these behaviours normative to the Canadian society?

How does the South Asian community view the following behaviours?

• Dancing/ Clubbing
• Alcohol consumption
• Dating, (having a boyfriend/girlfriend)
• Sex before marriage
• What are opinions of dress code?

Why do you think these behaviours are restricted?
• Do you see anything wrong with these behaviours?
• If so what?
• Are these behaviours only restrictive of females?
• Why?

Do you think it is difficult to refrain from engaging in these behaviours in Canada?
• Why or why not?

Do you engage in any of the mentioned behaviours?
• If so why?
• What is the purpose for engaging in these behaviours?
• How do you feel about engaging in these behaviours? (bad, don’t care, free?)

Have you dated?
• When did you start dating?
• Do your parents know?

Have you consumed alcohol?
• When did you start?
• Do your parents know?

Do you go out at night/with friends/clubbing?
• When did you start?
• Do you parents know?
• Who do you go with?

Have you engaged in pre-marital sex?
• Do you parents know?

What does it mean to behave like a girl or in a feminine manner to you?

**Impact of Culture and Religion**

What are the religious/cultural expectations of the previous behaviours?
• Dress code
• Alcohol consumption
• Partying
• Dating
Are these just religious restrictions or is this further influenced by culture?

- What is the difference between culture and religion with respect to these restrictions?

**Intergenerational Conflict**

What is it like in your house?

Do you argue a lot with your parents?

- What topics do you most frequently argue about?

Do you find it difficult to discuss your feelings about deviant behaviour with your parents?

- Why? or Why not?

Do both of your parents hold the same views on what is expected of you?

- Does your father and mother agree with restrictions? What are they?
- What do they agree on?
- What do they disagree on?

What is expected of you regarding dating, sex before marriage, drinking, etc?

What role does your neighbours, ethnic community, and extended family play in monitoring your behaviour?

- Are you only answerable to your parents or extended family as well?
- Why?
- Which other family members influence how your behaviour is controlled?
- How do they influence this control?

If an extended family member witnesses your engagement in a restricted behaviour, what would be the consequence?

Who holds more authority over you, mother, father, siblings or other family?

- Who are you more fearful of, parental authority or law enforcement?

Do you think your parents policing you is a good thing?

- For example does it keep you out of trouble?
Do your parents give you a reason as to why certain behaviours are restricted?

- What are the reasons?
- Ex. Religion
- Do you agree with the reasons?

How do your parents view these behaviours? Do you agree with your parents views?

- Do you think your parents prevent you from being “bad” or push you towards it?

What are the consequences of engaging in these behaviours?

- From your parents
- South Asian Muslim community
- Society as a whole

How severe would you say are the consequences of your actions, if you violate cultural norms?

- Physical
- Mental
- If your parents caught you kissing an intimate partner in public how would they react?

What are the consequences if the public/community becomes aware of your behaviour?

- Do you parents prefer that the extended community to be unaware of your actions?
- Do you think your consequences are greater if the community is aware?
- Ex. If a member from South Asian community, or mosque witnesses you consuming alcohol at a local restaurant what would be the reaction? Does it become known to your parents?

Are you ever made to feel ashamed of your behaviour?

- How?
- Is your family ever ashamed of your behaviour?
- How does your behaviour impact your family?

What role does shame and honour play in your life?

- Does it prevent you from engaging in disorderly behaviour?
- Is it relevant within your family/community?

Do you think shame poses a problem for South Asian Muslim women?
• How?
If you do bring shame to your family, what are some typical consequences?
  • Punishment – mental/physical
If you engage in disorderly behaviours, would your parents try to “help” you or provide treatment?
  • If so how is this done?
  • If not why?
At what age in your life were restrictions imposed?

Patriarchy
How would you define being a “good Muslim girl?”
What are some traditional gender roles expected of South Asian Muslim females?
  • Do you ever feel pressured into these roles?
  • What are typical expectations of women in terms of marriage, school, familial responsibility?
What is your role as a female (daughter), young adult within your family?
  • What expectations do your parents/family members have of you?
  • What are your responsibilities?
  • What behaviours are you expected to uphold?
Is your behaviour monitored?
  • By whom?
Are males allowed to engage in disorderly behaviours that females are forbidden?
Do you think that the same consequences that exist for females, engaging in the previously mentioned behaviours, are the same for males?
  • Are males held to a different standard?
Is the punishment for females worse than the punishment for males?
  • How do you feel about this?
Who has more freedom within a South Asian Muslim household? Son or Daughter?
• How do you feel about this?

Who is more attached to the family, you or your brother?

Do you think your parents are just protecting you when restrictions are imposed?
  • For example, do you think girls are more vulnerable than males?
Appendix E: Thank You Letter

I would like to take this time to thank you for your time and participation in this study, and remind you that the information you have provided will remain confidential. If you feel uncomfortable with the use of your data for this study, please notify me (Anisah Hussain) as soon as possible and your data will be destroyed. If you have any additional questions, concerns, or complaints, please feel free to contact me.

Your name has been entered in a draw for a 100 dollar gift card. If you are the prize winner you will be contacted to pick up your prize. Upon completion of the study you will also be provided with a copy of this thesis if requested. Once again I would like to extend my gratitude for your time.

Thank you,

Anisah Hussain
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