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GRUNGEWAVE: THE AUTHENTICITY OF NEO-TRIBES

BY

ELIZABETH BEASLEY

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OF

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ABSTRACT

Neo-tribes are characterized by fragmented identities, noncommittal

membership, fascination with style and image, and social connections between

members. They are often confused with subcultures due to sharing characteristics with

subcultures. This has resulted in the authenticity of neo-tribes to be questioned. The

confusion between neo-tribes and subcultures could be from the lack of detailed study

on the use of apparel and style in neo-tribe identity. Previous studies on neo-tribes

have incorporated the visual of apparel and style, however; these studies do not focus

on the logistics of identity creation and authenticity through apparel and style of its

members.

This study focuses on members of grungewave, a neo-tribe that has origins in

the 1990s grunge subculture. A pilot study, using images of grunge musicians, was

conducted in order to understand the logistics of data collection and determine

clothing components of grunge fashion. Grungewave bloggers were observed over a

three-month period on Instagram and completed an online survey. The clothing

components, captions, and tags used by the bloggers were quantified and categorized.

The results of the observation and survey assisted in the discussion of where

neo-tribes fit in the fashion system and how their authenticity is perceived, the

similarities and differences between neo-tribes and subcultures, and the logistics of

identity creation through apparel and style in neo-tribes. The results and discussion are

not representative of grungewave as a whole or all neo-tribes since there was a total of

ten participants. Further research with a larger sample size or different neo-tribe should be done to contribute to this discussion.

The aim of this research is to understand authenticity of neo-tribes, like grungewave, through apparel and style. This research is beneficial to the fashion media in addition to sociologists and anthropologists who are trying to understand neo-tribes, online groups, and how authenticity is realized through identity creation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cobain, and Eddie Vedder. Without your contributions to the grunge scene, this

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The development of the internet in the 1990s allowed individuals to create

identities through blogs, profiles, and forums.[1] This development increased

communication between individuals, as well as creating virtual spaces to meet, both of

which allowed them to participate in activities that they may not have otherwise.[2]

These online identities form neo-tribes, which are temporal gatherings of individuals.

Neo-tribes, as defined by Andy Bennett, do not have defined boundaries and allow for

noncommittal memberships unlike subcultures.[3] Other characteristics of postmodern

groupings like neo-tribes include: stylistic heterogeneity, fascination with style and

image, positive attitude towards media, transient nature, and apolitical sentiments.[4]

Grungewave is a current neo-tribe that has been described as a subculture.[5]

Grungewave (also know as soft grunge, pastel grunge, and pale grunge) is the

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[1] Charlotte Mallory, "Is Subculture Dead?" *The Huffington Post* (United Kingdom: July 21, 2014). Accessed on November 2, 2016. Retrieved from https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/charlotte-mallory/is-subculture-dead_b_5359046.html.

[2] J. Patrick Williams, "Authentic Identities: Straightedge Subculture, Music, and the Internet," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 35, no.2 (2006): 179.

[3] Andy Bennett, "Subcultures or Neo-tribes? Rethinking the relationship between youth, style, and musical taste." *Sociology* 33, no. 3 (August 1999): 599.

[4] David Muggleton. *Inside Subculture: The Postmodern Meaning of Style* (Oxford, UK: Berg Publishers, 2000): 52.

[5] Aleks Eror, "Dear Fashion Industry: Stop Making up Bogus Subcultures." *Highsnobiety*. May 26, 2016. Accessed on November 1, 2016. Retrieved from https://www.highsnobiety.com/2016/05/26/fashion-bogus-subcultures/.

millennial interpretation of the 1990s musical subculture grunge.[6] For the purpose of

this research, millennials will be defined as *Time* magazine does, as individuals born

between 1980 and 2000.[7] It should be noted that the birth year range for millennials

has not been universally agreed upon. Various media outlets have the birth years

ranging from as early as 1976 and ending as late as 2004. However, sixty-one percent

of Instagram users fall between ages 18 to 34 which fall into the birth range defined by

Time magazine.[8] As grungewave bloggers on Instagram will be the focus of this study,

this is a good fit for the purpose of this discussion.

Grungewave emerged in 2010 on the blogging website *Tumblr.*[9] Grungewave has

been described as being "both an iconoclastic reaction to the past and a nostalgic ode

to the childhood of its audience, clashing band T-shirts and Doc Martens with flower

headbands and ombré hairstyles in one idiosyncratic mix of influences."[10] It has been

perceived as embracing the aesthetic of grunge and making that the focus instead of a

being a music genre.[11] Clothing components that are associated with grungewave

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[6] Nico Amarca, "Cyber Trends: 5 Subcultures Created on the Internet." *Highsnobiety*. March 11, 2015. Accessed on November 1, 2016. Retrieved from https://www.highsnobiety.com/2015/03/11/internet-subcultures-health-goth-seapunk/.
[7] Joel Stein, "Millennials: The Me Me Me Generation." *Time Magazine.* May 9, 2013. Accessed on November 2, 2016. Retrieved from http://time.com/247/millennials-the-me-me-me-generation/.
[8] "Distribution of Instagram users worldwide as of January 2018, by age group." *Statista.* 2018. Accessed on July 24, 2018. Retrieved from https://www.statista.com/statistics/325587/instagram-global-age-group/.
[9] Amarca, 2015.
[10] Amarca, 2015.
[11] Alex Blackwood, "Hello and welcome to my Soft Grunge wonderland." *Critic* (August 10, 2014). Accessed on November 1, 2016. Retrieved from https://www.critic.co.nz/features/article/4254/hello-and-welcome-to-my-soft-grunge-wonderland.

fashion are band t-shirts, distressed jeans and tights, plaid button-ups, combat boots, and sneakers.[12]

The emergence of new subcultures is often met with outrage and fascination by the press.[13] Neo-tribes have been subjected to this reaction as well. Columnists on *The Guardian, Business of Fashion,* and *Highsnobiety* have been questioning the validity and authenticity of internet-based groups. A columnist from *Highsnobiety*, for example, believes that the fashion industry co-opts subcultural labels to apply to hollow trends for marketing purposes.[14] A writer for *The Guardian* mentions in a piece about online subcultures that youth are so over-saturated with options for entertainment that they are more interested in creating an online identity; teenagers don't feel the need to rebel or show allegiance to a specific set of interests through their outward appearance.[15] Based on the statements of these writers, the following research questions emerge:

> Question 1: Where in the fashion system do neo-tribes fit, and how is their authenticity perceived and created?
>
> Question 2: What are the similarities and differences between neo-tribes and subcultures? How can these be determined?

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[12] Elana Pruitt, "Everything you need to know about soft grunge (aka pastel grunge) fashion." *Rebels Market*. June 29, 2018. Accessed on June 30, 2018. Retrieved from https://www.rebelsmarket.com/blog/posts/everything-you-need-to-know-about-soft-grunge-fashion.

[13] Dick Hebdige. *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. (New York: Routledge, 1979): 92-93.

[14] Eror, 2016.

[15] Alexis Petridis, "Youth subcultures: what are they now?" *The Guardian* (March 20, 2014). Accessed on November 2, 2018. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2014/mar/20/youth-subcultures-where-have-they-gone.

The concept of neo-tribes was introduced in 1996 by sociologist Michel Maffesoli. However, neo-tribes are still confused with subcultures. This could be the result of a lack of detailed study on the use of apparel and dress in neo-tribe identity. Research that has been done on neo-tribes often incorporates the visual of style and dress, but does not delve into how members use this to construct their online identity. Based on the lack of literature, the following research question became necessary:

Question 3: What are the logistics of identity creation through style and apparel in neo-tribes such as grungewave?

An analysis of grungewave bloggers' style and apparel will provide answers to the questions posed above. This research will be beneficial to members of the fashion media, as well as sociologists, and anthropologists who are trying to understand neo-tribes and online identities.

A Brief History of Grunge Fashion

The economic recession of the early 1990s resulted in a reactionary attitude toward the conspicuous consumption lifestyle of the 1980s.[16] Fashion designers were beginning to gravitate towards waif-like models, like Kate Moss, because they represented a rebellious, youthful style.[17] This youthful style was emulated by bands such as Nirvana and Pearl Jam who were on the Seattle record label Sub Pop.[18]

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[16] Valerie Mendes and Amy de la Haye, "Chapter 9: 1989-1999, Fashion Goes Global." In *Fashion Since 1900,* second edition (London: Thames & Hudson, 2010): 252.
[17] Marnie Fogg, "Anti-Fashion." In *Fashion: The Whole Story* (New York: Prestel Publishing, 2013): 482.
[18] Fogg, 482.

The nihilistic attitude of the music of Seattle bands was reflected in the fashions of the musicians. This attitude and mode of dress in the scene was ironic due to musicians coming from middle class families. Inspired and feeling nostalgic for the music scenes of the 1970s, grunge musicians rebelled by intentionally neglecting their appearance as an outward representation of their apathetic attitudes.[19] The grunge look was characterized as being disheveled[20] with musicians wearing thrift-store finds, ripped and faded jeans, oversized cardigans, plaid flannel shirts, cargo pants, beanies,[21] and army-style boots.[22] The style, according to Pearl Jam bassist Jeff Ament, was "partly function and partly what was laying around."[23]

Grunge music had already infiltrated mainstream America in 1991 due to MTV giving airtime to bands like Nirvana.[24] In 1992 grunge fashion was introduced to mainstream America via Marc Jacobs for Perry Ellis.[25] The collection featured silk shirts with flannel prints, floral dresses paired over shorts, and combat boots. This look was a shock for Ellis connoisseurs who knew the company for its preppy, sportswear.[26] Other designers, such as Anna Sui and Donna Karan, picked up the

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[19] Jennifer Le Zotte. *From Goodwill to Grunge: A History of Secondhand Styles and Alternative Economies* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017):228.
[20] Mendes, 252.
[21] Fogg, 482.
[22] Mendes, 252.
[23] Caroline Young. *Style Tribes: The Fashion of Subcultures* (London: Frances Lincoln Limited, 2016): 176.
[24] Heather Clark, "Grunge: Cultural Phenomenon." Accessed on January 22, 2018. Retrieved from https://webspace.ringling.edu/~hclark/bu230/projects/essay.pdf.
[25] Fogg, 483.
[26] Fogg, 483.

grunge trend but were unsuccessful due to their customers not wanting to pay high-end prices for a disheveled, thrift-store look.[27]

The waif-like models featured on the runways of these designers were described as heroin chic due to their emaciated bodies and hollowed eyes.[28] While the death of Kurt Cobain from a self-inflicted gunshot wound in 1994 interrupted the grunge music scene, it was the death of fashion photographer Davide Sorrenti that ended grunge fashion. Sorrenti died at age 20 in 1997 from Cooley's anemia which was further complicated from his heroin use.[29]

President Bill Clinton spoke out on the fashion industry in 1997 stating that "you do not need to glamorize addiction to sell clothes."[30] By this point the music scene had moved away from the Seattle scene and towards brit pop bands.[31] The fashion industry followed by featuring healthier models and embracing glamorous designs by Versace and eccentric designs by Alexander McQueen.[32]

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[27] Mendes, 254.
[28] Alanna Nash, "The Model Who Invented Heroin Chic." *New York Times.* September 7, 1997.
[29] Nancy Jo Sales, "Caution: These Kids Are About to Blow Up." *New York Magazine.* August 24, 1998.
[30] Fogg, 483.
[31] Young, 179.
[32] Fogg, 483.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Subcultures can be defined as "a subdivision of a national culture or enclave within it with a distinct integrated network of behavior, beliefs, or attitudes."[33] Subcultures are very often discussed in terms of music and style and their consumption in a local scene.[34] For this study, subculture will be defined as a group "whose distinctiveness depend(s) largely on the social class and ethnic background of its members; often characterized by its adoption of a particular music genre."[35] Subculture has, however, become the "catch-all" term to describe any activity of a youth group with relations to music and style.[36]

Neo-tribes are often confused with subcultures because they involve youth, fashion, and music. Neo-tribes differ from subcultures in that they do not have defined boundaries and members to do not have to fully commit to the group.[37] Individuals that participate in neo-tribes differ from traditional subcultures in that individuals can participate in the culture purely online without committing to it in their everyday life.[38]

Neo-tribe identities, like traditional subcultures, strive for authenticity through the music they listen to, how the individuals in the culture view themselves, and how the

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[33] "Subculture." *The Free Dictionary.* Accessed on August 30, 2018. Retrieved from https://www.thefreedictionary.com/subculture.
[34] Williams, 173.
[35] "Youth Subculture." *Vocabulary*. Accessed January 15, 2018. Retrieved from https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/youth%20subculture.
[36] Bennett (1999), 599.
[37] Bennett (1999), 599.
[38] Williams, 174.

culture distinguishes itself from the mainstream.[39] This review of literature will present previous scholars' theories on subcultures, neo-tribes, online culture, and authenticity.

Subcultural Theory

Subcultural theory developed in the early 20th century through the study of juvenile gangs by criminologists at the Chicago School of Sociology and the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS).[40] Frederic Milton Thrasher was one of the first sociologists to study subcultural groups. Thrasher's research on Chicago gangs (1927) stated that gang traditions developed from environmental conditions which separated the gang members from the rest of society.[41]

Edwin Sutherland and August de Belmount Hollingshead studied common behavioral patterns in social groups in the late 1930s.[42] Sutherland, a sociologist and criminologist, looked at the attire of white-collar criminals—a term he coined to describe individuals who exploit social, economic, or technological power for personal gain.[43] Hollingshead, a professor of sociology, interviewed individuals about the social status of members of their community. By the late 1940s, Hollingshead began to work

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[39] Williams, 174.
[40] Bennett (1999), 599.
[41] Fine and Kleinman, 1, note 2.
[42] Fine and Kleinman, 1, note 2.
[43] Laurie L. Levenson, "White-collar crime." *Encyclopedia Britannica* (2018). Accessed on January 15, 2018. Retrieved from https://www.britannica.com/topic/white-collar-crime.

on developing a method of social classification that could be applied to survey-based research.[44]

Albert K. Cohen was an American criminologist who contributed to the development of subcultural theory by building upon the work of Thrasher, Sutherland, and Hollingshead.[45] In his 1955 book *Delinquent Boys*, Cohen studied the activities of urban gangs.[46] Cohen described subcultures as a grouping of individuals that were trying to solve societal issues by developing a new set of beliefs and values.[47] He stated that what people do depends on the problems they are faced with.[48] The situation (where a person is located in the world) dictates the problems that occur for an individual by limiting what they can do and the conditions in which their actions are possible.[49] He goes on to say that problems are not distributed randomly to individuals. A person's ethnicity, race, economic status, job, and social standing will ultimately decide the types of problems they face.[50]

The circumstances or problems faced by individuals would lead to the formation of subcultures. The members of these groups would become more reliant on

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[44] Julie Adams and David L. Weakliem, "August B. Hollingshead's 'Four Factor Index of Social Status': From Unpublished Paper to Citation Classic." *Yale Journal of Sociology 8* (Fall 2011): 11.

[45] Thomas Bernard, "Albert K. Cohen: American Criminologist." *Encyclopedia Britannica* (December 15, 2015). Accessed on January 22, 2018. Retrieved from https://www.britannica.com/biography/Albert-Cohen-American-criminologist.

[46] Bernard, 2015.

[47] "Subculture Theory: Chicago School of Sociology." *Subculturelists* (2008). Accessed on January 22, 2018. Retrieved from http://subcultureslist.com/subculture-theory/.

[48] Albert K. Cohen. *Delinquent Boys: The Culture of the Gang* (Free Press, 1955), edited March 1971: 51.

[49] Cohen, 52.

[50] Cohen, 54.

one another for validation of their beliefs and social interaction. These habits would then formalize as the subculture became more independent.[51]

These sociologists and criminologists contributed to the subcultural theory framework in the United States. British sociologists also focused their youth studies on gangs, delinquency, and deviant behavior.[52] By the 1970s, British sociologists started to move away from the study of youth gangs and on to style-based groupings. The CCCS began to develop framework for the correlation between youth, style, and music.[53]

The CCCS used the theoretical underpinnings developed by the Chicago School to understand style-based subcultures.[54] This reconsideration of youth subcultures was published in *Resistance Through Ritual* (RTR).[55] Various sociologists contributed to this publication which looked at post World War II social transformation and youth consumption.[56] Phil Cohen's 1927 paper "Subcultural Conflict and Working Class Community" represented the type of approach taken by the CCCS.

In his work Cohen focuses on the working-class community of East End London. Youth cultures, according to Cohen, happened in these working-class communities as a response to the redevelopment and urbanization of their towns.[57]

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[51] Subculturelists, 2008.
[52] Bennett (1999), 600.
[53] Bennett (1999), 599.
[54] Bennett (1999), 600.
[55] Bennett (1999), 600.
[56] Geoff Stahl, "Still 'Winning Space?': Updating Subcultural Theory." *Invisible Culture: An Electronic Journal for Visual Studies* (1999). Accessed on March 12, 2018. Retrieved from http://www.rochester.edu/in_visible_culture/issue2/stahl.htm.
[57] Bennett, 601.

Cohen's position is that these individuals are excluded from their own community.[58]

The individuals in this community were subjected to a middle-class ideology that

focused on individual ownership; this was a contrast to the working-class ideology of

collective ownership by all in the community.[59]

Within the community, youth felt the pressure of this middle-class ideology

more than anyone else. This resulted in a generational conflict and opposition to the

parent culture.[60] Cohen uses this to argue that a subculture's function is to imaginarily

resolve the hidden contradictions of the parent culture by reclaiming some of the

consistent elements that the parent culture destroyed.[61]

John Clarke's research on skinhead culture reflects Cohen's argument.

Clarke's view is that skinhead culture is a symbolic attempt to revive the working-

class culture.[62] Tony Jefferson, another contributor to RTR, studied the style of Teddy

boys (teds). Teds felt excluded and detached from their working-class communities[63]

because of their territories being expropriated from them.[64] Teds were a sartorial

representation of an Edwardian dandy.[65] Their Edwardian suits mixed with rhythm

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[58] Stahl, 1999.
[59] Stahl, 1999.
[60] Stahl, 1999.
[61] Bennett (1999), 601.
[62] Hebdige, 56.
[63] Hebdige, 50.
[64] Tony Jefferson, "Cultural Responses of the Teds." In *Resistance Through Ritual*, ed. Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson (University of Birmingham: The Centre for Cultural Studies, 1976): 81.
[65] Alex King, "The Teddy Boys: Britain's original teenage rebel." *Huck Mag*. September 21, 2016. Accessed on September 14, 2018. Retrieved from https://www.huckmag.com/art-and-culture/photography-2/teddy-boys-britains-original-teenage-subculture/.

and blues[66] allowed for them to create a middle-class image.[67] This was their way of symbolically expressing themselves and giving cultural significance to their social and economical predicament.[68]

Dick Hebdige's contribution to RTR was on mod style. Mod style, according to Hebdige, was subtler and subdued than that of the Teds. Mods wore suits in conservative colors, were neat and meticulous, and kept their hair short. This style allowed them to maneuver between work, school, and leisure activities. The attention to detail in mod style undermined the standard work uniform of suit and tie by "pushing neatness to the point of absurdity."[69] This style allowed mods to have total control of their private lives. Hebdige went on to study subcultures and their styles more extensively and often referred to the work of his CCCS colleagues.

In his 1979 book *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, Hebdige examines British youth subcultures, such as punks. According to Hebdige, youth subcultures typically start with trying to address challenges or ideologies symbolically. Punks in the 1970s developed as a response to "increasing joblessness, changing moral standards, the rediscovery of poverty, the Depression, etc."[70] The style formed by punks—safety pins, mohawks, ripped clothing—was a visual form of their anger and frustration with the climate of Britain.[71]

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[66] Hebdige, 50.
[67] Bennett (1999), 601.
[68] Bennett (1999), 601.
[69] Hebdige, 52.
[70] Hebdige, 87.
[71] Hebdige, 87.

Subcultures' styles are typically celebrated by the fashion industry and mocked by the media. The media representation of subculture style stems from the noise, which is the hype created by the subculture.[72] The media representation can waver between outrage and fascination depending on if the subculture is seen as a social problem.[73]

Style as a visual form of resistance is not the only component that makes up a subculture. Subcultures typically operate within a larger scale with various forms of influence. Hebdige explains this idea by referring to the fieldwork of Phil Cohen. In his work Cohen discusses parent and youth culture.[74]

Cohen defines subculture as "the need to create and express autonomy and difference from parents…and the need to maintain the parental identifications."[75] For Cohen, the underlying function of a subculture is to resolve "the contradictions which remain hidden or unresolved in the parent culture."[76] Hebdige agrees with Cohen's theory, but states that he places "too much emphasis on the links between the youth and adult working class."[77] Hebdige stresses that a youth culture can oppose the same conflicts as the parent culture, but it is the manner in which the youth culture expresses their opposition that differs from the parent culture.[78]

The relation to the parent culture, structure, and media representation of a subculture are dependent on the individuals that make up the subculture. Hebdige poses two questions: "how does a subculture make sense to its members? How is it

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[72] Hebdige, 90.
[73] Hebdige, 92-93.
[74] Hebdige, 77.
[75] Hebdige, 77.
[76] Hebdige, 77.
[77] Hebdige, 78.
[78] Hebdige, 79.

made to signify disorder?"[79] Hebdige refers to social scientist Paul Willis' 1978 book *Profane Culture* to explain the answer to his questions.

In his work Willis illustrates how subcultures are not anarchistic entities that have no order or limit; they are orderly and each member of the subculture relates to one another.[80] Willis uses the drugs and acid rock of hippie culture as an example of how different components of a culture are what give it cohesion to its members. While subcultural groups represent disorder, the internal workings (style, values, beliefs) of the group are orderly.[81]

Hebdige uses Stuart Hall's work to further support this idea. Hall states that subcultural style is signified to members through the assembly of objects, like clothing. The objects chosen are used to express visually different aspects of the group's life, concerns of the subculture, and a "collective self-image of the subculture."[82] Both Willis and Hall discuss the importance of the objects—dress, music, concerns, etc.—as how the members of a subculture make sense of the subculture itself.

Based on Willis' and Hall's work, Hebdige answers his two questions with one word: unity.[83] While the individual components of the subculture and its members may vary, the unification of the subculture is what keeps it moving towards a more cohesive experience and ideal.[84] Hebdige notes that while the individuals within a

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[79] Hebdige, 100.
[80] Hebdige, 113.
[81] Hebdige, 113.
[82] Hebdige, 114.
[83] Hebdige, 114.
[84] Hebdige, 126.

subculture may appear uniform, the individuals themselves may not feel that they are a part of the subculture and be hesitant to outside attempts to understand them.[85]

Criticism of Subcultural Theory

The use of subcultural theory as a framework for studying the relationship between youth, fashion, and music has been widely criticized.[86] In sociology, societies are often described as being comprised of subsocieties—which have been termed as subcultures.[87] These subcultures are a part of the dominant culture, but differ from it in regards to beliefs, clothing, and language.[88] While the term subculture is widely used in sociology, it has not proven to be a satisfactory explanation of the phenomenon.[89]

The term subculture is problematic due to the numerous definitions attached to it. The research of James and Laura Dowd examines how to teach subcultures in an undergraduate classroom. In their research, they identified how the textbook definitions of subculture vary. For example, *Sociology* (1998, 6th edition) defines subcultures as groups whose values and beliefs differ from the main society with members moving between the two.[90] All of the textbook definitions of subcultures from 1963 to 2001 involve the idea of a group of individuals with differing beliefs or values from the main society.

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[85] Hebdige, 139.

[86] Bennett (1999), 599.

[87] Gary Alan Fine and Sherryl Kleinman, "Rethinking Subculture: An Interactionist Analysis." *American Journal of Sociology* 85, no. 1 (July 1979): 1.

[88] James T. Dowd and Laura A. Dowd, "The Center Holds: From Subcultures to Social Worlds." *Teaching Sociology* 31, no. 1 (January 2003): 22.

[89] Fine and Kleinman, 1.

[90] Dowd, 26.

The problem with the definitions is that the examples given to explain subcultures differ immensely. Examples of subcultures with the definitions include drug addicts, prisoners, Amish, teenagers, body builders, and college students.[91] The same textbooks describe countercultures as subcultures with hippies and skinheads as examples.[92] This differs from the CCCS research, which identifies hippies and punks as just subcultures.

The terms counterculture and subculture were synonymous in early twentieth century research about alternative cultures.[93] In the 1960s, the terms were disambiguated with countercultures being defined as individuals who reject or oppose the values of the dominant culture[94] and are actively working against it to promote societal change.[95] Subcultures were defined as groupings of individuals based on race, religion, class, etc. within the dominant culture.[96] Early hippies, for example, would be considered a counterculture because they were actively working against gender stereotypes and protesting against the Vietnam War.[97]

The framework developed by the CCCS in RTR further complicates the understanding of subcultures. The authors of RTR were attempting to create a more

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[91] Dowd, 26-27.
[92] Dowd, 26.
[93] Patrick Williams and Erik Hannerz, "Articulating the 'Counter' in Subcultural Studies." *M/C Journal* 17, no. 6 (2014). Accessed on June 24, 2018. Retrieved from http://journal.media-culture.org.au/index.php/mcjournal/article/view/912.
[94] "Counterculture." *Dictionary.* July 24, 2018. Accessed on July 24, 2018. Retrieved from http://www.dictionary.com/browse/counterculture?s=t.
[95] "Difference between counter culture and sub culture." *Difference Between Similar Terms and Objects*. July 24, 2018. Accessed on July 24, 2018. Retrieved from http://www.differencebetween.net/miscellaneous/difference-between-counter-culture-and-sub-culture/.
[96] Williams and Hannerz, 2014.
[97] Difference Between Similar Terms and Objects, 2018.

sophisticated way to label theory on the sociology of deviant groups.[98] Gary Fine and

Sherryl Kleinman (1979) identified four conceptual problems with CCCS's

subcultural theory:

(1) subculture is treated as synonymous with the population of subsocieties (2) subcultures have been studied without regard to the individuals representing the group (3) subcultures have been defined as static and uniform and (4) subcultures have been portrayed as consisting entirely in its values and beliefs.[99]

One issue with the term subculture is equating it to a subsociety.[100] With the term subculture, it is assumed that it is a subsociety that a person can enter into if they chose. Subcultures are usually studied in large societies that are not always heterogeneous.[101] These large societies have access to subcultures, but the information will vary among the members.[102] Research has often been directed at subcultures through case-studies or in-depth interviews, which often rely on demographics for participant selection.[103] The lack of distinction between the terms subsociety and subculture have resulted in the assumption that the boundaries between the two are clear and that the culture of a group is derived from the subculture they are in.[104]

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[98] Gary Clarke, "Defending Ski-Jumpers: A Critique of Theories of Youth." *Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies* (University of Birmingham, 1982). Reproduced by the College of Art and Law at University of Birmingham.
[99] Fine and Kleinman, 2.
[100] Fine and Kleinman, 2.
[101] Fine and Kleinman, 3.
[102] Fine and Kleinman, 3.
[103] Fine and Kleinman, 3-4.
[104] Fine and Kleinman, 4.

Case-study research on subcultures imply that information gathered from the prospective group can be generalized to the rest of the group.[105] The intent behind these types of studies is to show that one group is representative of the entire subculture. Studies involving gangs look at the beliefs and structure of the group. Gangs may vary from group to group, but all of them are structurally similar.[106] These types of assumptions are also made in the study of youth culture.

The perspective of individuals within a subculture will differ from person to person. Information and cultural traditions will spread throughout the group at various rates.[107] For example, teenagers do not constantly participate in teenage activities. Teens who are a part of the work force, armed forces, married early, and so on are expected to have an adult role.[108] This means that individuals ages 13 to 21 that make up the youth culture may not actually share common beliefs or values.[109]

The assertion that working-class youth intentionally use uniform style as a way to resist the structural changes in society is another concern with subcultural theory.[110] This idea relies on the assumption that working-class youth think their social status is the only way to assert their themselves. Andy Bennett offers the argument that post-war consumerism allowed youth a way to break away from their working-class identity and create a new identity for themselves.[111]

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[105] Fine and Kleinman, 4.
[106] Fine and Kleinman, 4.
[107] Fine and Kleinman, 6.
[108] Jessie Bernard, "Teen-Age Culture: An Overview." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 338 (November 1961): 2.
[109] Fine and Kleinman, 3.
[110] Bennett, 602.
[111] Bennett, 602.

The problems with the structure of subcultural theory became more apparent when the framework was applied to subcultures that were not initiated by working-class youth. Gary Clarke, who studied at the CCCS, argues that the moment in time that styles are born restrict the "politics of you to a flashpoint of symbolic rebellion."[112]

The research in RTR is centered around select individuals from subcultures (mostly male members of said groups). These individuals in the studies are considered to be authentic representations of the group; they are juxtaposed against the majority of working-class youth. A cause for concern of the research of CCCS authors is the lack of acknowledgment of styles outside the flashpoint of rebellion, how subcultural styles become popularized, and how these styles are reassembled.[113] The authors of RTR admitted that their analysis of subcultures was restricted to the post-war era, however, they never investigated the implications of how their research only represented a select few individuals and their concerns.[114] Clarke underlined this problem by critiquing the work of Hebdige.[115]

Subcultures, as seen by theorists like Hebdige, are an assembly of objects, meanings, and signs that provide a way for youth to display their resistance.[116] Clarke argues that Hebdige's view that punk was a sartorial response to post-war working-class youth cultures[117] was not developed in the manner that Hebdige describes.

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[112] Clarke, 2.
[113] Clarke, 2.
[114] Clarke, 2.
[115] Bennett (1999), 602.
[116] Clarke, 5.
[117] Hebdige, 26.

Clarke suggests that punk culture actually developed among art school students who were avant-garde.[118] Bennett suggests that neither Hebdige or Clarke are wrong, but the accessibility of punk consumer goods made it easier for various segments of the youth population to adopt the look.[119]

Subcultural theory also neglects to discuss the role of girls and young women in youth culture.[120] Angela McRobbie and Jenny Garber (1976) noted that when girls are mentioned in subcultural literature, they are often referred to in stereotypical imagery[121] or as sexually permissive.[122] In T.R. Fyvel's research on Teddy boys (1963), he refers to teenage girls as "dumb" and "crudely painted." Paul Willis' research on motor bike subcultures (1972) refer to the girls involved as "scruffier and less attractive."[123]

In motor bike subcultures, the girls were excluded from the core of the culture.[124] The girls in this subculture are often depicted in the media as leather-clad with blackened eyes and an expressionless face. These girls were seen as a new form of aggressive sexuality. Girls in the motor bike culture were considered dependent on their male counterparts; they needed a boy to offer them a seat on their bike in order to participate in the subcultural activities. A girl's relationship with a boy in the

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[118] Bennett (1999), 602.
[119] Bennett (1999), 602.
[120] Bennett (1999), 602.
[121] Angela McRobbie and Jenny Graber, "Girls and Subcultures." In *Culture, Ideology, and Social Progress: A Reader*, ed. Tony Bennett, Graham Martin, Colin Mercer, and Janet Woollacott (The Open Press University, 1981): 209.
[122] McRobbie and Graber, 212.
[123] McRobbie and Graber, 209.
[124] McRobbie and Graber, 216.

subculture would dictate her own membership—if the couple breaks up then the girl would potentially be expelled from the group.[125]

Media fascination with subcultures contributed to the invisibility of girls and young women in the groups by focusing on the male membership.[126] Media focus would concentrate on more violent activities, like the Notting Hill race riots where a group of Teddy boys attacked six West Indian men.[127] The emphasis on this type of activity among subcultural groups reinforced the idea of subcultures being predominantly male.[128] Skinheads, for example, are often thought of in regard to violence, bigotry, wearing Doc Martens and suspenders, and for being male.[129] However, women constitute a major presence within the skinhead subculture.[130] Skinhead boys in the East End of London mentioned that females in their group "beat the blokes up."[131]

Female invisibility in subcultures could also be a result of the difference of how leisure time was spent between girls and boys. Girls and young women maintained jobs, but were expected to keep marriage, domestication, and home life as

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[125] McRobbie and Graber, 216.

[126] McRobbie and Graber, 212.

[127] Alan Travis, "After 44 years secret papers reveal truth about five nights of violence in Notting Hill." *The Guardian* (August 24, 2002). Accessed on February 12, 2018. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2002/aug/24/artsandhumanities.nottinghillcarnival2002.

[128] McRobbie and Graber, 212.

[129] Kevin Borgeson, "Culture and Identity Among Skinhead Women." *Michigan Sociological Review* 17 (Fall 2003): 99.

[130] Borgeson, 99.

[131] Anoop Nayak, "Placing Subcultures: Ethnographic Methods and Youth Studies." In *Race, Place and Globalization: Youth Cultures in a Changing World* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2003): 22.

their top priority.[132] The values held by working-class parents allowed for boys to go

out and have fun. Girls were allowed to go out on dates or with groups of their girl

friends, but were not permitted to hang out on the streets like their male

counterparts.[133] Boys in the Ted culture, for example, could get in trouble because

they needed to "sow their wild oats," but girls who did the same faced a tarnished

reputation in their community.[134]

Entry into subcultures and their activity varies from person to person. Female

skinheads stated in an interview (2003) that while they were introduced to the culture

through their skinhead boyfriends or mutual friends, they ended up identifying through

the music, style, and ideology of the culture.[135] So while research ignores the fact that

females are just as active, if not more, than their male counterparts, they participate

regardless. Girls and young women being overlooked created their own alternative

culture in the home and bedroom.[136] This culture, often referred to as Teeny Bopper,

revolved around listening to records, chatting with friends, putting on make-up, and

reading magazines.[137] While this was happening in the home instead of the streets, it

suggests the girls were creating their own avenue for subcultural activity.

The concepts and framework developed by the CCCS are still used in helping

understand the relationship between youth, music, and fashion.[138] The term subculture

is still widely used to describe youth groupings despite the criticism. Kleinman and

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[132] McRobbie and Graber, 213.
[133] McRobbie and Graber, 213.
[134] McRobbie and Graber, 213.
[135] Borgeson, 107.
[136] Bennett (1999), 602.
[137] McRobbie and Graber, 213.
[138] Bennett (1999), 603.

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Fine recommend that subcultures be studied through an interactionist framework that focuses on how individuals identify themselves in the subculture. Bennett suggests that a new term, "neo-tribalism", be used to describe youth groupings, since subculture is not adequate.

Neo-tribes and Online Communities

The term neo-tribe is based on the concept of tribes. Michel Maffesoli built upon Herman Schmalenbach's critique of urban and rural society.[139] Schmalenbach (1977) used the German term *bund* (meaning communion)[140] to describe groupings in society that act as elective groups. Bunds are not stable and require consistent interaction between its members to prevent it from breaking down.[141] Maffesoli views social groupings through the metaphor of tribes. Maffesoli states:

> As for the metaphor of the tribe, it allows us to account for the
> process of disindividuation, the saturation of the inherent
> *function* of the individual and the emphasis on the *role* that each
> person (*persona*) is called upon to play within the tribe. It is of
> course understood that, just as the masses are in a state of
> perpetual swarm, the tribes that crystallize from these masses

[139] Rob Shields, foreword to *The Time of the Tribes: The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society*, Michel Maffesoli, trans. by Don Smith (London: Sage Publications, 1996): ix.

[140] Günther Lüschen and Gregory P. Stone, introduction to *On Society and Experience*, Herman Schmalenbach, ed. Morris Janowitz (London: University of Chicago Press, 1977): 17.

[141] Keith Hetherington, "Stonehenge and its Festivals: Spaces of Consumption," in Rob Shield (edition), *Lifestyle Shopping: The Subject of Consumption* (London: Routledge, 2003): 92.

are unstable, since the persons of which these tribes are

constituted are free to move from one to the other (6).

By this definition, the individual is no longer central to the group.[142] This

means that the individual views the group as a site where they can live out a temporary

identity before moving on to the next group.[143] The word group no longer contains a

rigid form of organization.[144] This could be a result of what Maffesoli calls a *collective

unconscious*.[145] Carl Jung introduced the term collective unconscious to describe the

area of the mind that contains impulses and memories that the individual does not

recollect.[146]

As a state of mind, the collective unconscious is expressed through lifestyles

and forms of appearance. In everyday life there are various examples that "illustrate

the emotional ambience exuded by tribal development."[147] These type of groupings

have lost their shock value as they have become imbedded into the social landscape.[148]

This means that individuals within a tribe participate because of an emotional feeling

that has shaped them.[149]

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[142] Michel Maffesoli, *The Time of Tribes: the decline of mass individualism in society*, trans. Don Smith (London: Sage Publications, 1996): 9.
[143] Bennett, 605.
[144] Maffesoli 1996, 98.
[145] Maffesoli 1996, 98.
[146] "Collective unconscious." *Encyclopedia Britannica.* 2018. Accessed on July 24, 2018. Retrieved from https://www.britannica.com/science/collective-unconscious.
[147] Maffesoli 1996, 11.
[148] Maffesoli 1996, 15.
[149] Keith Tester. *The Life and Times of Post-Modernity* (London: Routledge, 1993): 139.

The lifestyles of tribes are distinct and indistinct at the same time. Mass rites are a result of these micro-groups.[150] Individuals move constantly between tribes and the masses.[151] Punks, street entertainers, joggers all invite us into their world of constant movement.[152] Individuals within these post-modern groupings are sustained through their deliberate attempt to not include others.[153]

Fragmentation is the main characteristic of tribalism.[154] Individuals have torn themselves away from previous commitments and fragments so that they can "gain access to a larger Self, the Self of the tribe, the Self of nature, or the Self of religion." [155] This type of fragmentation is, in our present day, exemplified through individuals' activities on social media.[156] The phenomenon of these tribes is undeniable, but individuals in the dominant culture are still not willing to acknowledge them.[157] Researchers view tribes as a phase of the youth and feel obligated to recognize it.[158]

Tribes are not phases of youth, though. Maffesoli identified three characteristics of tribes: the importance of territory in which the tribe lives, sharing of common tastes, and the return of the eternal child.[159] These characteristics are exemplary of belonging to a tribe.

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[150] Maffesoli 1996, 98.
[151] Maffesoli 1996, 99.
[152] Tester, 141.
[153] Tester, 142.
[154] Michel Maffesoli, "From Society to tribal communities." *The Sociological Review* 64 (Oxford: John Wiley and Sons, 2016), trans. Rob Atkins: 739. DOI: 10.1111/1467-954X.12434.
[155] Maffesoli 2016, 740.
[156] Maffesoli 2016, 740.
[157] Maffesoli 2016, 742.
[158] Maffesoli 2016, 742.
[159] Maffesoli 2016, 742.

The place or territory in which a tribe establishes itself ensures survival and unity among its members.[160] This is not to say that tribes are stationary. Tribes may find themselves moving into new territories, however, their communal rhythm will be wherever their customs and traditions were founded.[161] The transient nature of neo-tribes occurs due to the emergence and disappearance of people and available resources.[162]

Sharing tastes correlates to territory in that tastes often depend on the territory or place that they can be shared.[163] Cities have become areas where tribes can experience their tastes whether they be musical, cultural, spiritual, sexual, or sports related. These activities and experiences become tribal worlds. They give meaning to pleasures and help legitimatize individuals within the tribe.[164] Online communities operate in this manner in that they allow for individuals to have different experiences.

Virtual spaces facilitate the growth of identities and communities[165] by allowing users to share ideas, talk, and assume a persona of their own.[166] Research has shown that internet users are going online to see new forms of social interaction not withdrawal from society.[167] When an individual goes online to a virtual space, they reconstruct their identity.[168] This is due to the fragmentation of society meaning that

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[160] Maffesoli 2016, 743.
[161] Maffesoli 2016, 743.
[162] Christina Goulding and Avi Shankar, "Club culture, neotribalism, and ritualised behavior." *Annals of Tourism Research* 38, no. 4 (2011): 1437.
[163] Maffesoli 2016, 743.
[164] Maffesoli 2016, 743.
[165] Williams, 179.
[166] Sherry Turkle. *Life on the Screen* (New York: Touchstone, 1995): 9.
[167] Williams, 179.
[168] Turkle, 177.

locations that once united individuals no longer work as such.[169] Individuals are seeking alternate spaces for unity.

A recurrent theme in human history is that of the boy who never grew up, or the eternal child.[170] The territories and locations tribes find themselves in give them free rein to express and share their tastes in a childlike manner. This fusion is the natural structure of the eternal child and makes room for different ways of co-existing with other tribes.[171] The childlike playfulness of neo-tribe members aids in generating social links with other tribes because they are able to place more value on their passions and connect with others.[172]

The members of the tribe have to learn the rules of engagement.[173] First, individuals have to work their way from being on the outskirts of a neo-tribe into the tribe itself by learning the rules and etiquette of it.[174] Rules to gain access into a tribe include wearing specific types of clothing and adornment or consumption of similar objects.[175] The rules of engagement in addition to the three characteristics identified by Maffesoli are vital to a neo-tribe.

Rob Shields and Keith Hetherington have both critiqued Maffesoli's concept of tribes. Shields argues that tribes are filtered out of the masses. He views tribal

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[169] Turkle, 178.
[170] Maffesoli 2016, 744.
[171] Maffesoli 2016, 744.
[172] Goulding and Shankar, 1437.
[173] Goulding and Shankar, 1437.
[174] Goulding and Shankar, 1437.
[175] Shields, xi.

identities as a way to show the "temporal nature of collective identities" and how members adjust themselves according to their location.[176]

Hetherington argues that two processes are involved in the formation of tribes: "deregulation through modernization" and identity based on gender, class, location, and occupation.[177] He states that societies with a capitalist economy allow for a more spontaneous form of individuality. These spontaneous forms of individuality are a result of de-individualization and regrouping into new forms[178] like online communities. Marshall McLuhan explains this fragmentation as individuals trying to retribalize.[179]

Retribalization, according to McLuhan, is the reconnection of man through multiple tribal existences.[180] The majority of individuals pursue retribalization through connective media, like the internet.[181] Individuals can cycle through multiple identities as they retribalize. For example, Sherry Turkle interviewed a woman who used three separate username handles on Internet Relay Chat to express different areas of her personality.[182] Other individuals retribalize by exercising stylistic freedom by perusing through different images they can try on.[183]

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[176] Bennett, 606.
[177] Hetherington, 92.
[178] Hetherington, 92.
[179] Turkle, 178.
[180] Ericka Goerling, "Marshall McLuhan and the Idea of Retribalization." *Media Psychology 101*. August 2, 2014. Accessed on April 9, 2018. Retrieved from https://mediapsychology101.com/2014/08/02/mcluhan-and-the-notion-of-retribalization/#more-1162.
[181] Goerling, 2014.
[182] Turkle, 178.
[183] Muggleton, 82.

The creation of multiple online identities illustrates how individuals feel their identity can be created as a set of roles that can be mixed and matched with one another.[184] These multiple identities may be due to the anonymity of the internet; users may feel empowered to play around with how they present themselves online.[185] Online identities or personas can be mediated through images on social media sites [186] like Instagram.

Jean Baudrillard discusses images in terms of dissimulation and simulation. According to Baudrillard, dissimulation is pretending to not have something you do while simulation is pretending to have something you do not.[187] Dissimulation has the presence of reality while simulation has the absence of reality. Images of simulation are "murderers of the real."[188] These types of images have no connection to reality and, thus, are purely a simulacrum.[189] Guy Debord, who previously examined image-saturated culture, views images differently than Baudrillard.

Debord's work focuses on the spectacle, which is his term for the capitalist phenomena of advertising, films, celebrities, and television.[190] In *Society of the*

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[184] Turkle, 180.

[185] Williams, 179.

[186] "Understanding Your Online Identity: An overview of identity." *Internet Society.* 2017. Accessed on September 7, 2018. Retrieved from https://www.internetsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Understanding-your-Online-Identity-An-Overview-of-Identity.pdf.

[187] Jean Baudrillard. *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981), trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan, 1994): 3.

[188] Baudrillard, 5.

[189] Baudrillard, 6.

[190] Tiernan Morgan and Laura Purje, "An Illustrated Guide to Guy Debord's 'Society of the Spectacle'." *Hyperallergic.* August 10, 2016. Accessed on September 7, 2018. Retrieved from https://hyperallergic.com/313435/an-illustrated-guide-to-guy-debords-the-society-of-the-spectacle/.

Spectacle, he states that the spectacle is self-generated. The spectacle originates from the world's loss of unity.[191] The spectacle takes the fragments and unites them through their separateness.[192] This means that while the spectacle takes aspects of reality and flips them around, it is still a product of real life activity.[193] The spectacle, much like the internet, is not just a collection of images. It is the relationship between people that is mediated by images.[194]

Subcultural Capital and Identity

Sarah Thornton describes subcultural capital as being the cultural knowledge an individual uses to validate their status "in the eyes of the relevant beholder."[195] Subcultural capital can be objectified through haircuts, clothing, and music. The embodiment of this capital is in "being in the know"—using slang, sharing ideology or political views.[196]

Consumption of products to belong to a neo-tribe is different than that of a subculture. Neo-tribes are not consuming products to be subversive to the dominant culture. The social links that neo-tribe members have between one another take precedent over the products.[197] While the objects consumed, like clothing, may gain an

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[191] Guy Debord. *Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone Books, 1995): 22.
[192] Debord, 22.
[193] Debord, 14.
[194] Debord, 13.
[195] Sarah Thornton. *Club cultures: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1996): 11.
[196] Jessica Strubel, Sanjukta Pookulangara, and Amber Murray, "Musical Identity Online: A 'Netnographic' Perspective of Online Communites." *International Journal of Costume and Fashion* 13, no. 2 (December 2013): 17.
[197] Christina Goulding, Avi Shankar, and Robin Canniford, "Learning to be tribal: facilitating the formation of consumer tribes." *European Journal of Marketing* 47, issue 5/6 (2011): 816.

individual access to a neo-tribe, it is the connection of consuming such items that is important.

The investment into material conditions is a result of youth enjoying a break from the necessities.[198] Pierre Bourdieu states that the distance from necessity and those who are a part of it forms a conscious distance, which is a type of freedom.[199] The distance from necessity organizes and dictates choices like, a type of house decoration or subcultural clothing. The ability of those who can make these types of choices establishes their dominance over those who have to make choices based on necessity.[200] Taste in objects, like clothing or cosmetics, give individuals the opportunity to assert their position within a social space. The space they create for themselves can either be upheld by others or become a barrier.[201]

Simon Frith analyzed identity in regards to taste and music culture. He uses the distinction between music cultures to illustrate how identities can be created. Individuals' taste in music genres differentiates themselves from each other.[202] Most academic research focuses on how individuals' taste in music is a reflection of themselves. Frith's approach is the opposite: how does the music produce people and create an experience—musical, aesthetic, etc.[203] Frith's argument is based on two

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[198] Thornton, 102.
[199] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA: 1984): 55-56.
[200] Bourdieu, 56.
[201] Bourdieu, 56.
[202] Simon Frith, *Sound Effects: Youth, Leisure and the Politics of Rock'n'Roll* (Pathenon, New York: 1981): 215.
[203] Simon Frith, "Music and Identity." In *Questions of cultural identity,* ed. Stuart Hall and Paul du Guy (London: Sage Publications, 1996): 109.

principles. The first principle is identity is mobile; the second principle is that the experience of music is a self-in-progress.[204]

Frith's principle of mobile states that identity is a process that is best understood through listening to music or making it. Music correlates to identity because it suggests a sense of oneself as well as others. Music, much like identity, can describe the social experience of an individual as well as the individual in a social experience.[205] This means that music expresses "an understanding of both group relations and individuality."[206] Social groups know themselves as groups through their cultural activity, such as listening to a particular genre of music.[207]

Frith's second principle, self-in-progress, is described as an experience of identity.[208] When a person experiences music, they are pulled into emotional relationships with the performers and other fans. Music can be an individualizing experience as well as a collective experience. Individuals can place songs they like into their lives, but know that they do not have control over why they like what they like. Simply put, music gives an immediate experience of a collective identity.[209]

Based on Frith's two principles, identity does not come from within an individual. Identity comes from an exterior source that individuals can "try-on." Identity is not something to be be revealed or discovered inside oneself.[210] While taste in things, such as music and clothing, can contribute to an individual's identity, it is

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[204] Frith (1996), 109.
[205] Frith (1996), 109-110.
[206] Frith (1996), 111.
[207] Frith (1996), 111.
[208] Frith (1996), 121.
[209] Frith (1996), 121.
[210] Frith (1996), 122.

the social activity around these things that effect the individual's identity.[211] Neo-tribes and virtual spaces agree with Frith's principles in that individuals are allowed to participate in multiple identities if they chose to.

Authenticity

The seeking of authenticity explains how individuals associate themselves within a group.[212] Researchers have described authenticity as the intrinsic quality of a person, object, or process.[213] However, authenticity does not live intrinsically in a person, object, or process. Authenticity is "a claim that is made by or for someone, thing or performance and either accepted or rejected by relevant others."[214] Walter Benjamin's 1936 essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* was one of the first publications to explore authenticity. While Benjamin examines authenticity in relation to film, the principles of his work can be applied to subcultures and neo-tribes in terms of understanding how the youth culture stems from the parent culture and how the masses react to youth cultures.

According to Benjamin, a reproduction lacks the "presence in time and space" of the original, which may have changed over years as well as its ownership. Changes will vary with each reproduction, but the "presence of the original" must be there for authenticity to be perceived by whomever is viewing it.[215] Benjamin uses the example of photography to explain the presence of the original. In a reproduction of a

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[211] Frith (1996), 112.
[212] Williams, 177.
[213] Phillip Vannini and J. Patrick Williams. *Authenticity in Culture, Self, and Society* (Ashegate Publishing Limited, 2009): 2.
[214] Richard Peterson. "In Search of Authenticity," *Journal of Management Studies* 42, no. 5: 1086.
[215] Walter Benjamin. *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1936).

photograph, the process of reproduction can "bring out those aspects of the original that are unattainable to the naked eye."[216] Reproductions can also put the originals into circumstances that they would not have originally been a part.[217]

The constants that remain in the reproductions through their many changes can be described as the aura.[218] For example, a statue of Venus was seen as a symbol of worship and adoration by the Greeks, but clerics in the Middle Ages viewed the statue of Venus as an "ominous idol." Benjamin describes the meeting of the Greeks and clerics with the statue as being met with its aura. Works of art, like the Venus statue, are embedded in ritual. The aura of the work of art and reproductions of it are what make it inherently authentic.[219]

Reproductions evoke reactions from the masses. The type of reproduction will determine the type of reaction. Benjamin uses a Picasso painting and Charlie Chaplin movie to illustrate the types of reactions the masses have to art. A Picasso painting receives a reactionary attitude; this reaction is typical when the audience viewing the art does not feel as though they can relate to it. With viewing a painting, the audience may be only one person. In this instance, it is harder to gauge the reaction based on others. A Chaplin movie, though, receives a more progressive attitude. A movie is more inclusive; the audience receives a collective experience through the visual and emotional occurrences on the screen.[220]

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[216] Benjamin, 13.
[217] Benjamin, 13.
[218] Benjamin, 14.
[219] Benjamin, 19.
[220] Benjamin, 37-38.

Distraction and concentration can explain the types of reactions from the masses. Benjamin explains the concept simply: "a man who concentrates before a work of art is absorbed by it…In contrast, the distracted mass absorbs the work of art."[221] A distracted viewer avoids new tasks or ideas in terms of art. Benjamin states, "the ability to master certain tasks in a state of distraction proves that their solution has become a matter of habit."[222] A work of art, like a Picasso painting, requires concentration so that the viewer can be absorbed by it. Films facilitate a distracted viewer; films place the viewer in the movie while also giving them the power to critique without having to be fully absorbed by the film.[223]

The types of reactions to reproductions can also explain the differences in which subcultures and neo-tribes are viewed. Subcultures are more in line with a concentrated viewer. Individuals in subcultures are fully absorbed by the culture in terms of lifestyle, beliefs, and dress. Neo-tribes, however, are more like a distracted viewer. Individuals can temporarily place themselves within a tribe without having to fully commit to it.

Authenticity, Enculturation, and Assimilation in Music

Authenticity is one of the most important values when discussing music.[224] Therefore, the authenticity of music genres can aid in the discussion of grungewave and how it relates to grunge. In the book *Club Cultures*, Sarah Thornton examines the music, media, and capital of club scenes.

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[221] Benjamin, 42-43.
[222] Benjamin, 44.
[223] Benjamin, 44.
[224] Thornton, 26.

Thornton states that music is considered authentic "when it *rings true* or *feels real*, when it has *credibility* and comes across as *genuine*."[225] Authenticity in music is attributed to various sounds, however, live performances are the main site that it occurs.[226] Charles Lindholm (2008) best explains this statement through his discussion of country music fans and their perception of authentic music. The different types of country music, as developed in Richard Peterson's typology, are "hard-core" and "soft-shell."[227] Hard-core is used to describe traditional country music while soft-shell describes contemporary country music.[228]

Hard-core performers have southern roots, are humble, write songs about their own lives, and show emotion during their performances. According to Peterson, hard-core performers often sing out of time and have a local accent.[229] They typically wear working clothes and tell anecdotes about their life to connect with their audience. Hard-core performers have a more informal approach on stage that makes them more relatable to their fans.[230]

Soft-shell performers are the opposite of hard-core performers. These performers do not speak of their origins. Soft-shell performers typically have songwriters write their material; these songs are often sung in third person. This type of performer keeps their life private, which helps keep them distant from their

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[225] Thornton, 26.
[226] Thornton, 26.
[227] Charles Lindholm. *Culture and Authenticity* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008): 31.
[228] Lindholm, 31.
[229] Lindholm, 31.
[230] Lindholm, 32.

audience. Their singing style is different from hard-core performers in that is is always on time and smooth.[231]

The distinction between hard-core and soft-shell performers can also be attributed to their stage performance.[232] Country music audiences distinguish authentic performers as "southern, working-class, rural, and unschooled."[233] Country musicians who played the Grand Ole Opry appeared to epitomize those characteristics that audiences deemed authentic. However, these musicians were typically not the working-class, rural southerner they appeared to be on stage.[234]

Grunge, the parent culture and origin of grungewave, is like a hard-core performer. Grunge bands rejected expensive stage presentations that used light arrays and pyrotechnics. Musicians focused on playing their music and presented themselves as any other local band.[235] The fashion of grunge musicians reinforces their status as hard-core performers. Grunge fashion was not an attempt to create something appealing;[236] it was mostly practical and functional for the rainy weather of Seattle[237] as well as an intentionally apathetic and unkempt look that reflected musicians' attitudes.[238] Grunge musicians' style has also been connected to the working-class aesthetics of musicians from the 1960s, like Bob Dylan, who wore jeans and t-

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[231] Lindholm, 32.
[232] Lindholm, 35.
[233] Lindholm, 35.
[234] Lindholm, 35.
[235] "Grunge Music." *New World Encyclopedia.* January 21, 2014. Accessed on January 15, 2018. Retrieved from http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Grunge_music#Presentation_and_fashion.
[236] New World Encyclopedia, 2014.
[237] Young, 176.
[238] Blackwood, 2014.

shirts.[239] These types of characteristics would be deemed as authentic, according to Lindholm's hard-core country music audiences.

Grungewave, for example, takes the grunge aesthetic of not caring and does it intentionally. Artists like Lana del Rey, Sky Ferreira, and the Arctic Monkeys are often associated with grungewave due to their overall style and presentation.[240] Lana del Rey, for example, has two different styles. On-stage she can be seen wearing vintage-inspired while off-stage she is known to wear band t-shirts, combat boots, and flannel. Her stage set-up for her current LA to the Moon tour includes a grotto-inspired design with props and lighting along with technological assistance with her vocals.[241] This stage presence and style is quite different than grunge performances and can be perceived as inauthentic like soft-shell country musicians.

The demand for authentic live performers was intensified by increased access to recordings.[242] Recordings, or reproductions, stimulate a need for something closer to the original.[243] Benjamin had hoped that reproductions would be free from this type of worship. However, Thornton notes that Benjamin did not foresee the development of new authenticities in regards to recorded entertainment due to the changes in production and consumption.[244]

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[239] Jose Blanco, Patricia Hunt-Hurst, Heather Lee, and Mary Doering. *Clothing and Fashion: American Fashion from Head to Toe* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2016): 76.

[240] Blackwood, 2014.

[241] Ross Raihala, "Lana Del Rey delivers high drama, stylized gloom at her Twin Cities live debut." *Twin Cities Pioneer Press*. January 5, 2018. Accessed on July 24, 2018. Retrieved from https://www.twincities.com/2018/01/05/lana-del-rey-delivers-high-drama-and-stylized-gloom-during-her-twin-cities-live-debut/.

[242] Thornton, 27.

[243] Thornton, 27.

[244] Thornton, 27.

The 1960s were a period when producers used magnetic tape to edit songs into what they considered to be ideal. By the 1970s and 1980s, instruments like synthesizers were being used. These shifts in music production and sound resulted in the recording, or reproduction as Benjamin would say, becoming the original instead of the derivative.[245] This did not erase or corrode the authenticity of music; it just re-located it. This does not mean that recordings were immediately accepted as authentic by mass culture.[246]

For many years, recordings were considered inferior to live performances. Many people viewed records as not being capable of being authentic or delivering authenticity like a live performance.[247] However, the ways that art are produced or reproduce do not correlate to the quality of the work.[248] Any way of producing art, like a recording, produces a quality work.[249]

Once a work is completed, then someone must respond to it.[250] This process is known as enculturation and assimilation.[251] Enculturation starts with the view that whatever is new is considered inauthentic and artificial. Once accepted, the new is then absorbed by the culture and viewed as organic and authentic.[252] Thornton notes that Baudrillard believes that simulations, in terms of reproductions, are not in need of

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[245] Thornton, 27.
[246] Thornton, 27-28.
[247] Thornton, 28.
[248] Howard S. Becker. *Art Worlds* (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982): 2.
[249] Becker, 2.
[250] Becker, 4.
[251] Thornton, 28.
[252] Thornton, 29.

being assimilated.[253] However, neo-tribes that are reproductions do go through the process of enculturation and assimilation. For example, punk resurfaced in the 1990s in the form of neo-punk.[254] Despite punk assimilating twenty years prior through mass produced designs and collections,[255] neo-punk had to go through enculturation and assimilation again. The brightly colored hair, safety-pin clad t-shirts, and piercings of neo-punk was met with resistance.[256] Just like punk, neo-punk began to assimilate into the mass culture through music and fashion. Designers like Versace and Alexander McQueen created collections in the 1990s inspired by the look.[257]

Neo-tribes allow individuals to move from one tribe to another as they please. The non-committal relationship individuals have with neo-tribes contribute to them being perceived as inauthentic and artificial. Being a member of a subculture requires financial commitment to music and clothing.[258] Neo-tribe members have the freedom to have a broad range of interests. The authenticity of neo-tribes are then questioned by fashion journalists who feel that they are just another subculture-like label concocted by the fashion industry to sell hollow trends.[259]

Frith further supports this type of reaction through his discussion of music culture and new technologies. He states that new technologies are opposed to nature

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[253] Thornton, 33.

[254] Rose Apodaca Jones, "Neo-Punk: It's not just a look. These offspring share tunes and 'tude with another generation." *The Los Angeles Times*. August 26, 1994. Accessed on September 14, 2018. Retrieved from http://articles.latimes.com/1994-08-26/news/ls-31391_1_punk-rock.

[255] Young, 132.

[256] Jones, 1994.

[257] Young, 132.

[258] Eror, 2016.

[259] Eror, 2016.

and community.[260] Opera singers, for example, are seen as legitimate because they use their voices alone to reach their audiences. The microphone changed this by allowing intimate sounds to make a "pseudo- public presence" meaning that music critics thought singers were being dishonest because they were relying on technology to have their voices reach their audiences.[261] The dishonesty critics felt translated to the musician as being perceived as inauthentic.

Assimilation is a process that occurs when the dominant society accepts a secondary group as part of them.[262] The extent that the dominant group allows a secondary group participate with them is the degree that the secondary group is assimilated.[263] Once new technologies are assimilated into a culture, for example, new forms of authenticity are possible.[264] The microphone gave way to new channels of authenticity by "making singers sound sexy in new ways, giving men a new prominence in big bands, and moving the focus from song to singer."[265]

Individuals within neo-tribes assimilate through consumption of objects,[266] as previously discussed. These objects communicate the identity of the tribe to the dominant group in order to be assimilated into the group.[267] The authenticity of the

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[260] Simon Frith, "Art versus technology: the strange case of popular music." *Media, Culture, Society* 8 (Sage: London, Beverly Hills, and New Dehli, 1986): 264-265.
[261] Frith (1986), 264.
[262] Raymond H.C. Teske, Jr. and Bardin H. Nelson, "Acculturation and Assimilation: A Clarification." *American Ethnologist* 1, no. 2 (May 1974): 358-360.
[263] Teske and Nelson, 360.
[264] Thornton, 29.
[265] Frith (1986), 270.
[266] Eckehard F. Rosenbaum, "Against naïve materialism: culture, consumption, and the causes of inequality." *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 23, no. 3 (May 1999): 325.
[267] Rosenbaum, 325.

tribe is determined by the interpretation of their presentation to the dominant group.[268]

Authenticity can be the result of replicated interpretations; a sense of place and past of the objects or group is needed for this interpretation.[269] The past of a group reaffirms the autonomy of the group and authenticity of the individuals within it.[270] Once a tribe is assimilated, new forms of authenticity are possible based on their past and how they are interpreted.

Authenticity of a group is complex. The following research will demonstrate how individuals within a neo-tribe construct their identity and how their authenticity is perceived by individuals outside of the group. This research will be supported by the theories and framework discussed in this chapter.

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[268] Alison J. McIntosh and Richard C. Prentice, "Affirming Authenticity: Consuming Cultural Heritage." *Annals of Tourism Research* 26, no. 3 (1999): 590.
[269] McIntosh and Prentice, 590.
[270] McIntosh and Prentice, 590.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND OPERATIONS

This research aims to analyze dress as represented by grungewave bloggers to assist in authenticating neo-tribes, to further understand online identity creation, and further the discussion in the face of fashion industry skepticism. This research utilized qualitative approaches, such as netnography and ethnography, to analyze bloggers' social media posts and survey answers.

Pilot Study

Before beginning the research, a pilot study was conducted in order to understand how data collection of images would work. Images from Michael Lavine's book *Grunge* were used for the pilot study. Lavine is a valid choice as he lived in Olympia, WA in the late 1980s and early 1990s. He photographed individuals on the street and his friends, which included musicians like Kurt Cobain. Lavine's photography has become "synonymous with the grunge era" due to his photographs being used for albums of bands like Nirvana and Soundgarden.[271]

A total of 48 images with 162 individuals were analyzed in the pilot study. The images span from 1984 to 1993. These images were selected due to them containing grunge musicians who were the inspiration for the fashion industry during the 1990s. Clothing components and gender of individuals were collected and quantified. Data collected from the pilot study was used to develop categories for the study in addition

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[271] "Grunge—the photography of Michael Lavine." *NME* (October 28, 2009). Accessed on January 15, 2018. Retrieved from http://www.nme.com/photos/grunge-the-photography-of-michael-lavine-1427265.

to contributing to the definition of grunge fashion elements as described in Chapter One.

Data Collection

In order for bloggers to participate in the study, they must have a blog on Instagram, post clothing or outfits, post three times per week, use or be found in the tags grunge, grungewave, or soft grunge, and be 18 years of age. Once receiving IRB approval, participants were recruited through an organic search on Instagram using the terms grunge, grungewave, and soft grunge.

Potential participants were contacted via password protected e-mail with a flyer that included a brief description of the study and participation requirements. If a potential participant did not have an e-mail address listed on their Instagram blog, a private message was sent with a brief description of the study and a request for an e-mail address to send a recruitment flyer to. A total of 50 individuals were contacted with the goal of collecting 10 for observation and interviewing.

Individuals that responded to the recruitment e-mail verifying they meet the requirements were sent an electronic consent form with a link to the online questionnaire. A total of 10 participants were collected with three only participating in the survey.

The observation of the remaining seven participants took place over a 14-week period from May 2018 to July 2018. Blog contents were collected twice a week for the 14-week period in password protected spreadsheets. The number of posts per blogger, clothing components, hashtags, photograph tags, captions, and background elements of the posts were collected and quantified using open-coding from Grounded Theory.

Open-coding of the blog contents allowed for categories to be created in order to identify patterns amongst the bloggers.[272]

The survey was initially distributed to the first three confirmed participants as a trial run after receiving IRB approval. The three participants completed the survey which contained 17 questions. Their feedback on the trial survey was used as a guideline for revising the final version, which contained 27 questions. The final version of the survey was resubmitted to the IRB for approval. Participants were given six weeks to complete the survey at their own convenience. Participants had to consent to the survey before beginning; the consent page also stated that participants could terminate their participation in the survey at any time.

The survey consisted of demographics, yes or no answers, Likert scales, and open-answers. Demographic questions included age, gender, education, and country of residency. Questions relating to number of posts per week (based on a Tailwind survey)[273] and number of followers on Instagram were included in this section (range based on Optical Cortex survey).[274] Participants were given the option to not disclose information in this section if they chose not to.

Questions pertaining to grunge and grungewave ideology, personal style, and communication with other bloggers in the community were asked in yes or no format.

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[272] Juliet Corbin and Anslem Strauss, "Grounded Theory Research: Procedures, Canons, and Evaluative Criteria." *Qualitative Sociology* 13, no. 1 (1990): 12.

[273] David Christopher, "How Often Should I Post on Instagram?" *Tailwind Blog*. March 22, 2017. Accessed July 16, 2018. Retrieved from https://blog.tailwindapp.com/how-often-should-i-post-to-instagram-at-least-once-per-day/.

[274] Mike Byrne, "Instagram Statistics." *Optical Cortex*. March 12, 2014. Accessed on July 24, 2018. Retrieved from https://opticalcortex.com/instagram-statistics/.

The grunge and grungewave ideology questions allowed participants to explain in a text box why they agreed or disagreed with the statement. Likert scale questions were used ask the participants about familiarity with 1990s grunge music and fashion and the importance of aesthetic in Instagram posts and personal style.

The open-ended portion of the survey was based on the types of questions asked in research pertaining to individuals in subcultures and neo-tribes (Thornton 1996, Bennett 1999, and Williams 2006). Open-ended questions were used to ask participants about what elements are important in an Instagram post, how they would describe 1990s grunge fashion and grungewave, and what musicians or artists they associate with grungewave and how they are representative of it.

Three participants terminated their participation in the survey after question 10 (How many times per week do you post on Instagram?). A fourth participant ended their responses after question 20 (Do you communicate with other grungewave, soft grunge, or pastel grunge bloggers?). Five participants completed the survey.

Limitations

The limitations of this research include the demographics of the participants. There was only one male participant that consented to observation, for example. As of July 2018, Instagram reported that 50.3% of its global users are female with 49.7% being male.[275] This statistic coupled with the fact that females are 8% more likely than males

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[275] "Distribution of Instagram users worldwide as of July 2018, by gender." *Statista.* July 2018. Accessed on July 24, 2018. Retrieved from https://www.statista.com/statistics/802776/distribution-of-users-on-instagram-worldwide-gender/.

to create and maintain a blog[276] limits the amount of males available to contact for research such as this. The organic search of the tags grunge, grungewave, and soft grunge limited the pool of available participants. Bloggers who fall into the grungewave community but do not tag their posts, have other blogs feature them with those tags, or have private accounts were not considered for research.

Observation of the blogs may have contributed to the participants altering what they normally would post or the frequency in which they posted images. Participants who posted significantly more than the others would limit the research in terms of having more weight on the overall results. Re-posting images or participants wearing the same clothing for multiple images limited the range of components to be analyzed.

There was discussion as to whether the survey should be added to supplement the observation results. It was determined that responses from the survey may provide more depth to the observation results. However, the survey results were limited due to only five out of the ten participants completing the survey. The survey results may have been limited due to participants feeling that the survey in addition to the observation of their blogs was too intrusive.

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[276] Megan Garber, "The Digital (Gender) Divide: Women are more likely than Men to have a Blog (and Facebook profile)." *The Atlantic.* April 2012. Accessed on July 24, 2018. Retrieved from https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2012/04/the-digital-gender-divide-women-are-more-likely-than-men-to-have-a-blog-and-a-facebook-profile/256466/.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Pilot Study Results

A pilot study was conducted before the research to determine how image analysis would work, develop categories for clothing components, and supplement the definition of grunge fashion. Forty-eight out of 139 images from Michael Lavine's book *Grunge* were used for the trial run. The 91 images in the first portion of the book chronicle the punk scene in Seattle from 1983 to 1984. These images were omitted from the trial run as they predate the grunge music scene.

Images used for the trial feature bands from the Seattle music scene that inspired grunge fashion. The images date from 1986 to 1993. Bands featured in the images include:

U-Men, Buffalo Tom, Nirvana, Soundgarden, Screaming Trees, Dinosaur Jr., Hole, Pearl Jam, The Breeders, L7, Meat Puppets, Babes in Toyland, Love Battery, Mudhoney, Smashing Pumpkins, Tad, Skin Yard, White Zombie, Rollins Band, Redd Kross, Urge Overkill, Pussy Galore, Fluid, Foetus, Velvet Monkeys, Beat Happening, Blood Circus.

A total of 162 individuals were examined in the images with 78% of them being male and the remaining 22% being female. Clothing categories were created based on the images. Clothing components that could be positively identified were counted; some images were close-ups so only the clothing seen was documented. The clothing categories along with a brief description can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1

Pilot Study Clothing Categories

Category	Description	Number of Occurrences
Jeans	Denim and colored denim	93
Plain shirts	No logo, print, or pattern. Tank tops, short and long sleeve	71
Graphic shirts	Prints, logos, or patterned long/short sleeved shirts	49
Boots/Creepers	Cowboy, Dr. Martens, combat, and creepers	43
Button-up shirt	No print or pattern. Buttons on front and collar. Long and short sleeve	31
Jackets	Non-denim, non-leather, peacoat, utility jacket, corduroy	24
Headwear	Cowboy hat, bandana, beret, baseball cap	22
Sneakers	Non-brand specific sneakers	16
Converse/Vans/Keds	Sneakers specific to these brands	15
Sweaters/Cardigans	Pullover sweaters, open front cardigans (with and without buttons)	12
Pants	Non-denim. Print or pattern. Sweat and track pants included	10
Leather Jacket	Jackets that appear to be leather or faux leather	10
Plaid Button-up/Flannel	Plaid print or flannel. Long and short sleeve	8
Dresses/Skirts	Dresses of all varieties. Skirts: mini, fringe, leather.	9
Shorts	Denim, non-denim	9
Tights	Black opaque and fishnets	6
Miscellaneous	Jumpsuit, velvet shirt, sheer blouse, crop top, mesh tank, hoodie, poncho	7
Sleep/Intimates	Boxers, socks, bras	4
Heels	Pumps, Mary-Janes, stilettos	2

The top clothing categories included jeans, plain shirts, graphic shirts, boots/creepers, and button-up shirts. Feminine clothing categories like dresses, skirts, heels, and tights had lesser occurrences due to the images being mostly male.

Background elements were noted during the trial. Three categories were created: outdoor, studio, and indoor. Outdoor backgrounds made up 48% of the images and included streets, wooded areas, and rooftops. Studio backgrounds contained solid backdrops; these made up 44% of the images. The remaining 8% of images had indoor backgrounds, which included rooms with furniture.

Participants

The identities of the bloggers who participated in this study will remain anonymous. Their Instagram handles and names will be kept anonymous for the discussion of the results to protect their privacy.[277] Participants had to be at least 18 years of age to be considered for the study. This is due to grungewave being comprised of millennials which are individuals born between 1980 and 2000. Seven participants were included in the age range of 18 to 24; one participant did not want to disclose their age.

During recruitment, a total of eight males and 42 females were contacted. The grunge, grungewave, and soft grunge tags used to recruit participants contained primarily female-owned accounts. The males found within these tags were either professional models with one grunge inspired image on their account, a band or musician page, or did not post clothing or outfit images. The males contacted for the

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[277] Bloggers will be referred to as A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, and I.

study all met the requirements of posting clothing or outfits and using the tags grunge, grungewave, or soft grunge.

Table 2 shows the gender of each participant in addition to their participation level. Bloggers A through G were observed for the three-month period. Some of these bloggers completed the survey while others did not complete it or attempt it. Bloggers H, I, and J responded after the observation period started. These bloggers met the requirements of posting clothing or outfits and using the tags specified in the recruitment e-mail so they were allowed to participate in the survey. Only one of them did not complete the survey.

Table 2

Neo-Tribe Member Gender and Participation Level

Participant	Gender	Observation and Survey Participation
Blogger A	Female	Observation and survey
Blogger B	Female	Observation and survey
Blogger C	Female	Observation and survey
Blogger D	Female	Observation; did not attempt survey
Blogger E	Female	Observation; did not complete survey
Blogger F	Female	Observation; did not complete survey
Blogger G	Male	Observation; did not attempt survey
Blogger H	Male	Survey only; did not complete
Blogger I	Female	Survey only
Blogger J	Female	Survey only

Participants were asked to specify the country in which they reside in. Two participants are located in the United States with the remainder of participants located in the Dominican Republic, Ireland, Germany, Spain, and Russia. One participant did not disclose where they live. While the majority of the bloggers live in European countries, this does not reflect the grungewave community as a whole. There are approximately 19.4 million posts in the grunge, grungewave, and soft grunge tags which reflect the large quantity of bloggers and geographical locations within this community.

Participants were asked to indicate how long they have been on Instagram and the number of followers on their page. Table 3 indicates the number of years and followers on Instagram of the participants. Fifty-percent of participants have been on Instagram between four and five years, 38% have been on between zero and three years, and only 12% have been on for six to seven years.

There is no correlation between length of time and highest number of followers according to the results. The two participants who have the most followers (53,000 and 80,000) have been on Instagram between zero and three years. While 50% of the participants have less than 1,000 to 23,000 followers. The participant who has been on Instagram the longest has between 10,000 and 20,000 followers. This could indicate that the participants with the most followers are more active on their accounts than the other participants.

Table 3

Number of years on Instagram and follower count

Years on Instagram	Number of Participants	Number of Followers
0-1 year	1	80,000
2-3 years	2	10,000-20,000 and 53,000
4-5 years	4	Less than 1,000 1,000-5,000 5,000-10,000 23,000
6-7 years	1	10,000-20,000

Observation

The minimum requirement of three posts was decided on because if ten participants posted that many times for the fourteen-week period, approximately 400 posts would be generated for analysis. This would be enough data to determine patterns amongst the participants of the study.

Table 4 indicates the average number of posts per week and total number of posts by participants. The seven participants that were observed posted a total of 545 images; forty-two of these images were non-clothing related.[278] Some of the bloggers would make a single post with a series of images. These types of posts were counted

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[278] Non-clothing related: images of laptops with movie title screens, crystals, books, Polaroid pictures, and plants.

as one image with all of the clothing components counted individually. Blogger A

posted an average of 12 images per week. This blogger had posted the most images by

the end of the observation period. Blogger C posted the minimum requirement of

images per week which resulted in having the least amount of images at the end of

observation. The remainder of participants posted between four and six times per

week. It should be noted that Blogger A, due to the amount of total posts, had more

weight on the results.

Table 4

Participants Average Weekly Posts and Followers

Participant	Average Number of Posts Per Week	Total Number of Posts During Observation
Blogger A	12	161
Blogger B	4	58
Blogger C	3	36
Blogger D	5	76
Blogger E	6	89
Blogger F	4	56
Blogger G	5	66

Observation Results

The clothing components, image tags, and hash tags were all quantified and

coded into categories. The clothing components categories were based on the

categories created in the pilot study. Additional and more specific categories were

created during observation as needed. A total of 43 clothing categories were created during observation. Table 5 shows the top ten clothing categories from the observation period. The complete list of categories is in Appendix F.

Table 5

Clothing categories from observation

Category	Number of Occurrences
Choker necklaces	209
Graphic shirts	176
Jeans	169
Plain shirts	140
Skirts	111
Converse/Vans	107
Sneakers (non-brand)	91
Tights	87
Backpacks	69

Categories from the pilot study were broken up into more specific categories during observation due to the number of occurrences in images. For example, the boots/creeper category from the trial run was broken up into three categories: boots (non-brand), Dr. Martens, and creepers. The number of occurrences column in Table 5 indicates the total amount of times those components appeared in images. It was noted that one blogger had many posts that included Nirvana t-shirts; the number of occurrences was only significant to their posts. Another blogger featured "Kurt Cobain

sunglasses" in their posts. Some of the bloggers in the study were still in school during observation; the backpack category was added due to the prominence of them in the images. Prints and patterns worn by bloggers included black-and-white checkerboard, plaid in various colors, and stripes. The pilot study and observation clothing category results shared five of the same categories in the top ten: jeans, plain shirts, graphic shirts, sneakers, and Converse/Vans.

Table 6 shows the top hash tags used by the bloggers. The top two tags, grunge and soft grunge, were used consistently amongst six of the seven bloggers. One blogger did not use hash tags on their posts. The tags Tumblr and Tumblr style are reference to the origins of grungewave. Grunge girl and grunge style are in reference to the types of clothing posted by bloggers. Pale grunge is another term for soft grunge or grungewave. Aesthetic is a term used in describing grungewave, which will be further discussed in the following chapters. Ootd (outfit of the day) and outfit are tags used to indicate clothing posts to other users.

The male participant used the tags grunge boy and Tumblr boy in his posts to indicate his gender role within grungewave. Another blogger used tags, such as witches of Instagram and pagans of Instagram, to indicate other groups they participated in. These hash tags were found in the caption of the image or as an additional comment by the blogger. Other tags found that indicated participation or membership to other tribes included: fashion blogger, girls with tattoos, goth, vegan, Irish blogger, wiccan, green witch, art hoe, lifestyle blogger, harajuku, pastel goth, scene girl, and punk.

Table 6

Hash tags used by neo-tribe

Hash Tag	Number of Occurrences
grunge	261
softgrunge	259
grungegirl	254
tumblr	251
ootd	208
palegrunge	205
outfit	159
tumblrstyle	144
grungestyle	142
aesthetic	141

Tags were attached to the images posted in addition to the captions and comments. The tags on the images consisted of repost accounts, companies, or other individuals in the image. A total of 1,318 tags were used on the images. Fifty-nine percent of the tags were for repost accounts; forty-one percent were for companies. Bloggers tagged fast fashion and designer brands like Goodbye Bread, Pull and Bear, Vans, Romwe Fashion, Shein, Converse, Killstar, Balenciaga, Forever 21, H&M, and Versace. Repost accounts help bloggers gain more followers by featuring their images

on their account with a tag linking to it.[279] Company tags can lead to more followers

for bloggers as well.

Captions for images consisted of emojis, asking followers questions or

comment in their language, product giveaways, overall mood, or general happenings

in the bloggers' lives. Table 7 shows the number of occurrences of each type of

caption. The most commonly used caption format enabled the bloggers to engage with

their followers and get to know them better.

Table 7

Types of captions used by neo-tribe

Caption Category	Number of Occurrences
Asking followers a question or to comment	235
Mood of blogger or general statement about what is going on in their life	223
No caption text	45
Advertising a company or brand, hosting a giveaway, or special user discount	42

Background elements of the posts contained bedrooms, outdoor areas and

parks, street and sidewalk views, staircases, and businesses. The outdoor category had

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[279] Two of the repost accounts belonged to one of the bloggers that participated in observation. The two repost accounts had approximately 130,000 followers each.

the most occurrences at 203. This category included parks, water fountains, wooded areas, and fences. The bedroom category had 166 occurrences; these images contained mirror selfies with the reflection showing the blogger in their bedroom or front-facing images of bloggers in their bedrooms. The bedrooms seen in the bloggers' post were minimal in color—black and white with a small pop of color. One blogger did not fit this aesthetic, but instead had band posters on their wall; posters featured Kurt Cobain, Placebo, and Green Day. The sidewalk and street view category contained images of the bloggers on sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, or in the street. Forty-five images contained this type of background element. The remainder of images contained building exteriors, businesses, and other indoor rooms.

Survey Results

The survey consisted of 19 questions after the demographics. These questions were formatted as Likert scales, multiple choice, yes/no, and open-ended. The questions were formatted to understand how the bloggers related to grunge and grungewave, their perception of their personal style, if they interacted with others within the community, and if there is a musical style associated with grungewave. Six bloggers continued onto this part of the survey; one blogger dropped out after the first nine questions. Five participants completed all of the 27 total questions.

Grunge ideology and fashion. Bloggers were asked about their understanding of 1990s grunge. The following statements were asked on a Likert scale:

Statement 1: I am familiar with 1990s grunge.

Statement 2: I am familiar with 1990s grunge fashion.

The results for statement 1 showed that 33.3% strongly agreed, 50% agreed, and 16.7% strongly disagreed. The results for statement 2 were similar: 50% strongly agreed, 33.3% agreed, and 16.7% strongly disagreed.[280] The bloggers were asked about grunge ideology and fashion to understand their responses for the Likert scale.

Grunge ideology is grounded in authenticity of oneself (meaning not conforming to the main culture). One blogger who agreed with this statement said, "Grunge is about you're not like others and don't [be] afraid of expressing yourself in [a] different way." Another blogger connected the ideology to how they were raised stating, "That's what I was taught while growing up and listening to bands such as Soundgarden, Pearl Jam, and Alice in Chains. Their music was unique and did not fit into [the] mainstream sound. The fashion that formed around it also has this belief." The other bloggers who agreed felt that authenticity was part of the culture of grunge and people not wanting to be like everyone else. The blogger who disagreed felt that "too many ideologies are grounded in 'authenticity of oneself'" and this could pertain to other subcultures in addition to grunge.

Grunge musicians had an anti-consumerism mentality and often rejected corporations. Four of the bloggers agreed with this part of grunge ideology. "Grunge was very anti rock and roll. Their focus was on creating a genuine sound rather than becoming the best out there or famous," stated one blogger. Other bloggers said this mindset gave the musicians more "credibility to go against mainstream ideals" and also support to independent businesses, like small record companies. The bloggers

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[280] The blogger who strongly disagreed with this statement did not participate in the observation portion. They did not complete the survey either.

who disagreed said it depends on the band and the music industry stating that there is always a degree of interest in consumerism and grunge is not the exception to this.

The bloggers were asked what dress components did they associate with the grunge subculture. The bloggers listed the following dress components: Dr. Martens, denim jeans, graphic t-shirts, chokers, band t-shirts, flannel, boots, plaid, leather jackets, chunky shoes, slip dresses, high-waisted jeans, Converse, and denim jackets. One key word that was used in the answers was "oversized." Large, oversized jewelry and "chunky" (platform) shoes were listed; these items are not associated with textbook definitions of grunge fashion.

Grungewave fashion and music. Grungewave, as previously described, embraces the aesthetics (clothing, style, and beauty) that 1990s grunge fashion often rejected. Eighty-three percent of the bloggers agreed that grungewave fashion embraces the aesthetics that 1990s grunge did not. The one blogger who disagreed stated, "Aesthetic is relative." However, all of the bloggers "strongly agreed" or "agreed" when asked the importance of aesthetic in their Instagram posts and personal style outside of Instagram.

Grungewave fashion has been described by fashion media as a nostalgic ode to the grunge subculture by millennials. The bloggers, all of which are millennials, were asked to described grungewave fashion. One blogger defined grungewave as "a mix of elements of 90s grunge combined with modern trends and Instagram aesthetics." Another blogger said pastel, light colors—which would be Instagram aesthetics. One of the bloggers stated they did not know how to describe grungewave since they felt they were not a part of it.

Since grungewave has origins in a music-based subculture, the bloggers were asked about what musicians, if any, did they associate with grungewave. Arctic Monkeys were mentioned by 60% of the bloggers. As mentioned in Chapter 1, brit pop music and fashion started to trend towards the late 1990s and early 2000s—this could explain why bands like Arctic Monkeys have been associated with grungewave. Other musicians and bands from the 1990s like Kurt Cobain, Sublime, Weezer, Green Day, and Foo Fighters were included by another blogger. Indie bands The 1975 and Cults and You-tubers Conan Grey and Mimi B were also mentioned. One blogger also mentioned The Doors. All of the bloggers stated that this group of musicians represented grungewave through their overall style and attitude.[281]

Personal style and outfit posts. Individuals do not always identify as being a part of a subculture or neo-tribe. The bloggers were asked if they classified themselves as grunge, grungewave, or something else. Only 20% of the bloggers classified themselves as grungewave. One blogger preferred the term soft grunge over grungewave. Forty percent of the bloggers simply described themselves as grunge. One blogger said, "I wouldn't really classify myself as anything. I just wear what I want and use hashtags that I think people who might like my page will look at."

All of the bloggers agreed that the clothing and outfits they post on their Instagram accounts are similar to what they wear everyday. The bloggers were asked how they describe their personal style. One blogger described their personal style as

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[281] It should be noted that during observation Lana del Rey and The Strokes were referenced to by bloggers in captions twice. Another blogger mentioned in a question and answer post that Three Days Grace, a post-grunge band, and Linkin Park as favorites.

being a mess. "If there's no rips, zips, chains, and bagginess then I won't wear it. I like

my makeup to be a little rough around the edges and my hair to look like I've been

dragged through a hedge backwards," they stated. Other responses included relaxed

and comfortable, minimalistic and modern, 90s soft grunge with a touch of femininity,

and modern grunge with dark, witchy, alternative elements.

Bloggers found inspiration for their personal style from various people and

places. "The city where I live inspires me the most. There are so many unique places

and special people. Also Tumblr is a huge inspiration for me. I can scroll the feed for

hours, and it makes my mood. Also I get a lot of inspiration from 90s movies, TV

shows, and music. For example, I really love the first few seasons of Beverly Hills:

90210," one blogger stated. Other bloggers stated 90s fashion, Tumblr, social media,

and being comfortable as their style inspiration. It was apparent in the observation that

many of the participants referenced 90s pop culture in their styles. For example,

movies like The Craft and Jawbreaker were mentioned in addition to TV shows like

Twin Peaks.[282] Sixty-six percent of the bloggers said that sometimes other

grungewave, soft grunge, and pastel grunge bloggers were the source of their

inspiration that came from social media. Thirty-three percent said that their inspiration

comes from other bloggers in the community.

One of the bloggers stated that exhibiting their personal style was the most

important quality in an outfit post on Instagram. Other bloggers noted the overall

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[282] While this study does not focus on race and ethnicity, it would be an interesting
avenue to discuss the interpretation of Eurocentric culture by a global audience to
understand how it contributes to identity creation through style and apparel (For more
about race, identity, and transmission of culture see Nicholas Thomas, "The Inversion
of Tradition." *American Ethnologist* 19, no. 2 (May 1992): 213-232).

aesthetic, lighting, pose, and uniqueness of the image were also important when creating a post for their accounts. Another blogger stated more specific clothing details such as layering, black apparel, and plaid.

Bloggers were then asked to explain how they determine the captions and tags for their posts. One blogger said, "I don't think the caption and image always have to correlate. Sometimes the image inspires a caption but not always. Tags are just the usual tags I use and any other specific ones for that brand." Three of the bloggers stated their mood and how they are feeling at the moment are how they generate their captions and tags. One blogger simply said the companies or brands they are wearing in the image are used for the captions and tags.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The research questions posed in Chapter One will guide this discussion. This chapter will look at how neo-tribes fit into the fashion system, the perception of their authenticity, the similarities and differences to subcultures, and identity creation through apparel and style.

Grungewave as a Neo-tribe

Critics of grungewave and other tribes do not understand how neo-tribes fit into the fashion system. A grouping of individuals need to fit the three characteristics described by Maffesoli in Chapter Two in order to be a neo-tribe. Grungewave will be discussed in reference to the three characteristics to illustrate how the group fits into the fashion system as a neo-tribe.

Tribe members have a collective unconscious that allows them to move from one tribe to another as they please.[283] As stated previously in the observation results, one blogger used tags like witches of Instagram and pagans of Instagram. This blogger also posted images of crystals and described one aspect of their personal style as witchy. These tags, posts, and description of personal style illustrates that this blogger—while identifying with the grungewave community—also identifies with the witch and pagan communities on Instagram. Other bloggers were noted for using tags like goth, punk, art hoe, and girls with tattoos. These tags indicate possible participation in other communities or aspects of their identity.

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[283] Maffesoli 1996, 98.

Territory is important to neo-tribes because of their transient nature. The territory is wherever members establish their customs or traditions.[284] Grungewave bloggers have established their territory on Instagram through the use of their tags. The tags serve as points of contacts between members of the grungewave community. Tags like grunge, soft grunge, and grunge girl ensure that bloggers can find one another. Because the collective unconscious creates a space for instability within a tribe, the members must be consistent in their interactions with one another to prevent the tribe from breaking down.[285] The established territory of Instagram tags facilitates this type of interaction. As mentioned in the results discussion, grungewave bloggers indicated that they communicate with other bloggers in their community. Communication between grungewave bloggers transpires in the comment sections of their posts. Bloggers used questions as their captions to generate discussions with one another.

The establishment of their territory on Instagram creates a space for members of grungewave to share their tastes with one another. Bourdieu stated that when it comes to youth and their tastes in things it can either uphold one another or build a barrier.[286] Bloggers in this community use their tastes to uphold one another. Grungewave bloggers share taste in the clothing brands they purchase, the type of clothing they wear, and the types of images they post. Bloggers during observation tagged the same companies and even owned some of the same exact clothing items.

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[284] Goulding and Shankar, 1437.
[285] Herethington, 92.
[286] Bourdieu, 56.

Bloggers were always open to sharing with their followers and one another where they purchased their outfits.

The eternal child characteristic is the childlike manner in which members express and share their tastes with one another.[287] This way of sharing tastes enables members of the tribe to connect with one another through their passions. Grungewave bloggers utilized their captions and tags to connect with other bloggers in the community. While the images posted by the bloggers had multiple company and brand tags, it was these tags that connected them to each other. The captions that asked questions of their users were set-up in a way to get to know their followers and others in the community better. It was apparent during observation that the use of tags and captions were creating social links between the members by engaging one another.

Neo-tribe vs Subculture

While grungewave fits the three criteria of a neo-tribe as described by Maffesoli, it is still viewed as a subculture by fashion media critics. Neo-tribes have similarities to subcultures, which aids in this confusion. However, it is the differences that sets the two groupings apart. It is the contention of this author, based on the results of the observation, that grungewave is a neo-tribe.

Similarities between neo-tribes and subcultures. Subcultures and neo-tribes go through the process of enculturation and assimilation. Both groupings are rejected when they are initially introduced to mainstream society. For example, grungewave has been called a "hollow trend" with a subculture-like label attached to it by the

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[287] Maffesoli 2016, 744.

fashion industry.[288] This reaction by fashion journalists is the same type of reaction

Hebdige described when discussing media reaction to subcultures, which is typically

outrage or dread.[289]

The consumption of objects, or subcultural capital as noted by Thornton, are

how each group assimilates to the dominate society. The types of objects consumed by

both groups are the same. Both groups use clothing, music, and slang to connect with

others in the group. These objects communicate their identity to the dominate society

which aids in their acceptance. During observation, grungewave bloggers used the

same hash tags, wore the same brands, and even had some of the same clothing items

and accessories. These items signal individuals' participation within the grungewave

community.

Both neo-tribes and subcultures involve groupings of individuals, typically

youth, with a defined style. Individuals within the punk subculture are identified by

wearing safety pins, ripped shirts, and mohawks. Individuals within grungewave can

be identified by outfits consisting of band t-shirts, sneakers, boots, plaid, and jeans.

Like subcultures, grungewave has a stylistic way in which those clothing components

were worn. Bloggers would pair band t-shirts with skater skirts, fishnets, and chokers.

Even though subcultures and neo-tribes have identifiable styles, individuals

within the groups may not see themselves as a part of it. Hebdige stated in *Subculture:*

the meaning of style that the individuals observed would probably not recognize

themselves as being reflected in his research; these individuals would be less likely to

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[288] Eror, 2016.
[289] Hebdige, 93.

be receptive to being studied.[290] At first, the observation of grungewave bloggers indicated that they identified themselves as such through their use of the tags grunge and soft grunge (used interchangeably with grungewave). During the distribution and collection of survey responses, it was noted that grungewave bloggers may feel the same as individuals within subcultures. As mentioned in the survey results discussion, one blogger stated that they did not feel like they were necessarily a part of grungewave. The non-completion of the survey by half of the participants could be also be due to not identifying as a grungewave blogger or feeling that the questions were too intrusive of their personal lives.

Phil Cohen, as paraphrased by Hebdige, described subcultures as needing to create autonomy and difference from their parent as well as maintain parental identity.[291] Grungewave bloggers have created autonomy in their tribe by the clothing components they wear, the captions and tags of their posts, and the background elements seen in their images. Autonomy was also created amongst the participants with patterns like checkerboards and background elements. While they maintain grunge's identity in the type of clothing they wear, bloggers in this neo-tribe also exert the difference by how they style their outfits. For example, during observation it was noted that items like kimonos were paired over shirts, dresses were paired with sneakers instead of heels or boots, and other clothing components, like overalls and bodysuits, were paired with core grungewave components.

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[290] Hebdige, 139.
[291] Hebdige, 77.

Cohen also stated, according to Hebdige, that the underlying function of a subculture is to resolve contradictions in the parent culture.[292] Grungewave bloggers embrace conventional beauty aesthetics that their parent culture rejected. In the survey, bloggers said they agreed with grunge ideology but aesthetics are also important to them. Grunge was an intentional attempt at not caring while grungewave is an intentional attempt at caring. This suggests that this particular neo-tribe believes that individuals can agree with grunge ideology and wear grunge clothing components while simultaneously care about the overall aesthetic of their appearance without contradicting themselves.

Another characteristic indicative of a subculture is how members in the culture relate to one another. Grungewave members, as mentioned in the previous section, share tastes to build connections with one another. Subcultures get cohesion from its members communicating as do neo-tribes. Grungewave members communicate with one another through commenting on each other's posts and liking their images. The bloggers, during observation, indicated that they relate to one another by asking questions to better understand each other, discuss where they purchase clothing from, or have followers comment in their language to see where everyone is geographically. The non-clothing posts by the bloggers were also cohesive in their content. Those images included crystals, books, plants, Polaroids, and laptops with title screens for movies and shows. These images show other interests amongst the bloggers and allow for other avenues of relating to one another outside their appearance.

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[292] Hebdige, 77.

Differences between neo-tribes and subcultures. Subculture members make a commitment to the group. Neo-tribe members are allowed to make commitments to other groups if they wish. McLuhan stated in Chapter Two that the reconnection of man through multiple tribal experiences, or retribalization, allows for multiple identities to be created.[293] One blogger in this research, for example, participated in the grungewave community in addition to groups of witches and pagans. This particular blogger would post non-clothing images in regards to these two groups in addition to their grungewave outfit posts. Other members used tags like goth, punk, wiccan, art hoe, and girls with tattoos. These tags may represent other groups or tribes that grungewave bloggers in the study participate in; they could simply be used as a tool to gain followers in these areas as well.

Individuals within subcultures use their subcultural capital to be subversive to the dominant culture. Individuals in neo-tribes use objects to gain access to them. These objects act as the rules of engagement according to Maffesoli. However, the link to other members, which are a result of the objects, are more important to the individuals. The rules of engagement used by grungewave bloggers included wearing and tagging specific brands (Pull and Bear, Vans, Romwe Fashion), styling outfits in a specific manner, and using the same tags. These types of objects aid individuals in gaining access to grungewave.

Subcultures typically originate from a specific geographical location before diffusing. Grunge, for example, started in the music scene in Seattle, Washington during the 1990s. Neo-tribes like grungewave that claim territory in virtual spaces

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[293] Goerling, 2014.

become global because of the accessibility to other users. Grungewave bloggers in this research were located in the United States, United Kingdom, Russia, Dominican Republic, and Spain.

Subcultures usually have a music style or genre associated with them. Neo-tribes do not necessarily have music associated with them or center around a music scene. Grungewave originates from grunge, which was heavily influenced by the Seattle music scene in the 1990s. Bloggers gave a variety of bands and musicians they associate with grungewave. Bands like Arctic Monkeys and The Strokes (both formed in the late 90s and early 00s) were mentioned in addition to YouTube bloggers who have a few songs and bands that originated in the 90s like Foo Fighters and Weezer. The Doors, a late 1960s band, was also mentioned by a blogger. The bloggers observed rarely mentioned music or musicians in their posts. One blogger, who did not complete the survey, mentioned Lana del Rey in one post. So while there are associated musicians and artists to grungewave, they are not central to the neo-tribe or a major focus.

Subcultural theory often focused on males with little attention, if any, to females in the group. Grungewave appears to be predominantly female. Male bloggers were not as present within the grungewave tag as females. While this could be due to the majority of Instagram users being female, it could be a result of the accessibility of social media. Social media sites and the Internet empower individuals to play with or display different aspects of their identity. Females in grungewave were not afraid to display images in grungewave-related tags or post in regards to other aspects of their identity, like being a pagan or witch.

Female dominance in grungewave could also be a result of the continuation of what McRobbie and Graber referred to as Teeny Bopper culture, or bedroom culture. With bedroom culture, females were able to create a space in which they could participate in cultural activities. Because of the accessibility of social media, females in grungewave use Instagram as a space to participate in the community with one another. Female dominance could be a generational difference as well. Women have more social power.

Grungewave Authenticity

While the opinion that the fashion industry applies subcultural-like labels to hollow trends is valid, stating that neo-tribes are inauthentic because of those labels without research is not. Grungewave, in particular, has been subject to this type of criticism because it is a reproduction, or simulation as Baudrillard would say, of grunge. Reproductions evoke a reaction from the dominant culture. The reaction to a reproduction can alter the perception of its authenticity.

Grungewave is like the Picasso painting Benjamin used in his explanation of types of reactions. Individuals in the fashion media have had a very reactionary attitude towards grungewave. This reaction is due to the viewer feeling that they cannot relate to it, which alters how its authenticity is viewed. The fashion media is a distracted viewer. Their perception of grungewave would be different if they concentrated on the aspects that contribute to the authenticity of the community.

Reproductions often stimulate a need to be closer to the original.[294] According to Benjamin, the presence of the original must be present in the reproduction for

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[294] Thornton, 27.

authenticity to be perceived by the viewer. Debord supports this statement by saying that reality can be flipped around and the product is still that of reality.[295] Therefore, grunge must be present in grungewave for authenticity to be perceived. The results of observation were compared to the trial run in order to determine if there was any presence of grunge in grungewave.

The top categories from the trial run and observation shared five of the same categories: graphic shirts, plain shirts, jeans, sneakers, and Converse/Vans. Background elements in the images of grungewave bloggers were similar to that of the grunge images. The most common background used in grungewave blogger posts were outdoor scenes; this type of background was also seen in the majority of grunge images. The clothing and background elements found in the images of grungewave bloggers have the aura of grunge. Other constants that were seen during observation were Nirvana t-shirts, Kurt Cobain inspired sunglasses, and a poster of Kurt Cobain. These components were used regularly as a part of the outfit or image by bloggers. Benjamin stated previously that it is these constants that make a reproduction inherently authentic.

Originals can be placed into new circumstances by reproductions. The remaining five categories (out of the top ten) from the observation included two categories that were created during the observation: chokers and backpacks. Other categories created during observation were overalls, fanny packs, bodysuits, leggings, and kimonos. The female presence in this study is reflective of these additional categories. These categories also represent the ways in which bloggers are taking the

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[295] Debord, 14.

aura of 90s grunge fashion and adding style elements that were not seen in the pilot study images. For example, the blogger who wore Nirvana shirts would pair them with plaid skirts and pants and fishnets. These types of clothing pieces were paired together in the 90s grunge scene, but all items were found styled differently in the trial run.

Female dominance in grungewave is a new circumstance for the original. Grunge was a predominantly male subculture as noted by the musicians associated with the scene and the images used in the pilot study.[296] Females in grungewave have co-opted the masculine elements of grunge, like oversized t-shirts, jeans, and sneakers, and paired them with more feminine clothing elements like skirts, chokers, and fishnet tights.

Identity Creation in Grungewave

The logistics of identity creation, based on the theories of Bourdieu and Frith, relate to an individual's taste and experiences within a group. These theories will be applied to how grungewave bloggers utilize style and apparel to create their own identity.

Taste allows individuals to assert their position in a social space.[297] Grungewave bloggers asserted their position within the tribe through the brands and clothing worn in their posts. Brands like Goodbye Bread, Pull and Bear, Vans, and Romwe Fashion were tagged the most by bloggers. The preference for these brands allowed bloggers to reinforce their positions as members of grungewave.

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[296] It should be noted that riot grrrl—a feminist movement—was happening in the Pacific Northwest at the same time as the grunge music scene. While riot grrrl was the female dominated counterpart to grunge, it was not mentioned in the texts with the pilot study images or by any of the bloggers during the observation or survey.
[297] Bourdieu, 56.

Preference for specific brands trickled into bloggers' taste for how they styled their outfits. The top ten categories from the observation illustrate the types of clothing components worn together by bloggers. All six of the female bloggers, at various points during the three-month period, wore this specific outfit: graphic t-shirt, skater skirt, fishnet tights, choker necklace, and boots. The male blogger who participated in observation often wore a combination of plain and graphic t-shirts, jeans, Vans, or Converses; the female bloggers would also style outfits in their post similar to his. Preference to prints and patterns, like checkerboard, was seen in outfits of both the male and female bloggers.

The ways in which the bloggers paired these clothing components together reaffirm their position as members of grungewave. The same clothing components can be worn by individuals outside of grungewave, and those individuals could participate in another tribe. The taste or preference for styling these components in this specific manner set grungewave bloggers a part from other groups.

Frith stated that identity is mobile in that social groups know themselves through their cultural activity.[298] While purchasing specific brands and styling outfits in a certain manner create the grungewave image, all of the individuals must tag their posts in order to know themselves as a group. Part of grungewave's identity is reliant on bloggers within the group tagging their posts so that they can communicate with one another.

Bloggers stated in the survey that they communicate with one another and gain inspiration from each other's style. By using tags like grunge and soft grunge,

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[298] Frith, 109.

bloggers can find other members in the tribe, see what other brands they purchase, and new ways to style outfits. Tags enable the bloggers to interact with one another through liking and commenting on each other's posts. This allows the bloggers to get to know each other through their activity as individuals and collectively as a group.

Self-in-progress is the second principle Frith identified in identity creation. This principle states that when an individual has an experience with others they are pulled into an emotional relationship with others.[299] While it may seem to an outside that grungewave bloggers only care about the consumption of certain clothing items, it is the link to others in the tribe that is most important. A grungewave blogger may develop a relationship with another individual in the group because they wore a certain brand and used the tag soft grunge in their post.

The caption text of the bloggers' posts also indicated the importance of connecting with one another. Captions that asked followers a question or to comment were used frequently amongst the bloggers. These types of captions would ask questions to get to know their followers better (i.e. "When is your birthday?") or have followers comment a word in their language. Other captions involved the general mood of the blogger or an anecdote about their life. The communication between bloggers through captions and comments create an experience for all the individuals involved because they are getting to know each other on a personal level. This type of experience reinforces the collective identity of grungewave as a tribe.

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[299] Frith, 122.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This research utilized quantitative and qualitative approaches in order to understand how individuals in neo-tribes construct their identity and strive for authenticity through their use of apparel and dress. Potential participants were found using the tags grunge, grungewave, and soft grunge on Instagram. Bloggers were sent an e-mail with the details of the study. If a blogger met the requirements stated in the recruitment e-mail and wanted to participate, they were sent a consent form. The study consisted of a trial run, three-month observation period, and an online survey. During observation, aspects of the bloggers' posts—clothing components, background elements, caption text, and tags—were coded and categorized.

Bloggers in the study were between ages 18 to 24 with 87% being female. A total of 545 images posted by the bloggers during the observation period. The top clothing components in bloggers' posts were chokers, graphic t-shirts, jeans, plain t-shirts, skirts, Converse/Vans, sneakers, tights, backpacks, and denim jackets/vests. The most common background element was outdoor scenes; the most used type of caption was the question or comment format. The results from the observation were compared to the trial run images to determine if elements of grunge were present in grungewave.

The survey consisted of a total of 27 questions. The first ten questions pertained to demographics while the remaining questions were in reference to grunge and grungewave ideology, personal style and inspiration, communication with other

bloggers, and musicians associated with grungewave. The questions were formatted as Likert scales, yes or no with explanation, and open-ended. Participants were allowed to not disclose information in the survey or terminate their participation. Eight out ten bloggers started the survey with only five completing it.

This study found that neo-tribes like grungewave have many similarities to subcultures. These similarities contribute to critics, like those in the fashion media, questioning the authenticity of neo-tribes because they assume that neo-tribes are pseudo subcultures. Grungewave bloggers have a defined style associated with them. The clothing components they use create autonomy amongst the group, but also differentiate themselves from their grunge parent culture. The bloggers did maintain their parental identity, like subcultures often do, by wearing some of the same clothing components and agreeing with grunge ideology. One of the bloggers expressed they do not identify as grungewave, which is the same type of sentiment held by subculturalists in Hebdige's research.

The bloggers agreed that grungewave embraces the aesthetics of conventional beauty that grunge often rejected. In the survey, bloggers further confirmed this belief by indicating that the overall aesthetic of their outfit was important to their personal style and Instagram posts. Grungewave bloggers agreed with grunge ideology as well. It can be postulated that grungewave bloggers feel that the two ideologies and beliefs can coexist together.

While there were many similar characteristics between grungewave and subcultures, there were also differences. Members of grungewave illustrated the idea of the collective unconscious, which allowed them to move between tribes. One

blogger implied by their tag usage and survey responses as participating within the grungewave tribe in addition to two other tribes. Grungewave bloggers associated bands like Arctic Monkeys, The 1975, and 90s alternative rock bands with the scene. These musicians were mentioned to their style and attitude not their sound, according to the bloggers. There were only two occurrences of mentioning musicians in the captions. This suggests that grungewave bloggers have musical preferences, but it is not central to their membership in the tribe.

Results from the recruitment process suggest that grungewave is a female-oriented tribe. Female dominance in grungewave could be due to the female to male ratio on Instagram, accessibility and empowerment of posting on social media, or a continuation of bedroom culture.

The differences from subcultures in addition to meeting the criteria described by Maffesoli are what make grungewave a neo-tribe. Grungewave's territory is established on Instagram through the usage of tags like grunge and soft grunge. The sharing of common tastes is found through the brands grungewave bloggers purchase and how they style their outfits. Female and male bloggers in the study styled clothing components in the same manner. The way that bloggers shared their posts was in a childlike manner. Bloggers engaged with one another through tags, style, captions, and comments. Grungewave bloggers found inspiration with one another and were actively trying to get to know one another better through their posts.

The analysis of posts and survey responses show that grungewave is authentic according to Benjamin. Grungewave has constants like clothing components, background elements, and references to Nirvana and Kurt Cobain. These constants are

the aura of grunge. Therefore, grungewave is inherently authentic because it has the aura of grunge. This does not mean that grungewave will be viewed by its critics in this manner. Grungewave needs a concentrated viewer and complete assimilation into the culture for this to happen.

Grungewave identity is composed of taste in specific brands and clothing pieces and Instagram activity. Bloggers had a preference for brands like Goodbye Bread, Pull and Bear, Vans, and Romwe Fashion. Bloggers would style their outfits in similar ways and even owned some of the same exact pieces. Bloggers used the same types of outdoor and bedroom elements to frame their posts. They also used question or comment captions to connect with one another. These components represent the individual identity of each blogger as well as the collective identity of grungewave.

Conclusion

The reactionary attitude to grungewave is due in part to its similarities with a subculture. The participants in this study illustrated the characteristics of a neo-tribe. They had fragmented identities; they participated in other groups and tribes outside of grungewave. The fragmented identities also highlighted the transient nature of individuals within neo-tribes.

The stability of grungewave relies on the consistent interaction between the bloggers, which was evident by their activity in the comments of each other's posts. The interactions through the comments reinforced the importance of the social links and connections between tribe members. The tagging of specific brands, focus on style and image, and the importance of overall aesthetic implies to outsiders, like critics of

neo-tribes, that individuals within them are superficial. However, grungewave bloggers used these objects to build connections with one another.

While the results of this study lean towards grungewave being inherently authentic with set ways of identity creation, they cannot generalize grungewave or neo-tribes as a whole. These results are only indicative of how the selected participants create identity through their apparel and dress and strive for authenticity. A suggestion for future research would include a larger sample size for observation. A larger sample size may reveal different patterns and commonalities among grungewave bloggers.

This study included bloggers from the United States and European countries. Additional studies could focus on how neo-tribe members differ from country to country. It would be interesting to see how bloggers who identify in the same tribe differ depending on what country they live in; bloggers in European countries could be compared to one another to see if there are patterns in tribes that are dependent on the country of residency.

A similar study could look specifically at gender roles in grungewave or other neo-tribes. Interviews could be conducted with females within tribes to see how they regard males in their communities. It would also be worth noting if current feminist movements or politics are the catalyst to a stronger female presence in tribes. Males in tribes could be interviewed as well to understand their view on their role within the group.

For a study more focused on the socio-cultural aspects of neo-tribe identity, the topics of race, ethnicity, and transmissions of cultures could be examined. As stated in

footnote 282 in Chapter Four, the references of style inspiration for the participants were grounded in pre-dominantly white American pop culture references of the 1990s. It would be interesting to investigate the interpretation of white culture by a global audience as most of the participants in this study were from outside the United States.

APPENDIX A

GLOSSARY

Blogger: an individual who regularly creates content for their websites and social media platforms

Emoji: an image or icon used to convey an idea, emotion, or word

Fashion Blogger: a blogger who focuses on categories such as clothing, accessories, beauty, street style, celebrity fashion, and outfit of the day posts

Feed: a stream of content that can be scrolled through

Hash tag: a searchable word preceded by a pound sign used on social media

Image tag: a tag that appears on an image when a user clicks or taps on the image; these tags are typically user handles of other accounts

Instagram: photo and video sharing social networking website founded in 2010

Kurt Cobain sunglasses: rounded, cat-eye style sunglasses in white; often worn by Kurt in photographs

Ootd: outfit of the day

Repost account: an account on Instagram that reposts and shares images from other individuals' accounts; repost accounts ask other users to tag them in images or in their hash tags for a chance to be featured on their account in order to gain more followers

Tumblr: microblogging and social networking website founded in 2007

User handle/name: the name individuals use when logging in to social media accounts that identifies their account

APPENDIX B

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND
DIVISION OF RESEARCH
AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT

THINK BIG • WE DO℠

OFFICE OF RESEARCH INTEGRITY
70 Lower College Road, Suite 002, Kingston, RI 02881 USA
p: 401.874.4328   f: 401.874.4814   web.uri.edu/researchecondev/office-of-research-integrity

FWA: 00003132
IRB: 00000599
DATE: April 28, 2018

TO: Karl Aspelund
FROM: University of Rhode Island IRB

STUDY TITLE: Grungewave: The Authenticity of Neo-Tribes
IRB REFERENCE #:   1180002-3
LOCAL REFERENCE #:   HU1718-126
SUBMISSION TYPE: Amendment/Modification

ACTION: APPROVED
EFFECTIVE DATE: April 28, 2018
EXPIRATION DATE: February 20, 2019
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # 7

The above referenced human subjects research project has been APPROVED by the University of
Rhode Island Institutional Review Board (URI IRB). This submission has received Expedited Review
Review based on the applicable federal regulation 45 CFR 46 and 21 CFR 50 & 56. All research must be
conducted in accordance with this approved submission .

IRB DETERMINATIONS

INFORMED CONSENT
The URI IRB has granted a waiver of consent documentation for this protocol. Federal regulations
require each participant to have the opportunity receive a copy of the consent document.

MODIFICATIONS AND AMENDMENTS
Changes to the protocol or its related stamped consent/assent documents must be approved by the URI
IRB before implementation.

RECORDKEEPING
Federal regulations require all research records must be retained for a minimum of five years after the
project ends.

PROTOCOL EXPIRATION
Based on the risks, this project requires Continuing Review by this office by **February 20, 2019**. Please
use the CONTINUING REVIEW FORM for this procedure.

- 1 -   Generated on IRBNet

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APPENDIX C

RECRUITMENT E-MAIL

THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND

**COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
ADMINISTRATION**

THINK BIG · WE DO™

DEPARTMENT OF TEXTILES, FASHION MERCHANDISING AND DESIGN
55 Lower College Road, Kingston, RI 02881 USA   p: 401.874.4574   f: 401.874.4029   web.uri.edu/tmd

Dear _____,

     I am a graduate student at the University of Rhode Island in the Department of Textiles, Fashion Merchandising and Design. My thesis focuses on Internet-based subcultures and their authenticity. I will be interviewing bloggers in addition to analyzing the content of their blogs for this study. You have received this e-mail through random selection. If you meet the requirements and agree to participate, you will be sent a consent form and pre-interview questionnaire. After completion of the questionnaire, I will arrange for an interview to be set up at your convenience. If you agree, please respond to this email.

Requirements:
Must have a blog on Instagram.
Must posts outfits or clothing.
Must tag or be featured in the tags grunge, grungewave, soft grunge, or pastel grunge.
Must be at least 18 years old.

Elizabeth Beasley
M.S. Candidate

CONSENT FORM

E-mailed on University letterhead

STUDY TITLE
Grungewave: The Authenticity of Neo-Tribes

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS

Principal Investigator:
Karl Aspelund, Ph.D.   Office: (401) 874- 4176   Email: aspelund@uri.edu

MA Researcher:
Elizabeth Beasley   Cell (731) 697-6413   Email: ebeasley90@my.uri.edu

KEY INFORMATION

Important information to know about this research study:

- The purpose of the study is to understand neo-tribes and how their individual members create authenticity through clothing and style.
- If you choose to participate, you will be asked to answer demographic and interview questions and post on your blog at least 5 times per week. This will take approximately 1 hour to complete the demographic and interview questions; the amount of time spent on weekly posts will be at your convenience.
- Risks or discomforts from this research include minimal risks, such as being uncomfortable with discussing content posted, being categorized as a member of a neo-tribe, or not wanting your username and blog title to be published.
- The study will help in understanding how individuals create online identity through clothing and style, how neo-tribes operate through social media, and how bloggers chose content to be posted.
- You will not receive monetary compensation for participation in this study.
- You will be provided a copy of this consent form.
- Taking part in this research project is voluntary. You don't have to participate and you can stop it any time.

INVITATION

You are invited to take part in this research study. The information in this form is meant to help you decide whether or not to participate. If you have any questions, please ask.

Why are you being asked to be in this research study?

You are being asked to be in this study because you are a blogger who posts in the following Instagram tags: grunge, grungewave, soft grunge, and pastel grunge. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate.

What is the reason for doing this research study?

Grungewave emerged on the blogging site *Tumblr* in 2010 as a revival of 1990s grunge. Fashion media have been skeptical of the authenticity of neo-tribes, which they often confuse with subcultures. This research is designed to (1) understand where in the fashion system do neo-tribes fit and how is their authenticity perceived (2) determine the similarities between subcultures and neo-tribes and (3) investigate the logistics of identity creation through clothing and dress in online neo-tribes, such as grungewave.

What will be done during this research study?

Your Instagram blog will be observed for a period of 3 months. During this period, the images and text you post will be collected, quantified (i.e. percentage of posts that contain flannel shirts), and compared to clothing and style details of 1990s grunge images. In the observation period, you should be posting at least 3 times per week. The amount of time put into weekly posts will be determined by you.

You will be asked to complete a survey with demographic questions and questions pertaining to grunge, grungewave, and personal style. Demographic questions and interview questions will be distributed through a link e-mailed to participants. It should take 1 hour at maximum to complete the demographic and interview questions.

Additional questions about specific posts may arise during the observation period of the research; these questions will be distributed along with a screenshot of the image via link to your e-mail address. These questions will take 30 minutes at maximum to answer. You do not have to answer the additional questions if you wish not to.

How will my data and images be used?

Identifiable information, such as username and blog title, will be shared only with the principal investigator and MA researcher. Usernames, blog titles, and actual names will be coded and kept private. Consent to use any images in the research discussion will be obtained first. If an image is to be used in the research discussion, the username and face of person (if applicable) will be omitted from the image.

What are the possible risks of being in this research study?

This research presents the risks of being uncomfortable having your blog observed for three months, not wanting to disclose information about your demographics, and being uncomfortable with being classified as an individual in a neo-tribe.

What are the possible benefits to you?

You are not expected to get any benefit from being in this study.

What are the possible benefits to other people?

The benefits to science and/or society may include better understanding of how authenticity is perceived, the creation of online identity through clothing and style, and the similarities between subcultures and neo-tribes.

What will being in this research study cost you?

There is no cost to you to be in this research study.

Will you be compensated for being in this research study?

No compensation will be provided for participating in this study.

What should you do if you have a problem during this research study?

Your welfare is the major concern of every member of the research team. If you have a problem as a direct result of being in this study, you should immediately contact one of the people listed at the beginning of this consent form.

You may contact the following if you are unable to discuss problems with the research team:

Counseling Center: Contact the URI Counseling Center if you need additional emotional, personal, or academic support. The Counseling Center may be reached by phone at (401) 874-2288.

How will information about you be protected?

Reasonable steps will be taken to protect your privacy and the confidentiality of your study data. The data will be stored electronically through a secure server and will only be seen by the research team during the study and for 3 years after the study is complete.

The only persons who will have access to your research records are the study personnel, the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and any other person, agency, or sponsor as required by law. The information from this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings but the data will be reported as group or summarized data and your identity will be kept strictly confidential.

What are your rights as a research subject?

You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in or during the study.

For study related questions, please contact the investigator(s) listed at the beginning of this form.

For questions concerning your rights or complaints about the research contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Vice President for Research and Economic Development:

- IRB: (401) 874-4328 / researchintegrity@etal.uri.edu.
- Vice President for Research and Economic Development: at (401) 874-4576

What will happen if you decide not to be in this research study or decide to stop participating once you start?

You can decide not to be in this research study, or you can stop being in this research study ("withdraw') at any time before, during, or after the research begins for any reason. Deciding not to be in this research study or deciding to withdraw will not affect your relationship with the investigator or with the University of Rhode Island.

You will not lose any benefits to which you are entitled.

ONLINE SURVEY CONSENT
I have read and understand the above consent form, I certify that I am at least 18 years of age and, by clicking the submit button to enter the survey, I indicate my willingness voluntarily take part in the study.

Survey link: https://uribus.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6yOUwKUXg2U5jfv

DEMOGRAPHICS AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **What is your gender?**
   - Female
   - Male
   - Other
   - Do not want to disclose

2. **What is your age?**
   - 18- 24
   - 25- 31
   - 32-38

3. **Which of the following best describes your current relationship status?**
   - Married
   - Divorced
   - Widowed
   - Separated
   - In a domestic partnership of civil union
   - Single, not married
   - Single, but cohabitating with a significant other
   - Do not want to disclose

4. **What is your education level?**
   - High school degree or less
   - High school equivalent
   - Some college
   - Associate's degree
   - Bachelor's degree
   - Graduate degree
   - Doctoral degree
   - Do not want to disclose

5. **What country do you reside in? Please specify below.**

6. **How long have you been on Instagram?**
   - 0-1 year
   - 2-3 years
   - 4-5 years
   - 6-7 years

7. **How many followers do you have on Instagram?**
   - Less than 1,000
   - 1,000-5,000
   - 5,000-10,000
   - 10,000-20,000
   - More than 20,000 (Please specify)

8. **How many times per week do you post on Instagram?**
   - 1-2 times
   - 3-4 times
   - 5-6 times
   - More than 6 times

9. **I am familiar with 1990s grunge music.**
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

10. **I am familiar with 1990s grunge fashion.**
    - Strongly Agree
    - Agree
    - Neutral
    - Disagree
    - Strongly Disagree

11. **Grunge ideology is grounded in authenticity of oneself (meaning not conforming to the main culture). Do you agree with this?**
    - **Yes (Please explain why below)**
    - **No (Please explain why below)**

12. **Grunge musicians had an anti-consumerism mentality and rejected corporations. Do you agree with this ideology?**
    - **Yes (Please explain why below)**
    - **No (Please explain why below)**

13. **Grunge fashion from the 1990s has been described as a rejection of aesthetics and conventional beauty. Grungewave has been described as embracing the aesthetics (clothing, style, and beauty). Do you agree that grungewave fashion embraces the aesthetics that 90s grunge did not?**
    - **Yes**
    - **No (Please explain why below)**

14. Aesthetic is important to me when posting outfit/clothing pictures on Instagram.
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

15. Aesthetic is important in my personal style outside of Instagram.
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

16. The outfits/clothing I post on Instagram are similar to what I wear everyday.
- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

17. My personal style is dependent on the day of the week and occasion.
- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

18. Do other grungewave, soft grunge, and pastel grunge bloggers inspire your style?
- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

19. Do you communicate with other grungewave, soft grunge, or pastel grunge bloggers?
- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

20. How do you describe your personal style?

21. Who inspires your personal style and why?

22. Would you classify yourself as grunge, grungewave, or neither?

23. **When creating an outfit or apparel post for Instagram, what qualities are most important to you?**

24. **What elements in an outfit/clothing post help determine the caption text and tags?**

25. **When you think of grunge (in the capacity of the 1990s), what dress components come to mind?**

26. **How would you describe grungewave (soft grunge, pastel grunge)?**

27. **What musicians or artists do you associate with grungewave (in terms of dress and music)? Please be specific.**

28. **How do these artists/musicians represent grungewave?**

COMPLETE TABLE OF OBSERVATION RESULTS

Category	Number of Occurrences
Chokers	209
Graphic shirts	176
Denim jeans	169
Plain shirts	140
Skirts	111
Converse/Vans	107
Sneakers (non-brand)	91
Tights	87
Backpacks	69
Denim jackets/vests	68
Belt	66
Dresses	57
Boots (non-brand)	52
Dr. Martens	48
Pants (non-denim)	44
Sweatshirts/hoodies	32
Crop tops/tube tops	31
Creepers	28
Jackets (non-leather/denim)	25
Socks	25
Headwear	21
Sweaters/Cardigans	14
Plaid/Flannel shirts	14
Fanny pack	14
Intimates	13
Overalls	13
Graphic button-up	10
Mesh tops	10
Sheer blouses	9
Sandals	8
Plain button-up	4
Leather jackets	4
Poncho	4
Knee socks	3
Bikini	3
Suspenders	3
Kimono	2
Bodysuit	1
Leggings	1
Track pants	1

Handbag	1

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