POST-SUBCULTURAL GROUPS IN COSTA RICA: MUSIC SCENES, THE UNDERGROUND, AND CLOTHING STYLES DURING THE 1990s

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POST-SUBCULTURAL GROUPS IN COSTA RICA: MUSIC SCENES, THE UNDERGORGUND, AND CLOTHING STYLES DURING THE 1990S

BY

MARIELA AGÜERO BARRANTES

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE IN TEXTILES, FASHION MERCHANDISING AND DESIGN

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ABSTRACT

During the 1990s, Costa Rica experienced a growth in youth bands performing emergent music genres. With this emergence, new social groupings also rise creating new relationships and memberships linked with music taste. The significance of the study is twofold: First, to understand how foreign cultural influences and local sociocultural dynamics came together to create new styles. Second, to know how these groups created new spaces of socialization for youth, forms of expression, and patterns of consumption expressed through clothing. By interviewing members of different rock and reggae groups, information was gathered in order to visualize the development of these scenes.

From a post-subcultural approach, this thesis argues that different musical genres and scenes created a sense of unity and support that led to the creation of the underground scene during the 1990s. The ‘underground scene’ served as a platform that opened up a series of spaces that were alternative to the mainstream, where youth groups were able to perform their music and create new styles. In these new spaces, members of the underground developed new clothing styles linked to their musical tastes.

Musical influences came from all over the Americas, both in Spanish and English, and allowed the emergence of different genres, social relationships, and the creation of identities. The development of new genres was possible because of the role of media and direct access to new music, mainly through television. Guided by their musical taste, members of the scene socialized in both subcultural and post-subcultural
groups. Both allegiances led to the creation of new spaces of socialization for gigs and gatherings. Members of the scenes established their clothing styles based on their icons and could be identified within a specific genre due to their dress. Aesthetics were, therefore, a mix of influences and brands that came directly from the United States. *Americans* was their primary outlet for clothing hunting and adopted the current styles directly from the United States.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

As part of the effects of globalization, most countries are exposed to foreign influences that allow the formation of new customs, identities, and scenes. New social dynamics stem from the integration of new customs, which are often expressed in clothing and music. Latin-America has adapted several foreign practices in its culture, which has led to the diversification of cultural expression across the region (Molina, 2005). As a Central American country, Costa Rica has been influenced either culturally, socially, or politically by several regions (North and South America, and the Caribbean). Studying Costa Rican subcultures can benefit academics in understanding how foreign influences create new identities, spaces of socialization, and expressions through dress. More specifically, research on music subcultures can investigate the drives of young individuals to create music and styles. Youth often use clothing and music to express themselves and communicate their subcultural affiliations. Alternative groups are directly linked to their parent culture, from whom they are trying to move away (Bennett, 2000).

The majority of youth post-subcultural studies have focused on England and the United States. The focus on western countries limits the vision of how these groups have spread in different geographic locations, where subcultures are also a form of alternative identity (Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004). The dissociation of youth groups in Latin-America and the lack of familiarity with them has resulted in a deficiency of
existing literature. Therefore, by acknowledging and studying these groups, more researchers can propose similar research in non-western societies. The identification of groups in Latin-America can allow researchers to understand how individualities work in the construction of cultural backgrounds. In addition, the topic can motivate researchers to fill other gaps and interests related to subcultural behavior in non-conventional contexts. Thus, the study of alternative groups in Costa Rica illustrates the importance of foreign influences and how it is reflected in music and clothing.

**Purpose Statement**

This study will examine how and why underground styles used by rock and reggae scenes became popular among Costa Rican youth in the 1990s and early 2000s. The significance of studying this is twofold: First, to understand how foreign cultural influences and local sociocultural dynamics came together to create new styles. Second, to know how these groups create new spaces of socialization for youth, forms of expression, and patterns of consumption expressed through clothing.

By researching this topic, gaps in Latin-American alternative groups will be covered to provide a different approach to cultural analysis in regard to dress and identity. As a Central American country, Costa Rica has influences from North and South America and the Caribbean, leading to the construction of new genres and tangible expressions. The changes can be visible through expressions in music and clothing. Global processes, education systems, and increasing consumption had significant effects on the creation of styles in the decade of the 1990s and early 2000s. Mass media such as music, television, and the internet created new channels of communication among young cohorts and differentiated them from their parents.
Using interviews as the primary source of information, data will be gathered from subjects who are connected to the rock and reggae scenes. Subjects provide information regarding their music influences, clothing and style, and the creation of spaces for this specific cohort. Therefore, focusing on Costa Rica as a case study, the ethnographic approach will help explore the cultural dynamics of rock and reggae groups in the decade of the 1990s and early 2000s.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Theoretical Framework

Subcultures have been a topic of study since the early 20th century by both the Chicago School and the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS). The concept “subculture” was first used by scholars from the CCCS who studied youth groups by analyzing categories such as social-class resistance, style identity, and commitment to one specific group and way of life (Hebdige, 1979). These studies used Marxist concepts such as hegemony and class to identify the behavior of groups (Hebdige, 1979). Moreover, subcultures are characterized by their close boundaries, homogenous identity, and their high degree of allegiance with one group (Muggleton, 2000).

Since the 1980s, with the advance of new communication technologies, patterns of consumption, and social transformations, new identities were influenced, and individual attachments became more flexible (Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004). After this decade, new cultural structures became available for youth groups, and behavior changed and evolved as the post-modern condition highlighted individualism rather than group identity. The groups had blurred boundaries for both socialization and style, which became heterogenic, mainly influenced by mass media (Muggleton, 2000).
There was a rise of innovative communication technologies and media influencing social dynamics and group identities during the 1990s (Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004). The field of Cultural Studies has addressed the transition towards more fluid and less static youth cultural identities during the decade. The book, *After subculture: Critical Studies in Contemporary Youth Culture* by Andy Bennett and Keith Khan-Harris, explored new interactions among youth groups in modern times.

My thesis draws from concepts articulated by Bennett and Khan-Harris (2004) in a post-subcultural perspective. The authors proposed a post-subcultural approach as a reaction to the CCCS subculture theory. They analyze seven different and newer theoretical perspectives for the study of groups and youth’s behavior. These are gender-biased analyses, youth consumerism, the blurred relationship with social class, variety of geographical spaces, taste cultures, the role of media, and youth as an analytical category.

Groups are believed to be gender-biased, when people only socialize with same-gender members. However, post-subcultural theory contraposes this line of thought by arguing the importance of mixed relationships and giving women an equal role. Gender interactions are important since they create richer experiences and connections between groups. McRobbie (1994) highlights the lack of studies focused on women within subcultures. She argued the importance of the input and different perspectives given by women in masculine spheres. In addition, McRobbie (1994) also analyzed the relationship between fashion and how shifts in the display of style transformed consumerism. Street styles became the inspiration for high fashion, but more importantly, they created a blurred line between looks, as class was no longer
what held people together (Polhemus, 2010). Moreover, one person could or could not be committed to just one style or might be looking for *stylistic inspiration* in order to create their individual *self* (Polhemus, 2010).

Post-subcultural groups also encountered blurred lines between socialization spaces. Full allegiance was not the norm, as individuals can have numerous spaces and can empathize with several groups throughout the day (Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004). George Stahl (2004) proposed the concept of a scene and the aspects that make it suitable for post-subcultural groups. The scene enclosed a locality within urban space and is enriched by the different social, economic, and historical dynamics supported by a specific moment in time. Scenes’ nature is pluralistic, meaning that they interconnect several groups with wide differences in the same spatial place or places. Muggleton (2000) explained these lines as flexible and weak since individuals have fragmented identities and fluctuate between groups. Moreover, the author talks about the heterogenic and homogenic clothing styles within modern and postmodern groups as a visual cue for identity. The use of heterogenic styles looks forward to enhancing an individual’s authenticity. Though in post-modern clothing styles, the idea of true authenticity is blurred as the individual can jump from style to others easily (Muggleton, 2000; Hodkinson, 2004).

The fact that groups are not fully committed to a specific style gives space to the concept of “Taste cultures” (Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004). Bennett and Kahn-Harris (2004) defined taste cultures as style-based music groups, whose music taste is not affected by any social indicators. With heterogenic groups formed by taste, the author argued that post-subcultures do not primarily identify themselves as working-
class. Instead, taste cultures cut across patterns supported in subcultural theory by creating groups with similar musical attachments and symbolic definitions (Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004).

Due to the lack of universality in subcultural studies, post-subcultural theory takes into consideration a variety of geographical spaces. Furthermore, it proposes the creation of new cases of study across different regions (Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004; Stahl, 2004). The diversification of space also amplifies other concepts such as class, ethnicity, and gender, as these indicators do not define groups anymore. Furthermore, mass media, mainly television, allowed the mix of universality and blurred borderlines by creating availability with visual resources (Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004).

Finally, the post-subcultural theory introduced the concept of youth as an ideological category (Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004). Instead of referring to youth as a specific phase in life that only encompasses about five years, it can be analyzed through the idea of youthfulness (Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004). How being youthful determines style and taste, as well as their status in society throughout the years.

Music Influences in Aesthetics and Identity in Subcultural Studies

Subcultures emerge from working-class groups that want to express social structures’ discrepancies through many outlets, some being music and clothing (Hebdige, 1979). Post-subcultures have a broad spectrum of backgrounds and are related by their taste in music and clothing styles (Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004). Music started as a leisure activity but later on became the reason for being and its form of identity and expression. Music has a significant influence on the way people dress
and choose clothing styles. People reproduce, copy, or interpret the styles and clothing of their music icons, opening spaces for new identities. Scholarly articles have examined both subcultures and post-subcultures founded around music.

The move from subculture to post-subcultures began with globalization and the interactions via new forms of media (e.g., the internet), evolving to create new groups and behaviors (Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004). Bennett and Kahn-Harris (2004) presents music as a significant component of alternative groups and their identities, but he no longer placed groups into a static category. Their thesis is that contemporary youth groups have no limitations in their interactions; hence, they belong in several scenes and groups, and their allegiance is not devoted to only one aesthetic (Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004).

Linked to this idea, Hesmondhalgh (2007) analyzes concepts such as scenes, subcultures, and tribes through the lens of music and youth, specifically the role of music within social groups. Such relationships can create a sense of identity and authenticity, as well as collectivities. When people identify themselves as a collective, they create new aesthetics and symbols for in-group and out-group recognition (Hesmondhalgh, 2007).

Geographical Spaces

Studies from different countries use post-subcultural theory to illustrate the diversity of spaces and groups with similar components. Case studies from the Americas such as Brazil (Béhague, 2006), Argentina (Parr, 2006), Chile (Matus, 2001), and Canada (Stahl, 2004) have all addressed the creation of new social groups,
their relationship with music, and styles situated mostly in urban centers. Urban areas are the cradle of new scenes and groups because of their multi-cultural and pluralistic nature. For example, in Montreal, migration patterns have diversified the city resulting in the amalgamation of sounds and styles in an alternative scene (Stahl, 2004).

Countries from all over the Americas influenced each other as they feed on different musical and stylistic cues. Latin-America faced a political and economic crisis during the decades of 1970s and 1980s. By the 1990s, when most of these issues ended, the youth looked for outlets to express their feelings and views (Parr, 2006). During this time Latin-America faced an increase of original music and the diversification and creation of its own identity (Rodríguez Carabalí, 2018). In Brazil, by the decade of the 1990s, urban youth groups were adopting international beats. They mixed them with their own roots resulting in a new symbolic identity expressed through reggae and samba (Béhague, 2006).

Besides the growth of rock and reggae in countries like Argentina and Brazil, other subgenres developed as a part of the spectrum, such as ska, punk, grunge, hip-hop, and dancehall (Marshall, 2006; Paulraj, 2013; Rodríguez Carabalí, 2018). Despite being separate entities and the emergent popularization, these genres had to coexist due to the small number of available spaces. Matus (2001) studies youth groups under the concept of urban tribes, in rock spheres in Chile. He analyses the development of an underground movement that builds new forms of sociability as well as the creation of spaces. Along the same line, Stalh (2003) highlights Montreal’s alternative record label and radio shows which created space and voice for the urban scene. The author
talks about the genesis of the urban scene as a creative necessity for younger generations.

Costa Rican academia has vaguely explored music influences on youth through subcultural and alternative groups. Three studies have addressed music influences on lyrics and socialization spaces, pointing out the clothing styles and aesthetics but not using it as their main variable. Priscilla Carballo (2001) explores music as a way to create an identity among youth within reggae and ska scenes as spaces, and how these settings give individuals a space to commit and participate in a group. On the other hand, Mario Zúñiga (2003) proposes a mapping of reggae and rock through the analysis of lyrics. By analyzing them, his goal is to understand possible political reactions expressed by youth in early ages through music as opposed to the country’s context. Finally, Laura Fuentes (2004) explores punk and Goth as allegiance groups linked to music genres. She analyzes the different identities between both groups and how they belonged in the same space: the underground scene.

This study of rock and reggae can enhance the global spectrum of studies in music and aesthetics. It covers music’s influences, development, and creation of new scenes and socialization spaces, as well as how they are directly linked to aesthetics and behaviors. Moreover, the study of influences allowed the researcher to understand different international dynamics and how the subjects of the interviews were not excluded from a global set of ideas and consumerism.
Consumption and Clothing Identity

Consumption and clothing are key elements in the study of alternative culture. The identification of fashion trends allows researchers to understand the leap from underground contexts to the mainstream. This leap has two characteristics: the loss of meaning as alternative clothing, and the spread and commercialization of styles (Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004). Once a style is commercialized and reaches the mainstream, the boundaries between subcultural groups disappear.

The market of fashionable goods has created different lifestyles and group identities; in postmodern cultures, people can quickly move from one lifestyle to another (Hodkinson, 2004). In alternative groups, commitment and boundaries between groups and style preferences are flexible, as one person can have several identities (Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004). The fact that consumers can have several identities creates a broader spectrum of products with which people can buy into several memberships.

Authors have studied the relationship of these flexible identities and the construction of the self and consumerism. (Hodkinson, 2004, Moore, 2005, Nuttall et al., 2010, Arvisson, 2001). Scholars have argued that the acquisition of clothing is the reaffirmation of how individuals create an image and perception of the self. The construction of the self enhances belonging to several groups, thus increasing individuals’ subcultural capital. An individual’s subcultural capital depends on the amount of clothing or other types of accessories that they have, which reaffirms their
membership within a group or groups (Moore, 2005). Subcultural capital shows they are committed to the group, its knowledge, and attachment.

Polhemus’ (2010) concept “Supermarket of style” helps explain how the blurred lines among post-subculture groups and the popularization of styles serve consumption. According to Polhemus (2010), people can don several trends at the same time and be accepted by the mainstream. Polhemus (2012) also explained how fashion systems and industry have drastically changed over time, but the production stayed static ever since the ‘New Look’ in the 1950s. A spectrum of styles and alternatives have always existed and coexisted. Thus, the commercialization of alternative styles in postmodern societies is visible through new interpretations and the loss of original subcultural meaning (Polhemus, 2012).

Kawamura (2018) analyzes the commercialization of styles and introduces the concept of fashion institutions, which follows how styles are created, shown, spread, reproduced, and introduced into the mainstream. In other words, Kawamura addresses how the subcultural style transitions from its original meaning into fashion reproductions. In-group members, whose own style they legitimized, can also promote it as fashion (Polhemus, 2010). An example is the punk style, where members such as Vivienne Westwood founded high fashion lines. Subcultural fashion trends are promoted as “cool,” and outsiders take their sartorial style without the subcultural meaning or behavior (Kawamura, 2018).
Context and Music in Costa Rica in the 1990s: From Copied to Original Sounds

In the early 1980s, Costa Rica went through a severe economic crisis, which led to critical socio-economic transformations (Díaz & Molina, 2018). As a result of the debt crisis, the country adopted a series of market-oriented policies and privatization suggested by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The structural adjustment policies brought a series of changes. First, the small scale agricultural producers suffered from the liberalization of trade barriers and importation of consumer products (Barquero, 2011). Second, the closure of physically manufactured apparel production in Costa Rica led to the growth of service industries (Hidalgo, 2003). Finally, patterns of consumption changed, mainly due to the opening of the first Mall and the expansion of stores and goods available in the metropolitan area (Hidalgo, 2003).

Thus, the decade of the 1990s brought a significant change in the lifestyle of society, visible with the entrance of new technology, communication, and mass consumption into the homes (Molina, 2005). The American influence was evident in this changing society. Most families had a TV, which allowed the transculturation in aired TV shows and the influence of foreign music (Molina, 2005).

In this context, the first wave of original rock started to rise in the country in the late 1980s. This first wave challenged the popularity of chiqui-chiqui, which was the most popular mainstream music at the time. Chiqui-chiqui was a music genre that
came from a combination of pop and *son latino*\(^1\), starting first in the Costa Rican Caribbean coast in Limón, and then moving into the Metropolitan area (Vargas, 2015). Influences for new genres and movements came from the outside, creating a sense of transculturation, where Costa Rican youth was adopting other behaviors originating in foreign cultures (Molina, 2005). According to Molina (2005), new sounds, styles, and lifestyles were visible through TV shows mainly from the United States. Even though American pop culture had a significant impact in the 1990s, European and Latin American influences were also available in TV shows and magazines (Molina, 2005).

The economic growth in the country during the decade of 1990s allowed youth to create new social groupings, socialization spaces, and consumption, which became the base of commitment to a certain allegiance or scene (Molina, 2005). The increase of private enterprises also influenced transculturation in the 1990s; companies sponsored cultural activities for the general public to advertise themselves. In the 1980s and 90s, the primary sponsor for music festivals and concerts was the *Republic Tobacco Company* (Cuevas, 1995). Promoting their *Derby* cigarettes, they helped the transition between the 1980s *chiqui-chiqui* to rock, as they promoted music that was a hit at the moment.

The leap between music genres in the 1980s is significant. By the 1980s, *chiqui-chiqui* was a popular genre along with other tropical genres such as *salsa* and *merengue*. These last two came from Caribbean countries, and some bands became visible in New York with migrations to this city (Hernández, 2003). However, *chiqui-

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\(^1\) *Son Latino* is a Cuban music genre that encloses music elements from both Spanish and Afro-Cuban traditions.
*chiqui* was one of the first genres in Costa Rica to have national bands, but they did not play original songs (Cuevas, 1995). These bands were the first ones to tour around the country and create a fan base and followers (Cuevas, 1995). By the late 1980s, the first generation of rock emerged in the musical scene. The big difference between rock and *chiqui-chiqui* was song-writing creation; it was the first time that rock bands had their original sounds (Cuevas, 1995).

Rock music arrived in Costa Rica and created a new order, where sounds and lyrics were original. Though parents were not accepting this type of music because of its aggressive and rebellious nature, one event consolidated the arrival of the genre in the country: the concert *Derechos Humanos Ya* (Human Rights Now) (Díaz, 2018). In September of 1988, singers including Bruce Springsteen, Sting, and Peter Gabriel arrived in San José to perform. (Díaz, 2018). From this point on, rock music became a reality in the country.

Parallel to rock, the reggae scene was also growing, though primarily in the Caribbean. Even though there was no specific event to set up reggae as a popular genre among youth, the music also became popular in the late 1980s, primarily with familiar sounds from Panamá and lyrics in Spanish (Pereira, 1998). The relationship between the Atlantic coasts was different and close, as afro-descendant communities were a separate entity from the rest of the country. Within the Atlantic boundaries, communities shared the same ideals, heritage, and influenced each other with music and clothing. The popularization of reggae began with *breaking* or breakdance being showed on the show *Hola Juventud* in the mid-1980s (Palacios, 2019).
*Hola Juventud* was the first TV show exclusively dedicated to music in Costa Rica, starting in 1980. In the beginning, its main scope was to broadcast international music videos for youth, but as the scenes grew, this space supported recognized bands and had live interviews with musicians (Díaz, 2018). In the same decade, MTV launched its channel, but it was only available by paying for cable television (Díaz, 2018). With the popularization of music in Spanish, MTV Latino launched in 1993, promoting bands from all over Latin-American but focusing on music from countries such as Mexico and Argentina due to their large and consolidated music scenes (Bahena & Garibaldo, 2014).
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to identify the foreign influences and local dynamics in order to understand how they merged to create new clothing styles in Costa Rica. In addition, the study seeks to understand how these influences pushed groups to create new spaces of socialization, forms of expressions, and consumption expressed through clothing styles. Lastly, the study sets out to understand how scenes were formed and built based on inspiration from other countries and local context in the 1990s from a youth perspective.

The research was qualitative and sought to understand music youth groups in Costa Rica in the decades of the 1990s and early 2000s. An ethnographic approach was used, performing interviews to compile the data (Zaccagnini Flynn & Foster, 2009). Individual interviews were performed and analyzed by utilizing coding as a method for content analysis (Zaccagnini Flynn & Foster, 2009). Reliability was measured using Holsti’s formula and two different coders.

Qualitative research was a suitable choice for this project as the topic has been roughly researched from a clothing perspective in a Latin-American country. Interviews for qualitative research provide flexibility to test the data and help exploratory data and ideas to flow easily (Qu & Dumay, 2011). Semi-structured interviews give the interviewees the freedom to develop ideas. At the same time, they followed a script that guided their thoughts and memories so the researcher could
better understand (Qu & Dumay, 2011). Qualitative research also allows for the creation and discovery of new perspectives in a social situation or case study (Zaccagnini Flynn & Foster, 2009). In general, qualitative research allows the analysis of events and feelings that subjects express through data and to find the trends and shared ideas in all the interviews. Because interviews are guided conversations, it permits the creation and collection of data for a specific subject (Zaccagnini Flynn & Foster, 2009). Interviews allowed a closer look into a subject’s perspective but also limited the number of interactions between subject and researcher because the researcher decides the level of exchanges, unlike participant observation (Zaccagnini Flynn & Foster, 2009). Interviews also require thoughtful preparation in order to accomplish the objectives proposed. Prior research is necessary to design the questions, decide who the subjects will be for the interview, and select the right type of interview for the scenario (Qu & Dumay, 2011).

**Sampling Procedure**

Interviews were performed with band members and fans from Costa Rica in order to get their perspective on music, fashion, and aesthetics between the 1990s and early 2000s. The snowball method was used to identify participants who belong within the needed parameters. The snowball method is a non-probability sampling technique that studies a specific group of people who do not represent an entire society (Zaccagnini Flynn & Foster, 2009). Within the non-probability sampling, the snowball method can be categorized as purposeful sampling, which uses a specific group of studies that suits the relevance of the research (Zaccagnini Flynn & Foster, 2009). The snowball method is a multi-stage technique where the researcher starts with familiar
people and asks them to approach other subjects who are in the position to inform the study’s purpose. Then subjects can guide the researcher to other individuals of interest and let the cycle continue (Krippendorff, 2018).

The method is mostly used for new topics of study where random sampling would not be beneficial. Therefore, the snowball method was favorable because the researcher was able to pick subjects of interest that fit the goals of the study (Krippendorff, 2018). Using a third party to contact the subjects was both an advantage and a disadvantage. As an advantage, the third party that contacts the subjects serves to increase the subjects’ trust in the researcher. However, as a disadvantage, the third party could previously condition the expectations of the interviewee or misrepresent the goals of the research (Krippendorff, 2018).

**Participants**

A total of ten participants (8 men and 2 women) were interviewed. All the participants are Costa Ricans and above 35 years of age (mean age was 40.9 years), meaning that they were teenagers during the 1990s. All the subjects lived during this time at the Gran Área Metropolitana (GAM; Greater Metropolitan Area). Regarding their relationship to the music scene: six men were part of recognized music groups in Costa Rica and identify themselves as members of the scene; two women and one man are fans of the scene and actively participated in the scene; and one man created the first blog for music and concert promotions in the country.

From the sample, interviewees belonged to either the rock or reggae scene and its different branches. Three participants identified themselves as punk-rock, one was
rock, two were reggae, one was alternative reggae, one was a rude girl, one was a metal-rock fan, and the last participant’s relationship with the scene was not directly related to group identification, but online music platforms. All interviewees are from Costa Rica and participated in the underground scene during the 1990s in the province of San José. Participants and the researcher never met nor were acquaintances before the interviews. Table 1 shows participants' information, characteristics, and relationship to the scene.

Table 1

Subjects Interviewed and Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Relationship to the scene</th>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Sampling Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Esteban</td>
<td>Singer and guitar player at SEKA (Punk-Rock-Ska 1994 to present)</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Snowball Method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joaquín</td>
<td>Bass player at SEKA (Punk-Rock-Ska 1994 to present)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Snowball Method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabriel</td>
<td>Founder and bass player at Mekatelyu (Reggae 1997-present)</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Snowball Method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luis</td>
<td>Singer and founder at Gandhi (Rock 1993-present)</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Direct message on Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hugo</td>
<td>Singer at Mentados (Reggae-Ska 1996-present)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Direct message on Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paula</td>
<td>Rude Girl</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Snowball Method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paola</td>
<td>Punk-Rock fan</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Direct message on Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valerio</td>
<td>Metal fan</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Snowball Method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Huba</strong></td>
<td>Founder and singer of Ragga by Roots (Reggae 1996-1999)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Direct message on Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adrián</strong></td>
<td>Founder of online platform 89decibeles.com (2003-2015)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Direct message on Instagram</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Participant Recruitment**

Participants were recruited with two different approaches. First, by using the snowball method, which consisted of identifying people who know other reliable people who are familiar with the topic and can provide valuable information and experiences. Third parties were identified by the researcher and were asked to contact other specific subjects who could help with the development of the research. Once the third party formalized the connection, the researcher explained to the participant what the research was about and how their help was key in the data-gathering process. Third parties were people who had an established relationship with the researcher, either as friends or acquaintances with an amicable relationship. Third parties were more closely linked or related to the subjects. They are influential and trustworthy personas in the subject’s life.

Second, subjects were also contacted directly via email or social media to their public/performer profiles. Using this method allowed the researcher to have direct first contact with the subject. The subjects contacted by social media were strangers to the researcher before the interviews. The only link was their status as artists. No compensation was given to the subjects.
Subjects had to meet certain characteristics for inclusion, first an age above 35 years, meaning that they were teens and young adults during the 1990s. Second, lived within the two geographic areas of study: The Great Metropolitan Area and the Caribbean. Finally, consider themselves as a part of the scene either as a performer or a member, no matter the genre or allegiance. If they did not meet these criteria they were excluded as possible subjects.

*Location*

Interviews were held in Costa Rica, in locations that worked best for the subject, such as their homes or public spaces such as cafés. One interview could not be completed in person, and the subject was interviewed using WhatsApp calls and online surveys. The online tool can shrink the distance between the subjects and the researcher and allow the data to be available in a schedule that works for both entities. Conversations were audio-recorded, and the researcher also took notes while meeting with the subjects.

*Research Procedures*

To ensure that all needed information was gathered, the following protocol was applied. With the approval of IRB, two different dates were set to collect the data, Summer 2019 (August) and J-Term 2020 (January). A multi-stage draw was scheduled due to time restrictions and the intensive work of acquiring the appointments with the proposed subjects. The interviews were expected to have a duration between 30 minutes and 1 hour per subject.
Interviews were designed based on previous research made on the topic proposed to assess its feasibility. Questions were developed to meet the objectives planned. After designing the interview, third parties were selected based on their presence in the scene and the networking they had. Third parties had a broad idea of the research and why their help was fundamental in the process. They agreed and contacted the subjects if the subjects were comfortable with the research, third parties supplied direct contact information to the researcher.

The researcher approached the subjects via a telephone call, and explained to them how they were identified, what the research was about, and how their contribution would enhance the project. After the subjects approved their participation in the research, then a time and location to conduct the interview was discussed. The researcher was open to any options that were suitable for the subject and their necessities. Before the in-person interview started, the researcher reintroduced herself and again shared the objective of the project, and read and explained the consent form, which included information on their rights as a research participant. Consent forms were signed, and the interview started.

Interviews occurred in public locations like cafés, country clubs and bars, and in private locations such as the subject’s house. Only one interview was joined by two members of the same band, one was approached by the researcher, and the second person joined due to the subject’s invitation. For the rest of the interviews, only one subject and the researcher were present. In total, nine interviews were performed for ten subjects.
Data Collection

Individual interviews were the main form of data collection for this research. The script created for this purpose had eighteen open-ended questions that covered five different variables to answer the two main objectives. A semi-structured interview was used in this case, as it gives the researcher the advantage of having a plan but also allowing the subject the freedom to elaborate and describe their own experiences in-depth (Alsaawi, 2014). This method also allows the researcher to ask new questions from emergent topics coming out of the information shared in the interview.

Questions started with basic information so the subjects could create a bond with the researcher. They first needed to explain how they originated their interest in music, what was appealing about that music for them, and their influences on the music they created. This first approach allowed them to talk about their first experiences and make them rethink their musical project. The following questions covered topics such as social gatherings, spaces of socialization, scenes, and clothing. Interviews offered all the information needed to accomplish both objectives for the two groups proposed, rock and reggae.

The researcher ensured that the interview locations were chosen by the subjects, so they could pick an environment where they felt comfortable. However, the process of interviewing had one specific challenge. Most of the subjects are used to giving promotional interviews, an interview for an academic purpose put a few of them outside their comfort zone. Therefore, thorough explanation of the academic purposes of the study was necessary. Since a few of them were not used to giving in-
depth reflective interviews, they were hesitant about their responses. They were hesitant and doubtful that their stories were worthy of study or analysis, constantly asking if the information they were disclosing was relevant enough. The researcher had to reaffirm that their youth years were indeed relevant.

To enhance the data of the interviews, subjects provided photographs to illustrate the information given, which were useful to understand the visual component in spaces and clothing that was under study. They also referred to videoclips available in their YouTube pages to explain their clothing choices. Videos were used as a reaffirmation of information. This type of material also helped to support the theoretical interpretation proposed in post-subcultural theory.

The interviews were audio-recorded, and the researcher took notes on the process. Interviews lasted between thirty minutes and two hours. The audio was analyzed by using the coding method, hence creating a coding key. The coding key was created based on grounded codes that emerged from the interviews. These codes covered variables such as foreign influences expressed in clothing, consumption activities, and the meaning of clothing.

**Data Analysis**

**Data Coding**

Interview data were coded using an inductive process. The information was categorized aiming to answer the research questions and theory proposed. These categories were new and specific for this research design. A codebook was created and
used to compile the data and code it. In order to create the codebook, raw data results where trends were visible were used to establish the themes analyzed (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2011). Data-driven codes allow the researcher to condense the data in a few clusters, create topics, compare the data between interviews and create the codes to analyze the information more easily and in a standardized way (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2011). A coding key was designed with the information gathered from findings using grounded theory and open codes (Thomas, 2006). This key enclosed numerical codes to identify relevant information within the interviews. (Zaccagnini Flynn & Foster, 2009).

The interviews were coded using grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Grounded theory is an inductive process that analyses the data gathered and identifies trends of similar information that can be clustered in categories (Thomas, 2006). These categories result from the grounded theory and become the labels within the research as a form to clearly explain the data (Thomas, 2006). The categories are a manageable way of exploring a new area of inquiry as it develops from constant trends of information (Zaccagnini Flynn & Foster, 2009).

**Coders**

Two persons coded the data once it was in the codebook: the researcher and a research assistant. The researcher served as a primary coder and the research assistant as a secondary coder. The assistant received training before he/she analyzed the data. In training, the researcher explained the main objective of the project, the type of data, and the gathering method. Once the research assistant understood the goals, the
researcher presented the codebook and coding key and proceeded to explain how these tools worked. A demonstration with the first data set was performed with both researcher and assistant. After training was completed, and questions were resolved, the data was sent to the research assistant in an email.

**Methodological Integrity**

As a way to demonstrate its reliability, interview responses were compiled in an excel codebook, and two individuals independently coded the information. The researcher was the primary coder, and a secondary coder also analyzed the data. This second examination reduced coding bias and increased interrater reliability (Thomas, 2006). Both coders worked independently with the same codebook and coding key and attended the same instructions. Inter-reliability can also help researchers to understand if the codebook is appropriately designed to be able to inform the purposes of the study (Krippendorff, 2004).

The reliability of the coding was measured, and Holsti’s formula \((2M/N1+N2)\) was applied and estimated the accuracy of the coding responses (Allen, 2017). The calculation was made by comparing all possible agreements with both code sets, then the summation of all the agreements was made, and the formula applied. The coefficients can be rated on a scale from 0 to .100 percent, where percentages below .70 are low and only applicable for exploratory studies, .80 or more is adequate, and .90 or higher is acceptable (Allen, 2017).

Zaccagnini Flynn & Foster’s (2009) technique to assess validity was followed to assure the trustworthiness of the data. They ensured two types: internal and external
validity. Even though topics have a bias based on the researcher’s taste, internal validity was handled by promoting interviews from different genres. The connections available to the researcher were closer to the punk-rock scene, but that was balanced by including subjects from rock and reggae scenes. By having diversity within the sample, we ensured that the study was not only focused on just rock or just reggae but a middle ground.

Results expressed the external validity as data that could be replicated in further studies by using the same study design proposed. The fact that repetition within answers occurred shows the strength of the information. The Holsti’s formula was applied. The total average was calculated by adding the intercoder results. Table 2 summarizes the results, and the five categories are explained based on the trends seen.

**Table 2**

*Holsti’s Method and Results*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Intercoder Reliability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreign and national influences</td>
<td>0.853%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intergroup relationships</td>
<td>0.856%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spaces of socialization</td>
<td>0.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning of style</td>
<td>0.851%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumption and acquisition of clothing</td>
<td>0.903%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.86%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

After analyzing the interviews, five trends of information were visible and used to address the proposed objectives. To examine reliability in the data Holstí’s formula was applied measuring the agreements between the two different coders (see Table 2). These five categories covered aspects such as musical influences, social behavior between groups, spaces where youth socialized, and the consumption and creation of styles based on influences and economic means.

Ten participants contributed overall to the research; seven were interviewed in August 2019 and three in January 2020. By using the snowball method, third parties were contacted a week before the interview in the same timeline mentioned above. Participants were also contacted directly through their professional Facebook accounts. Four subjects followed up on topics of their interest and sent new ideas and photographs via text message. All participants answered the same set of questions at the interviews, and due to its semi-structured method, some other details and questions arose to accomplish the objectives.

Based on the data analysis, five different categories clustered all the visible trends in the interviews. These groups of information correspond directly to the objectives of the research. For the first objective to analyze foreign influences and
local dynamics in youth groups, two categories were created based on the answers. The first one explores their inspirations and influences in music. The second one questioned how these allegiances to music created gatherings based on style choices. For the second objective, the goal was to understand how youth created new environments and expressions through clothing. Three different categories were created to this end: first, new spaces of socialization; second, the meaning of style; and third, consumption and acquisition of clothing. Participants were addressed by their first names.

**Music Influences: Family and Generational View**

Subjects identified two sources that influenced their musical taste: parents or family members, and contemporary music outlets. Subjects emphasized their parents or other family members’ musical tastes as a primary source of influence. The subjects mentioned how their parents’ music (music from the United Kingdom, the United States, Jamaica, or Latin America) had impacted their taste. They were also encouraged to play an instrument. Table 3 shows the music influences and relationships with a close relative and the subjects. In addition to their parents’ or family’s musical taste, the subjects identified their contemporary music as an important source of influence. Here, the popularization of cable TV and music shows was very important. The role of media and broadcasting enhanced visual references. The subjects identified several countries of influence with a strong emphasis on the Latin-American scene: primarily Mexico and South American countries. Table 4 is an
exhaustive list of all the bands mentioned by the subjects in the interviews. These bands are from the same age cohort as the participants.

Table 3

Results for Foreign Influences Based on Their Relatives Taste in Music

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influences</th>
<th>Instruments played by the subjects and musical influences from their close relatives</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Played an instrument because of their family or friends influence</td>
<td>Piano, Guitar, Bass</td>
<td>Luis, Esteban, Joaquín, Huba, Hugo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical taste influence by their family members (Grandmother, Parents, Siblings)</td>
<td>Pablo Milanés, Víctor Jara, Mercedes Sossa, Silvio Rodríguez, Julio Jaramillo, The Beatles, Janis Joplin, Pink Floyd, Chopin, Mozart</td>
<td>Joaquín, Esteban, Luis, Valerio, Huba</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4

Results for Foreign Influences Based on Their Own Generational Views
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Foreign bands mentioned by the participants</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>United States</strong></td>
<td>Grunge</td>
<td>Nirvana, Pearl Jam, Alice in Chains, Red Hot Chili Peppers</td>
<td>Joaquín, Gabriel, Hugo, Luis, Esteban, Paola, Valerio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Megadeth, Guns and Roses, Pantera, Anthrax, Slayer, Metallica</td>
<td>Valerio, Luis, Esteban, Paola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jamaica</strong></td>
<td>Reggae</td>
<td>Bob Marley, Israel Vibration, rock steady</td>
<td>Gabriel, Huba, Luis, Paula, Hugo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>England</strong></td>
<td>Various genres from the UK</td>
<td>Two-tone movement, Depeche Mode, Sex Pistols, The Cure</td>
<td>Luis, Gabriel, Paula, Esteban, Joaquín</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Latin-America</strong></td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Café Tacuba, Molotov, Moenia, Caifanes</td>
<td>Esteban, Joaquín, Gabriel, Luis, Hugo, Paola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Costa Rica (national)</td>
<td>Bernal Villegas, Hormigas en la Pared, Deznuke, Post-Mortem, Capmany</td>
<td>Esteban, Joaquín, Valerio, Luis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>Aterciopelados</td>
<td>Paola, Joaquín, Esteban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perú</td>
<td>Narcóticos</td>
<td>Gabriel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>Sepultura</td>
<td>Luis, Valerio, Esteban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>Fabulosos Cadillacs, Soda Stereo, Charly García, Spinetta, 2”, Todos Tus Muertos</td>
<td>Esteban, Joaquín, Gabriel, Luis, Hugo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Broadcast Media (TV and Radio)</td>
<td>MTV Latino, Hola Juventud</td>
<td>Esteban, Joaquín, Gabriel, Luis, Hugo, Valerio, Paula, Paola, Huba</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The participants in the study pointed out influences from different countries, mainly across the Americas, and some from England. These influences were contemporary to them due to their age and events during the decade of the 1990s. However, they also address the influence of relatives as starting points on their music taste. That gave the subjects several layers of music generations and genres, which influenced the music they developed. The first influence mentioned was older family members, such as parents, grandmother, and brothers. Five subjects directly indicated their relatives’ influences over music taste, and interaction. Three of them played an instrument, such as guitar, piano, and bass in their early years. The other subject admitted that he followed in his brother’s footsteps in music taste, as he wanted to hung-out with him and his friends. Luis explained his first intention in music due to language barriers:

My first musical influence was my grandmother, she used to play the piano, she was from Jamaica, and I was born in America. When I first arrived in Costa Rica at the age of 5, she was the only one I could communicate with.

Family influences gave them the chance to have a bond and gave them the first push into music.

On the other hand, Joaquín and Esteban mentioned that their parents’ influence in music was very political, as the music they consumed was created within the context of the Cold War, civil wars, and dictatorships in Latin America. During the
decades of the 1970s and 1980s, Latin-American countries went through a tumultuous political period, as the neoliberal political leaders wanted to govern and take the left-sided parties down. Joaquín expressed his diverse background in music when he talked about his parents, explaining that:

My parents are from Chile and were political exiles, so at my house you always listened to Silvio Rodríguez, Mercedes Sossa, Violeta Parra, Pablo Milanés. But my dad was also super hippie, so The Beatles, Janis Joplin, Hendrix, Pink Floyd.

Though not all the participants explicitly mentioned their parents’ music as an influence, two more referenced artists such as Silvio Rodríguez and the nueva trova movement\(^2\), which strongly influenced the Latin American boomer generation (born between 1946-1965). Bands from England were relevant to the subjects, but this relationship was mostly regarding style and clothing, which are covered in a later section. In this case, subjects mentioned bands such as The Sex Pistols, the Two-Tone movement, Depeche Mode, and The Cure.

In addition to their parents’ music, participants addressed how they developed their own musical tastes. Influences from the United States can be classified by decades as subjects talked about their childhood years in the 1980s and young

\(^2\) Nueva Trova Movement: is a musical movement that speaks about political injustice and protest. It was created after the Cuban Revolution in Cuba as a way to denounce imperialism and postmodernism. This reaction can be interpreted as artistic expression or cultural contributions. (Pugh & Rodríguez, 2018)
adulthood during the late 1990s. For the 1980s, subjects mentioned glam rock, hard rock, hip-hop, and Michael Jackson. Out of the subjects who mentioned these genres and singers, one placed Michael Jackson as “the reason I began singing and performing,” and the other mentioned that hip-hop was a part of his heritage.

For the 1990s, most subjects named grunge bands as an influence on their music and style. The bands mentioned were Nirvana, Alice in Chains, Pearl Jam, and The Red Hot Chili Peppers. Joaquín explained why grunge was so appealing to the youth at the moment:

Generation-wise I did not consume glam rock, but I did fall into the grunge, the American vision of the attitude that also carried some punk.

This attitude was new to youth, even though the United States context was not familiar to them, they wanted to have the full experience.

Together with grunge, rock and metal bands were also a significant influence on subjects. Valerio listened to the big four of American thrash metal—Metallica, Slayer, Anthrax, and Megadeth. Luis mentioned other bands such as Guns and Roses as a breaking point in his career and musical taste, since Guns and Roses was the band he looked up to. Hip-hop bands such as Run-DMC were mentioned as a significant influence, both their way of dress and music. Huba explained how hip-hop was essential to him due to his Jamaican heritage and its close relationship with reggae:
Hip-hop at its beginnings was a musical movement, the culture and roots of hip-hop come from reggae and dancehall, you have a rhythm, an instrumental version, and a voice.

Other subjects also mentioned Jamaica as an influence due to its reggae and two-tone music. The subjects mentioned Bob Marley and, as stated above, and specific afro rhythms such as dancehall and the sound system culture that are typical genres from Jamaica. Gabriel talked about his multi-stage teen years from metal to punk, and to finally establish himself as a reggae musician. He elaborated on the parallelism he found in music, which helped him jump from punk to reggae:

I jumped into reggae, which I found similar to punk, I mean reggae is like black punk, Israel Vibration was my main inspiration for reggae, and Bob Marley.

Hugo, a member of a reggae-rock band, expressed that his influences were extensive, from reggae to heavy rock. Though grunge had a considerable influence in Costa Rica, other influences were key, such as the third wave of ska-punk within the United States. Hugo points out all these layers within the growth of music in Spanish:

My influences in the 1990s were mostly rock in Spanish, influenced by the Mexican wave, who at the same time where influenced by the grunge style from the United States.
All subjects mentioned at least one Latin-American band that influenced them in the 1990s. The countries mentioned were Puerto Rico, México, Guatemala, Panamá, Colombia, Perú, Argentina, and Brazil for both genres. The expansion and commercialization of music in Spanish gave the subjects a more direct identification with the lyrics and sounds. Parallel to the explosion of music in Spanish, television shows became a hit among youth. Channels such as MTV in English and MTV-Latino were widely popular, along with Costa Rica’s *Hola Juventud* music show. Luis pointed out those features in his interview:

The rise of the Latin-American identity also happened at this moment; bands such as Caifanes, Soda Stereo, Molotov, Moenia, Aterciopelados, and Fabulosos Cadillacs. MTV was THE channel. Everyone was watching MTV. You could watch videos all day, and everything was in Spanish, it was amazing… *Hola Juventud* as well, it was about national and international music.

It is important to point out that MTV and MTV Latino were available only through cable television. Therefore, not everyone had the same opportunities to watch the channel all day.

Paola explained that she started to listen to punk and rock in English with bands such as No Doubt. However, after listening to Mexican band Café Tacuba (see
Appendix A, Figure 1), she became interested in Spanish-speaking bands. Her taste did not change; her preferred bands in Spanish were still punk, rock, and ska:

I started to listen to ska-punk in Spanish because of Café Tacuba and Los Fabulosos Cadillacs. They led me to bands such as 2”, Maldita Vencidad y Todos Tus Muertos, a lot of Argentinean/ South American bands were punk, and ska was more a Mexican thing.

The final generational influence mentioned by the participants was Costa Rican national music. The subjects had two different opinions about the context within the country in the 1990s. On the one hand, the first wave of rock was growing and becoming mainstream. Characters such as José Capmany (see Appendix A, Figure 2), Bernal Villegas, and Hormigas en la Pared were mentioned by subjects as musicians they look up to. On the other hand, they argue that before rock arrived in Costa Rica, tropical music and chiqui-chiqui (see Appendix A, Figure 3) were the only things you listened to on the radio. Huba called himself the “biggest troll of chiqui-chiqui at the moment,” and Joaquín mentioned his relationship with that music at the moment:

Bernal Villegas and Capmany were our point of reference in terms of the national [rock] scene. Being close to their live music made it familiar and natural. I was seriously against tropical music, as it was the mainstream we were trying to run away from…
Overall, the subjects explained the different sources of influence as they grew old. Based on these inspirations, they found new identities and reflection on their own roots and language. The different music genres allowed them to create their own individuality by choosing the type of music they wanted to follow and their way of dress. The diverse music genres also let them to create groups based on their taste and which were sometimes driven by the way others looked.

**Intergroup Relationships**

Foreign influences inspired the subjects’ preferred type of music and how they wanted to be socially and aesthetically perceived. When participants defined their preferences, they sought to interact with people who had the same taste. With the rapid popularization of different rock subgenres in Costa Rica in the 1990s, both subcultural and post-subcultural identities developed at the same time. These behaviors created narrowed groups that hung-out in small and controlled places such as bars. However, as the decade evolved, groups became fluid and socialized in large gatherings such as festivals where they coexisted in the same space.

Only one participant used the word subculture. The other nine individuals did not consciously identify themselves with the word. Instead, they used terms such as mini-groupings, small groups, and micro-societies. Linked to the idea of subcultures or small groups, six subjects either agreed with or criticized the idea of purism within individuals or groups. Purism was discussed in a personal and collective level. The
concept explained the level of commitment by an individual and their allegiance to a specific group.

On the other hand, post-subcultural behaviors such as blurred lines between groups, were mentioned at some level by all the subjects. The behavior encloses increasing fluidity within individuals and groups, collectiveness and identification, and acknowledgement with others no matter their taste and style. The subjects refer to these attitudes as groups of people or scenes. Hence, this section used the subjects’ words and ideas about interrelationships. Subcultural behaviors were addressed as micro-societies and post-subcultural ones as groups.

Table 5

Results for Intergroup Relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of relationships</th>
<th>Reasoning</th>
<th>Groups Identities mentioned by the subjects</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Micro-societies</td>
<td>Explained their committed relationships with friends based on similar taste and clothing. Talked about purism in styles and behavior.</td>
<td>Skinheads, Rude boy, Punks, Metal, Reggae</td>
<td>Valerio, Paula, Huba, Paola, Esteban, Gabriel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups/ Scenes</td>
<td>Explained they are receptive to all types of people independently from their music taste and clothing</td>
<td>Underground</td>
<td>Esteban, Joaquin, Gabriel, Luis, Hugo, Valerio, Paula, Paola, Huba</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Social dynamics were influenced by the music subjects listened to and the visual cues they had. Based on the visual cues and music taste, people gathered in groups that we can identify as micro-societies. On the other hand, these tiny groups joined together to create a scene and share some burdens, such as the lack of social and musical spaces, instruments, and the public. Their identity had different layers: their personal identity, their allegiance to a group, and their sense of belonging to the bigger underground scene.

Micro-societies were, according to the participants, people who identified as members of a particular group or identity. These identities included punks, skinheads, metal, and reggae. Here it is recognizable that subjects were identifying themselves with the music they listened to, and their clothing choices were a means to belong in similar groups. For the metal, punk, and rock scene, the bar Sand (see Appendix A, Figure 4) was a hang-out place. Here Valerio explained his experiences as a metal fan:

In Sand, there were guys who were “neutral,” but outside the bar, there were always the [groups of] skinheads, metalheads, and others. There is always one guy in the group who knows another person from another group, and they greet. Sand was about mini-societies, all the groups were just that, and there was no rivalry between groups they all got along well.

These mini-societies were selective and exclusive. Several subjects mentioned the longevity of the metal scene in Costa Rica and how everyone compares to them
when it comes to close relationships. The metal scene was recalled by the subjects as a hard one to belong in as the commitment was high, and the person needed to fit in with the aesthetics. Luis, who called himself a “neutral” guy – the type that Valerio referred to – mentioned that “Metalheads were a bit purist, and other people and groups were more eclectic.”

Gabriel, who started in metal but then jumped into reggae, also mentioned his experience and how the same influences changed his perspective as a fan:

In metal, the aesthetics were super important, metal was really purist with the appearance if you did not have a black shirt and long hair you were not accepted, but everything changed when Metallica cut off their hair.

Paula, a rude girl, described herself as a purist because being a rude girl was a lifestyle and defined her way of thinking. Similar was Huba, who mentioned that reggae from the Caribbean was a closed group where members primarily supported each other. Though purism was present within some micro-societies, it was inevitable that they kept their social dynamics fully exclusive. All the subjects that talked about purism also commented about other relationships with “outsiders” from their social groups.

Connections within scenes were described by subjects in relationship to intergroup networks of support. Though micro-societies were present, in order to succeed in the scene it was necessary to help each other. Also, subjects mentioned that
the scene was about their friendships, hanging out, and generating new spaces. Joaquín explained how having the same taste in music influenced his friendships and what they used to do:

There was a collective vision of growing up together, we also acquire the music in clandestine ways such as recording in cassettes from radio shows, or we just sat together and watched music TV shows.

Joaquín was very vocal about the growth and the creation of a scene with people who had the same values, and who shared the vision. This idea was true among all subjects as they recall different groups helping by sharing spaces, gigs, equipment, and the public. Punk bands joined skinheads, rude boys hung out with punks, and reggae shared with alternative rock. Spaces were reduced as well, meaning that if the bands did not share the stage with other groups, their audience would be low:

You were always looking for new spaces to play at, and you bond with the people who had the same attitude as you, hoping that they also have instruments and amplifiers to share. Also, hear bands that sing something that is close to you, about being young, being angry, the politics…

The outcome of these relationships was that they encouraged each other.
Subjects had their own identity as either rock or reggae, but they recalled being shaped by the people they hung out with. Clothing and gender-wise, Paola, a punk-rocker, remembered her ties with different girls from other groups: “we used to hang out with
Metal girls, they had a different way of dressing and make-up, but we were influenced by them since we were all mixed together.”

Concerning music, Hugo talks about the difference between older rock musicians and the underground. They saw older musicians as a parallel universe. Although they were regarded as pioneers and the ones that opened the path for many of them, some subjects emphasized that older rock musicians were a separate scene and played in different locations.

The difference between the underground and other music scenes in the country was that we were so young, we just wanted to hang-out with friends, dance, sing along to the original music from Costa Rica, it was everywhere.

Subjects commented on the importance of the public. Their followers were in the same age range and liked the same music. Though gigs were a mishmash, each group tolerated the other. It was about developing friendly relationships in order to have a consolidated scene to which to belong and where fans could hear their favorite bands.

Participants made clear the different layers within the underground scene. The layers enlightened the diverse type of relationships and how both subcultural and post-subcultural dynamics arrived at the same time in the country. Combined with musical influences, subjects created both individual and collective identities that were visible in their social groupings. Beyond belonging to micro-societies, participants from
different music genres supported others, since they were small groups, in order to keep the bigger scene alive.

**Spaces of Socialization**

When subjects were able to identify themselves as both individuals and participating in collective spaces, they realized that locations for gigs and social gatherings were limited. This led to the creation and adoption of new spaces of socialization, both face-to-face and virtual. The importance of the spaces laid in the necessity of creating their own atmosphere as a generation, where they felt comfortable and separated from their responsibilities. With the establishment of physical space, a movement (or scene) was born: the underground.

Results showed youth were willing to create new spaces, where they could have their social gatherings such as concerts. The number of concert locations was low, but the underground emerged for this necessity of space, which had functioned parallel to other spaces for years. Other places mentioned were bars, radio shows, (given the state of communications), and skating locations as hanging out spaces. Table 6 summarizes the spaces discussed by the participants, with an exhaustive list of all the spaces mentioned in the interviews.
### Results for Spaces of Socialization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spaces Discussed in the interviews</th>
<th>Brief description of spaces and places mentioned by the subjects</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Underground</td>
<td>Bands who did not belong in the mainstream musical national scene. Had its own space in Cartago</td>
<td>Esteban, Joaquín, Gabriel, Luis, Hugo, Valerio, Paola, Paola, Huba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bars</td>
<td>Bars where they gathered and/or played. Places such as The Chinese Association, La Aduana, Picachos, Amón Solar, Sand, Corobici, Dynasty.</td>
<td>Esteban, Joaquín, Gabriel, Luis, Hugo, Valerio, Paola, Paola, Huba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure activities</td>
<td>Activities outside music that enhanced social relationships within members of the scenes, e.g. skate and breakdancing.</td>
<td>Esteban, Joaquín, Gabriel, Luis, Hugo, Valerio, Paola, Huba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio shows</td>
<td>Radio shows as a space where public and band members could interact and hear underground music. Radio stations such as Radio U with Punto Garage and 103 Radio.</td>
<td>Esteban, Joaquín, Gabriel, Luis, Hugo, Valerio, Paola, Huba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Flyers, word-of-mouth, and television as their main communication for gigs. The beginning of the internet.</td>
<td>Esteban, Joaquín, Gabriel, Luis, Hugo, Valerio, Paola, Huba, Adrián.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Spaces were mostly utilized by the mainstream music groups, and subjects were seeking their own spots. The lack of available spaces made this group of subjects
create their own based on their social dynamics. The spaces they built were exclusive for them to perform and create new bonds, and gave them the freedom to do anything.

The last quote from the previous section acknowledged the difference between the mainstream and underground scenes, describing the underground as a place to hang-out and listen to original music. The underground was a space created by the youth at the time to perform their music. All the subjects both belonged and mentioned the underground as a space in which they either performed or hung-out. The underground – or colloquially known as the under – welcomed bands from all types of genres that were emerging in the mid-1990s. Any band linked to rock or reggae, or the wide spectrum between them was allowed to perform their music in “the under.” The only thing that mattered was music. Esteban explained what the underground was:

The underground was a term to describe non-typical musical genres, the spectrum was huge and many bands started in the “under” before becoming famous.

Hence, bands who entered or classify themselves as underground were not labeled as mainstream. The underground was, as subjects called it, a brotherhood, where members could recognize their peers because of music style and age. However, it evolved as a physical space named “La Finca” (The Farm). “La Finca” was an open space in a sports complex outside the Great Metropolitan Area that was periodically
rented for gigs or gatherings. Hugo expressed nostalgia for the underground as space and explained the necessity of having a mixed space:

The underground was a brotherhood, a huge amount of bands were there in the same concert, same afternoon but necessarily not the same music… it was like a cradle for the development of bands at the time, everyone who had a band was there, no matter your genre.

All the subjects agreed that thanks to the underground and the friends they made, most of the bands were able to become recognized names in the mainstream scene. The underground started as a place for youth where they had their own space, but developed into a recognized musical movement. Though the underground started in “La Finca,” they took over other venues such as bars. As mentioned in the section above by the subjects, Sand was a bar where mostly rock, punk, and metal groups hung-out and sometimes performed. This was a crucial space, as they also offered concerts but generally focused on metal bands. Valerio identified Sand as his go-to bar all the time, “Sand was THE bar for metal fans, we always hang-out there”.

Other groups such as reggae and rude had their own home base, Huba mentioned Dynasty Bar as the go-to bar for true reggae fans. On the other hand, Paola described Corobicì Bar as the rude meeting point. Other places had the underground stamp, as they only performed there in the decade of the 1990s. Places mentioned by
the subjects included *The Chinese Association, La Fosforera, La Aduana, and Amón Solar*.

Additional information about the underground is noteworthy. Gigs from the underground scene had a specific characteristic highlighted by all subjects. They were held over the weekends in the afternoons. The subjects constantly mentioned how their age was an important factor in their behavior and their drive for an identity. Therefore, two things were basic issues for them, the accessibility regarding money, and second, the necessity of an ID. Most subjects argued that when they turned 18, they had the freedom they needed. Paola explained why they choose some spaces because of their limitations:

Gigs in bars and open spaces happened in the daytime, sometimes Saturday afternoon. That was our activity, other times we hang-out at San Pedro, and you could go inside some bars without an ID, but we were mainly in the streets because we were underage and also the economic issue. We were not generating any income, and we did not have money.

Being in the streets also enhanced an activity mentioned by some subjects: skateboarding. “Skateboarding” was mentioned as a leisure activity between youth. They did not skate in skateparks but public places like the street. Besides being an activity, skating was about the clothes and image. Esteban stated, “I used to skate with
friends from the scene, most people used to do it, and if they didn’t, they still wore the
clothes.”

The final space mentioned by the subjects was the radio waves. Radio stations
hardly played underground music. One of the subjects worked at a radio show who
helped develop the underground scene in the country. Nearly all subjects mentioned
how Radio Uno was a huge station, but “you would never be able to listen to ska,
reggae or metal, the door was pretty tiny and only open for other types of music.”
Punto Garage was a radio show in which all of types of music mentioned by the
participants were represented. The show was pretty selective with what they played
live and with the music they wanted to promote. According to Joaquín, Punto Garage
had two specific aims:

First, to record original national music for bands who didn’t have resources
(money) to do so, and second, the diffusion of alternative music and to
integrate it into the daily transmission. The show had sections such as top 10,
bands presented their songs and records, and the public called, there was an
interaction, their slogan was “the official rock show.”

Radio U did embrace all the genres, but exclusively for reggae, 103 Radio was
their place for broadcasting. Huba explained that when the Salsa boybands exploded in
Latin-America, they “were left out” and their music was not aired anymore. Channels
of communications were limited in the 1990s. All the subjects talked about the
limitations of not having the internet and cellphones. All the communication at this time was limited. Valerio reaffirmed this situation, explaining that “there was no internet at the time, it was only word-of-mouth and flyers.”

Other subjects such as Esteban, Paola, and Hugo had the same thought, and remembered how important a flyer (see Appendix A, Figure 5&6) was since it was their only way to promote their gigs. Esteban even recalled calling other band members and scene peers to their landlines to arrange gigs. Luis highlighted how MTV Latino covered the Rock Fest festival stating that “Rock Fest was a thing, even made it to MTV.” (see Appendix A, Figure 7).

Communications changed throughout the 1990s and by the early 2000s, youth started to have access to computers and internet. Adrián was the founder of the first music news blog in Costa Rica, 89decibeles, which created a new way of promoting gigs as well as a new virtual space for a broader audience.

During the 1990s, youth created and utilized spaces to create their own narratives. Though the music was the main aim, socialization and the development of a consolidated scene were the highlights for this cohort. Though subjects did not treat it as significant event, they initiated opportunities for future generations to have their own space within the broader urban space. The creation of spaces was not horizontal but multi-level they created leisure and concert spaces, as well as a system of communication that evolved from flyers to radio, to online platforms.
Meaning of Style

Once spaces of socialization were established through the data, the next step in the analysis was to understand why subjects decided to dress the way they did. Linked to foreign musical influences, every individual created a style based on their taste and what they wanted to communicate, with that being rebellion or musical allegiance. Moreover, individuals made visible their nonconformity with high school uniforms. Musical influences visible in television allowed them to have cues for their own style. Their reasoning was about moving away from their parent’s generation and any other institution that denied them the freedom of expression and creativity. Table 7 explained subjects’ reasoning about style and provides a brief description.

Table 7

Results for Meaning of Style

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons discussed in the interviews</th>
<th>Brief description</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uniforms</td>
<td>Uniforms created a discomfort with following rules that they did not approve. Provided a homogenic aesthetic in the midst of figuring out their identity</td>
<td>Esteban, Joaquín, Gabriel, Luis, Hugo, Valerio, Paola, Huba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebellion</td>
<td>Challenging their parents and educational system (uniforms) by wearing accessories and clothing that did not fit in the normality</td>
<td>Esteban, Joaquín, Gabriel, Luis, Hugo, Valerio, Paula, Paola, Huba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influences</td>
<td>Mentioned the same music</td>
<td>Esteban, Joaquín, Gabriel,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This section seeks to understand subjects’ personal reasoning about why they decided to dress in a certain way, influenced both by the music they followed and exterior personal motivations. Moreover, participants expressed their personal forms of expression in regard to clothing and how their own spaces influence them.

Subjects explained how they had lived with several clothing restrictions. They did not have the freedom to dress as they wished because of their parents and the education system (see Appendix A, Figure 8). All subjects mentioned that their first frustration regarding clothing was the school uniform they had to wear. They realized they wanted to wear certain clothing when they reached their teenage years; therefore, in late high school, they struggled with shaping their identity.

When participants faced restrictions in their identity in the form of clothing, they reacted against the educational system by disputing their choices. Gabriel was vocal about this disagreement with uniforms and said that “in high school, we weren’t allowed to wear any accessories, but I was always challenging the professors.” Joaquin gave an in-depth reflection about his dislike of the uniform:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>influences for aesthetic choices, they wanted to follow certain styles for their own identity.</th>
<th>Luis, Hugo, Valerio, Paula, Paola, Huba</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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In my case following the rules was traumatic, “tucked your shirt in,” and the uniform itself, it was the most evident way that you needed to respect the rules and fall into a box. I was pretty upset about being respectful, to obey the rules, and that you were just another one. [my image] it was about rebellion, and my own appropriation of my body and showed it the way I wanted to.

The rules were strict among all high schools, leaving teens no choice but to follow them. The rules consequently limited their identity and did not allow them to have visual cues to express who they were and their vested allegiances. Luis talked about how he was anxious about graduating:

I was desperate to start college, so I could wear my hair long, and show my full style. I did not want to use the formal shoes, tuck the shirt in, trousers, those rules annoyed me.

The boundaries they had in their clothing presented a rebellious undertone in their choices. As mentioned by the subjects, they could only wear their sartorial styles during the weekends, in gigs or places they hang out. Their style choices came from the groups they identified as influences in the first section. Their main broadcasting mediums were the television and MTV. Esteban talks about this phenomenon:

With MTV in every house, we could see the music videos from "Los Auténticos Decadentes" or "Fabulosos Cadillacs," and if one of these guys had
purple hair. Out of the sudden, in the next national gig, you could see a guy with purple hair!

Huba explained how his band started as a way to represent reggae in Costa Rican society, to dress the part and feel they were adding something to the national scene (see Appendix A, Figure 9). He expressed that reggae clothing was different because of reggae’s leisure activities:

We used to wear huge pants, oversized clothing, for dancing and rapping, the brand FUBU was made for us by us, they represented me and everything I was.

Gabriel also noticed the importance of internal identity beyond aesthetics (see Appendix A, Figure 10):

In reggae aesthetics are super important, the belief is that you carry all the stuff in your heart, many don’t have dreads, but they have them in their hearts, it was all about the green, yellow, and red and everything that the colors represented.

Paula criticized people with weak group and aesthetic identities because they did not show a real allegiance. She stated that when she started to listen to rude music, it was impossible not to dress the part. It was about being cohesive and complete in taste and aesthetics. She is close to the skinheads and explained that:
If you want to belong in a space you need more than your clothes, I have encountered skins that buy the whole uniform and a year later moved on to other things, they are not committed.

Though everyone committed to a representative style of clothing and music, other subjects such as Hugo stated that everyone dressed as they wish. For him, it was more about the close bond within the underground scene and the support, and less about the aesthetics. Another important factor explained by the subjects was their parent’s opinion. Influences had not only a huge impact on the subjects but also affected their parents and their feelings about the new generations. All participants mentioned how their parents were ashamed of their looks, and two important highlights were noted: first, they revealed how they would hide their clothes from their parents when they hung-out. Esteban explained how they kept their destination a secret:

A lot of people had their clothes in their bags, women mostly, they told their parents that they were going to be at the mall, but instead they were at the gigs, and they changed their clothes there.

Second, subjects mentioned how their parents avoided going out with them or even forced them to change their clothes. This created a distance between the subjects and their parents and allowed the latter to judge them. Luis explained how he wanted
to be like his influences (see Appendix A, Figure 11), but his father was not approving:

I wanted to be like Robert Smith and Depeche Mode, I wanted to wear my hair long, but in high school, I was not allowed. I wanted to have piercings, and use make up but I needed to hide it from my dad, he thought those things were gay and at that time that was a huge deal.

This topic made the subjects reflect on their actions and why they dressed the way they did. All mentioned the rebellion, how they tried to fit in within scenes, and the tolerance between styles. Joaquín also added that the clothes they wore were not “an imposition of fashion, but a revindication of fashion.”

As a masculine scene, most of the male subjects who mentioned how women looked and behaved. Gender behavior was limited or outshined by men as they were in the bands. Paola and Paula helped to clarify their actions and reasoning in the scene. Paula expressed the minimum participation of girls in the rude scene, on the other hand, Paola explained her experience in the underground scene and spaces:

Gender is always a topic, first because of aesthetics, is a masculinized scene so is the image, but also within the scene we had different boundaries that allowed us to go further, no other scene or the mainstream allowed us to dress with safety pins or dyed our hair. Though everything was homogenic, clothing
wise, girls looked the same with jeans, crop tops, and sweater, like adidas, vans or converse, same as guys, the skate and grunge influence was pretty strong.

In general, subjects described their clothing as a form of constructing their own identity and, at the same time, trying to belong in a group. Their clothing choices were a personal statement against the educational system, their parents, and other aspects that limited their expressions. Also, their appearance clustered them into a particular scene and specific groups, which they often visited to reaffirm their identity. Gender identifications differed, but as a masculine scene, subjects approached the topic from a different perspective. It is important to highlight the differences between genders as scenes were conformed to by both women and men.

Consumption and Acquisition of Clothing

The acquisition of clothing is important because, subjects wanted to communicate their commitment through clothing in the spaces where they socialized. However, as young people they were not fully permitted to make their own choices. Becoming an independent person was relevant to the subjects who sought to impose boundaries with their parents. They claimed their desire to make their own clothing decisions. Due to age and occupation, subjects did not have economic stability; hence they bought their clothes in Americanas (the colloquial name for thrift stores in Latin-America). Others ordered their clothing from foreign countries such as the United
States, and when bands were fully established, they owned their merchandise. Table 8 encloses the different reasoning and places subjects bought their clothing.

**Table 8**

*Results for Consumption of Clothing and Acquisition*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasoning</th>
<th>Brief description of the meaning</th>
<th>Subjects mentioned the information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Americans</strong></td>
<td>Cheap thrift store where subjects’ bought clothes and shaped them into their style</td>
<td>Esteban, Joaquín, Gabriel, Luis, Hugo, Valerio, Paula, Paola, Huba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic</strong></td>
<td>Money was an issue to purchase what they wanted to because of their age and income</td>
<td>Esteban, Joaquín, Gabriel, Luis, Hugo, Valerio, Paula, Paola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other ways to purchase clothing</strong></td>
<td>Exclusive stores for rock and reggae music did not existed, merchandise such as CDs or clothing was not available. Subjects shipped their clothing from other countries.</td>
<td>Esteban, Gabriel, Luis, Paula, Paola, Huba</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this section, the subjects responded to questions related to their clothing choices; where they bought their clothing; and how they acquired the inspiration for their style. These questions helped gather information concerning consumption and the specific stores they frequented. The information completed the second objective of the research.

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In earlier sections information was provided about what influenced the responses for this category. First, the dependence on their parents is fundamental to understanding their clothing decisions. As stated above, they were trying to move away from their parent’s generation and create their own style, but it was constantly criticized by their relatives. Second, the subjects became of age at some point in the late 1990s, which limited their social spaces and restricted the use of substances. Finally, even though they became of age, all were college students and had an economic dependence with their parents.

*Americanas* (a colloquialism for thrift stores in Latin-America) were identified by the subjects as their go-to store for clothing. Americanas were cheap, accessible and had the fashion of the moment, though their parents, of course, were not very approving of their clothing shopping. Joaquin explains the struggle of buying clothes with his parents:

> My parents hated Americanas, it was all about taste, it goes along with the understanding of “Why my parents buy my clothes?” Is something systematic, they impose a taste. When we went to buy clothes, they did not buy me the ones that I wanted, so I always ended up in *Americanas*, it wasn’t the same piece but it was about breaking the dependence. People believe that just because you don’t have an ID, they can make the decisions for you.
The dependence was primarily economic. Subjects mention brands such as Adidas, vans, converse and official merchandise from bands. These items were not accessible, as they did not have the economic means to buy these luxuries. The only way to get the clothes was the *Americanas*, they depended on the random selection these stores had. Esteban talks about the first time he found the stores:

Before I was 17 I did not know that Americanas existed, my parents used to buy me the clothes in a boutique. I became aware that I could use the clothes that I wanted to was crazy, knowing that in Americanas the clothes were there, it was pretty expensive to buy brands but sometimes you could find gems, like my Pearl Jam shirt.

They created styles with what was available at the moment. Paula mentioned that, “I buy whatever I see fits my personality and the rude aesthetics.” Luis, Joaquín, and Paola explained how they could express their identity by buying clothes at *Americanas*, as the creation of new styles was pretty important. Paola explained, “belonging in the underground gave us some freedom, we could modify our clothes, buy at *Americanas*, I never felt obligated to buy from a Mall store, and I never did.”

Alongside this idea, the *do it yourself* or DIY was also something subjects did to their clothes, because clothing styles were not available in the country at the moment. Luis mentioned:
Most of the clothing that was “in-fashion” was impossible to buy or even get in Costa Rica, like the ringer shirts, I used some pilots [sharpies] and a white shirt and did some for myself.

As stated, not all styles were available in the country, and subjects opted for other sources for obtaining the regalia. The first one was shipping. Huba, since most of this family lived in the Caribbean side of the country, explained how he used to obtain his clothes. The pieces came from New York and Jamaica, “Lots of people used to work on boats, and they brought the clothes from the US and Jamaica.” In the Caribbean side, this practice was common. Gabriel highlighted the lack of specific stores for styles, “there's not official stores for reggae clothing in Costa Rica, we used what was available and created our own style.”

Though the other subjects had different practices, Valerio and Paola remember the store WOM/Insomnio. The owner innovated the business by going to the United States and buying clothes, “the owner of WOM/Insomnio. used to bring clothes, magazines, and CDs from the US, but it was pretty expensive for someone in their 20s.”

The economic factor is something that all subjects faced. However, as they grew old and bands became consolidated, they launched their own merchandise. Gabriel explained the importance of their “Merch” with an experience that happened to him:
When we created our own merch was cool, once Los Pericos [Argentinan reggae-ska band] had a gig in Costa Rica, it was their first time here, and I asked the bass player if he wanted to wear our shirts? And he did it! It felt so good to be recognized.

In general, subjects wanted to establish a distance from their parents and create their identity based on their taste and economic means. As the scene grew, they had different channels to access clothing and information. Rebellion played a big part in subjects' reasoning since they were developing as adults and wanted to have the power to select their own taste. *Americanas* allowed individuals to demonstrate the gap between their parents and youth, and what subjects appreciated from stores. Overall, by buying certain clothes, they communicated distancing from other generations, their stage in life, and their engagement with the scene.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The results for the sections *Music Influences: Family and Generational View,* and *Intergroup Relationships* came together to answer the first objective: how foreign cultural influences and local sociocultural dynamics came together to create new styles. Overall, participants identified multiple sources of influence for music inspiration and clothing style that came both from their parents’ and their own generational context. Moreover, these influences allowed them to identify and create new social groups. These local groups were explained as micro-societies and scenes. The dynamics within groups reveal the different existing layers and how the many influences made them tolerant of each other.

Similar investigations have studied the relationship between rock and reggae and their construction via foreign influences. Bahena and Garibaldo (2014) analyzed how rock reshaped the Latin-American identity. Bands in all countries mixed their own sounds with the sound of rock and created a new sense of Latin-American pride. With the launch of MTV Latino in 1993, geographic spaces began to shrink, and borders between countries became blurred. Due to the difference in language, Brazil is an unusual influence in the Latin-American sphere. However, with the rise of new music broadcast on MTV, the country was able to receive and contribute to the scene. The new communication channels allowed all social classes to be involved with music and its representation. These relationships within Latin-American countries were
crucial during the 1990s, as all countries both shared and added sounds from others and thus influenced one another (Béhague, 2006; Rodríguez Carabalí, 2018).

Places along the Atlantic coast, such as San Andrés, Colombia, Brazil, Cuba, and New York, have been primarily influenced by Jamaican reggae (Marshall, 2006). This relationship happened mostly by the migration around the circum-Caribbean region and the relationship with the Afro-Caribbean culture (Béhague, 2006). For example, in Brazil, the appropriation of sounds such as reggae and rock created a new type of samba (Béhague, 2006). These influences made youth question their own identity and rethink their own roots. Furthermore, Afro-Costa Ricans negotiated their socio-cultural status within the dominant culture through the exposure of reggae along with the country (Davis, 2009; McCoy-Torres, 2017; Sánchez Aguirre, 2015).

Politics and its relationship with music at the moment was a topic not explored among Costa Rican youth due to the lack of repressive or authoritative regimes in the recent history of the country. Some Argentinean rock spoke about youth’s exclusion due to the neoliberal model after the dictatorship. Youth created music and spaces as a way to commemorate the end of a regime in the 1990s, as most of the spaces did not celebrate music. (Kurlat Are, 2007; Parr 2006). Reggae had the same reaction in places such as Brazil and Cuba as they encountered military dictatorships and controlled activities (Paulraj, 2010; Davis 2009). Music as a means to fight politics happened all over Central and South America due to their historical-political context with dictatorships. However, Costa Rica was the exception, no matter the degree of influence. The youth did create lyrics criticizing the government, but the country never experienced any military or political repression.
Costa Rica had a late development in regard to youth groupings. Instead of having the same separate cycles as western countries, Costa Rica evolved from subcultural to post-cultural groups in just one decade. Groups in Chile had a similar development as the country also experienced a late exposure to subcultures (Matus, 2001). In Chile, groups also faced both individual and collective identities forming both fluidity and fragmentation at the same time. Subcultural behavior was present in small gatherings united by the same style, e.g., skinheads. However, at the same time, the groups were so reduced that they needed support from each other, creating an alternative scene (Matus, 2001). The groups were comprised of individuals from all social classes, with different education, and access to music and information. This idea responds to Bennett’s (2004) concept of ‘Taste Cultures,’ as taste is stronger than any other social indicator, joining people in order to create rather than to confirm their allegiances. In contrast, countries such as Argentina, Mexico, and The United States subcultures surged earlier than the 1990s. (Parr, 2006; Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004). From the author’s perspective, during the 1990s the terms rock and reggae functioned as umbrella terms to describe various musical genres. The lines between genres were blurred thereby creating fluid relationships between scenes. For example, while some bands could be easily identified as rock or reggae, others contained elements from both genres.

The findings for the section *Spaces of Socialization, The Meaning of Style*, and *Consumption and Acquisition of Clothing* helped to answer how new spaces of socialization, forms of expression, and patterns of consumption are created by youth and expressed through clothing. Overall, the results showed that bands and social
groups created new spaces to gather, hang-out, and listen to music. Through clothing, they developed an identity that expressed aspects such as rebellion, distancing from parents’ authority, and rejection of mainstream fashion. The subjects also expressed the conflict between their parents and their clothing choices and how economic and independence factors were key to understanding which stores they selected.

Stahl (2004) emphasizes the case of Canada as he conceptualizes the urban space and the concept of scenes. Montreal grew as an urban space and developed a scene with outside identities that were united by local behaviors. Beyond the scene, they created new spaces such as record labels and radio shows specifically for alternative music. These spaces supported alternative musicians in a reduced scene. The role of media was a key space and a form of validation for members of any scene. By listening to the music people identify with, it creates empathy, and it grew as a virtual space that youth visited often. MTV Latino clicked immediately with youth among Latin-America; this type of mass communication mapped all the different scenes and exposed them across borderlines. Latin-American pride developed from this point on, where several national festivals were broadcasted in TV channels and shows no matter the genre (Bahena & Garibaldo, 2014).

The mass media of music videos provided a venue where artists could present their aesthetics. These visual cues created a desire for youth to dress according to their taste and identity. However, rigid dress codes associated with scholar uniforms were a norm among Latin-American educational systems (school and high school) (Dussel, 2000). In Costa Rica, uniforms were established by the school system as a way to homogenize the image of students (Molina, 2007). The main reason was not to lessen
the visible social and economic disparities between children and teens while they are learning. Gómez Torres (2010) explains the uniform as a mechanism of control, but as they grew old it was difficult to control their urge to be individualistic.

Despite the high school uniforms, the subjects were able to create their own identity based on their musical and aesthetic influences. Prices and brands mattered to them, as they were not affordable. *Americanas* were thrift stores that sold packages of used clothing from the United States and Europe within Latin-American countries. Similar studies talked about how *Americanas* are stores accessible for people with lower incomes that cannot afford to buy new clothing (Gómez Velásquez, 2018; Talavera Rodríguez, 2017; Valcárcel Rojas, 2017). Prejudices existed among older generations as *Americanas* arrived in the 1990s in Latin-America. Though parents did not accept this type of consumerism, youth used it for finding merchandise not available at regular stores and as an outlet for innovation. In Bolivia, Brazil, and Chile, youth were regular consumers in these stores, purchasing *vintage* clothing and underground styles at a lower price to create their own identity (Hernández & Loureiro, 2017; Farías, et al., 2008).

Identity as communicated through dress was influenced by genres such as grunge. Therefore, women had to adopt a masculine style to blend-in within the scene. Lyons (2017) explores the diminished identity of women in rock and punk among Hispanic-America. Women create their own relationships with others to support their status. She also identifies the singer, Andrea Echeverri, as a symbol of feminism within the rock scene in Colombia and Latin-America.
On the other hand, Matus (2001) analyzed two parallel trends that happened at the same time in Chile during the 1990s, which is the closest case of study to Costa Rica. First, he identified an underground scene that appropriated new spaces of socialization for themselves. Second, they argued that alternative styles were mostly bought in *Americana*s and modified by their members. The difference with the underground in Costa Rica is the social and economic status. In Chile, Mall Stores imitate the styles bought in *Americana*s. However, in Costa Rica, a way to legitimize the membership within the underground was to buy cheap clothes to show their indifference to the social status. Along with this idea, Bennett (2004) expresses that new patterns of consumption are bound to the construction of new identities independent of social or economic class.

Matus (2001), Stahl (2004), and Agüero Calderón et al. (2016) have a substantial similarity within their studies: the use of post-subcultural theoretical framework. Furthermore, they analyze their groups as tribes and scenes within urban spaces, instead of using the subcultural theory and concepts for groups. Matus (2001) also used interviews as a way to gather all the possible details from the Chilean alternative scene. Both methodology and framework correspond with the ones used in this study, as groups fragmented and created different scenarios for youth.

**Limitations**

Overall, the study has some limitations that are important to consider. Methodologically, the sample was small; hence it can be seen as emblematic of a moment in time but not an overarching assumption. An ideal number of participants
would be 20. The number was reduced due to time restraints, as interviews ideally needed to be in-person to create a bond and trust with interviewees. Since the researcher is located in the United States and participants in Costa Rica, communication was difficult and not fluid, unless the two were in the same geographical space. The snowball method is an effective sampling method, but it has the limitation that third parties take the responsibility to talk on behalf of the researcher.

In comparison to other studies, different methodological approaches were used, such as participant observation and focus groups (Fernández 2019) and open interviews (Zúñiga, 2003). Historical research was the most popular approached used, but it used newspapers and secondary sources to create a narrative, instead of talking with the subjects directly.

The data should be recognized as a retrospective history about the subjects' life during the 1990s. Hence, the data used is an explanation of their personal experiences within the different scenes and their own behavior. Furthermore, the interviews are biased and dependent on the subjects’ feelings, personal memories, and nostalgia for the scene in the 1990s that occurred during their youth. As the majority of subjects were members of bands, their responses were focused on music rather than their clothing style, suggesting that clothing was not as significant to them as their music and their experiences within their respective scenes. Thus, the project emphasized different social areas (e.g., spaces of socialization and interactions among members of the scenes), as well as linking all the information given by the subjects to dress and styles.
Regarding analysis, the unequal representation of genders is a limitation. As a way to understand the holistic development of the underground scene, it should include an equal number of interviews with both genders. More interviews are needed to create a broader dialogue of spaces with other members of the scene, such as skinheads and punks.

Analyzing social dynamics between groups based on their taste in music is an unexplored topic within Latin-America. Rock and reggae influences were visible and confirmed. However, the studies that explored influences do not include their local social dynamics, how these groups behave, and the fragmentation and collaboration for the creation of a new scene. (Rodríguez Carabalí, 2018).

Parallel studies in Latin-America have explored the identity crisis that youth had during their high school years, and the struggle they faced by trying to break the rules and implement new accessories to match a style (Dussel, 2000; Vásquez 2013; Villalobos, 2004). One important study highlights the practice of “styling” the uniform to fit within an urban tribe. Fitting into rock, and reggae tribes are examples of this behavior with youth (Agüero Calderón et al., 2016). Though studies mentioned clothing as a phase of the identity, none of them conducted an in-depth analysis into the meaning of clothing and why the styles are used.

The lack of studies focused on youth groups and their relationship to clothing made the comparison with other cases studies difficult. The main deficiency was in the gap of knowledge about Americanas and styles, aside from vintage. Hence, this
research can be referenced as a case study in Costa Rica than can be used as a comparison to other Latin-American cases.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to understand how musical scenes were created in Costa Rica during the 1990s among youth groups. The research also explored how scenes include different aspects of social relationships and the creation of identities. This research tried to analyze and evaluate scenes from both individual and collective situations that ultimately created a solid identity and taste within youth.

Foreign influences formed the musical taste for youths with a twofold exposure, their parent’s music, and their generational music. By mixing both types of influences, they created an amalgamation of musical tastes and styles. According to the subjects interviewed, their geographical location (Costa Rica) put them in a position to receive information from across the Americas and the United Kingdom. Both their parent’s music and their contemporary music was in English and Spanish. The primary way of viewing/ hearing influences was television, and to a lower degree, radio and flyers on the street. The role of media was a key visual resource and social component, and the relationship with these types of media have them an advance over their parents’ generation, as they were exposed to different and advanced technological influences (Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004).

In the 1990s, groups linked by musical taste had two layers. First, the subcultural groups or micro societies were small and had a strong allegiance to specific styles (e.g. skinheads, punks, metal, ska, and reggae). According to the
Subjects, these micro-societies coexisted in a series of spaces such as bars and gigs. This coexistence made the relationship among micro-societies more flexible and fluid, transforming them into post-subcultural groups (Muggleton, 2000).

Subjects from different music genres and styles had a shared vision of collectiveness in the 1990s. Post-subcultural groups created a sense of unity and support that led to the creation of the underground scene. The underground scene opened a series of spaces that were alternative to the mainstream, where musicians were able to perform and create networks of support. The underground scene attracted a growing fan base throughout the 1990s. Also, by creating a collective identity, groups were able to establish new spaces of socialization for either escapism from their daily lives or as a way of commitment.

The importance of these new spaces was vested in the significance of their behavior. First, groups were building their own genres and sounds based on foreign music. Second, scenes were influenced by the first wave of rock and reggae in the country but did not fit in with that scene. Finally, playing their own sounds broke away from the mainstream (chiqui-chiqui, rock, and reggae) and created new and original music. Hence scenes were more a necessity for new spaces rather than a confirmation of existing ones (Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004; Stahl, 2004).

To fit into a scene, members needed to dress in a certain way. Members created and consolidated their own style while attending high school. This fact created friction between the education system, their parents, and the individuals as they refused to follow the rules. All subjects described how school uniforms were static,
homogenous, and created a dull appearance. Moreover, the fact that they had to follow the rules was the source form participants’ main disappointments and frustrations. Outside of classrooms, individuals could be whomever they wanted to be, and they could, more importantly, show their taste in music. But as members of a scene, they traded uniforms for a specific sartorial style. By choosing their own style, members created a *self*-identity, marked by the products available in the market (Hodkinson, 2004). Though members created their own clothing styles, their main interest was music and the creation of original music. Therefore, rather than visually expressing their identity via dress, they preferred to be recognized by their music.

The expectation when this research was proposed was that members of scenes bought their styles from Mall stores, but it was the opposite as *Americanas* were the primary outlet for hunting clothing. Aesthetics were a mix of influences, but the preferred brands and styles came from the United States with grunge and skateboarding. Second-hand clothes passed through a reinterpretation when the owner was a member of the wide spectrum of scenes (Polhemus, 2012). A wide variety of styles existed and coexisted, and street style became an inspiration as members from all subcultures inspired each other (Polhemus, 2012). Clothing and style were about a reaffirmation of the identity they were creating rather than conforming to pre-existing styles. The lack of stores and merchandise available in the country allowed for inventiveness in shopping. In the early 2000s, stores such as WOM/Insomnio understood the gap and started to provide options.

This research amplifies the study of identities and spaces in youth groups. Moreover, it analyses the relationship between the different existing groups in the
1990s in Costa Rica. The underground was a unique space where all groups came together to support each other and play original music. Also, this investigation showed how the late development of subcultural behaviors created a unique scene.

The research indicated the need for new research topics focused on both Costa Rica and Latin-America. First, the interactions and relationship between subcultural and post-subcultural behavior can be further explored. It is necessary to amplify the spectrum of knowledge to understand how other countries in Latin-America had a late development of youth groups or had a robust scene. Second, the relationship with uniforms and frustrations with the search for identity and individualism is a topic that needs to be developed. Uniforms have been studied as a homogenized structure that serves an educational process, but not from the youth optic. Finally, the arrival of Americanas stimulated a change in consumer dynamics linked with economic status and poverty. However, Americanas can also be seen as a niche style within the youth population.

Finally, this is a specific case study from a post-subcultural perspective. However, it can also be expanded to include gender dynamics and give women a voice in a masculine scene. Also, by extending the time period, technological changes could be studied and brought into the picture as the internet created new spaces and dynamics between youth groups.
Figure 1

*Mexican Band Café Tacuba, image from their album RE*

*Note: Image courtesy of Café Tacuba website*
Figure 2

Jose Capmany, considered one of the first rock musicians in Costa Rica

Note: Image courtesy of La Nación archive
Figure 3

Chiqui-Chiqui band Manantial, 1980s

Note: Image courtesy of La Nación archive
Figure 4

Entrance of the bar Sand, located in San Pedro

Note: Image courtesy of La Nación archive
Figure 5

*Flyer promoting an underground rock festival, 1998*

*Note: Image courtesy of Esteban*
Figure 6

Flyer promoting “Sin Fronteras 2002” Ska&Punk Festival with Seka and Mentados.

Note: Image courtesy of Esteban
Figure 7

MTV Live transmission of the RockFest 1997, on stage: Gandhi

Note: Image courtesy of La Nación archive
Figure 8

*Standard high school uniforms in Costa Rica for the 1990s*

*Note:* Image courtesy of Esteban
Figure 9

Ragga by Roots, late 1990s

Note: Image courtesy of Huba
Figure 10

JohnnyMan (singer) and Gabriel (bass player) performing, Mekatelyu 2003.

Note: Image courtesy of Gabriel
Figure 11

Luis, singer of Gandhi performing in Planet Mall, 1999.

Note: Image courtesy of Luis
Figure 12

Gandhi as the opening act for Guatemalan band Alux Nahual, 1995.

Note: Image courtesy of Luis
Figure 13

Hugo, singer of Mentados performing, 2003

Note: Image courtesy of Hugo
Appendix B

Interview Script

STUDY TITLE: From Underground to Mainstream: Development of Rock and Reggae styles in Costa Rica

1. Explain why you wanted to be in a subculture
2. What was your perception of the mainstream vs your subculture?
3. Where do you think comes your way of dress?
4. Can you name influences from other countries?
5. To belong in a certain subculture did you have to dress in a certain way?
6. What did the subcultures want to express with their clothing?
7. Do they keep their 90s garments?
8. How subcultures are describe by newspapers?
9. How, when and where are the garments visualize?
10. From underground spaces to followers. What happened when the scene became bigger in style?
11. What do you think about other subcultures?
12. Which public spaces, bars or venues did you attend to?
13. Where did you buy your clothes?
14. When and how subculture trends become popular and are presented in stores?
15. What is your opinion about the commercialization and commodification of styles?
16. How did the stores sell clothing based on subcultural taste?
17. Where the subcultures bought their clothing then/now?
18. Did subcultural members have their own shops?

Appendix C

*Coding Key*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foreign Cultural Influences</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100 Family influence</td>
<td>Talk about the influence of their parent’s/ brother’s music e.g. Julio Jaramillo, Pablo Milanés, Victor Jara, Mercedes Sossa, Violeta Parra, Silvio Rodríguez, Beatles, Janis Joplin, classical music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101 English: Grunge US</td>
<td>Pearl Jam, Nirvana, Alice in chains, Red Hot Chilli Peppers,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102 English: Metal US</td>
<td>Megadeth, Guns and roses, Pantera, Anthrax, Slayer, Metallica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103 English: UK bands</td>
<td>Sex pistols, Depeche Mode, Rude boys, two-tone, The Clash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104 English: R&amp;B / Pop</td>
<td>Michael Jackson, Bobbi Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105 Latin-American: Argentina</td>
<td>Fabulosos Cadillacs, Soda Stereo, Charly García, 2 Minutos, Todos Tus Muertos, Spinetta,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>106 Latin-American: Mexico</td>
<td>Café Tacuba, Molotov, Moenia, Caifanes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>107 Latin-American: Costa Rica</td>
<td>Bernal Villegas, Capmany, Deznuke, Hormigas en la Pared, Post-Mortem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108 Latin-American: South America</td>
<td>Narcosis, Sepultura, Aterciopelados (Andrea Echeverri)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109 Spain</td>
<td>Héroes del Silencio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110 Jamaican</td>
<td>Bob Marley, Israel Vibration, Rock Steady, reggae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111 TV Shows</td>
<td>MTV- MTV Latino, Hola Juventud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112 US hip-hop</td>
<td>Run DMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>999 N/A</td>
<td>Does not answer the question</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| Describe your dynamics within your group and other groups, who you hang-out with or not? |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 200 Open dynamics                             | Mentions hanging out with friends, persons from other groups, lists several groups e.g. skinheads, punks, reggae |
| 201 Close dynamics                            | Talks about only hanging out with the same persons within the same group, no exposure to anything else e.g. Micro-societies |
| 202 Purism                                     | Mentions the word purism, either in pro or con                                  |
| 203 Use of substances                         | Mentions the use of drugs or drinking, smoking                                |
| 999 N/A                                       | Does not answer the question                                                    |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spaces of socialization</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>Underground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301</td>
<td>Concert locations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>302</td>
<td>Radio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>303</td>
<td>Skate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>304</td>
<td>Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>305</td>
<td>Bars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>999</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What was the meaning of style and clothing behind these individuals?</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>400</td>
<td>Uniforms/ rebellion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>401</td>
<td>Skate clothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>402</td>
<td>Influences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>403</td>
<td>Personal reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>999</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where they bought their clothes? Why those stores?</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>500</td>
<td>Americanas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>501</td>
<td>Price/ economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>502</td>
<td>Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>503</td>
<td>Bought/ Shipped the clothes from outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>504</td>
<td>Merch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>505</td>
<td>Stores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>999</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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