

**“It’s the Same Rain”: Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to Explore
Parenting Experiences of Bengali Speaking Immigrants to Canada**

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**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
towards the requirements for the degree
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Abstract

For immigrant parents, the desire to settle successfully for the sake of their children can complicate their own processes of acculturation and adjustment. Bengali speaking immigrants are an immigrant group for which there has been inadequate attention in the social work literature. Theory underpinning the study centred around acculturation, identity, and resiliency. This study employed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to explore the changes Bengali speaking immigrants endured as they parented their children in Canada. Thirteen participants were interviewed to ascertain how their immigration and acculturation experiences influenced their parenting.

Several key findings permeated the analysis. Acculturation and immigration to Canada accentuated gender differences between women and men. Women's silence was larger in a Canadian context, and their expressed losses were larger. Parenting was informed by the immigrants' sensitivity to their children's need to fit in, and parents were generally amenable but there were costs, such as discarding cultural pieces from the past (fathers) while using introspection in the present to maintain family togetherness (mothers). The difference in parent-child relationships was in parental authority, which shifted from deference to discussion, from impositions to negotiations. Finally, parents made Canada their home, but on their own terms, and resilience came from choice, experiences of racism, felt losses, and wisdom. A clear gender and power theme emerged favouring men's faster acculturation and accompanying greater dominance over women. Several graphical models illustrate the analyses, and propose ways for social workers to engage more empathically with immigrants. Limitations of the study and implications for future research are discussed.

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Dedication

Anjuli & Joya.

Thank you for being strong.

Thank you for making me humble.

Thank you for being cool daughters and didis.

Thank you for being hilarious, loving, patient, helpful.

Thank you for dinners out, and perhaps too-frequent sushi trips.

Thank you for volley ball, field hockey, a puzzle, Netflix, weird games.

Thank you for your perseverance, wisdom, creativity, playfulness

Thank you for exemplifying our traditions and values.

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Thank you for driving and back-seat driving.

Thank you for bearing witness.

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“Sir” & “Old Friend”.

So much love.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Children should follow in their parents' footsteps and having become like them, serve them to the best of their ability. - Atharva Veda

We may not be able to prepare the future for our children, but we can at least prepare our children for the future. - President Franklin D. Roosevelt

1.0. Statement of the Problem

1.0.1 Introduction

The above two quotations define the arduous task for immigrant parents – on the one hand, raising children to reflect reciprocal care while, on the other, readying them for the challenge and benefit of a 'better life' in a new country. In addition to focusing on their own adjustment challenges in terms of employment, learning about cultural differences, and trying to stabilize, immigrants must also focus concurrently on helping their children to fit into Canadian (host) culture, and maintain a sense of their Bengali (home) culture. Whether the children are immigrants themselves or are born in Canada, their parents must mediate at least two worlds as they support their children. Parents are the primary socializing agent for their children and, in addition to basic material necessities, they also provide the guidance required for their children to function successfully outside the confines of family: in school, with friends, and in an array of social situations.

For many immigrants, the transition from the home country to the new country compromises familiar foundations based on culture: long-standing networks of social support, including extended kin networks, and collectivistic family values. Consequently, immigrants may find the role of parenting in the new country a challenge. Immigrant parents contend with the day-to-day challenges of adjusting to a new society, new values, and a different way of

living. At the same time that parents are making their own adjustments, they assess the impact of different and often competing social values of the host culture upon their family. While non-immigrant families may be able to successfully mediate developmental and social challenges due to long-established stability, this is not so for the immigrant family. Instead, immigrant parents face threats to their family stability in the form of loss of values, absence of extended family, and challenges to parental authority.

Bengali immigrants to Canada are a recent phenomenon, relatively speaking. In the 1900s, Sikhs from India were the predominant immigrant subgroup from South Asia (Buchignani, Indra, & Srivastiva, 1985) but the numbers were quite limited due to Canada's policies that reflected its desire to retain a British character. With the removal of race-based immigration policies in 1967, the numbers of immigrants from South Asia increased significantly, the Bengali-speaking subgroups among them. Compounded with the expected adjustment issues listed above, South Asian immigrants also encountered significant racism (Ubale, 1977), an additional factor with which parents had to contend as they supported their children's adjustment. The statement of the problem articulates succinctly as follows: There has been relative silence about the acculturation processes that have changed the parenting of Bengali immigrant parents; this requires greater exploration and elaboration.

1.0.2 Studying Immigrant Adjustment –A Multi-Faceted Problem

Both overt and subtle factors affect the adjustment experience for immigrant families. As such, a study on any aspect of immigration requires a fuller understanding of the various factors that contribute to the nuances of immigration and acculturation. This section will address five pertinent factors related to choice, motivation, assimilation, resilience, and

categorization. First, is the *difference between immigrants and refugees*. Immigration is a complex psycho-socio-political process and immigrant experiences are different from refugee experiences depending on whether one chooses or is forced to leave the home country and arrive in another one (Gupta, 2005). For some, immigration is a choice that comes with excitement, possibility, and adventure. Underlying these sentiments is the desire for stronger opportunities for career, education, and family. Consequently, the 'vision for prosperity' earmarks the choice to immigrate. This choice also implies that the immigrant can return to their country of origin if they so choose. For others, there is no choice. The term 'refugee' refers to people fleeing persecution, escaping poverty, being displaced, or finding a haven from war and strife. The underlying sentiments here include fear, anxiety, and trauma. Upon resettlement, refugees lack choices, including the ability to return to their country of origin. While immigrants look to a new country for prosperity, refugees look to a new country for the mere purpose of survival. This study focused attention toward the parenting experiences of immigrants and not refugees; specifically, it focused on the Bengali speaking parents' choice to immigrate and pertinent concerns related to parenting their children in a new country.

Second, political strategies to promote national economic prosperity inform immigration policies, historically and currently. Consequently, immigrants are *economic-political tools with respect to supply and demand*. For Bengali speaking immigrant parents, not only do they have to worry about Canada assessing their labour potential, but they also need to consider the importance of establishing their children as contributing members of society. One cannot help but wonder about the immigrant's unspoken desire to be judged less as an immigrant and more as a contributing citizen. In essence, immigrants have to work harder to

be perceived as contributing members of society. For visible minority immigrants such as Bengalis, parents are all too aware that mainstream Canadian families (largely white) are valued higher than 'foreign' families.

A third factor in studying immigration is the recognition that Canada's approach to immigration has historically been *oriented toward assimilating newcomers*. The terms 'reluctant and cautious' best highlight Canada's immigration history. While visits to Canada from European countries (Vikings from Greenland and Iceland) took place around the year 1000 (Kelley & Trebilcock, 2010), Europeans from England, the Netherlands, France, Spain, and Portugal had an increased presence in what is now Atlantic Canada, largely to fish off the waters near Newfoundland (Knowles, 1992). It was in 1541 when Cartier was commissioned to establish a colony in present-day Montreal, but permanent settlement began by Champlain, in 1605 in Port Royal. Thereafter, Canada was said to be 'founded' by British and French settlers¹. Only in the last ten years, has there been a stronger emphasis on recognizing that Canada was never actually *terra nullus*, and that Aboriginals inhabited Canada well before European colonization.

With industrialization and mechanization in the late 1800s, Canada's immigration practices and policies were decidedly hierarchical and exclusionist in order to recruit Western and Central European (white) settlers. Policies to exclude Japanese, Chinese, and South Asian people significantly limited the number of these immigrants in the early 1900s. During both World Wars, policies limited and excluded people from countries that were enemies of the

¹ History books abound with the falsehood that Canada and the U.S. were 'founded' or 'discovered by Europeans. This ignores and suppresses the fact that Canada was already inhabited by over 50 'nations' which existed in relative harmony well before European settlement.

allied countries. Post WWII, the Canadian government reconsidered its immigration policies to reflect the need to meet economic growth and expansion. In the 1960s, the government eliminated race-based limitations on immigrants, and instead emphasized the importance of skilled immigrants coming to Canada. Therefore, the government created the Points System in 1967, whereby potential immigrants had to meet certain criteria in order to be granted admission². In 1969, Canada signed the UN Convention on the Status of Refugees and implemented changes to policy in the late 1970s. In the 1970s, Canada continued to focus on immigration as important in enhancing its labour needs, but worked towards practices that embraced ethnic diversity, relaxed its limitation on where immigrants could settle, and consulted with the provinces for stronger planning. Classes of immigrants were also developed³. In the 1980s and 1990s, 'boat people' from different ethnic groups were not always welcomed despite Canada's stated commitment to the humanitarian efforts towards refugees. In the aftermath of 9-11, Canada's treatment of people from Arab countries and other racialized peoples was subtly based on suspicion. Therefore, as much as Canada became increasingly multicultural and open, its suspicions of non-white settlers persist, and its overall approach is directed towards 'helping' immigrants to fit into 'white' society. In this regard, the Bengali immigrant parent is compelled to help their child to assimilate, while at the same time, be aware of the possibility of discrimination and exclusion from the dominant society.

² Admission criteria included: knowledge of either French or English, a relative or family member in Canada, knowledge and skills useful in the Canadian labour force, and immigration to an area in Canada with high employment needs.

³ The classes of immigrants were: independent, humanitarian, family, and assisted relatives. In the 1980s, a business class of immigrants was introduced.

A fourth factor to consider when examining the immigration and acculturation research is the lack of explicit examination of *resiliency* the immigrant brings to their experience. Since the 'successful immigrant' is evaluated by their ability to adapt to Canada, to attain economic prosperity, and to meaningfully contribute to Canadian society (James, 2010), these measures of success are externalized. This bias toward outcomes ignores and invalidates the immigrants' own resilience (the ability to bounce back from adversity, and draw upon internal resources to cope) as they adjust to living in their new world. Research largely examines the culture-loss phenomenon of immigration (Berry, 1980), relevant identity changes (Akthar, 2011), feelings of success, and their willingness to fit in (Larsen, 2006). The research even examines the processes (psychological, social, and spiritual) that contribute to immigrant acculturation (Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga & Szapoczni, 2010). However, the research does not adequately cover resiliency as it relates to immigration. For the Bengali immigrant, this is accentuated because of the myth of the South Asian (and other Asians) being the 'model minority' (Ancheta, 2006). Therefore, while society evaluates Bengali parents' immigration success in terms of educational, occupational, and assimilative capability of their children, what remains hidden is an understanding of the inherent resilience of the parents.

The final factor concerns the tendency in the literature to categorize immigrants according to their geographical origins. Specific to this study, there is a *problem with the term 'South Asian'*. Geographic groupings objectify many immigrant groups. While this is useful for census purposes, such groupings ignore the overt and subtle distinctions between nationalities within a geographical grouping and even regional differences between states. As such, the term 'European' fails to ignore historical, political, cultural, and economic differences between

people from its various countries. The terms 'Hispanic' and 'Black' similarly fail to illustrate differences between sub-ethnicities within these broader categories. Similarly, the term, 'South Asian' requires elaboration (Ghosh, 2006). South Asia is composed of six countries that are a part of the Indian Subcontinent: Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and Nepal. Furthermore, each of these countries has states that have their own sub-ethnic differences. India has 22 states, each with its own language. In terms of religion, while the vast majority in India practice Hinduism, pockets of other religions such as Sikhism, Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism dominate certain cities, villages, and towns.

Interestingly, language differences also permeate the nuances between sub-ethnicities. For instance, many of the languages in northern India are derivations of ancient Sanskrit, while the Southern languages have an entirely different linguistic history. The consequences of categorizing are numerous including generalizing about people, assuming homogeneity of experience, perpetuating colonialization, minimizing differences, and essentializing⁴ people. From a social work perspective, this categorization risks oversimplifying people, and marginalizing them by turning a blind eye to subtle differences between groups of people.

When taken together, the above five factors provide a context for this study. They remind us to avoid essentializing people, to de-categorize immigrants, to individualize experiences, and to challenge assimilationist practices. These factors also provide a focus in the

⁴ The term 'essentializing' relates to the assignment of natural, basic characteristics to specific groups such as gender, age, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status. Essentializing is a process in which we think and behave in ways that perpetuate stereotypes and prejudices (James, 2010).

research to accentuate inherent strengths and resiliency factors for Bengali parents in order to highlight how immigration influences important parenting tasks, functions, and principles.

1.1 Research Questions

This research was a study of the immigration and acculturation experiences of Bengali-speaking parents and the impact on their expectations, relationships, and experiences of child rearing following immigration to Canada. Given that acculturation requires a shift in cultural identity (Akthar, 2011; Phinney, 1990), the study was based on the assumption that such a cultural identity shift also influenced a parallel shift in parental identity. In essence the primary research question is: How did immigration and acculturation change parenting for Bengali-speaking immigrants? To focus specifically on addressing the concerns as raised above, and to address the current limitations in the literature, this study was guided by five research sub-questions:

- a) How have the expectations of Bengali parents for their children shifted from when they first arrived in Canada to now?
- b) To what did they attribute these differences?
- c) In what ways did immigrant Bengali parents resolve these differences?
- d) In what ways did the relationship between Bengali parents and their children differ from what the parents expected it would be if they were in India or Bangladesh?
- e) What kinds of strengths and inherent resiliency factors did they draw on to deal with these differences in expectations?

1.2. Definitions of Terms

Four key intersecting concepts framed this study: 'immigrant', 'acculturation', 'parenting', and 'resilience'. In this study, an *immigrant* is a person who is foreign-born, who had left their birth-nation to live in another country (Fong, 2004). The children of immigrants can be born elsewhere or be born in the new country. Regardless, it is important to acknowledge that for the purposes of this research, children of immigrants have specific aspects that define and add complexity to who they are (explained below). Immigration was the intentional act of the immigrant to leave their home country and enter into a host country for the purpose of long term or permanent residency (Lansford, Deater-Deckard & Bornstein, 2007). Motivations to immigrate included the wish for better financial and occupational opportunities, the pursuit of accessible education, and the desire to provide more opportunities for the immigrant's children. In this study, immigrants' own evaluations of their success as parents were examined.

Acculturation is a term with roots in anthropology, sociology, and psychology. Graves (1967) introduced the phrase "psychological acculturation" to refer to "changes in an individual who is a participant in a culture contact situation" (as cited in Berry, 1997, p. 6). Berry (1980) stated that the nature of acculturation necessitated the contact of two or more cultural groups that resulted in change. Kundu and Adams (2005) asserted that cognitive elements such as expectations, attitudes towards the new culture and members, cultural identity, perception, and attribution and change in values played a role in acculturation.

The concept of acculturation closely relates to "adaptation", which connotes change or modification (O.E.D, 2011). Marin and Gamba (2003) suggested that such adaptations take

place through processes of 'culture shedding' and 'culture learning'; however, these also result in culture conflict and acculturative stress (Berry, Phinney, Sam & Vedder, 2006). With increasing globalization and transnational migration, Sam and Berry (2010) updated Berry's earlier definition to include change as a result of the meeting between cultures, stressing the mutually impactful processes of one culture making contact with another (Crisp & Hewstone, 2006). In this study, acculturation referred to changes, the processes of such changes and the consequences of changes that resulted for individuals and families in moving from one culture to another.

The concept of *parenting* combines functions of guidance, nurturing, accessibility, and providing discipline in an effort to assist and support children as they navigated the personal and social surroundings (Ragg, 2011). How a parent balanced these functions depended on sociocultural influences, such as religion, values, cultural demands and expectations, and legal parameters. The transmission of cultural belief systems, the considerations of beliefs about child development, and the teaching of values and skills are also important aspects of parenting (Parmar, Harkness & Super, 2008). This study explored the manner in which immigrant parents believed that immigration changed their parenting.

The term *resiliency* is derived from the stress and coping literature. While coping is "...constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p.141), resiliency demonstrates a process of 'bouncing back' from adversity, challenge, struggle, and change (Greene, 2007). In addition to 'bouncing back' from such stresses, resiliency is about how a person adapts and adjusts to changes that result from

challenges. People who are resilient exhibit characteristics and draw on resources that support and increase their abilities to face hardship and adjust well (Walsh, 2006). Resiliency is a significant concept in strength-based social work (Saleebey, 1999), empowerment perspectives (Lee, 2001), and solution-focussed social work (De Jong & Kim Berg, 2008). The act of immigration and process of acculturation provoke challenges and stresses that influence the immigrant as well as the family. Certain factors contribute to immigrants' resilience: qualities of excitement and hardship (Khan & Watson, 2005); an emphasis on education, safety and connecting to community (Silveira & Allebeck, 2001); and drawing on culturally held sentiments of suffering, faith and religion (Lee & Chan, 2009). Other factors included symbolic resources (Markovitzky & Mosek, 2005), such as landscape, climate, literature, and music to maintain ethnic identity. Another factor contributing to resilience is aspiration: seeking opportunities for equality, success, and personal gain in the context of Canadian society (Dhruvarajan, 1993; Menon, 1997; Naidoo & Davis, 1988). Finally, meaning-making strategies (Lykes & Sibley, 2013) such as choice and control over immigration, experience of the primary social network, level of emotional attachment to and investment in the host country, and ongoing relationship with the home country are also relevant resiliency factors for the immigrant (Bourhis et al., 1997; Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001).

This research was a study of particular factors, such as the ones listed above that contribute to a person's resiliency. Specifically, the study was an examination of resiliency factors that helped the Bengali immigrant maintain and/or strengthen the parenting of their children upon immigration to Canada.

1.3 Purpose and Rationale

The purpose of this research was multi-faceted. First, it aimed to gain understanding about the immigration experiences of Bengali-speaking people. While there are similarities amongst South Asian subcultures, it is necessary to point out that there may be subtle differences between them. Specific to Bengali-speaking immigrants, the literature does not adequately acknowledge the differences between Bengalis from Bangladesh, who are largely Muslim, and Bengalis from India who tend to be Hindu. As Ragg (2011) points out, religious influences affect parenting and so there may be subtle differences between Bengali speakers. This research attempts to uncover possible differences by focusing on sociocultural factors that influence the Bengali-speaking immigrant parent, including religion. In an effort to build on existing research on various ethnic immigrant groups, the results of this study have the potential to expand our understanding of a population that has limited representation in the literature. This research was also an examination of grief, loss, and adversity as these influence how Bengali immigrants parented their children.

Second, the results of the study will inform the literature on acculturation by building on existing models and theories. In doing so, the study will add to the literature on parenting, immigrant identity and resiliency. The research can further the understanding of factors that promote resiliency of the parent and help maintain the balance between fitting in to the new culture while holding onto elements of the old culture. As much as Bengali immigrants are successful overall, the unidentified and untapped strengths of the parents require elucidation. This research attempted to fill this gap by naming and categorizing these resiliency factors. Further, contextualizing these factors within Bengali and South Asian values served to create a

typology of resiliency factors that can inform and enhance immigrant parenting. Note that this research did not examine structural issues that contribute to racism and discrimination.

Third, the research can add practical knowledge and suggestions for social work practice in areas related to culturally respectful practice, immigrant settlement work, intergenerational conflict and parenting. There are unspoken factors that mediate both the achievement of success and the management of acculturative stress. Parents are the primary socializing agent for their children and, when they parent in a new country, are responsible for encouraging success while managing stress for themselves and their children. This research sought to identify the factors that contribute to successfully managing this dual parental duty. As it pertains to the Bengali-speaking community, this research can provide additional insights into the value-based nuances of this sub-ethnic group, which may contribute to social work's repertoire for empathy, understanding, and respect in the attempt towards increased culturally respectful practice.

Fourth, the research will add further understanding to the nuances of how Indian families operate, that could then aide social workers. Western models of psychotherapy with immigrants are demonstrably inadequate because of the underuse of mental health services and a high rate of premature termination by them (Leong & Lee, 2006). As well, Morrison and James (2009) state that social services fail to recognize that immigrants are reluctant to share family problems and that there is frustration between first and second-generation immigrants. There is also a lack of understanding by therapists about the woman's role as facilitator and negotiator in many ethnic groups (Acharya & Northcott, 2007; Awad, 2007; Bhalla, 2008). Most significantly, intervention approaches fail to help the immigrant examine the hidden or

repressed costs of assimilation (Valtonen, 2008). Consequently, this research adds further nuance to models of psychotherapy and intervention and can provide a foundation for greater empathy by social workers. This ideally will in turn, prevent premature termination of service by this population.

Finally, from a practical standpoint, this research was timely because it shows how by giving voice to resiliency, social workers can encourage the immigrant family to tap into their inherent strengths and utilize these as they acculturate and parent simultaneously. As well, the research permits a gathering of information that can connect immigrants with the existing South Asian communities (Bhattacharya, 2002). Aronowitz (1992) proposes that parental ego structure and functioning is the primary and most crucial mediating factor in how parents both perceive adjustment and how they guide their children in this regard. Therefore, working with parents in terms of loss, grieving as well as strength-building is paramount. This research is particularly relevant in that it builds on our understandings of the resiliency factors that immigrants can solicit and employ to enhance their parenting.

1.4. Summary

As noted above, studying any aspect of immigration requires framing its context. The primary focus of this introductory chapter is the balance that Bengali immigrant parents are compelled to maintain as they help their children to fit into the dominant society's expectations while teaching them the principles they wish to retain from their culture of origin, usually India or Bangladesh. In having to negotiate between the familiar collectivistic culture from 'back home' and the individualistic culture of Canada, Bengali parents' challenge is in finding a happy medium by which they can: 1) guide their children to participate and therefore fit into Canadian

society, and 2) incorporate Bengali values and principles in their parenting. In doing so, Bengali parents draw upon strengths that enhance their resiliency in the acculturation process.

The second chapter of this dissertation provides a review of the literature pertinent to South Asian, Indian, and Bengali concepts around values, social expectations and moral concepts that organize family life. Additionally, it provides an understanding of the history of South Asian immigration to Canada and some of the challenges that these immigrants faced. Chapter 3 summarizes the major theoretical orientations that guide this study. The chapter presents summaries of models of acculturation, acculturative stress, identity, and resiliency. A discussion of the research methodology comprises the fourth chapter. The dissertation employed the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to analyze the data gathered during the research. The fifth chapter describes the results of this qualitative study and presents some initial themes. Chapter 6 provides an in depth analysis of the data following the steps required in IPA. Initial models for understanding the data present a consolidation of the analysis as a way to organize the themes. The final chapter offers the conclusions to the research by responding to the research questions, acknowledging the study's limitations, and providing recommendations for social work practice and further research.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

A legacy of racism and exclusion has shaped and continues to shape Canadian immigration policy and practice, favouring certain immigrants and prohibiting others. During the first 60 years of the 20th century, Canada had a tiered immigration system largely based on racial and ethnic preferences (Knowles, 1992). Only in the 1960s was policy changed to become free of race-based criteria, due to the combination of two factors. First, already established immigrants had joined in the war effort, which brought forth an increasing awareness by the general public about human rights and discrimination. In essence, World Wars I and II united different immigrant groups for a common cause and from this commonality, they advocated for the privileges (i.e., inclusion of extended family) they saw in their British counterparts. The second reason was rooted in significant advances in technology, knowledge, and innovation, which required a labour force. As such, the importance of increasing immigration to sustain Canada's economy precluded race-based preferential treatment of potential immigrants.

During the early 1900s, most South Asians in Canada experienced humiliation and suspicion and until the early 1960s, South Asian immigration to Canada remained negligible. In the 1960s, when immigration expanded significantly to include people from South and East Asia, the literal 'face' of Canada changed from almost exclusively white to increased racial and ethnic variability. However, as Canada became accustomed to this new group of people, the immigrants from this part of the world experienced similar adjustment challenges as did their European counterparts who came to Canada in the earlier parts of the century.

This chapter comprises four sections, and explores South Asian and Bengali immigration to Canada. The first briefly summarizes how social Darwinist and eugenic attitudes shaped Canada's immigration policies. The second section provides a background to understanding Bengali people in the context of the South Asian and larger Asian populations. The third section examines some of the specific Bengali cultural concepts influencing how Bengali immigrants negotiated their acculturation in Canada. The final section reflects some of the key acculturation factors faced by South Asian immigrants.

2.1 Historical Racialization of Canadian Immigration Policy

Canada's immigration policies moved from being outwardly racist in the 1900s to having no explicit elements of racism in the 1960s. However, prior to the 1960s, the various settlement challenges immigrant groups faced were the result of having to deal with prevailing cultural, religious, and ideological practices held by the dominant culture, which was largely British and white. This section demonstrates how Canada's immigration policy and practices prior to the 1960s were rooted in a sense of racial, ethnic, and religious hierarchy determining which ethnic and racial groups were 'more eligible' to immigrate to Canada.

2.1.1 Pervasive Social Darwinism

Canada's immigration history contains social Darwinist attitudes and beliefs that protected and maintained the dominant group's economic and social power (Boyko, 1988). The overarching ethnocentric assumption was that Canada ought to be a "white" country and policy therefore supported a racialized hierarchy of eligible and less eligible immigrants (Basran & Singh, 2003). In order to maintain a socially and culturally homogeneous nation, Canada not

only justified its racist policies, but it also deemed them necessary. Even before the beginnings of immigration policy, between 1815 and 1845, newspapers across Britain, Scotland, and Ireland included notices from Canada's government, of individuals looking for family members or friends (Errington, 2007) of men (husbands) who were already in Canada. Essentially, this promoted an overall 'British families first' sentiment.

Discriminatory immigration policies of the early 1900s specifically limited immigrants of Asian origin. People from countries such as China, Japan, and India were judged by the largely British immigrants to be dishonest, lacking in morals, carrying disease, and prone to criminality and prostitution (Knowles, 1992). When these immigrant groups lived closely together, dominant (white) society portrayed these communities as overcrowded and disease-ridden, giving rise to discriminatory policies. For example, Chinese immigrants faced an entry head tax of \$50 in 1900, increasing to \$500 in 1908. Other immigrants faced so such fee. The Canadian government also imposed strict limits on immigrants from Japan. The *Continuous Journey* clause of 1908 halted many South Asian immigrants, which led to the Komagata Maru incident.⁵ Previous immigration legislation (1869) had been based on fears of immigrants becoming dependent on the public, developing insanity, having infirmity, disease, or handicap, becoming an inmate of a jail or patient of a hospital, and committing crimes of "moral turpitude" (Roy, 1989; Ward, 2002). However, the *1906 Immigration Act* expanded the government's range and

⁵ The Continuous Journey Clause dictated that immigrants would not be admitted Canada if their ship made a stop en route. This applied to Indian immigrants because it was necessary for ships coming from to make a stop in Japan or Hawaii for fuel. The Komagata Maru was a ship hired by a Sikh entrepreneur in India to exercise the rights of Indians (who were British subjects) to travel to, and settle in any part of the Commonwealth. Canada denied entry to the ship, so it weighed anchor in Vancouver Harbour while the governments of Canada and British Columbia attempted to resolve the issue. The ship stayed in Vancouver Harbour for two months before the Canadian government turned it away. Of its 376 passengers, only 24 were permitted entry to Canada. Upon the ship's return to India, 19 Sikhs were killed and many more were imprisoned by British police.

power by compounding these racist policies with wide-ranging deportation authority. The *1910 Immigration Act* (Section 38) was far more explicit in the government's authority to prevent any immigrant "belonging to any race deemed unsuited to the climate of Canada..." (Knowles, 1992, p.85). The social Darwinist belief that only Northern and Western Europeans were accustomed to the cold and snow of Canada's harsh winters underscored this sentiment. Therefore, the federal government justified discrimination against South Asian, East Asian, and African people because of the preconceived, albeit erroneous belief about these races as being unsuited to tolerate Canada's harsh climate conditions. In addition to climate, the government used complaints made by unions about threats to jobs as justification to restrict immigration from Asian countries.

Between World War I and World War II, additional racist and ethnocentric immigration policies capitalized on the demonization of enemy states and peoples. For example, during World War I, the *Wartime Measures Act* and the *Wartimes Elections Act* disenfranchised people from 'enemy states', many of whom were previously naturalized Canadian citizens. Additionally, people who spoke Hungarian, Finnish, German, and Russian faced heavy scrutiny and suspicion (Knowles, 1992). Canada denied entry to Dukhobors, Mennonites, and Hutterites from about 1919 to 1921 because of the perception of their more isolated and traditional ways of living, and political beliefs, which were more collectivist, socialist, and pacifist (Boyko, 1988). Their pacifist approach was a threat to the emerging capitalistic and neo-liberal economy because of their lack of participation in society but also because of their antimilitarism and refusal to fight on religious grounds. Canada preferred immigrants from England, America, Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland, France, Holland, and Belgium. The Great Depression of the

1930s invited increased discrimination for immigrants as they were seen as becoming dependent on public assistance and competing with existing residents for jobs; immigrants of colour and immigrants who were from 'enemy states' were at greater risk. In the preceding years before World War II, Jewish people experienced significant discrimination and Canada severely restricted their entry (Irving & Troper, 2000). During World War II, Canada discriminated heavily against Japanese-Canadians and went so far as to expel Japanese Canadians or otherwise place them in detention camps.

In the 1950s, Canada became more open to immigrants outside of the traditional European preferences due to four factors (Knowles, 1992). First, the war had created the need for new technologies, and these technologies were subsequently used to enhance the standard of living. Second, to compete in the global economy, Canada required a larger and more skilled labour force. Third, immigrants who had settled in Canada prior to the war had begun to advocate for their families to immigrate. Fourth, the plight of international refugees influenced an increase in Canada's social conscience. However, the 1952 Immigration Act retained race-based exclusion factors: the government could deny immigrants entry based on nationality, ethnic group, country, or area of origin, peculiarities in ways of life and habits, and potential failures to assimilate. The primary motivation for this reluctant openness was to fill a significant shortage of labour; however, two major legislative initiatives also influenced this openness. The first was the introduction of Prime Minister Diefenbaker's Canadian Bill of Rights (1960) enshrining constitutional rights for all Canadians. The second, Diefenbaker's public criticisms of South African apartheid policy and a desire to have a 'colour-blind commonwealth,' prompted a significant change in Canada's immigration policy in 1962. For the

first time, there would be no denial of entry to Canada due to race, religion, colour of skin, or national origin. Of primary importance was fostering labour-based population growth through immigration, while not exceeding Canada's capacity to care for its citizens (Rao & Zubrzycki, 1984). Consequently, these regulations made training, education and skills the main conditions of admissibility (Walker, 1984)⁶. The 1967 amendments introduced a system that awarded immigrants points for skill and labour-based attributes, which, in turn, determined an immigrant's admissibility to Canada.

In retrospect, the changes in immigration policy reflected Canada's evolution from racist and xenophobic perspectives, toward greater tolerance and openness. Such changes reflected Canada's vision on what it wanted its society to be. Prior to the 1960s, Canada expected immigrants to assimilate. This cultural assimilation resembled the 'melting pot' analogy for Canadian culture. However, the overwhelming preference for a white, British-based Canada was first challenged when Canada moved away from the 'melting pot' metaphor, to the 'mosaic' where immigrant groups could maintain their cultural heritages while simultaneously committing to participating in Canadian life (Gibbon, 1938). Whereas the 'melting pot' was a way to pressure immigrants to cut off ties with the respective heritages, the 'mosaic' encouraged people to maintain cultural practices. The second challenge to the preference away from the 'melting pot' was offered by the sociologist Porter (1965) who argued in favour of a vertical mosaic, for the melting pot approach had solidified the social, economic, and

⁶ Canada's immigration system has been based on points associated with skills, education, and labour market participation. In contrast, the US's model relies on short-term foreign labour and a greater focus on extended-family green cards. In essence, Canada can pick and choose immigrants based on its needs, while the US relies in a first-come, first-served process. Further, while Canada's immigration focus on employment is federally oriented, the US allows state givenments to regulate employment.

cultural domination by people who were of British descent, while other ethnic groups were discriminated against. As such, the 'mosaic' was a way for Canada to treat immigrants more fairly in comparison to the dominant British groups.

During the mid-1960s, when Canada thus began accepting non-white immigrants, the government also introduced its policy of multiculturalism (*Multiculturalism Act, 1971*), which committed Canada to becoming a culturally pluralistic country, with a bilingual preference. In other words, as long as immigrants were competent in English or French, Canada protected their right to maintain their cultures. This promoted Canada as a world leader in accepting immigrants from developing countries (Palmer 1991). Concerns over the plight of refugees also fostered a broad exploration of past oppression, discrimination, and human rights. The 1970s and 1980s saw significant backlogs for immigration applicants and the lack of landed immigrant status, which prevented immigrants from gaining employment. Subsequently, Canada relaxed many of its rules and made the families of immigrants admissible as immigrants in an effort to be more respectful of human rights (Dorais, 2000), as sponsorship programs for close relatives began. In the 1990s, some immigrants and travel agencies used false refugee claims and took advantage of immigration. At the same time, Canada entered a fiscal recession. In an effort to manage the refugee and immigration system, Canada levied a landing fee for immigrants (not refugees), reminiscent of the head taxes of the early 1900s. Canada also altered its immigration criteria to accept more immigrants who were wealthier and with the financial means to invest in Canada's economy. This entrepreneurial class of immigrant combined with a greater emphasis placed upon highly skilled immigrants therefore undermined access to Canada of

people who would have been accepted as immigrants in the past – those with fewer skills, less education, and who came from the labouring classes.

Canada passed the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act in 2002 to replace the 1976 Immigration Act. Immigration authorities had an increased mandate to deny, detain, and deport immigrants suspected of threatening Canada's security, presumably as a response to 9-11. Entrepreneurial class immigrants faced higher requirements with respect to business experience, annual profits, and annual incomes. Therefore, even while Canada has increased its social tolerance and acceptance based on the Bill of Rights, it maintained a preference for immigrants who would contribute significantly to Canada's economy. This created an apparent class-based immigration system, which in its implementation, limited the immigration of families, refugees, and people persecuted in their countries of origin. Canada's priority to its economic agenda overshadowed Canada's Bill of Rights and other humanitarian ideals. Therefore, policy initiatives institutionalized pressures for immigrants to be "successful", and social Darwinistic attitudes positioned less successful immigrants as a 'drain' on society.

2.2 The History of South Asians to Canada

2.2.1 Lumping the 'Asiatics'

Understanding South Asian immigration to Canada requires the historical context (in the later 1880s) that categorized this group of people as part of a larger (non-white) diaspora from the 'Far East'. This group included people from China, Japan, and the Indian subcontinent. Canada initially lumped all people from East Asia and South Asia into one category. They were collectively termed as 'Asians', 'Asiatics', 'Orientals', or 'Mongolians' (Roy, 1989). The first

'Orientals' (from China, Japan, and India) settled in British Columbia but their individual ethnic histories did not matter to most British Columbians (Ward 1982). White entrepreneurs welcomed the 'Orientals' because they worked for lower wages, longer hours, and under poor working conditions. However, the prevailing sentiment among church groups, trade unions, and others was one of suspicion: this group of people came to make a quick dollar, take away jobs from white Canadians, undermine efforts for better wages and working conditions, and engage in illegal and morally corrupt activities (Roy, 1989).

The Fraser River Gold Rush in the mid-1800s lured Chinese immigrants and they subsequently enjoyed legal equality in terms of wages. They participated in British Columbia's economy by farming, cutting cordwood, operating laundromats, and so on (Tan & Roy, 1985). When gold became less available, entrepreneurs continued to employ the Chinese because they were cheap and reliable; however, the public expressed negative sentiments because they believed the Chinese did not assimilate, and represented unfair competition for labour. The public therefore, barred them from provincial public employment, and political protesting. The suspicion against Chinese immigrants later led to disenfranchisement, public insults, and mob attacks on their businesses (Buchignani, et al., 1985).

The Japanese generated even more suspicion, as the West considered them an 'enemy' during World War I and II. By 1908, strong public opposition to Japanese people had led to Canada and Japan entering into agreements to limit the numbers of Japanese immigrants. British Columbia was a hotbed of anti-Japanese sentiment; the Anti-Asiatic League was founded there, which informed much of Canadian policy against Japanese Canadians (Ward, 1982; Ward, 2002). The 1941 attack on Pearl Harbour by Japan plunged the United States into war and

Canada, already at war, followed the Americans in ordering all Japanese people interned into labour camps and concentration camps. Consequently, they faced forcible detainment, imprisonment, and removal from British Columbia to other parts of Canada.

People from South Asia (largely India) were called 'Hindoo' or 'Hindu'. Interestingly, the British and Canada erred in two ways. First, they essentialized all people from India into a monolithic category, by placing Sikhs and Hindus into one ethnic category. The second error was in conflating ethnicity with faith - Sikhism and Hinduism are separate faiths. The majority of Indian inhabitants in British Columbia were Sikh by religion and not Hindu. In the early 1900s, Indians worked as farmers and loggers in British Columbia (La Brack, 1988). While the Sikhs enjoyed a celebratory status in the late 1870s to the early years of the 1900s as decorated soldiers for the British Empire, they eventually faced much discrimination. The Komagata Maru incident of 1914 was evidence of Canada's attitude against Indians (described in footnote above). Such sentiments continued in the 1940s. In 1944, the Labour Minister for British Columbia said, "the Hindu is not helping us to maintain the standard of living ... in the province. There's nobody in the province as unreliable, dishonest, and deceitful as the Hindus. They break every regulation we have..." (Buchignani, et al., 1985, p.102). As such, the overriding feelings of suspicion prevailed.

2.2.2 The Sikhs in the 1900s.

The Canadian context with respect to the immigration of people from India requires an understanding of the oppression of Sikhs and Punjabi people in India (Buchignani et al., 1985). The Sikh people endured significant persecution and conquest in India from Afghan, Mughal,

British, and Hindu groups, largely due to their refusal to convert to various dominating sociopolitical regimes. Interestingly, throughout various points in their history, Sikhs were recruited to militarily protect these various groups from one another. The British viewed them as loyal and martially driven, trained for war, and possessing impressive military skills. In the 1800s and especially the early 1900s, when faced with marginalization and oppression in India, Sikhs sought sanctuary elsewhere with many employed by the British military.

The first South Asian in North America went to present-day New Mexico (U.S.) in the 1640s, probably a Portuguese-Indian (Buchignani et al., 1985). In the 1790s, there was a trading vessel from Madras, India, which came to Canada, but the people onboard did not stay (Subramaniam, 1977). Another early record speaks of a Parsi man in British Columbia, doing business from around 1870 to the early 1900s. The first public visit by East Indians was in 1897 when Sikh soldiers came to British Columbia as participants in Queen Victoria Jubilee celebrations (Basran & Singh, 2003). Britain and Canada hailed them as heroes. Then, when the Canadian Pacific Railway introduced Trans-Pacific passenger ship service from Hong Kong to Vancouver on April 1, 1904, Sikh immigration to Canada began (Johnston, 2005). Ironically, the arrival of Sikhs occurred when Canada introduced a halt to Chinese immigration – Sikhs were considered lower in status than white people were, but higher than the Chinese.

There was a steady presence and increase of Sikh immigrants to British Columbia in the early 1900s. By 1908, just over 5000 Indian immigrants came to British Columbia, with Sikhs representing over ninety percent. This is when Canada enacted the Continuous Journey Clause (see previous footnote); Canada denied all ships entry to Canada unless there were no stops along the way. This Clause made it virtually impossible for Indians to come to Canada, and for

those Indians who were here already, the Clause prevented their families from joining them (Basran & Singh, 2003).

Sikhs who were in Canada intentionally did not follow the Chinese into domestic service, laundries, and hotel and kitchen help, largely because in India, they were mainly engaged in the work of security, protection, and combat (Johnston, 2005). Upon arrival in Canada, they took the best opportunities open to them, preferring arduous or rough work outdoors and becoming gardeners, loggers, and railway workers.

2.2.3 Canada Opens its Doors.

During the Interwar Years (1919-1939), South Indian immigration to Canada ceased, and Indians resident in Canada remained disenfranchised. Then, in the mid-1940s Indians in Canada capitalized on trade agreements between China, India, and Canada, and they began to protest against disenfranchisement with the result that on April 2, 1947, Canada granted South Asians the right to vote. This coincided with the slow development of Canada's more open immigration policies. In 1962, after racial classifications were completely removed from Canada's immigration policies, steady increases in South Asian immigrants to Canada began (Buchignani et al., 1985). As a result, people from other parts of India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh increased more so than the Sikhs. In the 1960s and '70s, most Indians who came to Canada were similar to the Chinese immigrants – they were generally university-educated and, as a group, well skilled in various occupations (Johnston, 2005). As such, they found employment more easily and assimilated into the workforce more quickly. They were also a socially cohesive group, coming primarily from the middle and upper classes as well as urban backgrounds (Basran & Singh, 2003). However, despite their efforts to assimilate, Indian and

South Asian people in the 1970s faced racial unrest, violent attacks (Ubale, 1977), and discriminatory employment practices. While Canada selected Indians, largely based on their education and skills, employers demeaned them by placing them in jobs inferior to their educational credentials and social backgrounds. Indians were not favoured as Canadian residents, largely because of misunderstandings and misconceptions about the Indian community (Indian Immigrant Aid Services, 1977), and racist attitudes and beliefs.

Non-Indian Canadians were suspicious of Indians' physical appearance, clothing, mannerisms, food, religious practices, and aloofness and isolation from Canadian society. Some Indians themselves, who acknowledged their own 'faults' in terms of their self-perceived inability to give direct answers and difficulties in improving their language skills, contributed to this unfavourable image (Ubale, 1977). Indians in the 1960s, therefore, received at best, an ambivalent welcome in Canada. This juxtaposition of this construction with the label of Indians as the 'model minority' in the workplace needs exploration. In the workplace, managers idealized Indians because of their conciliatory and eager approach. Henry (1983) suggested Indians in Canada were simultaneously invisible and overexposed. They had superior educational and occupational qualifications, yet managers overlooked them in key areas of employment. So Indian immigrants did what they needed to do to obtain gainful employment by fitting into the demands of the dominant culture. This made them favourable as immigrants because they did not complain and they contributed to Canada's economy (Naidoo, 1987). Yet, because they had dark skin, wore saris or turbans, they were quite visible, making them targets for harassment, teasing, and assault (Henry, 1983); this was reminiscent of what Sikhs faced in the early 1900s. Even when Sikhs agreed to shave their hair and beards to better fit in and in

order to have better employment prospects (Hoerder, 1999), they still did not fit in because of racism, the language barrier, and their lack of power within labour unions. In this sense, the idea of Indian immigrants as the model minority is a myth.

2.2.4 Bengali Immigration to Canada

While Sikhs dominated Indian immigration to Canada in the early 1900s, there were also Bengalis who came (Buchignani et al., 1985). Due to increasing discontent over the British colonization of India, pockets of protest developed throughout the country and stimulated emigration. Specific to Bengali people, many notable Bengalis travelled to Europe for advanced study and immersion into Western cultures (Parnaby, & Keely, 2009). Shahita (2010) refers to the period of late 19th and early 20th century as the Bengali renaissance, a period of intelligentsia and enlightenment. Bengali people excelled in literature and art and incorporated a sense of national pride in these expressive formats. This artistic expression, combined with an overall Indian movement toward emancipation from the British, in turn mobilized other Indian states. As such, many secret societies in Bengal organized around the development of armed resistance against the British. Immigrants also brought such initiatives to Canada. In Vancouver, B.C. during the early 1900s, Bengali leaders combined forces with Sikh leaders to establish freedom societies and protest organizations in Canada such as The United India League, the Hindustanee Association, the Ghadar Party, and the Hindu Association of the Pacific Coast (Buchignani et al., 1985; Parnaby & Keely, 2009).

It was only after 1962, when the doors of immigration opened widely, that Bengalis came to Canada in higher numbers. Currently, more than half of all Bengali immigrants to Canada live in Toronto (Ghosh, 2006), some settled in Montreal in the 1960s, many settled in

Calgary and Edmonton in the 1970s, and those who arrived in the 1980s have increasingly chosen to live in Toronto. The Census of Canada (2001) stated that 15,000 Bengalis lived in the Toronto area, representing one of the fastest growing immigrant groups.

2.3 The Bengali Context

The purpose of this section is to review literature pertinent to Bengali-speaking people. First, the categorization of 'South Asian' will be discussed. Then, a history of the regions from which Bengali people originate will provide further context. Third, a number of concepts defining Indian culture and relationships will be described. The focus will then be on a few Bengali-specific concepts shaping social identity. The section will end with an overview of Indian immigration to Canada and relay some of the pertinent acculturation factors.

2.3.1 What is a South Asian?

A challenge in defining a certain group of people lies in categorizing them according to geographical boundaries (Hwang & Matsumoto, 2013). In this regard, people from South Asia are lumped geographically into one category. The term 'Asian' most frequently identifies people from East Asia (Japan, China, Tibet, Indonesia, etc.); however, it sometimes includes people from South Asia. People from the East Asian countries (identified above) face categorization differently than people from South Asia based on racially defined differences in the colour (Glenn, 2009). Therefore, the term/category 'South Asian' refers to people from several countries in the South Asian subcontinent and the overlapping sense of identity these countries share (Buchignani et al., 1985). The South Asian subcontinent consists of India, Bangladesh, Burma (Myanmar) and, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Bhutan and, Sri Lanka and

the Maldives. Some also include Iran and Tibet under the term South Asian. Differences between religions and anthropological histories are easily ignored; as such, the too-frequent use of the term 'South Asian' relegates and homogenizes a very diverse and differentiated people into a common culture (Subramanian, 1977), thereby perpetuating a Eurocentric-defined ethnic identity (Ghosh, 2006).

2.3.2 The History of Bengali Speaking People

The history of geographical and religious conquest in India challenged the categorization and definition of Bengali speaking people as well as others in the Indian subcontinent. India is a civilization segmented by religion, social hierarchy, region, traditions, and history (Subramanian, 1977). Aryans, Mughals, Turks, Dutch, French, and British people invaded the Bengal region of India (Ghosh, 2006). Successive invasions brought various sociocultural changes, religious influences, culinary changes, agricultural advancements, and economic and commercial relationships. Over time, the area consisted of people who subscribed to two primary faiths – Islam and Hinduism. The British Empire colonized and ruled India from 1858 to 1947. After British rule ended, India divided into two countries: India and Pakistan. India was predominantly Hindu and Pakistan was primarily Muslim. However, Pakistan was further divided into two regions: West Pakistan and East Pakistan, with India lying in the middle. This division resulted in the division of the Bengal region between India and East Pakistan. East Pakistan seceded from West Pakistan in 1971 and became Bangladesh. Such changes have therefore shaped Bengali-speaking people into a diverse and complex people.

Throughout the various invasions of Bengal, Hinduism prevailed in the western part of the state of West Bengal while Islam was predominant in the east (East Bengal/Bangladesh,

eventually) (Buchignani et al., 1985). In West Bengal, the Aryans, an ancient group of people composed of an Indo-Iranian-European background introduced a hierarchical social and occupational structure based in categories of work and ways of life (Stern, 2003). This led to the formalization of the caste system in the 1500s, which became widespread in India. It was based on four castes or classes of people, namely Brahmin (priests), Kshatriya (warriors), Vaishyas (trading and merchants), and Sudras (servants and 'untouchables'). In overall societal development, came advances in knowledge and religion. As such, cultural assimilation strengthened and organized Hinduism in West Bengal and pushed non-Hindus into less desirable areas. The spread of Islam throughout India and Bengal took much longer and increasingly, Muslim Bengalis became relegated to East Bengal (Eaton, 2003; Majumdar & Ghose, 1965). India then came under British colonial rule. Hindu Bengalis (those from west Bengal) embraced Western education, bureaucracies, and arts, and were prominent in British circles (Tagore, Ramakrishna, and Vivekananda were prominent Bengalis in this respect); they also introduced ideas from Hinduism into Western thinking (Buchignani, et al., 1985). The British in turn, used divide-and-conquer methods to capitalize on the increasing differences between Bengali Hindus and Bengali Muslims (Majumdar & Ghose, 1965).

Whereas Hindu Bengalis embraced British education and therefore had greater economic advantage, Muslim Bengalis continued a rural way of life, rejected education, and spoke Bengali mixed with Arabic and Persian dialects (Vaidya & Sreshtha, 2002). The British colonizers, while providing advantages to Hindu Bengalis, encouraged Muslim Bengalis to organize against Hindu oppressive systems. Consequently social, political, religious, and economic divisions increased between Hindu and Bengali Muslims. Essentially, from the early

1900s to 1947, religion divided Bengali society; however, both peoples maintained the commonality of speaking Bengali (Ahmed, 1985).

The overall frustration from colonial oppression resulted in organized efforts for independence. During the early 1900s, the Pakistan Movement began to address the problems in the western states of India where Hindu property owners oppressed Muslim peasants. When India gained independence in 1947, the British partitioned the country into two countries: India and Pakistan (West and East). Essentially, the western part of where Bengali Hindus lived was now the state of Bengal and the eastern part, where the Muslim Bengalis lived became East Pakistan (Buchignani et al., 1985). This partition was insufficient for the people in East Pakistan for two reasons: the first was because West Pakistan retained economic, military, and governing power over East Pakistan; the second was the rejection of Bengali as a recognized state language by West Pakistan. Civil war ensued and India, being geographically in the middle took East Pakistan's side in the conflict. Mass migration of Bengali speaking people in the tens of millions ensued and East Pakistan became a sovereign country, Bangladesh, in 1971 (Sreshtha, 2002).

As noted above, the multifaceted history of people who speak the Bengali language causes differences along historical, religious, political, and cultural lines. Table 2.1 below is a summary of major differences between the two primary groups who speak the Bengali language. While this summary represents broad views and overarching generalizations, there are variations within these groups. The historical context provided above shows people who spoke Bengali have differences in religion primarily, but maintain commonality by a language

with a unifying function. With subsequent dominations and increasing divisions, the similarity in language became secondary to the political, regional, and religious identities between the two groups. British rule exacerbated these differences.

Table 2.1⁷ Major Differences amongst Bengali-Speaking People

	'Bengalis'	'Bangalis'
Historical Indian State of Origin	West Bengal	East Bengal
Post-Colonial State Name	Bengal (India)	East Pakistan (Pakistan)
Post 1971	Bengal (India)	Bangladesh
Primary Religion	Hindu	Muslim
Living Circumstances	Cities and Towns	Rural
Education	Generally highly educated	Generally less educated
Societal Structure	Organized caste system based on occupation	Peasant, agriculture, based on religion
Government View on Emigration	Not supportive (loss of educated professionals)	Supportive (toward Middle Eastern/Muslim) countries
General Migration Trend	Towards Europe and then North America	Limited to generally Muslim countries

2.3.3 Indian Cultural Concepts

The specific cultural concepts shaping family life for South Asians, Indians, and Bengali-speaking people are subject to scrutiny and criticism by the Bengali-speaking communities for generalizations not applicable to all Bengalis. Ubale (1977) writes, "...it must be pointed out that when a South Asian in Canada writes something about his own community, he or she is vulnerable to criticism from non-South Asians on the grounds of possible subjectivity.

⁷ Table 2.1 is summarized from Buchignani, Indra & Srivastava, 1985; Majumdar et al., 1965; Srestha, 2002; and Srivastava & Sasikumar, 2003.

However, there is no guarantee that a non-South Asian writer will be less subjective” (p. iii).

This observation emphasizes the importance of being cognizant of emergent subjectivities and biases in the following discussion. It challenges but does not necessarily invalidate what non-Bengali or non-South Asian writers have to say about them.

2.3.3.1 Familism⁸ and Collectivism.

The key structure for South Asian families emphasizes familism and collectivism. Historically, Indian societies were organized around complex, village-based agriculture. Consequently, village life promoted the interdependence of close-knit families, relatives, and friends. For this to occur successfully, the household became the most important social unit, made up of extended family (Buchignani et al., 1985). Due to the orientation around interdependence in families and between families, a child born into such a communal setting learned the importance of group cooperation and sharing over individuality and independence (Seymour, 1983). Collectivism, from the perspective of Hindu social structures requires the cooperation of extended family, exceptional loyalty, the minimizing of individual accomplishments and achievements, and dependence on the wishes of the family (Naidoo, 1987). Such filial piety and obligation necessitate adherence to hierarchical authority structures permeating family life, mate selection, married life, parenting and care of elderly family members (Naidoo, 1987). For example, with regard to dating and marriage, parents have incredible influence over their children’s courtship and dating behaviours (Basran & Singh, 2003). While some of this is class/caste based, there is also a significant double standard for

⁸ *Familism* describes identification with family (nuclear and extended). Familism encompasses loyalty, reciprocity, solidarity and exceptional loyalty to the family. Familism also includes family structure, values, attitudes, and behaviours shaped and sanctioned by the overall larger family system (Rodriguez et al., 2007).

girls and women, and they face more caution and parental control (Naidoo, 1987). Most Indian parents restrict their sons and daughters from dating, yet, when it does happen, girls have more restrictions placed upon them than boys (Kurian & Ghosh, 1983). This is, in part, due to the gender-based roles women play in Indian culture regarding preserving cultural traditions and ethnic identity (Agarwal, 1991). Further, the gender specific depiction of a 'good' Indian girl positions her as shy and delicate, and she defers to her parent's choice of marital partner (Menon, 1989). Upon immigration, these traditional roles of women are challenged due to an understanding and embracing by women of more equal treatment (Dasgupta, 1997).

2.3.3.2 Deference and Discretion.

From dating and inter-marriage, filial piety and obligation assert themselves into the care for children. As a foundational value, the trait of deference-discretion-shame is critical (Buchignani et al., 1985; Kurian & Ghosh, 1983; Naidoo, 1987). In this regard, parents teach their children to demonstrate deference to, and respect for their elders (Inden & Nicholas, 2005). This comes in the form of household decision-making, family activities, education and career choices, and more. Deference in this context requires younger members of the family to concede to the expectations and decisions made by elders. While younger members might have some input into decisions, the authority to make decisions rests with elder members. Deference is not necessarily relinquishing control as much as recognition that family functioning falls within a long line of tradition held by elder members. Furthermore, they emphasize the importance of discretion; as such, parents stress emotional self-control, thereby showing respect to elders. Raising one's voice, arguing, defying, and disagreeing with an elder family member are behaviours demonstrating a lack of self-control in the company of an elder

and are seen as being indiscreet and therefore disrespectful (Majumdar, 2009). This leads to overall attitudes of holding a shameful stance, especially when one has wronged an elder. Whereas shame in an individualistic context implies some form of personal embarrassment and humiliation one brings onto themselves as a result of one's actions (Ray, 1998), in the Indian context, shame is the result of a lack of personal discretion, the result of which brings dishonour not only to the offender, but to the family as a whole (Dutta, 2015). Family shame emphasizes the concepts of family piety, obligation, and collectivism. Shame equates to self-control using discretion. In the Indian context, when one faces a reprimand for disrespectful behaviour, a reprimanding question is, "Do you not have any shame?" This can be loosely interpreted to mean, "Were you not thinking (about how your behaviour impacts us)?" or "Did you not learn anything (from what we taught you)?" Essentially, shame, in this context is not about an individual failure but reflective of shared family honour. The Western adage of "you make your bed, you lie in it" clearly does not apply for Indian families; instead, the adage is changed to "you defy me, you shame us all".

2.3.3.3 Parenting.

Indian values emphasize family security and continuity from generation to generation; parents as well as grandparents actively perpetuate these values (Bacon, 1999; Farver et al., 2007). Not having their own parents to support the propagation of these values to their children, Indian immigrant parents lack adequate models to maintain family stability and cohesiveness (Basran, 1993; Chekki, 1988; Dhruvarajan, 1993). Another problem for the immigrant parent is the child often acts as a cultural interpreter, thus compromising the parent's influence over the child and within the family (Haines, 2007; Khan & Watson, 2005).

Consequently, the function of parenting/child-rearing is complex due to overt and covert levels of intricate family values, and communally held social mores.

Parenting in Indian families is directed at socio-cultural continuity, rather than drastic changes caused by individualistic initiative and independence (Kurian & Ghosh, 2003). This continuity requires the whole family to be involved in raising children. Especially if grandparents are in the home, parents end up with a secondary role while grandparents emphasize adherence to rules, take the lead in overall family identity, and establish family spiritual practices and customs. Older family members therefore, become important influences in the lives of children. The following statement encapsulates an early articulation of children in Indian families:

A good child in the traditional context may be described as humble and intelligent although not necessarily brilliant, kind to small babies and animals, religious and goes to Temple at least once a day, not interfering and well behaved...not being mischievous and avoiding quarrels with other their children. He should above all, be obedient and respectful to elders (Mencher, 1963, p. 56).

The ability to carry out family responsibilities according to role is termed '*daityo*' (Rao, 2006). As with many Bengali words, this concept does not easily translate into English. The expectation of responsibility carries with it meanings around duty, obligation, commitment and, onus. While one can perceive such responsibility as burdensome, the word '*daityo*' evokes a sense of pride, honour, and dignity. In Bengali culture, one's carrying out of household responsibilities is a means to establishing family honour.

Parents teach their children their roles from a very early age based upon gender (Kakar, 1981). Completing family chores demonstrates children's thoughtfulness towards family. (Saraswati, Sikka, & Dutta, 1988). It also shows the ability of the family to be 'seen' to do what

needs to be done as opposed to being 'told' what to do. This speaks to the 'high context'⁹ of Bengali culture. Parents and family expect children to learn by example and by observation. Understanding roles also implies awareness of, and respect associated with the rule. The rules in the family are hierarchical and connect to *daityo* (Banerjee, 2004).

2.3.3.4 Educational Expectations.

Indian parents emphasize the significance and importance of achieving higher education in order to secure strong employment to maintain status (La Brack, 1988). A child's education and subsequent career have less to do with the child's own wishes and more with the family's honour and status (Farver et al., 2007) in maintaining a deference to parental authority. In this regard, Indian families encourage their children to pursue education and career opportunities in the sciences and business fields (Patel, Power & Bhavnagri, 1996). As well, due to the importance of social status, South Asian and Indian parents encourage their children to attend university over college and go further than a baccalaureate degree. Parents are highly involved in their children's education and often guide their children's high school academic courses in order to increase their chances of getting into a university program (Nimmagadda & Balgopal, 2000). Education and a successful career are a reflection of the parents' investment and

⁹ Edward T. Hall (1976) in his book *Beyond Culture* explains that high context cultures use fewer specific words and rely on gestures, interdependence, and shared meanings learned over time, in order to perpetuate communication and culture. Low context cultures rely less on relationship and more to specific words to communicate ideas. Hall stated that while in high context cultures much was left unsaid and left for members of the culture to learn by observation, low context cultures used many more words to convey meaning. He went further to suggest that high context cultures were more intimate than low context cultures because of the higher level of interdependence needed in order to communicate and relate.

involvement in child rearing, and so the child's level of achievement contributes to the family's social and cultural capital (Datillio & Bahadur, 2005; Hwang, 2006).

2.3.3.5 Dating and Marital Considerations.

Indian parents are invested in their children's dating and marital choices¹⁰. Due to the long-standing practice of arranged marriage, Indian parents intend to have some say over their children's choice in dating partner (Pettys & Balgopal, 1998). The immigration experience stalls and potentially frustrates this investment because in addition to possible Indian dating prospects, children meet non-Indian people to whom they may be attracted. The quandary for the parents lies in wanting their child to fit into the host culture (Karakayali, 2005) while avoiding the potential of a non-Indian marital partner from within the host culture (Kundu & Adams, 2005). While Indian parents impose cultural and family values emphasizing adherence to family standards (e.g., respect for parents and homogeneity in religious and cultural tradition), they also encourage the child to socialize with both the natal and host cultures (Farver, Narang & Bandha, 2002). Many young people believe as long as their grades are high and they show respect to people in the community, whom they socialize with is not much of an issue until the prospect of dating and potential marriage emerges (Pettys & Balgopal, 1998).

The family orientation of Indian culture emphasizes contributions and involvement from elder family members in all matters of family living including recreational, financial, career, education and daily living realms (Datillio & Bahadur, 2005; Hwang, 2006; Kalvar & Willigen,

¹⁰ Arranged marriages were, primarily an historical format of uniting a groom and bride, to prevent the mixing of castes. Families of the bride and groom meet to discuss a match between their children and the exchanges of gifts and a dowry. Essentially, the woman moves from her father's home, to the home of her husband and parents-in-law. Currently, while there are more love marriages in India, many are still given approval or sanction by the parents.

2005). As such, a parent's job or duty to find a suitable mate for their child is of paramount importance. However, in Canadian society, arranged marriage is an affront against individuality and independence (Deepak, 2005; Hwang, 2006). Therefore, Indian parents face the prospect of self-imposed, as well as perceived community-imposed, shame in their failure to meet this parenting obligation. Similarly, Indian parents recognize the importance of Canadian culture and value some of the independence they themselves have gained because of immigration (Kim et al., 2003).

2.3.3.6 Adherence to Cultural Values.

Indian parents expect their children to adhere to the primary precepts of their cultural teachings, including respect for elders, mutual care taking, and maintenance of religious and spiritual values (Basran, 1993; Dhruvarajan, 1993). The role of family pride becomes primary for Indian families, and children feel pressured to maintain the family name (Kundu & Adams, 2005). There is also pressure to appear without fault within the very small Indian community (Chekki, 1988). This requires parents to be strict with their children and for children to be obedient to maintain positive social status. Within the Indian diasporic community in Canada, there are smaller subcultures according to the state (e.g., Gujaratis, Punjabis, Bengalis, Tamils, etc.) from which people immigrated. These subcultures are insular and the families within them seek to maintain mutual interdependence (Deepak, 2005). However, the initial interdependence between families decreases over time as families begin to embrace Canada's individualistic culture (Kalavar & Willigen, 2005; Kim et al., 2003). As such, family pride becomes a sort of 'protected resource', something held in high esteem. Whereas in the past, families might support each other's pride, as a communal commodity, upon immigration and

decreased interdependence, families perhaps compete for pride because other families assess and judge them (Farver et al., 2007). Rather than pride being something perpetuated and strengthened by the community as a whole, each family competes as the previous strength of the community is fragmented. Whereas in the natal country, Indians will nurture, care for, and discipline one another's children, these same families in Canada become more isolated and, as such, parenting functions reflect the smaller family system as opposed to the community as a whole (Pettys & Balgopal, 1998). The consequent loss of a larger familial community for the Bengali immigrant is therefore stressful and difficult to bear.

The value of respecting elders is a key value and Indian parents pride themselves on their children's respect for their teachers and other elders in their surroundings (Kalavar & Willigen, 2005). In India, religion and social culture intertwine and thus attending religious events has a dual function. First, it is a place where families talk with, and update one another on their activities (Acharya & Northcott, 2007). Second, these venues provide a forum for the perpetuation of overall family and cultural values (Antonucci, Jackson & Biggs, 2007; Dhruvarajan, 1993) reinforced by other parents and elders.

Frequent get-togethers are forums through which people perpetuate and reinforce cultural values. Due to the absence of extended kin networks upon immigration, parents and families associate with one another in each other's homes virtually every weekend. A close-knit group of five to ten families will quite frequently get together over many decades. Such get-togethers are for the purpose of '*adda mara*' – loosely translated as "chatting", "shooting the breeze", "updating", and "gossip". Whereas in the home country of India or Bangladesh, this might happen on a day-to-day basis with neighbours and extended family (Chekki, 1988;

Messent, Saleh & Solomon, 2005), due to the busy lifestyle and generally geographic distance between families in Canada, *adda mara* happens on weekends. *Adda mara* provides a forum for the parents to support one another, to cook elaborate meals, to share stories of growing up back home, to remind one another of religious and cultural practices, to share recipes and to continue to build inter-family connections. For the children, these get-togethers provide a forum for playing, supporting one another, and learning from their elders. In this regard, these interactions nurture and perpetuate Indian family values (Pettys & Balgopal, 1998). Parents will often talk about the values they learned and took to heart while in India (Messent, Saleh & Solomon, 2005). Many of the challenges and successes Indian parents face in raising children in Canada are shared at these “family” gatherings. Parents offer one another advice and care, and at times will chat with each other's children to emphasize the importance of adhering to certain family values. As much as there seems to be a hands-off approach to directly parenting one another's children (unlike in India), parents do not hesitate to challenge or redirect the behaviour of another parent's child regardless the age.

2.3.4 Specific Bengali Concepts - Spheres of Bengali Identity

The above generalized Indian concepts help to understand the overall values and family rules organizing South Asian/Indian family life, and while they apply to Bengali-speaking families, it is also important to emphasize more specific terms, lending a deeper appreciation for Bengali speaking people. These terms come directly from the Bengali language, which also shapes culture, family life, and ways of being.

2.3.4.1 The Importance of Bengali as a Language. The Bengali or *Bangla* language is an important aspect of cultural identity. Ghosh (2006) found such identity to be stronger for

Bangladeshis than for Indian Bengalis. For both Bangladeshis and Indian Bengalis, a ‘non-Bengali’ is anyone who does not speak Bengali. This clarifies and solidifies Bengali-speaking identities and culture. Yet at the same time, Indian Bengalis refer to Bangladeshis as “Musulman” (Muslims) and references to being Bangladeshi (national) automatically imply being Muslim (faith) unless otherwise noted as “Bangladeshi Hindu”. While religion and geography differentiate Bengali speaking peoples, the Bengali language unifies this group.

Literature remains an essential part of Bengali language and culture. To illustrate, Rabindranath Tagore¹¹ was without doubt the key Bengali poet, storyteller, songwriter, and purveyor of Bengali culture in the late 1800s through to 1940 (Anisuzzaman, 2008). Whether Hindu or Muslim, whether Bangladeshi or Indian, Tagore was and is a symbol of pride and a representative of freedom for Bengali-speaking people. Having had exposure to British systems, Tagore maintained a strong foothold in Bengali literature, poetry, and song. In fact, he wrote the national anthems for both India and Bangladesh. Bengali communities all over the world, celebrate a day (early May) dedicated to him and his contributions to Bengali culture.

For Bengali immigrants, use of the Bengali language holds the highest importance for identity (Ghosh, 2006). Interestingly, Indian Bengalis did not see the importance of speaking Bengali as significantly as Bangladeshis. In her study of language switching by Bengali speaking children, Pagett (2006) found children’s preference to speak English is due to the Bengali language’s close roots to sentiments of home, culture, behaviour, and even self-esteem, terms neither easily translatable in English nor as relevant in western society. Therefore, language is a way for Bengali children to distance themselves from their parents. This, however, creates

¹¹ Tagore was the first non-European person to win the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913.

intergenerational conflict because it directly contradicts the role of immigrant parents as teachers of language to their children (Mukherjee, 2003).

2.3.4.2 Sentiments of Home and Belonging. The importance of home or *ghor* in Bengali is not only a physical place where one resides (Khondker, 2008) but, as similar to other cultures, home is the foundation for family life and socialization. Specific to Bengalis however, *bhari* is the place to which one *returns* after work, visiting people, or travelling (Chatterjee, Das, Ganguli, and Dey, 2008). For the immigrant who has left India or Bangladesh, 'home' also means returning to the homeland (Khondker, 2008). When one goes 'back home' or goes to their *bhari*, therefore, it truly means returning to their childhood roots. For the immigrant who chooses to not return 'back home', their identity is less stable because in addition to not having the physical home to which to return, all the related associations to childhood, extended family, and intergenerational relationships, are missing.

The theme of travel is present in Bengali literature, film, history, and music (Chatterjee et al., 2008). Images and depictions of the worldly, 'proper', upper class, knowledgeable Bengali traveller set up interesting expectations for immigrants to adapt, wherever they go. However, in these same cultural depictions, the traveller maintains ties to familiar sentiments of home.

2.3.4.3 Women and Gender. Families in Bengali culture (Hindu) have a very strong patrilineal structure in all castes particularly in the lower castes (Leonetti, Nath & Hemam, 2007). Consequently, women's lives are greatly restricted, as they move from their father's home to their father-in-law's or husband's. While patriarchy is predominant among the lower castes, there is greater emphasis on boys' education and boys' achievements in all of Bengali

culture. Gendered norms are important in Bengali families (Hindu and Muslim), where the husband is considered the head of the household (Ghosh, 2006). Roy (1976) provides a Freudian psychoanalytic interpretation of Bengali women in India and suggests a possible inherent need to be needed; hence, the deference to husbands, sons, and fathers. When they are young and live at their parents' homes, most girls learn, from their mothers, the methods, tasks, and rituals associated with daily prayers. In this regard, they are the religious caretakers of their own households when they themselves marry. Girls also learn how to operate the household, which includes management of servants, food purchase, and cooking. Therefore, this prepares them to be managers of their own homes later in life. However, as Roy (1976) points out, this perpetuates the need to be needed. As a result, even while men depend on their wives for household maintenance and religious caretaking, women remain subservient to men in order to be needed. They also encounter incongruent messages in the media. Basu (2001) examines a radical feminist Bengali magazine, which, on the one hand, contains progressive articles about sexuality and identity; yet the magazine also features articles and advertisements celebrating Bengali women's subservience to husbands and their roles as spiritual holders.

Due to women's increasing presence in the workplace in India, cultural changes have resulted in increasing challenges for women (Dutta, 1999). While intergenerational families help to free women to work outside the home, their traditional roles as caretakers and doers of domestic work also prevail. Significantly, the caretaker role in this sense includes maintaining the language. Women's roles as purveyors of the Bengali language help to keep the culture

alive because the nuances of the language retain their foundation inside family networks (Mukherjee, 2003).

The female role of caretaker continues into older age where Bengali (Muslim) women care for ailing husbands (Gardner, 2002). Bengali (Muslim) men receive honour in their youth as workers and, when older, their honour comes from religious affiliation and knowledge. For women, the role of being caretakers transcends much of their lives. However, older Bengali women also seek gurus, as they give so much, that their own needs go unmet. Upon immigrating, women experience the constant dilemma to juggle responsibilities between the home and society (Bhattacharya, 2010). The caretaker role extends beyond the home into social arenas such as the workplace and their children's school settings. Bengali women use their determination and tenacity to balance these domestic and societal roles.

2.3.4.4 Small Inconveniences. The idea of *aushubidae* or 'inconvenience' (Rao, 2001) refers to the way Bengali mothers in India advocate for their children with disabilities to be included in regular school. With the cultural emphasis on education and success, a child with a disability faces 'disadvantage'. Rather than focusing on the problems the child brings, the mother is expected to address the disability, 1) by acknowledging the issue to others, and 2) simultaneously minimizing its effect. In this regard, the term, *ektu aushubide* ('a small inconvenience') is used. Translated statements such as "It's only a small inconvenience" or "It will be little bother to you" or "I realize this will cause you some awkwardness or burden" suggest that whatever challenges the child brings due to a disability, it really is incumbent on others, especially their mothers, to provide support and care. Rao (2001) notes the use of this term for mothers who advocate support for the children, the term is also used in the Bengali

vernacular with reference to being respectful to the inconveniences one causes another, and concurrently, to obligate the other to make accommodations for people who need to be cared for. This approach strengthens the interdependent nature of Bengali culture.

2.3.4.5 Behaviour and Conduct. Another element of Bengali culture and language that shapes interactions with one another, and particularly influences parenting, is *babohar*, which translates to 'behaviour' or 'conduct'. A cumulative/all-encompassing term, *babohar* is compelling because it implies adherence to a code of conduct and behaviour reflecting successful parenting, effective discipline, and desirable family values (Rao, 2006). Specifically, Rao (2006) describes five elements to good conduct (*bhalo babohar*). The first is demonstrating respect (*maan deva*) by covering one's head, touching an elder's feet, using the formal version of the pronoun 'you' (*apni*) instead of its informal version (*tumi*), and accepting food and gifts. Second, is the recognition and understanding of appropriate social cues (*podoti cheng*). The third element is the willingness to include others into one's own personal sphere (*apon kore neva*), requiring a ready affection and extension of kinship. Fourth is the responsibility of taking care of guests (*atithi satkar*). The final element to *bhalo babohar* is to exemplify affection and love (*bhalobhasha*).

Babohar is taught explicitly, but also implicitly, using shame. The Bengali word for shame is *lojja*. In a disciplinary situation where a family member violates a family value, the chastisement comes with a rhetorical question: "*tomar kichhu lojja Ney?*" ("Do you not have any shame?"). Lacking shame is a comment on one's *babohar* or conduct, but it also refers to how one is parented and therefore reflects on the family as a whole (described above). The concept of shame in South Asian culture is different from its meaning in North

American/Western society. In Western culture, shame is heavily oriented towards feelings of lack of worthiness, not being good enough in one's own eyes as compared to others, and isolation and separateness from others (Brown, 2006). In Indian culture, it is more about discretion. One's negative behaviour reflects an inability or unwillingness to demonstrate discretion in front of others. This in turn, brings shame or dishonour to the family as a whole. Related is another judgment, one contained in the statement: "*Oder baccha ke ora kichhu shikheni*" (they did not teach their children anything), which implies that teaching the concepts of shame (*lojja*) and conduct (*babohar*) are the family's responsibility. When evidence of this is lacking, the shame for one person's conduct falls on the entire family, based on a lack of instruction and discipline.

2.3.4.6. Titles. Titles delineate hierarchy and parental lineage (Kakar, 1981). A younger person never calls a person older than them by name alone; instead, the name accompanies a title to signify the elder's position. Consequently, everyone is someone's uncle, aunt, grandparent, and older sibling. Even people outside of the family are titled accordingly. This strengthens one's accountability to elders, solidifies and extends filial obligations, obligates elders to care for younger people, and perpetuates a system of checks and balances to emphasize and reinforce *bhalo babohar* (good behaviour). A related element of social hierarchy is an awareness and respect for gendered norms in Bengali family life (Ghosh, 2006). In this regard, particularly endemic to Indian Hindus, the husband is the head of the household. Finally, with regard to conduct, there is one's placement of self, relative to others. In this regard, every elder has a title according to their social position, while anyone younger (by title, not age) goes by their given first name.

2.3.4.7 Religion and Spirituality. Religious identity is important for both Bengali Hindus and Muslims. Historically, Muslims were required to pray in a mosque once per week, with regimented expectations. In this regard, they preferred to live near a mosque. Indeed, for Muslims, their faith held their lives together. In contrast, for Hindus, religion is a private affair, and the public 'puja' is held in a grander public place where private Bengalis come together, as a unified people, to not just celebrate a religious festival but to socialize (Ghosh, 2000). *Durga Puja* is the most important religious event, involving the purchase of new clothes, participation in friendly events and competitions, expressions of creativity such as singing, dancing, poetry reading, and sharing food. In this regard, the *puja* goes beyond religion to encompass social and public identity.

The above discussion indicates that both Hindu Bengalis and Muslim Bengalis are groups whose members relate to one another in complex ways, unspoken formality, and learned obligation. Family members and close friends incorporate a system of behavioural checks and balances, which together, establish and maintain authority. Family life is organized around the formalization of responsibility, adherence to hierarchy and structure, deference to levels of authority, and an inherent expectation of affection and mutual care. All of this takes place in an environment of subtlety and highly contextualized interaction, where the outsider would experience difficulty ascertaining behavioural expectations because so much is based on indirect communication and nuance (Hall, 1976; Samovar et al., 2013).

2.4 The Immigration Experience for South Asians (Indians)

This section examines acculturative stress, coping, and identity for South Asians in Canada. The next chapter provides a more elaborate theoretical discussion on these concepts and processes. While this section summarized adjustment issues generally, this section addresses South Asians (Indians).

2.4.1 Acculturative Stress

Although immigration can be an adventure or an opportunity, the experience is also often stressful (Foster, 2001; Hollander, 2006; Short & Johnston, 1997). As discussed previously, acculturative stress contributes to the decline in the overall health of individuals struggling to adapt to a new culture psychologically and socially (Berry, 1987). According to Bryon-Cox (2009), acculturative stress is a form of pain, especially for first-generation immigrants. They feel looked down upon by the majority, experience anger caused by stereotypes, endure oppression because of hostility and rejection, and feel alienated due to a lack of support from the larger society (Murti, 2010). There are losses of family, community, familiar social networks, and known physical environments, which compound acculturative stresses associated with the impact of immigration on family structure (Hwang, 2006; Pottinger, 2005; Smith, Lalonde & Johnson, 2004).

Indian immigrants feel compelled to adopt a style of behaviour foreign to their former self-definitions (Larik, 2001). They face fear and self-imposed confinement as they integrate into Canadian society. In the 1970s, South Asians were a visible minority and stresses abounded because of hostilities between Canadian society and South Asians (Subramaniam, 1977). Additional stressors included changes in family structures, absence of relatives, friends

and peers, and overall residential scattering. For example, they became reluctant to seek police services when they faced discrimination (Ubale, 1978). As such, they withdrew from social and recreational pursuits, women were afraid of going out, and families tended to stay at home. In turn, when families stayed at home, family tensions increased.

Initially, when they moved to Canada, Indian women immigrants moving to Canada ended up with the same problems as they lived with back home in terms of maintaining a home while the husband went to work (Buchignani et al., 1985). Because they stayed at home, they had fewer opportunities to learn English quickly. This self-imposed confinement increased stress because they had lost the social community they had had in India (Periyamayagam, 2007). The roles of wives and mothers became only more complex and challenging when translated into additional domestic and family duties in a new country (Bhattacharya, 2010).

Acculturative stress also affects the family. For most Asian families, the collectivistic orientation remains throughout one's lifetime (Mock, 2001). Individuals (particularly women) sacrifice for the well-being of the overall family (Lee, 1997). However, following immigration, families have to face the individualistic values of most Western cultures where families socialize members to be independent and self-sufficient. For Indian immigrants, these cultural differences and incongruences play out in the context of the family and manifest themselves in inter-generational conflict (James, 2010). As a result, individual family members do not have the familiar comfort zones of traditional culture, kin networks, and friends, which would ordinarily perpetuate a sense of stability and coherence (Bajaj, 2008).

2.4.2 Coping & Resilience

In order to cope with acculturation and acculturative stress, families utilize a combination of familiar and new resources in order to cope effectively. For South Asian immigrants to Canada and the US already exposed to British systems during colonial times in India, they maintain their values with minimal changes (Subramaniam, 1977) in three basic ways: maintenance of values, establishing community, and relying on faith.

First, a primary way for immigrants to adjust to change is to hold onto values, language, and culture (Periyamayagam, 2007) as they learn the methods of living in the new culture. This involves a process known as 'cultural identity resilience' (Walsh & Shulman, 2007). While the immigrant adjusts to the overall ways of existing and interacting in the host society, they work hard to retain their ethnic values, a source of pride and belonging. Saunders (2005) also suggested that immigrants (South Asians in particular) filled many employment gaps which served to retain flexibility and promote 'fitting in'. An additional way for Indians to cope is through attempts at maintaining family values of interconnectedness (Bhattacharya, 2010). Such interconnectedness served the purpose of strengthening, perpetuating, and transmitting important family values and activities, done deliberately and thoughtfully. Finally, immigrants used hope as an important method to cope with acculturative stress (Chang & Banks, 2008). They relied on hope to work toward a better future (education and career attainment for their children, financial stability), engage in active problem-solving, and maximize the likelihood of overall success.

The second strategy for South Asian immigrants was to organize themselves as a community. This increased immigrants' coping mechanisms because such organizing allowed

for positive self-image, a 'holding space' for traditional culture, community pride, and a place to belong in wider society (Srivastava, 1983). There are a few Bengali and Bangladeshi societies in Toronto, and many more throughout Ontario and the rest of Canada. These societies provide psychological support to members, act as a source of information for immigrants, and create forms of religious and cultural community and unity (Buchigenai et al., 1985); they are important in the adjustment process (Lorick-Wilmot, 2007).

The third form of coping is the use of religion and faith. Religious coping was associated with positive mental, psychological, and physical health (Gall et al., 2005). Spirituality served as a place of power where one transcended situational challenges (Cervantes & Parham, 2005). For many immigrants, spirituality and religion provide a basis for hope (Chang & Banks, 2007). For Hindus and Muslims, religious faith, values, and practices cannot be separated from day to day living. In all realms of one's being (work, family, home, community), religion permeated culture (Byron-Cox, 2009). According to Bhattacharya (2010), immigrants carried their religion with them when they came to Canada as an important way to make a new life in the host society.

2.4.3 Parenting

While the ultimate objective for all immigrant parents is to provide better opportunities for their children, parenting processes undergo continual challenges because of acculturation. Conflict between the old and new cultures is the primary source of family dissension (Ferguson, 1964). Immigration and the generational acculturation gaps cause parents to believe their children are becoming strangers to them. As such, some parents are anxious to educate their children about their culture; some make frequent visits to India, others insist their children

attend Indian functions, see Indian movies, and follow Indian cultural values and behaviour (Kurian & Ghosh, 1983). Family conflicts emerge from the inconsistencies between lifestyles in the family of origin and the host society (Bhattacharya, 2010). What also complicates parenting is the lack of time immigrant parents had to spend with their children due to demanding work schedules (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007). The lack of overall parental control and influence has thus led to increased parent-child conflict. Western interpretations exacerbate the idea of a child becoming an adult at age 18 by prioritizing individuality and independence. The self, in Western culture is characterized by the "I", whereas in Eastern cultures, it is characterized by the "we" (Mock, 2001). Adulthood in Western culture therefore, threatens the immigrant concept of 'we'.

Bajaj (2008) noted in Indian families, mothers tended to raise issues of psychological distress, because they are the emotional centers of the family. Mothers mediated the various emotions experienced by various members in the family. In addition to monitoring and mediating the emotions of the family, they could also use this influence to comment on factors causing emotional and psychological distress to (largely) children. Mothers tended to be more accepting of their children's western influences, and better connected emotionally with their children. While fathers connected to their children emotionally, they took a more hands-on role in terms of educational direction, directives for career, and instructions for fitting-in (Kakar, 1998). In general, Asian families generally avoid open conflict (Lee, 1997) because traditional customs, language, and beliefs mediate conflict before it arises.

Parents hope for their children's best interests and want them to succeed with many Indian parents valuing education as a means to success. Education provides economic security,

and raises a family's social status (Bhattacharya & Schoppelrey, 2004). The pressure to succeed academically is a motivation not just for such success, but also to dispel racist views towards immigrants as being a drain on the dominant society and to demonstrate their equality, as citizens, in the dominant society (Smith, 2004). Educational achievement also leads to the ethnic and immigrant pride parents want to instill in their children (Bajaj, 2008). Such pride then, helps the family deal with racism.

Parents learn to parent by being themselves socialized in a culture, experiencing exposure to family practices, and participating in family and extended kin activities (Belsky, 1984). Most Asian immigrants come from an authoritarian parenting style (Sue & Sue, 2003). Therefore, if the child exhibits challenging behaviours, others judge this as a failure on the part of the parents (Tseng, 2004). In this regard, Indian immigrant parents face challenges raising their children in Western society (Bajaj, 2008) because of the increased pressures to be authoritarian in a permissive culture (Patel, Power, & Bhavnagri, 1996). One of the key missing components for South Asian immigrant parents in helping to socialize their children is grandparents and extended kin (Bhattacharya, 2010). As noted before, extended family provides a context for value transmission, discipline, overall family integrity, and a forum for problem resolution; the absence of extended family exacerbates parental challenges in the new culture.

2.4.4 Identity

Immigrant ethnic identity emerges from the interaction between structure (constraints) and agency (choices) (Sastry, 2011). Structure and choices are compounded by settlement experiences, interactions with the host community, and use of language, dress, religion,

clothing, and so on (James, 2010; Hogan-Garcia, 2009). Immigrant identity also shifts as the immigrant addresses factors such as travel to the home culture, responses to prejudice, and how people identify themselves (Subramaniam, 1977). Further, as one's identity shifts, the ways in which they mediate the above aspects of their lives also shift. Through this ongoing identity shifting process, immigrants determine what cultural patterns they will maintain, what they put aside, how they parent, and how they receive help. The relationship between acculturation, stress, and coping therefore shapes the immigrant identity (Bryon-Cox, 2009).

For South Asian immigrants, family is the context in which decisions about moving, arrival, adjustment and residency take place (Sastry, 2011). While parents struggle to establish their new identity, their children have the benefit of borrowing from their Indian identity and immersing themselves in the new (Canadian) identity (Larsen, 2006). Indian immigrants to the US found they could more freely embrace their Indian identities during weekends while interacting with other Indians, away from work and school (Murti, 2010). In other words, Indian identity was more wholly and fully expressed in the company of other Indians in one another's homes, or in a community space. Whether at school or at work, however, Indian immigrants had to suppress their 'Indianness,' and assimilate to expected norms in the dominant culture. This 'identity splitting' minimizes racism and helped immigrants to 'fit in' (Bajaj, 2008). Indian immigrants constantly negotiated their values based on their expectations in India and what they learned in the U.S. (Bhattacharya, 2010). These negotiations shaped a more fluid identity, but at the same time, left them somewhat less certain about their belongingness.

2.5 Summary

This chapter began with a nuanced understanding of Canada's immigration history. The issue of pervasive racism in policy and practice was noted especially in the history of South Asians immigrating to Canada. This provided the background to appreciating some of the challenges South Asian immigrants faced, and is reminiscent of the prejudice directed at other non-British immigrants from the earlier part of the 20th century. The chapter then provided an exploration of Bengali-speaking people in the larger contexts of India, Bangladesh, South Asia, and Asian. The descriptions of various Indian and Bengali cultural concepts provided the reader with a detailed understanding of the values, norms, and expectations shaping Bengali culture and identity. The final section of the chapter discussed some of the pertinent acculturation issues faced by South Asians when they immigrate. Factors surrounding acculturative stress, parenting, identity and coping provided a background to understand the challenges faced by these immigrants as well as the processes used to overcome them.

The literature discussed above provided insights into the social, cultural, and historical realities Bengali immigrants bring when they come to Canada. Collectivist meanings of traditional culture remain highly evident in many of the concepts and norms they perpetuated around familism, interdependence, and adherence to tradition. Upon immigration, Canada's overarching individualistic orientation challenges and threatens Bengali immigrants' familiar norms. Since the continuation of these norms require the presence and involvement of extended family, immigration places this traditional cultural system of mutual care and familism at some risk. Nevertheless, immigration requires acculturation and adaptation.

The next chapter presents theoretical constructions of acculturation, stress, and resilience. In light of the threats and losses to familiar cultural and family values and conflicting expectations upon immigration, the next chapter provides a theoretical context through which to understand how Bengalis cope with acculturation as they draw upon familiar culture while engaging in the new society.

CHAPTER III: THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

“It takes a long time to move from one part of the world to another. It takes even longer to decide to unpack your suitcase” (Paris, 1980, p. 273).

3.0 Introduction

This chapter examines theoretical perspectives shaping the understanding of the immigrant parenting experience. The first section outlines pertinent models and theories on acculturation, acculturative stress, and coping. The second summarizes the main themes on ethnic identity formation. The third section presents the main theories and pertinent concepts on resiliency as well as an introduction to the Immigrant Parenting Enhancement Framework.

3.1 Acculturation, Stress, and Coping

This section covers the primary concerns surrounding acculturation, acculturative stress, and methods of coping. As immigrants move from their home country to the host country, they go through a process of major change associated with learning about their new home, letting go of aspects of their former home, making choices to ‘fit in’ to the new society, and negotiating their identities. Such processes can be stressful to immigrants as they seek a better life in a new country. These stresses not only affect the immigrant, but also challenge familiar family processes and dynamics. Immigrants employ a variety of coping mechanisms to adjust effectively to the stresses of acculturation.

3.1.1 Summary of Models of Acculturation

Fields such as anthropology, sociology, and psychology define and explain the term ‘acculturation’. Anthropologists examined acculturation because of the observed changes

encountered when members of one culture make contact with another (Herskovits, 1937). However, the influences of sociology and psychology provided additional context such as historical motivations for cross-cultural contact, psychological impact on individuals, and the dynamics of adapting to a new culture (Kramer, 2003). Powell (1880), an American geologist and early anthropologist, was the first scholar to coin the term 'acculturation'. He defined it as the psychological changes induced by cross-cultural imitation. Redfield, Linton, and Herskovitz (1936) were commissioned by the Social Science Research Council to provide a universal definition for acculturation:

Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups (p. 149).

Significantly, this definition emphasised the mutual influences between cultures and the recognition that both cultures change because of such prolonged contact. They based acculturation on four factors. The first was an understanding of the situations under which contact took place. Forced versus voluntary situations brought different motivations for contact. The second factor was the process of acculturation, whereby people's personality traits and behaviours changed because of contact. The third was psychological processes because of cross-cultural contact. The final factor was the results of acculturation around acceptance, adaptation, and reaction between groups that made such contact (Redfield et al, 1936).

Firth (1951), an ethnologist, referred to acculturation as "...the way in which new patterns of behaviour or types of relationship were acquired and incorporated into a primitive

system” (p. 81). In 1953, acculturation implied, “a primitive community ... in the process of being acculturated to the West” (cited in Online Etymological Dictionary, 2011). The 1954 Social Sciences Research Council (SSRC) Summer Seminar explained acculturation to be the process of change when different cultures interact. Resulting changes include alterations in values, personality, roles, etc. In contrast to these macro-level definitions, Graves (1967) examined psychological acculturation as the processes an individual endures due to cross-cultural contact. Overall, the similarities in the definitions position acculturation as an outcome requiring adjustments and changes to one’s interactions due to immersion and interaction with another culture. The differences in the definitions suggest that acculturation is a process in terms of the methods one employs to shape their personhood to a new culture. Whereas early definitions of acculturation examined the outcome of cross-cultural contact (i.e. the end-results or specific behavioural change), later definitions focused on the dynamics and processes of how these changes came to be. As such, examining the process of acculturation provided additional context to the mere outcomes for acculturation.

A number of acculturation and assimilation models emerged from the 1950s onward to describe the specific processes persons endure as they immigrate from one culture to another. Ngo (2008) takes a critical approach to these theories and categorizes them under unidirectional, bidirectional, and interactive acculturation theories. Ngo (2008) reviews Park’s (1950) and Gordon’s (1964)¹² models and stages of acculturation and concludes that the interaction between cultural groups results in the assimilation of one group into the other,

¹² Park (1950) said that when ethno-racial groups interact, they go through stages of contact, competition, accommodation, and assimilation. Gordon (1964) posited seven forms of assimilation: 1) cultural or behavioural, 2) structural, 3) identificational, 4) marital, 5) attitude receptional, 6) behaviour receptional, and 7) civic.

thereby minimizing or even extinguishing one ethnic identity in favour of the dominant one.

Portes and Zhou (1995) proposed “segmented assimilation” theory, where adaptation for immigrants involved three different types: integration into the dominant (middle class) culture, integration into the underclass, or maintenance of traditional culture. While segmented assimilation theory expanded the understanding of acculturation, Ngo (2008) saw these unidirectional theories as based on assimilation and oppression.

The problem with unidirectional-assimilationist theories is two-fold. First, there is the assumption that acculturation only goes one-way, where immigrants go through a process of change and loss of their culture. Second, such an approach then implies that if the immigrant is not ‘successfully’ adapted, then it is their fault. Unidirectional theories therefore place too much emphasis and onus on the immigrant’s choice to change without examining larger sociocultural forces.

Bidirectional models of acculturation developed from the 1980s onward. The most prominent theorist, Berry (1980) went beyond the linear/unidirectional model by proposing a bicultural model of assimilation based on two dimensions and resulting in four outcomes. The two dimensions respond to the questions: ‘Is it desirable to have positive relations with other groups in society?’ and ‘Is it desirable to maintain cultural heritage?’ When placed in a four cell, orthogonal model, Berry (1980) developed four outcomes of acculturation, as seen in Figure 3.1 below.

Figure 3.1: Outcomes of Acculturation (Berry's (1980) four cell model)

		Positive Relations with Host Society	
		Yes	No
Maintaining Cultural Heritage	Yes	Integration	Assimilation
	No	Separation	Marginalization

While Berry's (1980) model describes outcomes associated with *behavioural acculturation* (adaptive changes in language, communication style, sharing food, adjusting routines, and participating in the new culture's events and activities), others (Szapocznik et al., 1978; Ramirez, 1980, Searle & Wood, 1990) examined complex processes of *psychological acculturation*, the changes immigrants experienced in their fundamental values and beliefs, their ideologies, as well as their attitudes, personal preferences, and coping mechanisms. Quantitative scales measured general acculturation as well as culture-specific acculturation. These consisted of questions scoring a person's level of acculturation (adoption of the new culture as one's own) in the new society (Burnam et al., 1987; Cheung, 1995; Kim & Berry, 1986; Lalonde & Cameron, 1993; Lambert, Merigis & Taylor, 1986; Laroche, Kim & Hui, 1997; Maldonado, 1995; Marino, Stuart & Minas, 2000; Suinn, Ahuna & Khoom, 1992; Triandis et al., 1986; Zheng & Berry, 1991). Santisbetan and Mitriani (2003) proposed adding family and group changes. Similar to Berry (1980), Rivera-Sinclair (1997) developed a bicultural model of

acculturation examining two dimensions. One was the cultural involvement-marginality continuum and the other was the monoculturalism-biculturalism continuum¹³.

The theories above have static end-states or outcomes related to individual acculturation. They do not adequately describe processes of acculturation and other socializing factors. Again, Ngo (2008) finds bidirectional models lacking because they still maintain a focus on how the immigrant changes, adapts, and essentially assimilated into the dominant culture without an adequate perspective on the historical and political forces shaping immigration and acculturation. Ngo (2008) also critiques bidirectional models for not sufficiently exploring the factors related to identity. From an intersectionality perspective (Lockhart & Danis, 2010), bidirectional models appear to only focus on the ethnic aspect of one's identity without a realistic understanding of other aspects such as gender, race, sexual orientation, and class.

In response to this inadequacy, Bourhis et al. (1997) developed the Interactive Acculturation Model, demonstrating the interactions between immigrants and larger structural factors, such as the host society and government. The three dimensions assessed were: 1) immigrants' adjustment/acculturation strategies, 2) the host society's receptiveness to immigrants, and 3) the accompanying relationships when combining these two dimensions. Three acculturation processes resulted in three relational outcomes: consensual (both groups share in the acculturation orientation), problematic (the groups disagree on parts of their acculturation orientation), and conflictual (both groups aim towards separateness). In other

¹³ The cultural involvement-marginality continuum measures the extent to which the immigrant fully participates in the new cultures versus the extent to which they isolate and marginalize themselves. The monoculturalism-biculturalism continuum measures the extent to which immigrants see themselves having only one culture versus two.

words, the interactions between the acculturation orientations of the host and immigrant groups result in these three relational outcomes between the two groups. Ward, Bochner, and Furnham (2001) added to the interaction between immigrants and the host society by examining the changes in transitions, stresses, and responses during acculturation. In the same vein, the transitions and acculturation processes endure over generations (Matsumoto, 2007) as cultural learning is passed down. In other words, acculturation is not static. Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, and Szapoczni (2010) added the domains of collectivism, familism, individualism, and interdependence to acculturation, resulting in the expansion of acculturation as far more complex and multi-dimensional.

Upon reflection, the evolution of these theories suggests that acculturation involves more than the mere contact between groups of people. From the unidirectional to the bidirectional to the interactive orientations, when immigrant groups come to Canada, the processes of adaptation are multi-layered. There is without doubt, a strong element of assimilation, where one group loses parts of its culture due to the dominant group's requirement for an immigrant group to 'fit in'. However, the theories above suggest elements of nuance and depth requiring research to examine the processes of acculturation at levels of greater and deeper interpretation. Concerns about how acculturation passes from generation to generation, questions about the impact of acculturation on collectivism and familism, and perceptions of how immigrants interpret and cope with larger assimilation ideologies require explication, and are the focal areas for this research.

3.1.2 Acculturative stress

Examining acculturation models also gives rise to the issue of acculturative stress, a concept defined as stress occurring when an individual's normal adaptive capabilities are inadequate in aiding their adjustment to a new culture (Dressler & Bernal, 1982). Acculturative stress develops from three forms of bicultural conflict (Keifer, 1974). The first is cultural alienation, which refers to the sense of personal discontinuity due to cultural disruption. A person's sense of self depends on an assumption of continuity. When immigration interrupts this continuity, the person's sense of future is at risk, which results in acculturative stress. The second form of bicultural conflict comes from feeling overwhelmed with conflicting cultural norms between the new and the familiar. The immigrant feels caught between living their life in the way most familiar to them and the demands made by the host culture to fit in. The final form of bicultural conflict occurs when the immigrant's own values are in direct conflict with, or incompatible with those of the host society. This causes stress because there is clear understanding that not fitting in actually causes conflict between the immigrant and some aspects of the host society (workplace, school, etc.). Berry et al. (1992) explained acculturative stress as the behavioural manifestations (anxiety and depression), which are the result of feeling marginalized, alienated and confused about one's own identity. When an immigrant experiences an incongruity between who they believe they have been with who they are coerced to be (in order to fit in), they become increasingly removed and therefore isolated from their identity, causing acculturative stress

3.1.2.1 Stress as loss. For the immigrant, stresses from acculturation are the result of four intermingling losses. First, there is a loss of social status. According to Izuhara and Shibata

(2001), an immigrant may have had status while in their home country. Indeed, the majority of immigrants from India are from the middle class. However, when they arrive in Canada, they face reduced income, work opportunities at a lower level than their profession, and underemployment. Underlying these concerns is also the experience of racism, which represents a loss of status in terms of equality. Having to adjust to unfamiliar and unexpected work leads to stress (Ferguson, 1964) and a loss of status.

Second, there is loss of extended family (Nandan, 2007). Many immigrants come from collectivistic societies where extended family members play mutually supportive roles with regard to overall family income, household management, and child rearing. Immigration severely compromises this natural and intrinsic support system and therefore the loss of extended family is stressful. In addition, there is the related loss of networks that could otherwise lead to greater opportunities for gainful employment and upward mobility (Lyman, 1994). Finally, loss of extended family also raises concerns about the loss of language, traditions, and customs (Zeigler, 1979). The required additional efforts towards cultural maintenance add unanticipated stresses for immigrants.

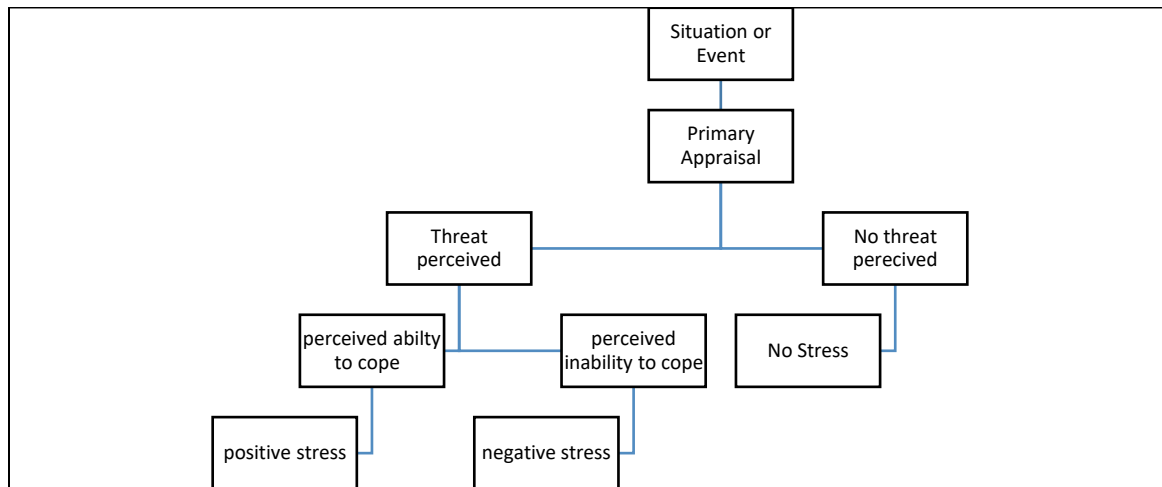
Third, immigrant parents lose some control over their children. In other words, parents lose a level of authority over children due to the pervasive influences of the host society. Children acculturate at a faster rate than do their parents (Farver, Narang, & Bhandha, 2002), which adds to the acculturation gap. In essence, children have a greater command of the host culture than their parents do, which in turn, alters the power balance. Authority is also unbalanced, as children sometimes become the cultural and language interpreter for their

parents. The fear of losing one's children and the loss of parental authority to the host society causes stress for immigrants (Montero, 1977).

Fourth, loss of acceptance due to discriminatory behaviours by the host society causes additional acculturative stress for immigrants (Abouguendia & Noels, 2001; Zeigler, 1979). From employment to education to recreational activities to neighbourhood connections, societal structures emphasize the dominance of the majority culture, ultimately diminishing and discriminating against immigrant cultures. Such institutionally created and systemic barriers contribute to acculturative stress for immigrants because they feel pressured to accept discrimination in order to fit in. These four interconnected losses compound acculturative stress for immigrants because they lead to self-doubt, a lack of confidence, and a decrease in self-esteem (Shimoni, Este, & Clark, 2003).

3.1.3 Coping with Acculturative Stress

This section explores additional theories on stress and coping, and definitions related concepts such as hardiness, social support, self-efficacy, and optimism. This provides a context for the way in which immigrants cope with acculturative stress. The foremost studies on stress and coping are Lazarus (1966) and Lazarus and Folkman (1984). They emphasize four factors: the cognitive appraisal of a situation, a perception of the situation being a threat, a belief in one's ability to cope, and whether the perception of stress is positive or negative. These factors are depicted in Figure 3.2 below.

Figure 3.2 Transactional Life Stress Model (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984)

The figure above shows that when someone faces a situation, their primary appraisal of the event defines whether there is a threat. The perceived lack of a threat relegates the event to imposing no stress. If, however, the appraisal of the situation results in a perceived threat, then two processes can occur. First, if the individual believes they can cope with the threat, then the stress is positive, because one anticipates positive outcomes from having to cope with the issue. Second, if the individual judges they are unable (or less able) to deal with the threat, then they will experience negative stress.

Holmes and Rahe (1967) introduced the idea of critical life events where stress arose when critical life events created changes to a person's normal life habits. Appraisals (Arnold, 1960) are the cognitive as well as the emotional factors influencing situational and personal factors, which in turn, help to measure the level of imbalance a stressor is likely to cause. As defined by Folkman and Lazarus (1980), coping refers to "the cognitive and behavioural efforts made to master, tolerate, or reduce external and internal demands and conflicts among them" (p.223). Therefore, coping directs and shapes people's efforts toward problem resolution or

regulation of emotions in the face of stress. In addition to internal aspects of coping, a number of authors introduced additional related concepts.

3.1.3.1 Hardiness and self-efficacy. Kobasa (1979) introduced the concept of hardiness; here, people who experience stress place the issues at hand into perspective so they can reduce the impact of the stress on their health. Maddi (2006) saw hardiness as made up of three characteristics – challenge, commitment, and control. Kobasa (1979) stated that commitment lies in one's ability to perceive the world as meaningful. The concept of control speaks to the belief in one's ability to influence situations. Challenge requires the person to translate change and stress into opportunities for learning and growth. When taken together, these provide a person with the necessary courage as well as motivation to persevere through stressful situations with fewer deleterious effects. There are similarities between Kobasa's components for hardiness and Bandura's (1977, 1995) concept of self-efficacy, referring to developing mastery and competence by persevering through challenges and obstacles. It relates to one's perception about their abilities towards achievement. Self-efficacy also comes from the observation of, and participation with others through which people learn via observing and modelling. Self-efficacy requires a sense of engagement with the self and the goals desired (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004) because it inspires willingness, involvement and absorption in the task at hand (Ouweneel, Le Blanc & Schaufeli, 2011). Both theories are based on social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977) where one's self efficacy (hardiness) is developed partly by how one perceives their competence in the face of external social factors.

As it relates to acculturation, an immigrant's hardiness depends on their ability to commit to fitting in to a new culture, control what they can to maintain aspects of their familiar

culture, and challenge themselves to adjust to the changes and transitions associated with immigration and acculturation. The immigrant's sense of self-efficacy then increases as they engage these processes. This sense of hardiness and self-efficacy then encourages the immigrant to work toward their goal of a successful adjustment to Canada.

3.1.3.2 Social support. Social support also adds to a person's coping abilities. Initially, Barnes (1954) described social support as relationships formed as a protective factor to vulnerability. Social support comes from four overall characteristics: socio-demographic, social network, social involvement, and personality (Cornman et al., 2003). Included within the realm of social support are social policies and laws (such as the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms), which comprise a set of rights that protect people and increase their sense of being supported in law. Social support is about matching social provisions with people's needs (Sarason & Sarason, 2009) as well as matching people with each other based on cognitive and behavioural styles (Anderson & Chen, 2002). Social support reduces fear of failure and the anticipation of danger, while allowing people to explore their world, take risks and to cope more easily (Goldsmith, 2004). Casual, every-day interactions with non-significant others (letter carriers, grocery store clerks, neighbours, and so on) also form casual community supports (Kazdin, 2007).

For immigrants, social support becomes important because they can draw on Canadian societal institutions to help them acclimatize to this country, while relying on ethnic community groups to maintain aspects of ethnic identity. Immigrants' interactions with people in their communities strengthen through day-to-day contacts, involvement in events and activities, and in forming "natural" supports within their neighbourhoods.

3.1.3.3 Optimism. A concept related to self-efficacy is optimism, defined as primarily dispositional: “a tendency to believe that one will generally experience good outcomes in life” (Sheier & Carver, 1985, p.222). Other forms of optimism include explanatory optimism (Seligman, 1991), unrealistic optimism (Weinstein & Klein, 1996), and defense pessimism (Norem & Crandell, 1991). Explanatory optimism is a form of rationalizing events. In this sense, explanations of events have their basis in internal or external causes, stable or unstable factors, and whether explanations are context-specific or generalizable. When a person attributes their explanations of events to internal causes, stable factors, and generalized situations, they are optimistic. Conversely, when a person attributes explanations to external causes, unstable factors, and context-specific situations, they are more pessimistic. Unrealistic optimism is composed of four factors: a person’s desired outcomes, their cognitive/perceptive abilities, the information about themselves and others around them, and their mood or attitude. Therefore, when good things happen, a person develops positive self-esteem and self-efficacy. When bad things happen, a person may take more unhealthy or unsafe risks, and develop unrealistic optimism. Defense pessimism refers to a perception or attitude in which one anticipates unfavourable outcomes. This lack of optimism is a form of emotional and mental preparation if events do not lead to one’s success.

Optimism also corresponds with adaptation and coping (Endler & Parker, 1994), which applies to immigrants and acculturation. Most immigrants come to Canada with hopes of favourable outcomes for their children and themselves. The balance between explanatory optimism, dispositional optimism, and defense pessimism helps the immigrant to navigate the acculturation process. They draw upon an enthusiastic and goal-oriented disposition

(dispositional optimism) in order to fit in to Canada, to establish roots, and to work toward stability. Immigrants who are optimistic rely on explanatory optimism, and will tend to explain situations as being within their control of internal causes. They will also see their life circumstances as moving toward stability and seek out opportunities to enhance this stability in order to acculturate more efficiently. Finally, immigrants will tend to globalize or generalize their experiences around acculturation instead of personalizing them.

3.1.3.4 *Combatting acculturative stress.* Immigrants navigate and mediate acculturative stress by applying self-efficacy and hardiness, social support, and optimism. They perhaps appraise stress and crises in a broader context, recognizing situations as part of adapting to a new society. As such, immigrants use coping strategies and crisis management to mitigate perceived losses (of children to Canadian society, or extended family from back home, of humanity due to racism). They draw on their own hardiness, optimism, and social support to counter these losses or place them in a useful cognitive frame to keep their overall goal at the forefront – to establish stability and success for their children and themselves. This constant process then builds on the immigrant’s self-efficacy to buffer acculturative stress.

3.2 Immigrant and Ethnic Identity Formation and Development

3.2.1 Early Theories

The discipline of psychology gives considerable attention to the concept of identity. In the past, identity development was relatively straightforward because most people were born into, raised, and eventually fit into roles prescribed for them through tradition, history, and necessity (Cote & Levine, 2002). Due to the lack of choice in identity options in these times,

identity related problems were uncommon. As society became increasingly complex, with more forms of social organization beyond family, people had more choices in the roles they could play in society. As a result, the process of identity formation became more complex, and multi-layered. Whereas in the past, family imposed and maintained one's identity, the vast number of current social influences makes identity formation less tied to any one social unit and, therefore, an independent and perhaps, lonely task.

Freud (1896) was the first theorist (in the Western world) to develop a stage-based theory on identity development. In the 1920s, he proposed five psychosexual stages based on age. These stages began in infancy and largely ended in late adolescence/early adulthood and were tied to the individual's sexual development and needs. While this was the first psychological theory about child and adolescent development, it fell short because of the assumption that once adolescence ended, there was no further psychological development for adults. To address this gap, in 1950, Erik Erikson proposed an eight-stage model of identity development. It went beyond Freud in three ways. First, Erikson's theory went from birth to death instead of stopping at adolescence. Second, instead of focusing on psychosexual motivations, Erikson focused on the relationship between the individual and their social interactions with others. Third, whereas Freud's theory focused on resolving needs resulting from the conflict between the id and superego, Erikson's model asserted that the individual endured a psychosocial crisis at each stage, the resolution of which would promote an individual's identity development. Figure 3.2 below summarizes these stages. Again, Erikson's theory recognized that the resolution of one's internal crisis helped form identity development.

Table 3.1 Erikson's Eight Stages of Psychosocial Development

Stage	Age	Crisis or Conflict	Virtue Achieved	Description
1 infants	Birth - 1.5 yrs	Trust vs Mistrust	Hope	Developed through consistent love and support
2 toddlers	1.5 - 3 yrs	Autonomy vs. Shame	Will	Independence fostered by support and encouragement
3 preschoolers	3 - 6 yrs	Initiative vs. Guilt	Purpose	Developed by exploring and accepting challenges
4 children	6 - 12 yrs	Industry vs Inferiority	Competence	Mastery comes from success and recognition
5 adolescents	12 - 18 yrs	Identity vs. Role Confusion	Fidelity	Exploration of different paths to attain a healthy identity
6 young adults	19 - 40 yrs	Intimacy vs Isolation	Love	Form positive, close relationships with others
7 middle adults	40 - 65 yrs	Generativity vs. Stagnation	Care	Transmitting something positive to the next generation
8 seniors	65 yrs to death	Ego Integrity vs. Despair	Wisdom	Life review and retrospective evaluation of one's past

Adapted from Santrock (2009)

In 1966, Marcia developed the Identity Status Formation model with particular attention given to adolescence. Marcia (1966) postulated that adolescents endure change and development over two axes: 1) the exploration of goals, ideals, and values, and 2) the commitment to a future course of action to resolve this exploration. The result is a four-fold set of identity statuses: identity foreclosure, identity diffusion, identity moratorium, and identity achievement. These statuses around identity formation apply to many other groups besides adolescents; however, like Freud and Erikson's theories, Marcia's theory is limited

because it continues to focus on identity development as an outcome, and not a process. It is important to recognize these theories as rooted in Western worldviews and that non-Western immigrants may endure additional challenges based on their own views of identity.

House (1977) was the first theorist to discuss how larger societal forces impinge on one's identity. In his effort to better link symbolic interactionism to social psychology, House (1977) emphasized the interactions between social structures and people as key to contributing to one's social identity and their personal identity. He asserted the importance of recognizing the macro-level structures (class, religion, and organizations) and the macro-level processes (urbanization, immigration, industrialization) as contributing factors to individual psychological behaviour, personality, and development. The explanations of these early perspectives on identity development demonstrate a growing focus on the interactions between individual or micro-psychological processes and larger social forces. As they relate to acculturation, most prominently, House's (1977) recognition of the influence of institutions, structures and social processes on personality development are foundational to Ngo's (2008) (see above) critical analysis of unidirectional and bidirectional acculturation models.

3.2.2 Theories on Identity and Culture

The concept of Erikson's identity crisis and ideas of culture and ethnicity were elaborated upon by Kim (1981) who combined Identity Crisis with Bicultural Conflict. Asians who immigrated to the US developed a crisis of identity when they tried to acculturate into American society. As immigrants take on the identity of the majority culture, they have difficulty removing parts of their cultural past. This leads to the identity of a person as being

someone who exists in the margins of two different cultural traditions, and the potential exists for an identity crisis. For example, if an immigrant comes to Canada in their early adulthood (age 20-40), then according to Erikson, the psychosocial crisis is one of intimacy versus isolation and therefore, the individual's goal is to form intimate and loving relationships. The application of Erikson's theory becomes problematic because it does not take into account significant life changes. However, Erikson's concepts are still useful. Instead of focusing on personal relationships in this stage, perhaps there is value in expanding the crisis to intimacy with self, others, and the new society versus isolation. In other words, the developmental crisis still applies; however, the event of immigration and the process of acculturation expand the existing crisis and even activate others.

Phinney (1992) went further to define three stages of ethnic identity development. First is the 'unexamined ethnic identity' in which one's identity is based on the opinions of others, or is otherwise explored. The second stage is 'ethnic identity search' in which the individual seeks what it means to be an ethnic person in the context of the dominant culture. The third stage is 'achieved ethnic identity' in which the individual is clear about what their ethnicity means to them. Smith (1991) developed an ethnic identity model in which the focus was on the power differential between the members of the dominant culture and the immigrants. This power differential and resulting status imbalance produced four phases of ethnic identity development: 1) preservation of ethnic self-identity, 2) preoccupation with the ethnic conflict, 3) resolution of conflict, and 4) integration. There are some similarities here to Berry's (1980) four-cell model in terms of the balance between the immigrant's positive relations with the host society and the desire to maintain their own cultural heritage. In comparison, the phases

of preservation of ethnic self-identity and preoccupation with ethnic conflict (Smith, 1991) correspond with Berry's (1980) end-states of separation and marginalization; as well, Smith's (1991) phases of resolution of conflict and integration fit well with Berry's (1980) end states of assimilation and integration.

Sodowsky et al. (1995) proposed a Multidimensional Ethnic Identity Retention Model, which considers a bi-directional process of ethnic identity. Applied to Asians, the authors examined two dimensions: the extent of adopting whiteness, and the degree of maintaining 'Asianness'. This produced four ethnic identity orientations: 1) Bicultural Identity (the individual identifies with both groups, 2) Strong Ethnic Identity (the immigrant preferred the retention of their own ethnic identity), 3) Strong White Identity (the individual chooses not to identify with their own culture), and 4) Cultural Marginalization (the immigrant identifies with neither culture). A Minority Identity Development Model (Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1997) reflected on five stages based on the individual's attitudes toward self, others of the same minority group, others in different minority groups, and the dominant group¹⁴.

Isajiw (1982) examined the interplay between internal (psychological) aspects of the self and external (social) aspects of an individual and the way they interact with society. The internal aspects include moral (obligation to one's ethnic group), cognitive (self-image and knowledge of ethnicity), and affective (feelings of belongingness to one's own ethnic group)

¹⁴ The five stages in the Minority Identity Development Model are Conformity, Dissonance, Resistance & Immersion, Introspection, and Synergistic Articulation & Awareness. (See Atkinson, Morten & Sue, 1997)

dimensions. The external aspects are sociocultural behaviours (friends within the ethnic group), speaking the ethnic language, and taking part in ethnic traditions and festivals.

The theories above most notably demonstrate that identity development is multifaceted and comprise both internal-individual processes and external-societal influences. The internal-individual processes reflect the emotions, cognitions and behaviours that individuals engage in as they develop their identities. The external-societal factors influence how individuals choose to form their identities. For immigrants, the process of identity development is tied to sentiments and pressures around cultural allegiances, the necessity of fitting in, experiences of acculturative dissonance, and the conflict between keeping the old and embracing the new. The stages of identity development in the various theories are similar with regard to providing a continuum of possibilities from isolation and resistance to integration and immersion. The additional concern about the theories presented above (Berry, 1980; Cote & Levine, 2012; Erikson, 1968; Freud, 1896; House, 1977; Isajiw, 1982; Kim, 1981; Marcia, 1966; Phinney, 1992; Smith, 1991; Sadowsky et al., 1995) is their basis in the Western world. For South Asians, identity may have similar stages but they are rooted in different contexts around familism, interdependence, duty, deference, obligation and respect as described in the previous chapter. As such, applying these theories to South Asian families without consideration paid to cultural context is limiting.

3.2.3 Acculturation, Coping, and Immigrant Identity

Culture is always in motion; it is as full of color as a mosaic, changing as a kaleidoscope, but adds new people constantly (Hoerder, 1999).

This section examines the interweaving of acculturation, coping and identity development and maintenance. Acculturation for immigrants is not static and various nuances come into play as immigrants negotiate their changing identities when they enter into a new country. Coping strategies and resources serve to mediate these identity changes.

Breton (1992) identifies cultural communities as having five symbolic components: 1) experiences of exclusion and inclusion, where members of a community share stories about how they experience social exclusion from dominant society as well as efforts they make toward being included, 2) representations of the past, as communities express commonalities of a shared history experienced by all members, 3) hopes and visions for the future, as depicted by goals and dreams common to the members of the same community, 4) relationships with other groups and the larger society, shown by similarities in accounts expressed by members about how they interact outside of their shared cultural group, and 5) the significance of social differentiation, as a unifying set of factors and traits setting the group apart from the dominant culture. These symbolic components influence the overall cultural group's identity by 'housing' a common and shared set of experiences. However, the symbols also contribute to individual identity development by imposing historical aspects of group identity onto individuals. Since most Canadians prefer to live in the Canadian mosaic (Hoerder, 1999), identities are subject to shifts and therefore the symbolic associations for the whole community shift and are recreated.

Immigrants utilize Breton's (1992) symbolic components to cope with changes associated with acculturation and maintain identity by referring to commonalities shared by all members of a group based on history, goals, experiences, and relationships. In other words, as immigrants cope with the challenges around fitting in and processes of culture shedding, they

can individually, and as a group, refer back to shared symbols as a way to maintain their cultural identity while making necessary changes to shift into a new identity. While they may not fully participate in their cultural identity, as they would have in their home countries, they can indeed engage in the symbolic representations of their group cultural identity. However, three perspectives define identities for immigrants (Bialystok, 2000). First, the experience of the immigrants requires oral testimonies of hardship, challenge, and success surrounding leaving the home country, facing discrimination, and seeking stability. Second, one must acknowledge creed – uniqueness of a particular group based on culturally distinct rituals and habits. The third perspective recognizes the contributions individuals in the ethnic group have made to their community and country. This requires generating collective interest and mobilizing community participation (Ziegler, 1979). These perspectives help us understand the nature of identity challenges and identity restoration during acculturation. The challenge to identity comes from the initial loss of stability, the changes to (and losses of) rituals and habits unique to the group, and the fear of a lack of recognition for accomplishments in the process of acculturation. The possibilities for identity restoration do not come solely from stories from the home country; instead, the combination of stories from the past as well as the creation (evolution) of cultural identity helps to restore identity during acculturation.

The social-psychological phenomena of acculturation, immigrant identity formation, and coping occur in three overall contexts: 1) the overt and covert cultural patterns of interaction, 2) the establishment of personal ties within the family, friendship networks and ethnic community, and 3) the participation in organizational entities such as schools, clubs, media, and functions where groups express their ethnicity (Breton, 1992). These contexts negotiate ethnic

and immigrant identity; however, this implies neither total identity elimination (Isajiw, 1981; Isajiw & Makabe, 1982), nor assimilation or non-assimilation (Harney & Troper, 1975). Instead, the processes of acculturation and coping illuminate the immigrant's potential loss of cultural nuances as they adopt newer ones (Paris, 1980). This speaks to how the community adjusts its identity to accommodate changes imposed by the dominant or adopted host culture (Bialystok, 2000). In this regard, identities are "constructed, chosen, created, and performed by people in their daily lives" (Roseneil & Seymour, 1999, cited in Ghosh, 2006, p. 5). Jensen (2003) described cultural identity as the combination of alignment with a group, identifying with the attitudes, behaviours, and beliefs of that group, and the feelings of belonging to the group. By extension, ethnic identity relates to the subjective feelings one has about the ethnic group to which they belong (Phinney & Ong, 2007). When one immigrates, the process of acculturation can lead to the development of a dual or bicultural identity (Steinbach, 2014).

The literature overwhelmingly assumes immigrant identity development to be a linear process in that one adds to, or changes, their identity upon moving to another country. However, the process of crossing borders results in immigrants revising their identities that are mediated by establishing several different relationships with new people, new neighbourhoods, and new institutions (Zhang, 2016). It is in the various levels of cultural crossings that new ethnic *identities* are developed. Furthermore, the intersections between class, gender, and ethnicity further add complexity to immigrant and ethnic identity (Plaesu, 2011) and results in multiple identities (Roccas & Brewer, 2002). Portes and Rumbaut (2006) discuss the phenomenon of reactive identity formation in which children of immigrants observe their parents' challenges as they acculturate and, therefore, react by creating a more flexible ethnic

identity encompassing the intersections listed above. This identity development helps them to avoid identifying entirely with their parents' immigrant identity while claiming their own version of an identity to better fit in to dominant society (Lee, 2012).

As applied to this research and social work practice, the above theories and perspectives provide a context whereby the process of acculturation is more active. Immigrants are not passive recipients or observers of their own acculturation; they are active creators of their own changing identities as they experience acculturation. Social workers can draw upon aspects of the models above to help immigrants assess where they are in the acculturation process, validate feelings around loss, strength and coping, and support their emergent identity in the new country. Recognizing identity as also the result of larger societal forces, social workers can help name, and give voice to the structural prejudices at play as immigrants explore their changing identities.

3.3 Resilience

The previous section identified theories about acculturation, stress, and coping. This section summarizes the pertinent literature on resilience and provides some of the key themes in the literature used to shape this study. The section will also highlight some examples of resiliency as it applies to immigrants.

3.3.1 Evolution of Definitions

Approaches to defining and assessing resilience began with examining children's abilities to thrive after emerging from chaotic circumstances. Its early conceptions focused heavily on individual strengths and capacities. The adages of the ability to 'bend without

breaking', or the ability to 'bounce back' after encountering difficulty were primary depictions of resiliency permeating common knowledge and popular culture (Southwick & Charney, 2012). In a similar way, resilience is less of an outcome and more a 'self-righting' process (O'Connell Higgins, 1994).

The concept of resiliency helps us to understand recovery from trauma following adverse events (Fraser, 1997). Lazarus (1966) recognized the importance of the perception of danger or threat or harm, as people overcame the odds of various life events. Greene (2002) also conveys the idea of 'beating the odds' and increasing competence during life transitions with competence. The American Psychological Association (2011) defines resilience as the "process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, and even significant sources of stress..." (<http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/road-resilience.aspx> para. 1). Critics of resiliency theory refer primarily to concerns about invulnerability. For instance, when adults (teachers, counsellors, and parents) deem resilient the children who have endured hardship or trauma, this can create a status of 'invincibility', thereby creating a false sense of security and perhaps overconfidence (Southwick & Charney, 2012). Another implication of being assessed as invulnerable or invincible is a form of victim-blaming. To illustrate, people who struggle through challenge or hardship may engage in maladaptive behaviours in order to cope. Since resilience implies strength, people who do not overcome adversity incur blame for not having 'the right stuff' to get them through (Ungar, 2004). While these ideas of resilience relate to trauma and tragedy, the concept of 'routine resilience' reflects people's ability to deal with everyday stresses. As a unifying concept for life's ordinary challenges, routine resilience is about "coping with the vicissitudes of daily life...and facing the inevitable adversities that lie in

wait” (Neenan, 2009, p. 7). Resilience captures the process and the act of self-righting (O’Connell Higgins, 1994). There are three benefits of resilience: enhancement of self-image, enrichment of relationships, and alteration of life’s priorities (Haidt, 2006).

From individual understandings of resilience, the literature then shifted to a focus on the family. McCubbin and McCubbin (1996) defined resilience as the “characteristics, dimensions, and properties of families, which help families to be resistant to disruption in the face of change and adapt in the face of crisis situations” (McCubbin & McCubbin, 1996, p. 247). They refine this definition for family resiliency as the “past behavioural patterns and functional competence individuals in the family unit demonstrate under stressful or adverse circumstances, which determine the family’s ability to recover by maintaining its integrity as a unit while ensuring, and where necessary storing, the well-being of family members and the family unit as a whole” (p. 5). This is important because prior to McCubbin and McCubbin (1996), ideas about resiliency did not consider the context of family. They were the first to examine the entire family system as a resilient entity, thereby looking at the dynamics of the system. Walsh (2006) defined family resiliency as the “key processes that enable families to cope more effectively and emerge hardier from crises or permit stresses, whether from within or from outside the family” (p. 263). The idea of resilience, therefore, expanded from individuals to families. What was initially seen as an individual process then emerged as a dynamic found within the processes families underwent to cope with stress.

In recent times, the term, resilience extends to the interactions between individuals, families, and communities. Ungar’s (2005) definition encapsulates current thought on resilience related to three capacities: 1) the capacity to navigate necessary resources

supporting well-being, 2) the capacity for the environment to provide such resources, and 3) the capacity of individuals, families and communities to share resources in meaningful and culturally sensitive ways. From another perspective, “resilience is about rebounding from adversity, being stronger and more resourceful. It is an active process of endurance, self-righting, and growth in response to crisis and challenge” (Walsh, 2006, p. 28). The target of analysis is “internalized capacities and associated behaviours that people draw upon to maintain a sense of integration in the face of adversities” (Gilgun, 1999, p. 43). While Walsh (2006) and Gilgun (1999) do not explicitly refer to community, the idea of being more resourceful and integrated relate to Ungar’s (2005) definition.

3.3.2 Components and processes of resilience

This section summarizes the key components of resilience. The movement from a focus on the individual to family, community and larger society is noted.

3.3.2.1 Hardiness. The concept of hardiness is a component of resilience and is comprised of three additional concepts: commitment, control, and challenge (Kobasa, 1979). Commitment is about valuing life in self and relationships and investing oneself in these areas of life. Control is about maintaining power, and even acting as if one has control over their environment. Challenge is the opposite of stability and therefore is the normative mode of life. Therefore, stressful events are not seen as surprises but more as challenges to overcome. When an individual combines their commitment to themselves and others, takes control of their situation, and perceives stress as a challenge, Kobasa (1979) says that this creates a person’s hardiness. Hardiness comes from being proud of something and finding meaning. This reflects the six domains of Ryff and Singer’s (1998) related concept of well-being:

autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Immigrants can highlight these domains and concepts in more active ways to demonstrate their acculturation. From a practice perspective, social workers can identify attitudes, behaviours and cognitions to promote well-being and hardiness for immigrants, building on existing strengths (Saleebey, 1999).

3.3.2.2 Acceptance. There is also value in exploring acceptance as a facet of resilience. Resilient people tend to be flexible. They take challenge and reframe it into a more personally understandable context. They demonstrate flexibility when they exercise acceptance as they acknowledge the reality of a situation, direct their efforts to what they can change, and abandon non-feasible goals. Acceptance is based on realistic appraisal and active decision-making (Orisillo et al., 2005). As an example, many immigrants are faced with discrimination, racism, prejudice, and marginalization. When they accept these challenges as a part of society and that there is more value in focusing on the eventual goals of immigration (fitting and achieving success) than actively combatting these challenges, the act of acceptance shows some flexibility in immigrants in taking into account the good along with the bad.

3.3.2.3 Self-Efficacy. Bandura (1977) introduced self-efficacy (described above) and suggested that people base their self-efficacy on four components. The first is 'active attainments' referring to the cumulative idea of success breeding success. The second is about 'vicarious experiences': witnessing others in their successes and failures and learning from them. The third area is 'verbal persuasion', a situation in which others push the individuals to believe in themselves. The fourth is 'physiological state', a biological state of arousal or readiness to be resilient. Other factors affecting resiliency are potency, referring to the power

one has in their actions (Strumpfer, 1990); personal causation, meaning the recognition one draws upon from personal skills to impact a situation (De Charms, 1968); cohesion, where in combined efforts with others, people can be resilient together (Bobele, 1989; Minuchin, 1974); and communication, as a form of sharing experiences of strength and resolution (Epstein & Bishop, 1981). When applied to immigration and acculturation, self-efficacy becomes an active trait of personal capability to endure and overcome the stresses associated with fitting into a new society. Immigrants can maintain active personal power by recognizing that they participated in, and made conscious choices in the 'process' of acculturation as opposed to being a 'product' of acculturation.

3.3.2.4 Patterns and Types. Polk (1997) identifies four patterns of resilience for individuals. The first is 'dispositional', relating to physical attributes and autonomy, self-reliance, and self-worth. The second pattern is 'relational', referring to an individual's relationships with others. The third is 'situational', addressing the link between an individual's problem-solving ability and their ability to assess situations and respond appropriately. The fourth is 'philosophical' and expresses the individual's worldview, beliefs, and values promoting resilience, an explanation of which is below. Palmer (1997) refers to four types of resilience: anomic survival (constant chaos and disruption), regenerative resilience (incomplete attempts to develop competence), adaptive resilience (sustained periods of using coping strategies), and flourishing resilience (extensive use of coping strategies). The 'challenge model' for resiliency has seven components: insight, independence, relationships, initiative, creativity, humour, and morality (Wolin & Wolin, 1993). Again, naming these patterns, types, and components of resilience is useful because as applied to immigrants, one can identify and characterize the

resources and skills immigrants draw upon to be resilient as they become accustomed to their new life in the host country. Tracking these components can help immigrants work toward a balance in practicing types and forms of resilience, which they may not consciously use. The exploration of these components of resilience then adds to the immigrant's self-efficacy as a way to enhance both coping and resilience.

3.3.2.5 Salutogenesis. The concept of salutogenesis, developed by Antonovsky (1979) refers to people's ability to function normally and maintain a state of homeostasis until a problem arises. While stress certainly has negative consequences and threatens health, there are salutary consequences well. The salutogenic model of health refers to opportunities for resilience and health: maintain a sense of coherence to make sense of their stress, appreciate one's own life experiences, draw upon generalized resistance resources in order to control external factors threatening stability, assess stressors, manage tension, and capitalize on the maintenance of overall good health. Focusing on homeostasis, balance, health, and well-being can assist immigrants as they make sense of their immigration history, consolidate their life experiences, address stressful aspects of acculturation, and navigate tensions.

3.3.2.6 Resilience Factors. Southwick and Charney (2012) developed ten resilience factors: realistic optimism, facing fear, moral compass, religion and spirituality, social support, resilient role models, physical fitness, brain fitness, cognitive and emotional flexibility, meaning and purpose. Optimism needs balance, and supports resilience via the 'broaden-and-build' model (Fredrickson, 2001). It leads to positive emotions that reduce physical arousal, and broaden visual focus, thoughts, and behaviour. Coping mechanisms in the 'broaden-and-build' model are positive reappraisal of difficulty, goal directed problem solving, and infusion of

meaning into regular life events. Morality and altruism influence optimism: morality speaks to doing what is right and having the sense of right and wrong, while altruism refers to selflessness, and caring for the welfare of others. When immigrants endure the stresses of acculturation, these resilience factors provide a foundation for continued focus toward the eventual goals of their immigration, which are to provide their children with better opportunities and to establish stability for their own families.

3.3.2.7 Religion and Spirituality. As noted above, resilience also reflects aspects of religion and spirituality. A spiritual approach is useful in restoring hope and acquiring a balanced view about justice and injustice (O'Connor et al., 2003). People can change their religion, but maintain their spirituality (Garber, 2009); while for people who do not subscribe to a religion, their beliefs, values, and morals constitute an active sense of spirituality. Religious habits can protect and prevent against destructive habits like drug and alcohol abuse (Southwick & Charney, 2012). Inherent in religion and spirituality are three kinds of prayer or meditation or reflection: thanksgiving for what one has, reception for what one hopes to receive, and adoration — feeling blessed or honoured (Whittingham & Scher, 2010). These kinds of prayer contribute to resiliency by providing meaning and direction to life events. For many immigrants, the importance of seeking a higher power provides a meaning and context for the challenges (racism, loss of familiar culture, potential isolation) one faces during immigration. Faith can provide a forum for meaning and hope, as well as instruction and guidance for immigrants to make sense of their experiences.

3.3.2.8 Attitude. Attitude shapes resilience and has three components: thoughts, emotions, and behaviours (Neenan, 2009). Philosopher Epictetus (55-135) said: “Men are

disturbed not by the things which happen, but by the opinions about the things” (Frankl, 1985, p. 131). In essence, the importance of having flexible beliefs allows us to adapt to changing circumstances (Dweck, 2006). Therefore, one’s attitudes about frustration tolerance, self-acceptance, self-beliefs, humour, perspective, emotional control, support from others, curiosity, problem-solving skills, finding meaning, and adaptability, influence their resilience (Greene, 2007). These are active skills, which immigrants can readily employ as they mitigate the circumstances of their acculturation and experience. These skills help the immigrant to better come to terms with the losses and gains resulting from immigration, while at the same time helping them to be an active agent in their own process of acculturation.

3.3.2.9. Family Factors. As the literature shifted to examining resiliency within the context of the family, Hawley and DeHann (1996) said family serves as both a risk factor as well as a protective factor, affecting resiliency. Therefore, the family is a context for the individual. McCubbin and McCubbin (1996) developed the Family Resiliency Framework, which examined two related family processes: 1) adjustment, in which the family utilizes its protective factors to maintain its overall functioning, and 2) adaptation, in which the family utilizes recovery factors in order to bounce back from crises. Based on these family processes, they provided a list of ten family resilience factors¹⁵. Michalski and Watson (1999) identified resilient families as having strong problem-solving skills, a division of labour in the household, flexible goals, adaptable priorities, excellent communication skills, consistent contact with external friends and relatives, and connections to the community for support. Walsh (2006) identified three

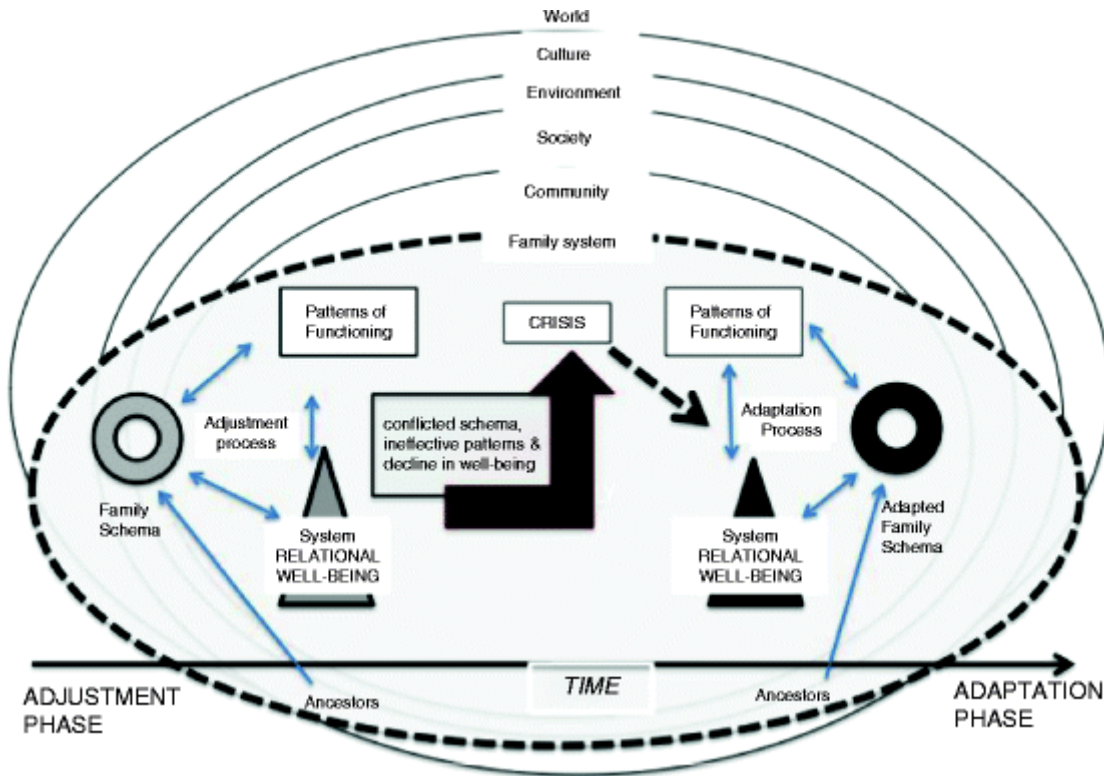
¹⁵ Family resilience factors: 1) family problem-solving communication, 2) equality, 3) spirituality, 4) flexibility, 5) truthfulness, 6) hope, 7) family hardiness, 8) family time and routine, 9) social support, and 10) health (McCubbin & McCubbin, 1993, 1996)

aspects as keys to family resilience, which are family belief systems, organizational patterns, and communication processes. Under belief systems, people attempt to extract meaning from adversity, hold a positive outlook and practice transcendence and spirituality. Organizational patterns entail the examination of flexibility, connectedness and social and economic resources. With communication processes, one explores clarity, open emotional expression, and collaborative problem solving. This model transcends cultures, ethnicities, citizenship statuses, and family configurations.

3.3.2.10 Resilient Communities. McCubbin and McCubbin (2013) referred to the importance of four main sources of support outside the immediate family: neighbourhoods, family and kinship networks, intergenerational supports, and mutual self-help groups. Bowen (1998) found four dimensions for resilient communities: physical infrastructure, the socio-demographic profile of the community, institutional capacity of numbers and types of agencies and organizations, and the degree to which a community provided social interdependence. These also include legal supports, municipal laws, and justice approaches reiterating the importance of community-based problem solving, restorative justice, and neighbourhood relationship building. Community levels of resilience required a much broader lens to assess and support people. As such, Sonn and Fisher (1998) discussed the concept of 'community competence' where people felt free to practice their culture with freedom, and where opportunities were available for raising awareness, participation, and belonging. Essentially, resilience depends not just on the individual, but also on available resources through family, friends, community, culture, and government (Southwick & Charney, 2012). These resources depend on communication, sharing information, creativity and flexibility (Norris et al., 2010).

3.3.2.11 Ethnic dimensions. Following the concept of community competence as it relates to cultural diversity, Blankenship (1998) identified the impact of race, class, and gender on resilience. Blankenship (1998) discussed the community members' access to power and resources to seek betterment for their community. However, such resources are not always evenly distributed; therefore, some communities experience greater access to resources to enhance their resilience. McCubbin and McCubbin (2013) introduced their revised model for resilience applied to ethnic families (see Figure 3.3 below). They proposed three core interacting elements: family schema, family patterns of functioning, and relational well-being. Ethnic families build coherence and meaning through the reciprocal influence between their culture and the dominant society. As the family moves from adjustment to adaptation, they face a number of challenges or crises that conflict with their familiar ways of coping and interacting. As the overall family's well-being declines, the family must draw upon newer sources of support in the host culture. As they work between their familiar culture and dominant culture, they begin to adapt and approach well-being, or homeostasis. This reciprocity of influence between the familiar family schema and offerings from the dominant culture then helps the family to develop a newer schema that reflects the family's ability to adapt. The reciprocal influence depends on communication and flexibility. As relational systems, families partake in the values, protocols, and practices of the host or dominant culture, and adopt these practices into their own schema, functioning, and well-being.

Figure 3.3 Modified Resilience Model of Adjustment and Adaptation in Ethnic Family Systems (McCubbin & McCubbin, 2013)



While resilience refers to rebounding from adversity, becoming stronger, being more resourceful, engaging in a self-righting process, etc., Greene (2007) urges caution: resilience is not about invulnerability, nor is it a static achievement. It also does not equate to competence in functioning. Resilience requires us to ‘struggle well’ both internally and interpersonally (O’Connell Higgins, 1994). In essence, “resilience is forged through adversity, not despite it” (Walsh, 2006, p.7).

3.3.3 The Immigrant Parent Enhancement (IPE) Framework

The Immigrant Parent Enhancement (IPE) framework (Dutta & Klein, 2016) takes many elements of the above theories and models and posits a framework to facilitate an

understanding of how immigrants parent their children as they acculturate and adapt to a new society. The framework employs a) Berry's (1980) four-cell individual acculturation strategies model; b) Berry's (1990) four-cell societal acculturation approach; c) Baumrind's (1966, 1991) and Maccoby's (1992) four parenting styles, d) Ragg's (2011) four parenting functions, e) Mana, Orr & Mana's (2009) immigrant identity statuses, and f) Akthar's (2011) children's ethnic identity outcomes. The above models result in four outcomes each, and when realigned, produce four parenting 'tendencies': a) unified-restorative, b) abandoned-providential, c) partitioned-austere, and d) deprecated-detached.

The *unified-restorative parenting tendency* suits immigrant parents who resolve cultural conflicts between the host and home cultures, maintain balance between raising their children in the dominant society while maintaining their cultural values, assist their children in 'taking the best from both worlds', and provide a recuperative function. The *abandoned-providential* tendency is consistent with immigrant parents who value the dominant/host culture over their own and tend towards a significant 'letting go' of original culture traits. Such parents are liberal and permissive, and allow their children to participate fully in the dominant culture with few limits. Parents who tend toward the *partitioned-austere* quadrant place greater value on their original culture over the host society's culture and expect their children to adhere to strongly held cultural values, beliefs and behaviours, leading to increased separation from society and a very regulated and rigid parenting approach. The *deprecated-detached* parental tendency reflects an uninvolved approach by parents towards their children. Not only does such a parent separate from the dominant culture, they also separate from their children. The assumption of mental health issues is prevalent in this tendency. Parents who encounter depression, anxiety,

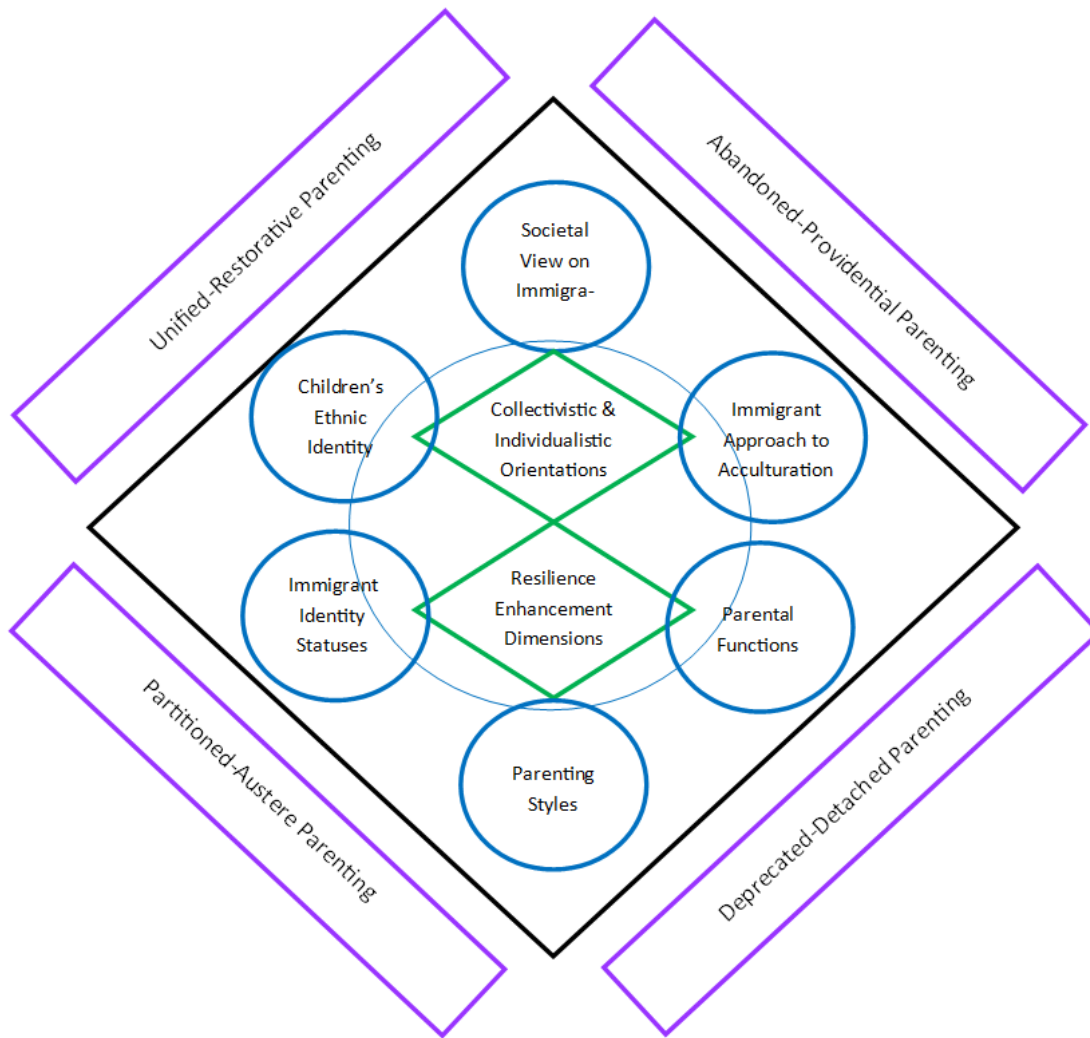
and perhaps even addiction, may be so distracted by the mental health challenges that they withdraw and detach from their parental responsibilities. Table 3.2 below, provides a depiction of the parental tendencies and the models from which it is constituted.

Table 3.2: Immigrant Parental Tendencies

	Unified- Restorative	Abandoned- Providential	Partitioned- Austere	Deprecated- Detached
Acculturation Strategies Model (Berry, 1980)	Integration	Assimilation	Separation	Marginalization
Societal Acculturation Approach to Immigration (Berry, 1990)	Multiculturalism	Melting Pot	Segregated	Exclusion
Parental Styles (Baumrind, 1966, 1991; Maccoby, 1992)	Authoritative	Permissive	Authoritarian	Disengaged
Four Parenting Functions (Ragg, 2011)	Balance of discipline, guidance, nurturing and accessibility	Focus on Nurturing and Accessibility	Focus on Discipline and Guidance	All functions 'muted'
Immigrant Identity Statuses (Mana, Orr & Mana, 2009)	Extended identity	Secluded identity	Rivalry identity	Identity loss
Children's Ethnic Identity Status (Akthar, 2011)	Bicultural identity	Hyper-assimilated identity	Ethnocentric identity	Alienated identity

The unifying construct for the IPE framework comes from Greene’s (2007) risk and resiliency model. It draws from a wellness perspective (Ryff & Singer, 2002) with six domains of wellness discussed earlier. When reconfigured, the six models, the immigrant parental tendencies, and the resiliency dimensions form the IPE Framework depicted in Figure 3.4.

Figure 3.4 Immigrant Parenting Enhancement Framework (Dutta & Klein, 2016)



3.4 Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to provide a theoretical foundation to explore the pertinent concepts in this research. Theory on acculturation has expanded from unidirectional theories, where the focus is on one culture assimilating into another, to broader ones that recognize the dynamic interactions between members of one culture and its institutions and the social structures of another. Whereas previous theory focused on cultural loss, more recent theory recognizes the immigrant's (in this research) active agency in their acculturation. This does not deny or preclude the overarching oppressive forces (Ngo, 2008) of a dominant culture; however, it sheds additional light on the more nuanced processes of acculturation. The theory on acculturative stress and coping highlights the psychological distresses and inner conflicts immigrants experience, as they adapt to a new culture and decide how to utilize their familiar cultural ways to cope with unfamiliar language, customs, and social mores. Primary factors of loss and risk complicate the immigrant's stress. Not only do they try to fit in and be successful, they also cope with grief and loss as they shed some aspects of their culture. The literature on coping focused on hardiness, self-efficacy, social support, and optimism as primary factors immigrants use as a way to cope with and combat acculturative stress.

The second section's focus was on theories of identity development and ethnic identity formation. The various components of identity and identity development trace a movement from a very personal-focused stage-and-age model for identity to a more fluid one, recognizing the interactions between people and their larger social environments as dynamic processes that shape identity. Theory on ethnic identity and bicultural identity development revealed the additional issues concerning isolation from (or relationship to) larger society and how an

immigrant's identity changes as they mediate their integration into dominant society. This also speaks to the processes immigrants employ in order to maintain certain ethnic identities.

The third section explored resilience. Recognizing processes of strength and perseverance when an immigrant experiences processes and pressures of acculturation leads to an exploration of resilience. Several factors involving resilience were described in order to explore their emergence and meaning in this research study. Finally, the Immigrant Parent Enhancement framework was summarized as a consolidating model that focuses on the dynamics of immigrant parenting.

The concepts and concerns raised in this chapter formulate the specific study questions for this research. This chapter provides an anchor that helps guide a methodology to expand on these concepts as applied to Bengali immigrants. The aspects of resilience, acculturative stress, coping, acculturation and immigration can be tested for their depth and meaning as applied to this research.

CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

4.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the method of the study and its guiding design. The study is qualitative and draws on phenomenology. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used for analysis of data. The chapter will review the methodology used in the study by discussing operational definitions, sampling strategies, and how the data was collected. The chapter concludes with a discussion of pertinent factors related to human subjects and ethics and examines issues around the trustworthiness of the research.

4.1 Research Design and Logic of Inquiry

4.1.1 Phenomenology

Philosophers have long debated the differences between ‘the appearance of things’ and ‘the things as they really are’. Immanuel Kant proposed that the human mind could never know ‘the thing itself’ but could only know things as they appeared to us (phenomena). Edmund Husserl in his seminal text *Ideas* (1928, 1989) defined the term ‘phenomenology’ as the scientific study of essence and of conscious experience (Finlay, 2011). His aim was to provide a method to analyze the structural and descriptive qualities of consciousness - ‘to the things themselves’. Husserl emphasized the essence of a phenomenon that required researchers to employ ‘intentionality’ (i.e., directing consciousness toward the phenomenon). Through this process, one suspends and sets aside any pre-existing knowledge, biases, and thoughts about the phenomenon. In this way, one comes closer to establishing the structure and description (the essence) of the

phenomenon under study. This path of phenomenology is known as transcendental or descriptive phenomenology.

Martin Heidegger, a student of Husserl, moved phenomenology from exploring consciousness (descriptive/transcendental phenomenology) to investigating existence itself (Spinelli, 2005). This branch is called existential or hermeneutic phenomenology.

Heidegger broke from Husserl because he believed that his mentor's work was too theoretical. He proposed that humans could not separate their existence from the phenomena they experienced; it is through our interpretations or hermeneutics of experiences, that phenomena become meaningful. As such, the hermeneutic task implores us to interrogate the meanings placed in observations and interpretations.

The German schools of thought (through Hegel, Husserl, and Heidegger) essentially examined existence in the context of the relationship between the self and the world. The French influence (Merleau-Ponty, Sartre) built further into existential phenomenology by examining human phenomena and experience as embodied in the world. As such, the French schools examined phenomena as shaped by realms of social identity such as gender, sexual orientation, and race. This is important to consider because Merleau-Ponty and Sartre wrote during the wars and their writings are heavily shaped by experiences of the desire for freedom and the influences of social institutions on identity.

Merleau-Ponty added to phenomenology the terms of subjectivity and embodiment. He suggested that how humans lived in their everyday lives, their activities, and their interactions were more meaningful than the abstractions suggested by Husserl and Heidegger. Essentially, while one can approach a close grasp of another's experience,

they can never truly understand it because one person's subjective embodiment of an experience is inherently different from another's.

Sartre extended phenomenology by stressing that understanding is ongoing. The term 'nothingness' is highlighted in Sartre's phenomenology. He believed that in examining phenomena, contextual ideas deemed as unimportant or absent were just as important as the ideas under study. Since humans are constantly becoming (emerging) and developing, Sartre's focus for phenomenology lies in how people engage with their world, and how their experiences depend on the presence and absence of their relationships to other things.

Merleau-Ponty and Sartre, phenomenological existentialists, believed that something comes into consciousness and existence when we direct our attention toward it. This was different from Heidegger and Husserl who believed that things existed in the world and already had their 'essence' or true natures. Through the process of reduction, one could come closer to describing their true essences. Merleau-Ponty and Sartre asserted that directing perception toward something made it real. While the phenomenon exists regardless of the individual's attention to it, it becomes real when the individual realizes its existence. Heidegger and Husserl for the most part, maintained phenomenology as a mental set of processes whereas the existentialists moved past mental processes and included the use of language and expression in their philosophies of phenomenology.

4.1.2 Phenomenology and Research

Amadeus Giorgi and the Duquesne group in the 1970s established a phenomenological research-based discipline (Hein & Austin, 2001). This movement was the

start of grounding phenomenological research more in experiences and interpretations rather than in theoretical assumptions, which were positivistic. From its philosophical orientation, the Duquesne group sought to develop a research endeavour for phenomenology that was systematic and methodical (Giorgi, 2009). As stated earlier, the two primary phenomenological approaches are transcendental and hermeneutic. The accompanying research endeavours also followed these two paths.

Clark Moustakas (1994) was the foremost contributor in establishing transcendental phenomenology in research methods. In transcendental phenomenology, there is a greater emphasis on the empirical, more structured experience, with rich and thick descriptions. There is a greater alignment to bracketing. The emphasis on noticing subjectivity and employing bracketing results in a systematic and disciplined discovery of the essences of a phenomenon. The assumption in transcendental phenomenology is that the essences do not change, and therefore, in research, these ideal structures are more descriptive of the common (essential) features of a phenomenon and less open to interpretation of the differences. The researcher frequently uses the exact words of the participants to describe the essences. Data are presented in tabular fashion with an organized thematic analysis. The systematic approach consists of four steps: the listing of preliminary groups of data; the reduction and elimination of words and phrases that do not contribute to overall themes; clustering and organizing of themes; and the final identification of the invariant or essential constituents of the phenomenon under investigation. Put succinctly, the steps are engaging in *epoche*, moving toward phenomenological reduction, employing imaginative variation, and then the synthesis of textural and structural descriptions.

Max van Manen (1990) promoted hermeneutical phenomenology in his research, and focused on interpretation in a holistic way. The approach is more open-ended, and while the researcher engages in epoche and reduction, the phenomenological attitude requires the researcher to emphasize their inability to separate their biases from their knowledge. This is because knowledge is deemed a construction of the relationship between the researcher and what they wish to know. The process requires sensitivity, openness, and empathy. This approach rejects transcendental phenomenology in stating that there are no ideal essences or invariant constituents. There is openness to poetics and language; therefore, it is more interpretative and less descriptive. The descriptions of phenomena are insights, which are not replicable results. This form of phenomenological research is based on context, emphasis, and amplification of experience and therefore attempts to avoid prior theoretical assumptions. While there is no prescriptive, step-by-step method, van Manen proposes a methodological structure that interacts with six research activities: tuning in to a concern as a lived experience; investigating the experience as lived; reflecting on essential themes; describing the phenomenon through writing and rewriting; maintaining a strongly oriented stance toward the question; and balancing the research context by considering the parts and whole of the experience.

This study took a decidedly phenomenological approach; however, there are elements of both transcendental and hermeneutical methods. For example, the themes were extrapolated from the data and placed in tabular form (transcendental). Yet, the level of analysis was inherently based on the use of language and meaning (hermeneutic). While there are elements of description (transcendental), the study leans toward the participants'

experiences of immigration and parenting. Therefore, IPA (explained below) was chosen as a methodology to address the need for flexibility and balancing these approaches.

4.2 Methodology

This section will outline the methods used for collection and analysis of data. First, however, it will present operational definitions central to this research. Then it describes participant recruitment and selection and how original research questions were reconfigured to organize the interviews more thematically. The section ends with a discussion of the strategy for data analysis.

4.2.1 Operational Definitions

Four key intersecting concepts guided this study: ‘immigrant’, ‘acculturation’, ‘parenting’, and ‘resilience’. An *immigrant* is a foreign-born person, who has left their birth-nation to live in another country (Fong, 2004). The children of immigrants can be born elsewhere or be born in the new country. The act of *immigration* is the intention of the immigrant to leave their home country and enter into a host country for long term or permanent residency (Lansford, Deater-Deckard & Bornstein, 2007).

As described earlier, *acculturation* comprises changes, the processes of such changes and the consequences of changes that result for individuals and families because of moving from one culture to another.

The concept of *parenting* combines functions of guidance, nurturing, being accessible and providing discipline support children to navigate their personal and social surroundings (Ragg, 2011). How a parent balances these functions depends on sociocultural influences such

as religion, values, cultural demands and expectations and legal parameters. In this study, participants were asked how immigration altered their parenting.

The concept of *resilience* is derived from the stress and coping literature. While coping is “...constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person” (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 141), resilience connotes ‘bouncing back’ from adversity, challenge, struggle, and change (Greene, 2007). In this study, participants were asked about the experiences and characteristics that helped them to bounce back from adversity and stress.

4.2.2 Construction of the Interview Tool

The original research questions were reformulated into more accessible and engaging questions during the interviews. Appendix C provides the general inquiry tool that was used as a guide. These questions emanated from examining the six models¹⁶ and the unifying construct from the IPE framework (see Chapter 3). Many questions were shaped spontaneously and while the four overall reformulated themes below were the primary focus, each interview took on a life of its own, hence the need for flexibility.

4.2.2.1 Reconsidering the research questions. To reiterate the the primary research question: *How did immigration and acculturation change parenting for Bengali-speaking immigrants?* The five research sub-questions for this study were:

¹⁶ a) Berry’s (1980) four-cell individual acculturation strategies model; b) Berry’s (1990) four-cell societal acculturation approach; c) Baumrind’s (1966, 1991) and Maccoby’s (1992) four parenting styles, d) Ragg’s (2011) four parenting functions, e) Mana, Orr & Mana’s (2009) immigrant identity statuses and, f) Akthar’s (2011) children’s ethnic identity outcomes.

- a) How have the expectations of Bengali parents shifted for their children from when they first arrived in Canada to now?
- b) To what did they attribute these differences?
- c) In what ways did immigrant Bengali parents resolve these differences?
- d) In what ways was the relationship between Bengali parents and their children different from what the parents expected it would be if they were in India or Bangladesh?
- e) What kinds of strengths and inherent resiliency factors did they draw on to deal with these differences in expectations from the old country to the new country?

These original questions were reconfigured during the interviews. The purpose for this was to ensure that the questions 'made sense' to participants. As well, they clarified key concepts driven by the literature. In addition, the underlying issues that the questions were designed to examine were uncovered more clearly during the interviews. As a result, the five original research questions collapsed into four overarching themes, leading to four corresponding headings, which subsequently organize the chapters on Data Presentation, Analysis, and Conclusions.

1. **Lived Experience of Acculturation.** This described the participants' own understanding of experiences related to the immigration journey, acculturative stress, acculturation processes, and the overall differences between living back home and living in Canada.
2. **Felt Impact of Immigration on Parenting.** This covered the perceived impact of immigration, acculturation, and adjustment on how the participant has parented

- their children, how they change their expectations and what they believe their children have lost and gained as a result of these changes are explored.
3. **Stated Coping, Strengths, and Resilience.** The participants' self-identified coping mechanisms, strengths, and resiliency factors are examined as they discussed their immigration story and their parenting outcomes are outlined.
 4. **Expressed Identity Development.** This discussed the nature in which participants expressed how they came to be who they are due to immigration and acculturation.

4.2.3 Sampling Strategies

4.2.3.1 Inclusion criteria. Participants solicited for this study were Bengali-speaking immigrants born either in Bangladesh or in India. The study was geared toward parents with children who were at least in their mid-teens, at least at 13. This way, parents would likely be in their 40s and older. They also then had a number of years of parenting experience that encompassed their children's infancy, toddler years, latency age, pre-adolescence and for some, even adulthood. This range of parenting experience served the purpose of establishing a more reflective experience for the participants. Similarly, the country that the children were born in also did not matter, as long as their parents lived in Canada for at least five years. This decision was made in order to ascertain the period of adjustment to Canada, assuming that a minimum of five years would be the period in which participants would have settled into Canada, established work or further education, participated in Bengali and non-Bengali communities, and engaged in the school and extra-curricular activities of their children.

4.2.3.2 Participant recruitment. A sample of between ten and sixteen participants was sought for this study. Two strategies were employed to recruit potential participants. The first

was convenience sampling (Berg, 2007) whereby participants from a previous course-based research project were sent an email, requesting their participation in the current study. The second strategy combined purposive and snowball methods (Berg, 2007). A poster was created and emailed to Bengali elders, and posted in Indian convenience stores. Additionally, this poster was emailed to former students of this researcher whom were known to be Bengali-speaking. Even though there was no lack of enthusiasm and interest about the research project, this did not initially translate into the numbers anticipated for actual participation. Note that the participants for this study were from the Toronto and Mississauga areas.

Nine individuals and two sets of couples for a total of 13 participants were interviewed. All but three participants indicated their interest in the study by directly initiating contact via email. The three other participants were met at various get-togethers, and after indicating their interest, were contacted by phone to arrange the interview. One individual interview took place in May 2013, while the remainder occurred in the May-June period of 2014. One interview took place over the phone, another took place in a public library, and a third took place via Skype (video conferencing technology). The remainder of the interviews took place at the respective participants' homes.

4.2.3 Data Collection

Data collection consisted of four participant-relevant activities (discussed in Section 4.4 below), including semi-structured interviews and multiple email contacts. In addition to these participant-relevant activities, other sources of data included notes made after each interview, reflections of observations during family and community get-togethers, and 'bracketed' notes during the analysis. One couple and two individuals requested recordings be deleted after

transcription. While all participants spoke Bengali as their first language, all were proficient in English, the language in which the interviews were conducted. Sometimes a word or a phrase was stated in Bengali to more accurately illustrate a common concept, idiomatic expression, or cliché. Note that while the initial research ethics application stipulated focus groups, this data collection method was rejected due to concerns around participants potentially knowing one another, and a concern about the lack of spontaneous conversation.

4.2.3.1 General sample description. While the next chapter will more elaborately describe the sample, the following provides initial context. This study involved eight women and five men. Four members of the sample (two men, two women) were born in Bangladesh while nine were born in India. The age range at which participants came to Canada was 19 to 38 years and the mean age of the participants upon arrival was 27.3 years. Ten participants came to Canada in the period 1968-1976, while three participants came in 1997 and 1998. All the men in the sample came to Canada after having gone to other countries such as Japan, Germany, and England. Of the eight women, two came to Canada via other countries and the rest came directly to Canada. The average length of residency in Canada was 36.5 years. The sample's current age ranged from 45 to 77 years with the average being 65.5 years. Twelve participants reported being married while one is widowed. All the men in the sample came to Canada to seek better opportunities in terms of employment. In addition, the two Muslim men discussed conflict and civil instability as additional reasons for leaving (Bangladesh). All of the women noted that their reason for coming to Canada was to join their husbands who either had already sought out opportunities, or were already beginning to settle. Members of the sample have returned to either India or Bangladesh from zero to 15 times, with an average

being 5.8 times. All participants in the sample have children with the average being 2.2 children.

4.2.4 Data Analysis

Initially, QSR NVivo10 was employed to store and organize data from the interviews. However, hard-copy versions of the data were preferred over digital methods. Essentially, instead of using NVIVO, data was printed out and using scissors, key phrases and sentences were cut out and then coded, categorized and re-categorized into emergent themes, super-ordinate themes and then, final primary concepts. Initially, 89 codes emerged which were reduced to ten thematic clusters. Superordinate themes were then organized around three overarching concepts discussed further in Data Analysis chapter: a) Initial Entry and Adjustment; b) Negotiating Parenting 'Worlds'; and c) Multiple 'Homes' of Resilience for Immigrant Parents.

4.2.4.1 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) – Foundations. This research makes use of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). In 1996, Jonathan Smith developed this approach within experiential psychology in order to move away from the deterministic and quantitative nature of psychology as a field, and because it easily applies to fields in health care, psychotherapy, and counselling (Finlay, 2011). Psychology had largely been rooted in diagnostic, evaluative, and reductionist processes which labelled people and took an authoritarian stance towards their assessment and treatment (Smith, 2004). Such an orientation was based in positivism and objectivity. IPA instead focuses on understanding the process of individual experiences contextualized in their lived worlds

(Clancy, 2013). The task in IPA is to balance the experimental and the experiential in psychology, which requires an approach that is inductive and reflexive (Smith, 2004).

There are three foundational elements and seven steps in IPA (Smith et al., 2009). The first foundational element is that it is phenomenological. As reflected from the discussion on phenomenology above, IPA examines the comprehensive units of a person's experience and the significance these units have on the person's life. This study examines parenting experiences for immigrants. It engages participants' reflections regarding the meanings they make of the various elements contributing to this phenomenon such as acculturation, dissonance, parent-child relations, values, gender roles, and resiliency as related to immigration, parenting, and resiliency.

Second, IPA is interpretative and commits to a 'double' hermeneutic process whereby research participants approach the essence of the experience-at-hand, while the researcher interprets the sense-making process (Smith et al., 2009). Essentially, the researcher attempts to make sense of the participant making sense of their experience. The difference is that the researcher does so self-consciously and systematically. This is where the researcher brackets their interpretations of what the participant offers about their experiences. The double hermeneutic is best explained by Ricoeur (1970) as a balance between the hermeneutics of empathy and the hermeneutics of suspicion. Empathy requires the researcher to assist the participants in making sense of the experience/phenomenon in their own words. Suspicion requires the researcher to utilize theory to make meaning of the phenomenon as described by the participants. In this study, participants respond to questions, prompts and probes designed to help them give voice to

their experiences of immigrant parenting and the various influences and outcomes therein. Concurrently, theory is used to make further sense of these experiences.

The final element in IPA is its idiographic focus. As such, each case is taken in its own terms and treated independently of the others. Yet, common themes emerge. The researcher maintains an idiographic orientation in order to see the common themes, while at the same time, focus on particular and specific details of each case to draw out variations within the theme. In this study, while certain themes emerged from the data, the case-by-case attention to depth facilitated an understanding of similarities and differences between participants describing the same phenomenon of immigration and parenting. These nuances within overarching themes led to a greater depth of sense-making about how Bengali immigrants experienced parenting.

4.2.4.2 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) – Implementation. Following the three foundational elements of IPA described above (phenomenology, interpretation/double hermeneutic, and idiographic focus), this section outlines the seven steps (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith et al., 2009) to implement this analytical method.

1. Immerse oneself in the data by reading and rereading the interview data. Each interviewed was transcribed with the use of voice-to-text software (Dragon Naturally Speaking). As the recorder played back the interview, it was spoken into a microphone, which then transcribed the text onto document processing software (Microsoft Word). The interview was then played back a second time while the transcription was read to check for accuracy of the voice-to-text software. The transcription was then read independently of the recording. This was done for each interview.

2. Engage in initial noting with free association.

Each transcript was then formatted to include three columns. The first column was intended to include any words, thoughts, feelings and questions (free association) that emerged from the reading of the transcript., The second column was the word-for-word-transcript itself. The third column was used to extrapolate emergent themes or relate the free association to theory or other transcripts.

3. Identify emergent themes from the interview data.

The third column of the transcript as described above was dedicated to extrapolating larger themes. In addition, the transcript itself was cut into various words and phrases and laid out on the floor. Words and phrases that appeared similar in meaning were categorized and labelled as emergent themes. For example, when a participant was asked about what they did not like about Canadian culture, emergent themes were: treatment of elders, observation of children's behaviours, cultural values, parenting and discipline.

4. Search for connections across emergent themes.

In this step, as emergent themes/categories were placed and re-placed on the floor, a process ensued whereby themes could be related to one another and integrated in a way that connected certain ideas that were similar. To take the example from the previous step, the emergent themes above could be abstracted and integrated into three overarching abstractions: 'parenting of children', 'absence of reciprocity', and 'differing values'.

5. Move onto the next case and bracket the preceding case's themes.

The next interview is then analyzed in the same way. However, it is treated in its own right. Preconceived themes from previous cases needed to be bracketed or set aside, a process that required some journaling and personal noting in order to obtain relative objectivity and distance between cases. This helped to facilitate a state of open-mindedness for each subsequent case.

6. Look for patterns and higher order characteristics across cases.

This was accomplished by taking the various third column themes from each case and placing them on the floor. These were then categorized according to high order or superordinate themes. Each theme could then contain idiosyncrasies and variation. For example, this study included both Muslim Bengalis and Hindu Bengalis. However, the use of faith was similar for some and different for others. Such variation could be explained by gender, by religion itself, and by extent of reliance on faith.

7. Interpret at deeper levels.

Interpreting with depth required extrapolating metaphors and images of the overarching thematic clusters. This exercise in analysis resulted in pictures, models, and frameworks that connected to existing theory. For example, one interpretation was constructed into the metaphoric theme: "Multiple 'homes' contribute to parenting resilience". The image or picture of a 'home' became salient as the analysis delved deeper. This sentiment of home then captured the essence of resilience from a variety of nuances and idiosyncrasies.

4.3 Human Subjects and Research Ethics Review

In keeping with the ethical treatment of participants for this research, compliance to Memorial University's Interdisciplinary Committee on Research in Human Ethics (ICEHR) was ensured and the proposal for ethics approval was received. This section addresses the actions taken to protect participants' rights and privacy.

4.3.1 Ethics Approval

Prior to this study, a course taken during the PhD program was a research internship in 2011. The necessary online training was taken as per the Guiding Ethical Principles of the Research Ethics Board at Memorial University and Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans. This training was again taken as part of teaching a course at the University of Waterloo in the winter of 2014. This particular research received ethics approval from ICEHR (Memorial University) in September 2012, and was renewed in September 2013 and September 2014.

4.3.2 Informed Consent

Most participants received an emailed copy of the Research Information Form (Appendix A), the Research Consent Form (Appendix B), and the Research Recruitment Poster (Appendix D) via email. Some participants who either did not have email or did not have the opportunity to ask for email addresses were informed that the materials would be brought on the date of the interview. All participants (but two) were provided paper copies of the Research Information Form when they were met in person. One participant, interviewed over SKYPE provided verbal acknowledgment in place of a signature on the Consent Form. The other participant who was interviewed over the phone also provided

verbal acknowledgment. For all participants the Research Information Form and Consent Form were reviewed verbally. Participants were reminded about their voluntary participation in the research, and of their right to withdraw from the research at any time. Participants were offered a coffee gift certificate as an honorarium; however, many declined. Participants were encouraged to feel free to make contact if they had any questions or concerns.

4.3.3 Confidentiality and Privacy

Participants were invited to provide a pseudonym in place of their actual name to maintain anonymity. Most participants provided a name of their choosing while a few left the choice to me. The recordings of the interviews were placed on the hard drive of a laptop computer and a memory-disk, both of which are password-protected. The original mp3 recordings have been deleted. The participants were informed that the only person other than me who had access to their personal information was the research supervisor, if at all necessary.

4.3.4 Potential Harms and Benefits

The focus of the research was on how acculturation influenced parenting for Bengali speaking immigrants. While potential negative feelings of regret, sadness, and frustration were considered, the focus on resiliency mediated such feelings. The Research Information Form provided my contact information should they require assistance to deal with any troubling emotions or thoughts; they would then be given a list of counselling agencies that specialized in immigrant settlement issues. The study was considered of negligible risk to

participants. The Research Information Form spoke to the benefits of the study as the articulation of strengths and resiliency factors capitalized by social workers to assist other immigrants.

4.3.5 Conflict of Interest

I am a member of the Bengali-speaking community and specifically belong to the Hindu Bengalis who emigrated from India. I know some participants via academic and personal contexts while others were introduced to me through word-of-mouth. All participants were very willing to contribute to the study and wanted to provide additional contacts. Additionally, given the subject material of the study, the personal information was not of a nature that required my emotional distance from the participants. Emotional distancing would potentially lead to the error of a positivistic and objective approach where participants are treated as 'things to be studied'. My familiarity with some of the participants had risks and benefits to the data. In terms of risks, participants were my elders and therefore, I was aware of my discomfort in asking certain questions (such as marital dynamics). This may have prevented a deeper level discussion. Another risk was that my own analysis of the data was at risk of being skewed by my own socialization in the culture and the reluctance to discuss certain critical issues. For example, in the initial drafts of this research, I did not directly name gender as an issue due to the reluctance to discuss gender issues in my own culture. A third risk was my own bias to present the positive aspects of the participants, or at least, to shape the analysis in a positive light. To mitigate these risks, I engaged in consultations with my academic advisors, and they would

sometimes name issues for me to analyze. As well, I attempted to engage in the IPA process to bracket myself (discussed below) as I explored the data.

While familiarity was a risk to the data analysis, it was also a benefit. As a 'son' in the community, where participants had difficulty explaining a Bengali concept, I could easily interpret this and then seek their confirmation. As an example, when participants talked about sharing, I could provide a nuanced explanation of sharing taking place in the context of multiple generations of family living, to which they readily agreed. Another benefit to the familiarity was the ease through which participants expressed themselves due to the comfort they had with my own immersion in the culture. Familiarity with some participants made for richer conversations and depth of data.

4.3.6 Personal Reflexivity

I chose to research Bengali experiences of immigration acculturation because I am the son of Bengali immigrants who came to Canada in the late 1960s. Having been a part of the Bengali community as a child, adolescent and now as an adult, I learned much about immigration, adversity, and resilience from listening in on the stories of my parents and their friends as they talked about racism, life back home, and the efforts they made to ensure success while living in Canada. As a single parent of two biracial children, I often struggle with the balance between teaching them Bengali cultural precepts and overarching Canadian values. In addition, I am at a stage where most of the members of my cohort (children of Bengali immigrants) also have children of their own. Collectively, we watch the relationships that our children have with our parents. I watch our parents 'become Bengali again' as they take on the role of grandparents. I have always wondered about the

challenges and experiences that our parents' generation endured all these decades. In addition, I had a notably tumultuous adolescence compared to my counterparts, both in Canadian and Bengali communities. I fought against what I thought was pressure from my parents and control from my culture. I rebelled against and abandoned many of the expectations of behaviour, education, career, and dating prescribed by my culture. In this regard, my own acculturation requires examination.

The fact that I am a social worker and a post-secondary educator influences how I approached this study and its processes. Due to my close ties to this research, the phenomenological steps were of particular value as I engaged in reflective and reflexive processes. Instead of this research being objective, the "bracketing"¹⁷ procedure in phenomenology assisted me in delving deeper into the concepts and themes uncovered by participants' stories. My own ongoing research journal, as well as the use of the 'notes' function in NVivo, assisted in my being as reflexive as possible. I also consulted with the members of my committee, the adult children of immigrants (my counterparts), and three Indian colleagues (post-secondary educator/colleagues) to provide additional feedback and input, as I analyzed the data.

4.4 Trustworthiness of Research

Creswell (2005) outlines the importance of careful attention and rigor to promote accountability in qualitative analysis. Whereas quantitative analysis claims to be based in

¹⁷ Bracketing is a self-meditative process whereby the researcher becomes increasingly aware of the world surrounding the issue at hand, and any related interpretations and conceptually placed brackets around them. This process of slowing down (Wertz, n.d.) facilitates a process of bracketing previously acquired knowledge so that new knowledge and interpretations emerge (Moran, 2000).

statistical significance, objectivity, validity, reliability, and generalizability, qualitative research does not have equivalent terminology because it is critiqued as lacking the 'detachment' inherent in quantitative analysis. However, qualitative analysis utilizes comparable terms and processes to maintain its research rigour (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Martin, 2005; Rodwell, 1998) described below. Further, qualitative analysis does not intend generalizability and objectivity. The very nature of depth, description, and detail establishes qualitative research as separate from, and equal to quantitative methods.

4.4.1 Credibility

Credibility was established by taking time to talk formally with participants before the study as well as afterwards. Four activities were applied to maximize credibility. The first was a semi-structured audiotaped interview with each participating, each lasting between 60 and 90 minutes, demonstrating a prolonged presence associated with this type of research. Second, a verbatim transcript of the interview was sent to all respondents to ensure accuracy. Five respondents made nominal changes to their transcript, having more to do with demographic information. Save for such very minor clarifications, the alterations made no difference to the focal areas of the interviews. Third, participants were also emailed their section of the data presentation (following the interview transcript). Again, participants were satisfied with the narratives and offered no clarification or expansion of ideas. Fourth, upon completion of the initial analysis chapter, this too was emailed to participants. Four participants made contact via email to provide additional perspectives

and context to the themes presented. Additionally, frequent email contact helped to maintain the credibility of participation.

4.4.2 Transferability

Transferability of the data was established by soliciting thick and deep descriptions about the questions asked of participants. In addition to the content questions, demographic questions provided contextual factors that added further depth to the study. Additionally, the demographic information served as a way to generalize the information to others as appropriate.

4.4.3 Confirmability

This potential issue was addressed by keeping research notes and journals as a way to engage in 'bracketing' feelings and reactions as part of the entire research process. In addition to these reflective summaries after each interview, during the data analysis there was consistent reflection about the statements, themes, and structures that emerged as part of the IPA method.

4.4.4 Dependability

The dependability of this study was achieved by presenting a very clear description of the research design and method. In this regard, other researchers can implement the same methods and replicate the study thereby allowing for duplication of the research.

4.4.5 Authenticity

The authenticity of this research required member checks. In this regard, participants were provided with the transcripts of the original taped interviews, soliciting feedback on accuracy of text, etc. Following the initial thematic analysis, participants were sent a summary of these themes, as well as their individual stories. Participants were asked to provide input and feedback on their narrative, as well as the emergent themes. They were also provided with the analysis on which they were invited to comment.

4.4.6 Triangulation

Triangulation in the study required reflection on the analysis, the existing literature, as well as a few novels that have as their focus Indian and Bengali immigration as themes, as well as casual observations of present and past get-togethers. What was important was to compare the themes uncovered in the research with the Bengali and Indian cultural concepts and values discussed in Chapter 2. Conversations were held with three Indian colleagues to discuss similarities and differences and to assist in bracketing.

4.5 Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to explicitly outline the research design and methodology for the study. Phenomenology anchored this study to its heuristic purpose. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was utilized as the analytical method for the study. Issues of research accountability and human subject and ethical concerns were also discussed in this chapter. We now turn to the next chapter, which presents the participants' narratives.

CHAPTER V: DATA PRESENTATION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the interviews with the participants. A demographic summary will provide key information about the sample. Participants' responses to the interview questions will then be summarized.

5.1 Revisiting the Research Questions and Reformulated Headings

The previous chapter discussed the original research questions, examined their underlying intent, and presented questions that were more accessible to the participants, organized under the four headings: lived experience of acculturation; felt impact of immigration on parenting; stated coping, strengths, and resilience; expressed identity reformulation.

5.2 Demographic Summary

There were 13 participants in the study. There were eight females and five males; 12 were married, one widowed. The sample comprised a well-educated group of Bengali-speaking immigrants. Immigration served as a vehicle for finding middle class opportunities. However, participants not only sought better opportunities for themselves but also established themselves to secure better futures for their children. The majority of the sample, now either retired or close to retirement, have children who are largely in their 30s and 40s, and many are entering into grandparenthood. All are living comfortably, as indicated by home ownership and their ability to return to India or Bangladesh. Overall, the sample was more financially stable. As well, the majority of members of the sample have lived most their adult life in Canada. Indeed, they have settled here and made Canada their home.

Table 5.2 Socio-Demographics of the Sample (n=13)

Demographic Characteristics	Women (n=8)	Men (n=5)	Overall/Total (n=13)
Current Age			
Mean age during the study (years)	62	65	65.5
Age range (years)	45-72	55-77	45-77
Marital Status			
Married	7	5	12
Widowed	1	0	1
Current Religious Identity			
Hindu	6	3	9
Muslim	1	2	3
Atheist ¹	1	0	1
Highest Educational Level			
College Diploma	2	2	4
Undergraduate Degree	4	0	4
Graduate Degree	2	3	5
Employment Status			
Working Full-time	1	2	3
Working Part-time	4	0	4
Looking for work	1	0	1
Retired	2	3	5
Field of Employment (past/present)			
Direct Health Care	3	1	4
Human Services	2	0	2
Customer Service	2	0	2
Management/Consulting/Business	1	4	5
Number of Parents with Number of Children			
Two children	8 (16) ²	4 (8)	12 (24)
Three children	0	1 (3)	1 (3)
Age Range of Children (n=27)³			
16-19	2	0	2
Early to mid-20s	2	2	4
Late 20s to early 30s	0	3	3
Mid to late 30s	8	4	12
Early to mid-40s	4	2	6

Table 2 continued

Demographic Characteristics	Women (n=8)	Men (n=5)	Overall/Total (n=13)
Grandchildren			
Yes	5	4	9
No	3	1	4
Age at immigration			
19-24	5	0	5
25-30	2	4	6
31-36	1	0	1
36-40	0	1	1
Year of immigration			
1968-1976	6	4	10
1997-1998	2	1	3
Route to Canada			
Via other countries	2	5	7
Direct to Canada	6	0	6
Number of Years in Canada			
16-20 years	2	1	3
30-40 years	1	1	2
40-50 years	5	3	8
Mean Years Living in Canada	36.5 (n=8)	36.6 (n=5)	36.5 (n=13)
Mean Years Living in Canada ²	43.2 (n=6)	41.5 (n=4)	42.5 (n=10)
Number of Visits 'back home' ⁵			
0	1	0	1
1-5	3	4	7
6-10	3	1	4
11-15	1	0	1
Mean visits 'back home'	6	5	5.8

¹ This individual reported being born as a Muslim.

² The numbers in brackets indicate total numbers of children in each category.

³ The total number of children represented in this study is 23; however, as two couples with children each were interviewed, they are counted twice for a total of 27.

⁴ Three participants have lived in Canada for 16-17 years, while 10 have lived here for 38-48 years

⁵ 'Back home' implies the participant's country of origin (Bangladesh or India).

5.3 Participant Stories

This section presents each participant's response to the questions asked. The first four interviewees are Muslim Bangladeshi parents. Khatun & Assad are a married couple; Rubina (female) is married as well; and Bashar is a married man. Nine participants are Hindu Indians. Lekha & Shankar, a couple, were interviewed together. Four women are married (Chris, Parvati, Deepa, and Arpita). One woman is widowed (Shakshi). Two men were interviewed (Ranjan and Kumar).

5.3.1 *Khatun & Assad*

Khatun and Assad were interviewed together. Assad began the interview while Khatun was cooking. When she joined in, she confirmed much of what Assad had stated, but also provided additional commentary. Khatun and Assad came to Canada in their mid to late- 30s and have been here slightly less than 20 years. They married (arranged marriage) in Bangladesh and lived in Japan for two years before coming to Canada. Their main reasons for leaving Bangladesh were political instability, violence, and corruption in Bangladesh and other South Asian countries. They also wanted to seek further opportunities in the West. Both identify as Muslim and practice regularly. Khatun and Assad have two children, both in their early 20s, with no grandchildren. They both have graduate degrees from Bangladesh. Khatun studied in psychology and education and Assad studied in agricultural systems. While in Bangladesh, Assad was employed as a university teacher and consultant while Khatun taught grade school. Upon arrival in Canada, Khatun and Assad moved to Mississauga and worked in factory positions as workers. Now, Khatun owns and manages a business while Assad is a quality control manager in industry.

Lived Experience of Acculturation. When Khatun went to Japan, and later, Canada, there was an initial feeling of being homesick, largely due to the language differences. However, he said, “in Japan and people in Canada, they are really, really good. Therefore, the homesickness went away quickly. They treated us like friends, so the homesickness is very short” (Khatun, line 216).

The indirectness of communication in Canadian society was a challenge and a concern. They recalled one of their children having an unsuccessful application to a university in Canada. When they asked the university about what was incomplete or insufficient with the application, they learned little; “nothing is spoken ... Back home, if you are applying for a job or somebody else is looking for school, you know that you have to do the best you can to get in. And they tell you exactly what is wrong if you don’t get into something. But here, nothing is spoken” (Assad, line 159). This speaks to some levels of cultural confusion and perhaps even a loss in status. Assad also referred to being misunderstood due to his accent, which contributed to his awareness of being different, which proved to be a barrier to faster integration. Despite these concerns, the couple believed a respectful, passive, and patient approach to dealing with these problems was preferable to an assertive and confrontational approach, reflecting self-efficacy, the power to choose their approach to adopt a Canadian-style of communication.

Assad and Khatun have a ‘live and let live’ attitude and philosophy, as they believe in peaceful relationships between different peoples and generally have a cooperative and optimistic attitude toward neighbours and friends. They have held on to much of their culture and religion, especially within the home. Even outside the home, they try to maintain as much of their culture as possible. They have not abandoned their religious principles, choosing

instead to compromise very little in their beliefs in the hope that others (non-Muslims) will be tolerant and respectful. This came from what Khatun and Assad called 'sharing', a collectivistic concept they attributed to being from Bangladesh. Sharing went beyond family and extended family: "Say you are my neighbour, in our vision... [you are] my nearest relative" (Assad, line 128). Subsequently, Khatun and Assad continued to promote cultural respect and compromise, to 'live and let live'.

Felt Impact of Immigration on Parenting. Assad expressed concerns about what he termed 'free-mixing' between his children and the children of the dominant culture. 'Free-mixing' referred to unregulated, unmitigated, and unapproved friendships and dating practices between the children of different cultures. He had no concerns about religious and cultural differences between people; however, as a parent, he relayed fears about his children becoming too close with people who were not Muslim or Bengali. He believed that too much interaction between people who were different would undermine and compromise the consistency that his culture and religion provided his children. Ultimately, he saw Western culture as too permissive compared to his values and preferred that his children be socially conservative, deferent to authority, and family-oriented. This is where having Muslim and Bangladeshi family and close friends served three purposes: 1) they mitigated the adjustment to Canada; 2) they exemplified the importance of familism and community, and 3) they supported and shared in the overall parenting of all children in the community. Having extended family and friends made it less lonely; everyone involved reinforced rules and expectations more universally and consistently, a key facet of the involvement of extended family in Bengali culture.

Khatun and Assad made sure that they kept adjustment frustration to a minimum because they foresaw that retaining and expressing frustration would cause negative consequences for the mental health of the entire family. Khatun and Assad have been successful in their parenting because “we care about our kids and so far, up to now, they also care for us ...We have created a family that we give to them and now they have given us back” (Khatun and Assad, line 260). They are pleased that their children have kept in touch with them and they saw this as the sign of a happy life and positive parenting. With regard to self-efficacy and hardiness, they recalled advocating for their daughter in the school system when they withdrew her from some sex education orientation because this went against the family’s particular beliefs. This was a major difference in cultural values; however, in the effort to minimize frustration in acculturating, Khatun and Assad worked with the school to assert their beliefs while also allowing for some sex education as mediated by them. Furthermore, they demonstrated flexibility when they supported their daughter’s choice not to wear the hijab, especially after 9-11.

Khatun and Assad noted the advantage of communication to maintain a connection with their children. They were patient and always tried to communicate with the children and to explain why they parented in the way they did.

Stated Coping, Strengths, and Resilience. Khatun and Assad relied on religion for coping and for keeping things in perspective to deal with challenges. They supported other family members and friends to come to Canada and helped them to adjust successfully, which reflects family resilience. They held onto their values of sharing and taking care of people. Khatun and Assad described the adjustment to Japan and then Canada to be generally positive.

While acknowledging the differences between cultures, they relied heavily on their Muslim religion as a guide to maintain stability and adherence to principles related to deference, religious adherence, and being polite and friendly with neighbours. In addition, they “...attend and always maintain our culture because we develop and maintain relationships with our friends and relatives” (Assad, line 41). This again speaks to the importance and use of larger community to maintain resilience. Consistent religious observance and community ethno-religious support were factors that Assad and Khatun believed insulated them from the challenges that immigration brought.

Khatun and Assad attributed their successful integration into Canadian society to having relatives living in the country. As stated before, family and friends from the cultural community helped to reinforce cultural and family values. In this regard, they preferred a collectivist approach to family and community living, because “this makes a happier life and a happier society ... This happens when we depend on each other. We have to maintain, we have to address challenges, we have to keep going. We have to make things peaceful” (Khatun, line 197). Assad asserted that people should be treated equally. He was concerned about anyone believing that his or her ethnicity or religion was superior and, in response, he said, “...in general, we tried to appreciate everybody’s culture. Because I used to work in places with many people from many, many different countries and all kinds of people, I have learned to appreciate everybody” (Assad, line 93). His experiences of exclusion and racism reminded him about the importance of appreciating others. Note, however, that for Khatun and Assad, appreciating others did not equate with participating with others. As such, they maintained a respect for people who were different than themselves, but did not partake in activities that

made them uncomfortable, such as attending barbeques with alcohol. They were committed to establishing a very peaceful approach and related particularly well with their relatives and neighbours. As they have faced problems and challenges, their problem-solving approach is forward thinking and based in optimism, “What will you do? You’ll give up? No. After that, it’s about what is my next option?” (Khatun, line 191).

They also balanced working in the present while maintaining hope for the future. In other words, both Khatun and Assad believed that all that they could do is work hard in their present circumstances and hope their investment would lead to positive results for the future: “Right now we cannot understand the benefits of what we are doing... We can’t see it now...Everything we are doing for our children, we’ll find out whether or not it has worked in the future” (Khatun, line 274).

Expressed Identity Reformulation. Because of immigration, Khatun and Assad became increasingly patient and far more family-oriented. They learned to take everything into perspective and to keep their frustrations to a minimum. Their strong religious orientation combined with close extended family and community connections served to minimize any experiences of exclusion, helped to maintain personal ties, and kept intact their hopes toward the future. As they acculturated into Canadian society, they adapted in many ways while maintaining very strong links to their culture and religion.

5.3.2 Rubina

Rubina came to Canada in the late 1990s when she was about 30 years old. In her mid-40s now, she has been in Canada for the past 16 years. She came to Canada through Thailand,

as she had followed her husband's educational pursuits. Rubina was born as a Muslim in Bangladesh but, over the course of many years, she became an atheist. She has not returned to Bangladesh since immigrating to Canada. Her children are in their later adolescent years; she has no grandchildren. She completed a Bachelor of Arts degree in Bangladesh and upon coming to Canada was employed in various types of factory work and other types of jobs. She completed a college diploma and is currently searching for work in the human services sector. She settled in a medium-sized city about one hour from Toronto when she first arrived in Canada. She currently resides in Toronto, where her children have greater educational opportunities, and she herself will have access to more work opportunities.

Lived Experience of Acculturation. It was not very difficult for Rubina to adjust to Canada. The fact that she and her husband are atheists meant that she did not have to force their children into adhering to any particular religious precepts. This made them far more open to Canadian culture. Interestingly, of Canadian culture, Rubina said, "honestly it helped. There were many more open ideas and it was good for my family" (Rubina, line 32). She referred to the openness in schools in terms of sex education, and so on, which was refreshing because such issues would have been taboo had she stayed in Bangladesh. Her curiosity and positive hopes for the future demonstrate an optimistic and consensual approach to acculturation. Rubina acknowledged that she experienced some racism when she moved to a medium-sized city. In addition to the overt comments, she also experienced indirect forms of racism: "...at the time I was still wearing a *salwar kameez*¹⁸. It was very...I don't know the way they [white

¹⁸ A *salwar kameez* is a set of pants and long shirt that women most often wear in South Asia and the Middle East. It can come with a separate cloth-piece (almost like a scarf) that can be used to cover the head.

neighbours] looked was different. I was feeling judged because of my outfit...So they were just looking at me and it was very different because everybody is looking at you” (Rubina, line 47). This speaks to cultural confusion and the beginnings of alienation. However, Rubina adjusted to Canada by learning the language and staying positive. She found her own culture to be more judgmental than Canadian culture, in terms of being more conservative, less permissive, and more male-dominated. This helped her to become more accepting of Canadian culture because her own values were more congruent to freedom of thought, gender equality, and more accepting and liberal. In terms of retaining important cultural elements, Rubina was enthusiastic when talking about literature, music, and food (sentiments of home). Many of these things remained within the domain of the household and with close friends, again, reinforcing the importance of family and community in the immigration process. She wanted to retain cultural elements of gentleness and politeness, traits she associated with Bengali concepts of deference, respect, and dignity. Since her husband maintained similar beliefs (atheism), Rubina, and he raised their children to be open to all faiths but remained determined to maintain Bengali cultural values.

Felt Impact of Immigration on Parenting. Rubina and her husband were in their 20s when they left Bangladesh and she said they had to deal with life challenges (finding work, navigating new neighbourhoods, learning the language, and practicing unfamiliar customs), reflecting flexibility and problem solving skills. Rubina said that being young was both a challenge and a strength in moving from Bangladesh to Thailand, then to Canada. She said that the challenge was that as they moved, she and her husband had to get to know each other and without the presence of family, and this was somewhat of a challenge. The strength of their

youth lay in an openness in learning and adapting quickly. Rubina incorporated Canadian customs and methods into her own parenting, such as seeking her children's input in family decisions, avoiding the use of corporal punishment, and engaging in more conversation with her children. Outside of the home, she liked to fit into mainstream culture and wanted to make sure her children could also fit in. However, she imparted to them foundational Bengali cultural practices such as politeness, pride, and being respectful. Within the home, Rubina was more assertive about making sure that her children remained aware of Bengali poetry, literature, cinema, music, and the foods that defined her culture.

Rubina also talked about the importance of success, something that she has instilled in her children: "we are told to study first and do it well to be successful. This is the only thing that is worth anything. As an immigrant here, we don't have anything. If you study well, that's the only thing you have" (Rubina, line 131). This reflects the importance of education as achieving a level of success and status.

Rubina also referred to familism and collectivism, when she expressed a parenting challenge due to the lack of an extended family to assist in child rearing. She reiterated the importance of having mutual filial responsibilities as a key difference between Canadian families and Bangladeshi families. She also talked about how failure to meet family obligations would result in negative associations and depictions about her by the community, which would lead to individual and family shame: "[In Bangladesh], we have a culture where we learn....that you have to take care of friends. If you don't do it then you can feel that you might be the bad son or the bad daughter" (Rubina, line 150). Essentially, this self-assigned label came from

being socialized in a system that taught acceptable and unacceptable family-related behaviours and duties.

Rubina points to her daughters' adherence and deference to her as a parental success. This is because, for her, they have maintained family closeness instead of their straying too far away. Maintaining family was a major practical challenge for first-generation immigrants and she was thankful that her children continued to relate to her in a strong and supportive way. An additional value that she imparted was the importance of taking care of elders. "Whatever we have, everything goes to our children. Certainly we don't expect anything and we won't expect anything from our daughters but in some ways, I will hope that they will take care of me when I am older" (Rubina, line 155). This is reminiscent of what Rubina and other participants said about learning to be respectful to elders and promoting family obligations and ties.

With regard to what her children have lost, Rubina's children did not experience their grandparents' love and affection. They also missed out on having uncles and aunts around them. Consequently, the values of filial responsibility and mutual family caregiving were not experienced by Rubina's children. She compensated personally for this loss by recognizing that her children had witnessed alternative positive experiences in Canada. She explained that, even while in Canada, she placed her children in activities that reflected Bangladeshi heritage. They are also involved in their cultural community, which helped them to retain many of their traditional cultural values and ways of being.

Stated Coping, Strengths, and Resilience. When discussing stress, Rubina experienced challenges from time to time. She said, "Bengalis are very emotional. And we learn to escape

from stress by emotion” (Rubina, line 195). It was important to express frustration to people who were close with her and, in this way, she learned to minimize conflicts with children and to be a more actively supportive parent to them. She also adopted many Canadian ways in parenting and coping such as trusting her daughters more, allowing them more of a voice in the family, and being less involved in her daughters’ school lives. Moving to Toronto, having much greater access to Bangladeshi culture and Indian films and literature, has been useful for Rubina to cope and to maintain a sense of her home in Bangladesh. In the smaller centre, there were fewer such opportunities. Even so, they attended cultural events to maintain feelings of belongingness and connectedness. However, living in Toronto made such contact a part of day-to-day life because of more consistent contact with and exposure to traditional cultural activities.

Rubina said her openness and her willingness to adapt were key strengths that she employed in adjusting to Canadian society and coping with stress. She also credited her willingness to communicate and to talk about her culture as elements of strength and resilience. These elements are important to help to justify why she conveyed Bengali cultural concepts and values to her daughters.

Expressed Identity Reformulation. Rubina’s identity is that of a proud, Bengali-based, yet very open-minded woman. While she enjoys the freedoms and progressive thinking espoused in Canadian culture, she celebrates with vigor, her sense of being Bengali by attending cultural events and being mindful of expressing her Bengali heritage at home (language, food, literature). She takes advantages of opportunities that help her to learn to be more worldly and believes very strongly in freedom of expression and the pursuit of knowledge.

5.3.3 *Bashar*

Bashar came to Canada from Bangladesh in the mid-1970s at the age of 28 and has lived here for 38 years. Bashar wanted to seek greater opportunities in his education and work, but he also cited the desire to escape conflict as an additional reason for leaving Bangladesh. Bashar is Muslim by faith, but he described himself as more liberal than most Muslims. Bashar's family helped him to gather the funds needed so that he could come to Canada. Before coming to Toronto, Bashar had settled in two different parts of Western Canada, both in large, metropolitan cities. These were brief stays, lasting only about two years in total. He began factory work while in Western Canada. Upon moving to Toronto, Bashar obtained a college diploma in business. He is currently a distributor in the health industry. He has returned to Bangladesh five times. He has three children: a son, and one daughter who are in their later twenties, and another daughter in her early thirties. He also has three grandchildren.

Lived Experience of Acculturation. Bashar's adjustment to Canada was initially challenging. In the 1970s, there were few Bengali speaking people; however, there were even fewer Bangladeshi Muslims than Indian/Bengali Hindus, resulting in a sense of cultural alienation. Bashar explained that the most significant problem with adjusting to Canada was not knowing the English language very well and not understanding Canadian ways of communication. As an example, he had some anxiety around communicating with women in Canada; in his experience, they were "much more aggressive" (Bashar, line 33) than what he had experienced back home. He also initially had difficulty in understanding the differences between women's behaviour and presentation in Bangladesh versus Canada. He overcame his

cultural confusion by learning to be more accepting and becoming an advocate for women's voice and equality.

He explained four main factors that helped him to adjust and fit into Canadian society. First, as a young man, he pursued stereotypically Canadian activities such as watching hockey and going out to bars to socialize. Through them, he also learned English far more quickly. Second, he says, that "I was very adventurous, and I was not shy" (Bashar, line 83). This sense of curiosity helped him to relate to people quite readily. Third, he credited his father who encouraged Bashar and his siblings to avoid sticking too closely to religious observances that may prevent them from participating more fully in other societies. This helped him to maintain a balance between certain Muslim principles and mixing with people of other cultures. Fourth, Bashar recognized that having a somewhat relaxed religious orientation helped him adjust. He continued to attend the mosque but his religious principles emphasizing charity required him to be very friendly and accepting to everybody who came his way. Charity, for Bashar meant that he needed to let go of Muslim connotations, which he viewed as exclusive and judgmental. In this regard, there was an inherent willingness to assimilate – to fit in and a desire to engage fully in the institutions of the host society.

Bashar was somewhat of an anomaly in marriage. Whereas traditionally, many arranged marriages for the immigrant men would take place in India or Bangladesh, Bashar met his future wife in Canada. He recalled there were very few Bangladeshi women in Canada in the 1970s. While in Canada, he became acquainted with a Bangladeshi woman through college, whose parents and siblings had immigrated. While there was initial hesitation in both sets of parents, the woman's parents eventually went to Bangladesh to introduce themselves to

Bashar's parents. The marriage was then arranged because it was more convenient to hold the marriage in Canada. In addition to his wife being university-educated, his parents more easily accepted this marriage because her parents were already here, and "she is also very familiar with our old Bangladeshi ways" (Bashar, line 79). The family felt secure that they could retain certain religious and cultural values, such as a sense of familism, hierarchical deference, and filial piety.

Felt Impact of Immigration on Parenting. Bashar recognized that for immigrants, the conflict lay between the desire to maintain ethnic customs and religion while wanting children to fit in to Canadian society. Bashar explained his personal quandary when he became a father. Until then, his upbringing compelled him to be friendly, open, and curious. However, when he had children, "...it was very difficult for me because then I understood that my culture was also important. So I was feeling if I did not teach them the Bangladeshi ways or the Muslim teachings, then I would lose the culture and they would not know anything" (Bashar, line 130). It was interesting that while he and his wife wanted their children to participate in Canadian activities in order to fit in, they prevented their daughters from doing as much as they allowed their son, because they wanted to retain some of the traditional views on women's roles and activities. He acknowledged that it may have been wrong, but he had his reasons. During the 1970s, people from South Asia faced discrimination and overt racism; so, his girls were at greater risk and they wanted to protect them; "we were doing the best we could" (Bashar, line 156). This reflects cultural gender discrimination, but also the desire to avoid conflictual acculturation.

Bashar and his wife relaxed their expectations of their daughters to wear the 'hijab'¹⁹. Bashar's in-laws (in Canada) as well as his parents (in Bangladesh) supported this decision. This flexibility allowed Bashar's in-laws to provide more context and space to practice Bangladeshi and Muslim culture, while he and his wife could mediate their children's involvement in Canadian culture. They did assert the importance of not eating pork at any time, no matter what.

Bashar remembered that while he received some criticism from his religious community about his parenting approaches, he and his wife found other friends within the same community who had similar ideas around parenting and adjustment. This kind of mutual community support was very useful in terms of parenting and discipline. Bashar explained that they (he and his wife and their similar-minded friends) tended not to discipline their children heavily. Even in their adolescent years, they relied more on discussing things and explaining their rationale for setting certain limits on behaviour. In these explanations, Bashar and his wife asserted the importance of respecting elders. Bashar expressed disappointment in Canadian culture for what he perceived to be a lack of respect for older adults. The presence of extended family in Bangladesh reinforced common parenting ideals, and necessitated trust and openness. In Canada, the emphasis on privacy and independence became more challenging for him. As a parent, he had to learn the Canadian ways and compromise some of his values and methods in order to better fit in to Canadian society. He and his wife, "had to ask more

¹⁹ The hijab is a head scarf worn by many Muslim women in the presence of males and elders. It demonstrates the practice of modesty.

questions and we had to hear more from our kids. This means that we had to be more open and more trusting of our kids” (Bashar, line 224).

Stated Coping, Strengths, and Resilience. Even though he was not a strong Muslim, Bashar relied on particular aspects of his faith to help him cope. In addition, his attitude toward being adventurous and excited about learning has helped him to deal with stress. This speaks to his optimism. He also took a philosophical view on stress and realized that while he could always address certain problems; “...things that I cannot solve, I tried not to worry about too much and let other people fix those problems” (Bashar, line 315). This reflects his hardiness, self-acceptance, and self-efficacy. Bashar and his wife strongly supported their children in pursuing education. As an immigrant, “...they can take away anything from us, but they can never take away our knowledge and our schooling” (Bashar line 287).

His strong marriage was one of the key factors for his success as a parent. While common in Bengali families, Bashar expresses this in a way that is different from the traditional hierarchical and gendered structure of Bengali families. The children observed a consistency and mutual respect within the marital relationship, which, in turn, gave them a sense of security and an understanding of their parents’ unity. Additionally, unlike many Bangladeshi families, Bashar and his wife ensured equality in the marital relationship. Since Bashar and his wife were very open with one another in front of the children, they enjoyed a more relaxed family atmosphere, which helped them to be more receptive to their parents’ expectations.

Expressed Identity Reformulation. Over the years, Bashar said, “I have become more Canadian than Bangladeshi” (Bashar, line 53). Bashar said that he became a man who

embraces Canadian culture openly and claims to reap the benefits of both cultures. He believes that he is fully integrated into Canadian society and prides himself on being a Muslim-Bengali-Canadian.

5.3.4 Lekha & Shankar

Lekha and Shankar were interviewed together in their home. They had moved to Toronto in the early 1970s from India when 22 and 25 years old respectively; they have been in Toronto approximately 40 years (save for about three years when they lived in a rural part of Ontario). Lekha and Shankar were married in India through an arranged marriage. Shankar's father sent him to Canada because he knew a friend who could assist him in getting work and access to education. Lekha followed within four months. Shankar came to Canada to seek work and education opportunities, and Lekha came for much the same reasons, although primarily to follow her husband. She spent the first several years in Canada raising children and later sought education and employment opportunities in health services. Now, Lekha and Shankar have two children in their mid to late-30s, and four grandchildren. They identify themselves, as Hindu, and have returned to India approximately 20 times. Shankar has an MBA and worked as an entrepreneur and middle manager in various industries. Lekha earned a Master's degree in science and worked in direct healthcare. Both are now retired.

Lived Experience of Acculturation Shankar and Lekha say the primary challenges in coming to Canada were their shyness and the lack of language skills. Shankar added that he had difficulty in adjusting to Canadian customs and levels of informality that did not exist as he grew up, "I did not like how everybody talked with people's first names ... I come from a place where it was such a hierarchy in many ways" (Shankar, line 34). He recalls with humour that he

encountered much teasing because his efforts to be respectful to women were misinterpreted by members of the dominant culture as courting behaviours. Lekha remembers that the first several weeks were very lonely and very sad for her because she did not know how to use the kitchen equipment, and she struggled in missing home and family in India. Shankar practiced speaking English at work and, therefore, became increasingly comfortable. Lekha's comfort level increased when "we got into the Bengali community, which was very small at the time ... We were able to communicate with people and talk to people in our language so it was much better. There, we found many friends and we still have those friends almost 40 years later" (Lekha, line 47).

Lekha talked about being respected as a young girl back in India but that she would face certain limitations. For example, she would have to cover her head with her sari in the presence of men, elders, and in-laws. Shankar recalled that in India, everybody shared everything with everyone, everybody took care of one another, and discipline was meted out by anyone within the immediate and extended family. Respect, in this regard, depended on contributing to overall family harmony. However, in Canada, people seemed to share less with one another and took less care of one another. They both agreed that respect, from their perspective, was missing in Canada.

Lekha's adjustment to Canada also required her to adapt to cooking. She learned to cook many Canadian types of foods and her motivation to do this was to help her children fit into Canadian society. She learned how to make sandwiches with processed meat however, "I hated the sandwich meat so much. Sometimes I would eat it but I hated it in the beginning because it smelled bad and I thought it was not very healthy but I had to do what the white

people did because I needed to make sure my kids could fit in” (Lekha, line 125). After a time, she began to learn to cook food from various cultures, and began to take pride in her adaptability. Shankar had to learn about competition in Canada and this propelled him to learn to manage his money, become independent, and participate in Canadian sports like hockey and football. He adapted very quickly to the Canadian food because he was more exposed. He appreciated that his wife cooked these items and learned from her how to cook in a “Canadian” or non-Indian way.

Part of the challenge in adjustment for Lekha and Shankar was racism. After a few years living in Toronto, they moved to a rural part of Ontario for about three years where there were virtually no South Indians. In their rural town, racism was far more evident. Lekha recalled with some difficulty that during the later 1970s and into the mid-1980s, her children’s schoolmates “would say things like ‘paki’ and ‘why does your food smell like that?’ or ‘you look stupid’ or ‘go back home’” (Lekha, line 150). Interestingly, she also noted the more subtle aspects of being racialized: “so you have sometimes people looking at you funny or making strange faces or sometimes just staring at you... I can’t say exactly what I would see but it would be like a feeling of being looked at as if I was different, which I was, but they made it feel as if I was a stranger and that I do not belong here” (Lekha, line 152). Upon returning to Toronto, they were far more involved in the Bengali community and their children fit in better.

Felt Impact of Immigration on Parenting. Lekha and Shankar agreed that they became far more Canadian than Indian in their parenting approaches, yet they were nostalgic for communal kinds of experiences with regard to Indian experiences of shared parenting. They also expressed regret that their children did not experience having grandparents and other

relatives present in their lives. They regretted that they would not be able to care for their parents, a cultural aspect of familism. They both were clear that in Canada they had to let go of their expectations that their children reciprocate in traditional caretaking duties, as they became older. Shankar also said, “I can’t discipline the way I was disciplined. In India, there are certain things you can do like slapping, which we can’t do here” (Shankar, line 177). While Lekha was comfortable with changing disciplinary methods, Shankar expressed frustration that Canada made him fearful to practice his parenting methods, “If you are an immigrant, it makes it even worse because then the white people will say, ‘why are those immigrants still here beating their children? They should just go back home’” (Shankar, line 188). Lekha echoed this sentiment and spoke about how they have felt targeted in the media and by Canadian society for being (newer) immigrants.

As a parent, Lekha had to “learn to talk much more. I’ve had to learn that my kids’ opinions are important” (Lekha line 206). It was very important to Shankar to maintain his Bengali heritage and culture, and to pass them down to his children. He credited his wife in helping him to understand that he could not push the children too far. In order to assist their children in learning about their Bengali heritage and culture, Lekha and Shankar enrolled them in Bengali language classes, forced them to attend cultural events and celebrations, and spoke Bengali at home. However, in adolescence, their children rebelled significantly (defiant behaviour at home, usage of alcohol, associating with peers from ‘broken homes’, and challenging household rules and expectations), so they had to learn to be flexible. Shankar acknowledged that this was difficult because, “I thought it was a rejection of everything that is important to me” (Shankar, line 225). However, he resolved this by focusing on overall family

peace and increased patience. Lekha made herself very available to her children for discussions. She also credited her husband for listening to her. While they were inclined to follow traditional Bengali hierarchical family structures, they were also particularly open to balancing marital power.

Lekha and Shankar talked about the differences they have in the relationship with their children. While they enjoy a close relationship with their eldest child, they have a somewhat strained relationship with their youngest. They recalled that the youngest child, a daughter, was particularly rebellious and when she moved out of the home at age 20, she kept in touch only every few weeks. Conversations tended to be limited because this child had traditionally blamed Shankar and Lekha for being overprotective. She would escalate their concerns about her responsibility and respect to accusations about control and lack of trust. While this caused difficulty for both parents, they continued to maintain hope that she would become close with them once again.

Stated Coping, Strengths, and Resilience. Lekha's faith has kept her strong. She also relied on a sense of nostalgia in terms of "trying to remember how my parents have supported me" (Lekha, line 300). Patience and respect were particularly important, as she has tried to cope. She also talked about leaving things "in God's hands" (Lekha, line 303) as a method for coping with changes wrought by immigration. Shankar was not especially religious. He always had a strong belief that immigration, overall, was a positive event, and that Canada was a country that provided him and his children with greater opportunities. He attributed his coping to his ability to adapt to different situations. After 40 years of living in Canada, Shankar's accent has not significantly changed and he has become more accustomed to people making

fun of him. He learned to ignore people and his primary focus, "... was to be a good immigrant. So I learned to try and speak better English quickly and to learn the language very quickly" (Shankar, line 62).

Lekha and Shankar's children benefitted from having two cultures. This was a particular strength for their children because it made them adaptable in working with virtually anybody from any culture and background. Beyond this adaptability and socialization, living in two cultures also helped their children develop empathy for others. "They can actually know what it's like for immigrant people who are not even Indian and they can care for those people in a nice way" (Lekha, line 322). They explained that even though the children lost their heritage and daily living customs of being Bengali, they agreed that this was compensated for by a very strong community of close family friends who were predominantly Bengali. In other words, Lekha and Shankar tried very hard to replicate Indian family relationships in Canada through their friends. This sense of optimism, self-efficacy, hope and positive appraisal has been a key source of strength.

Expressed Identity Reformulations. Both Lekha and Shankar expressed exceptional pride in being Canadian and having adopted Canada as their home. Shankar became independent; his opportunities at work provided him with a good pension. Certainly, he had negative feelings about immigration because it had "... taken away some of my values and it also got in the way of my family," (Shankar, line 254) and created a distant emotional relationship with his youngest daughter. Nevertheless Shankar felt mostly at home in this country.

Immigration taught Lekha to be a very strong woman. She had been very well employed in her past and successful in her career. She had also become an excellent mother and a very good wife. In short, immigration had taught her to learn to balance many things all at once. Immigration also exposed Lekha to many different cultures; she enjoyed learning about different foods, different music, and so on. However, Lekha could not be Bengali outside of the confines of her home. She could not easily practice Indian and Bengali holidays and special occasions. As a result, she learned to create an identity where she could be both Indian and Canadian but in separate spaces.

5.3.5 *Shakshi*

Shakshi came to Canada in 1970 in her early 30s. She has resided in Toronto for over 40 years and is currently in her 70s. She came to Canada because she married a man (arranged marriage in India) who was already setting his roots in Canada. She identifies as Hindu, and has been back to India 15 times. She has two children who are in their late 30s and she has two grandchildren. She obtained a Master's degree in India and worked in the health services field upon immigrating to Canada. She is currently working part-time and hopes to retire soon. Shakshi has been widowed for approximately four years.

Lived Experience of Acculturation. Immigrating to Canada always had an impact on how Shakshi practiced Bengali culture, but it was never very significant. She was always immersed in the English language because she went to English-medium schools in India. Nothing was a terrible shock to her because she had a very strong command of the English language, and her studies were in English and American literature. She acknowledged, however, that there were a few minor adjustments she had to make, such as getting to know

the city. While being proficient in English already, Shakshi retained a profound love for the Bengali language, literature, and philosophy. She read in Bengali frequently, and continues to do so. She learned about respect and acceptance of others from India but she did not necessarily see these as inherently Indian and Bengali values.

Shakshi was thoughtful in terms of her ideas around immigrant families. She believed middle-class families comprised the greatest number of immigrants to Canada and this afforded them the opportunity to return to their country of origin more frequently. This gave families like them exposure to the evolution of both cultures. As such, “there is so much of a multicultural and multinational upbringing” (Shakshi, line 31). She also explained that from her perspective, India was under British rule for many years, and the education system was strongly influenced by the British. Therefore, in India, once a colonized country, she was also part of a culture that was heavily influenced by British and American culture. Much of the Indian middle class was educated in systems similar to those of England and America. Shakshi took a very balanced view of being colonized. She acknowledged that the British rule of India had been violent and oppressive. However, on a positive note, she sees one result as the exchange between cultures that eventually enhanced her appreciation of broad cultural differences. As such, for Shakshi, the move to Canada was not another form of colonization but an extension of her comfort zone, as she became acclimatized in this new cultural and social environment.

Felt Impact of Immigration on Parenting. In regard to some of the changes involved in parenting, Shakshi wanted to make sure that her children felt at home in Canada while not missing out on Bengali culture. Because both she and her husband spoke their language and expressed their culture at home, her children were automatically involved and immersed in the

Bengali aspects of their parent's identities. However, since Shakshi and her husband wanted to ensure that her children were part of Canadian culture, they also spoke in English. Her children understood Bengali as part of their upbringing and they retained a significant portion of the heritage through language schools.

Shakshi did not intend to change how she viewed parenting when she came to Canada. "Parenting is parenting. No matter what, we had to be loving, provide choices, and give our kids opportunity. We still had to tend to them and nurture them and encourage them to achieve their goals. The country didn't matter" (Shakshi, line 24). She remembered that she and her husband were not particularly strict because, in the new country, they intended to assimilate, though they did not want their children to miss out on what it meant to be Bengali. They encouraged their children not to feel different about themselves and did not want them to feel inferior or superior to others.

They encouraged mixing with children from the dominant culture; they assumed they simply could not detach from the mainstream culture. What they wanted to work toward was instilling confidence in their children. Frequent visits to India resulted in gaining much exposure to Indian and Bengali culture, which mitigated any culture shock. Since India was changing, and her family was visiting frequently enough that they could witness the changes, Shakshi's children moved back and forth between the cultures with ease. "They could easily pick up the language, they could talk to people, and they could also understand the love of the people, and the language of the people" (Shakshi, line 14). When the children were younger, Shakshi would read to them in Bengali and, as they indicated an interest, she would pass on to them certain pieces of knowledge about Bengali culture and heritage. She missed sharing the literature and

culture of India with her children as they grew older, but she also understood that this was not always possible given the fact that they lived in Canada.

Shakshi was unsure whether she had provided sufficient guidance to her children. In an effort to balance structure and flexibility, she had had to adjust. She and her husband encouraged their children to fit in with other cultures as long as they were not hurting themselves or other people. “So there were definitely rules and there was some control about following certain behavioral guidelines, but at the same time, there was a lot of flexibility for our children” (Shakshi, line 66). For example, Shakshi talked about her eldest daughter being invited to sleepovers. While she acknowledged that it might appear ‘racial’, she did not permit her daughter to sleep over at children’s homes where she did not know the parents. It happened that the parents she knew were Bengali and so the sleepovers tended to be with Bengali parents. She and her husband also mainly wanted their children to value academic achievement and involvement and they would therefore talk to them in these terms so that they could assert that sleepovers were a distraction from the emphasis on academics as a family goal. In terms of other social and peer influences, Shakshi says, “we let them be aware that there were too many things to learn and too many things to understand. We thought that this would be too much for them and this would be too stressful for them. So this is why we strongly encouraged them to do very well in school” (Shakshi, line 86). Her eldest child was particularly ambitious, and so any fears around dating or activities that would lead them to deviate from the overall goals of academic and career success were minimized.

Stated Coping, Strengths, and Resilience. Shakshi relied heavily on Bengali philosophies involving patience, seeing beyond the present, having faith, and committing to family in order

to cope with stress. While she identified as a Hindu, many of the teachings came more from philosophies in Bengali culture, literature, and poetry. She also adopted the approach of delayed gratification. She acknowledged that things changed and she embraced the adage, “this too shall pass...Yes stress is there, but tomorrow it could be a different thing” (Shakshi, line 187). She took a particularly philosophical approach to stress, challenge, and adversity and used a few metaphors to describe how she dealt with stress. She also took on an approach that suggested that God is everywhere, and she relied more on spirituality than religion to be patient and to believe her stresses could be surrendered to something larger than herself. She also coped by embracing many different faiths and learning from them. As she became older, she also exercised the element of personal choice. In order to cope with challenges, she became more assertive in terms of recognizing that she did not have to participate in certain things if she did not want to. Finally, she identified appreciation and thankfulness for her strengths and her blessings as part of her coping mechanism. In other words, Shakshi listed the benefits of her life such as health, success, prosperity, and friends, and she was thankful for these elements in her life as a way to cope with stress.

Expressed Identity Reformulation. The person Shakshi became, as result of immigration, changed as she aged. Ultimately, it appears that she would not have been much different had she not immigrated to Canada. “This is because the basic instincts and basic thought processes, I do not think [they] changed much. I don’t think that I have ever felt alienated in Canada. I didn’t feel myself being different when I came to Canada. I don’t think that I was fruitless here” (Shakshi, line 135). Basic instincts and thought processes meant that underneath any changes around immigration, Shakshi did not change her overall orientation in

seeking happiness. She cared for her children, supported her husband, obtained employment, and worked toward settling in Canada. The desire for stability and happiness remained a constant regardless of whether or not she had immigrated. In regard to not feeling fruitless, Shakshi claimed getting a good job, contributing to her profession, maintaining her traditional roles of mother and wife as worthwhile endeavours.

In fact, Shakshi talked at length about making particular efforts in order to make Canada her home. Prior to her children being born, she entertained thoughts about returning to India, but these changed as soon as her children were born. In this regard, Shakshi's priorities shifted from herself to her children's and she therefore convinced herself that she had to adjust to Canadian society and provide for her children. She chose to feel at home in Canada and kept India as a memory: "...the sky is the same, the sun the same...this is the way we thought. It's not that we don't miss home but the world is also become so small, and we still have the opportunities to do anything we want" (Shakshi, line 147). She created her family and remained close in her immediate surroundings and therefore drew upon immediate friends to substitute for relatives back home. As result, "basically, what's happened is that you are not an immigrant anymore once you accept it [Canada as the new home]" (Shakshi, line 166).

5.3.6 Chris

Chris came to Canada in the early 1970s, after marrying a man who had traveled in Europe and Canada. The arranged marriage was held in India. She has been in Canada for 45 years and has been back to India ten times. She has two grown children in their later 30s and has two grandchildren. While in India, Chris completed her undergraduate education and two years of courses towards a Master's degree in the arts. When she came to Canada, she

updated her Bachelor's degree and has worked in the field of human services in vocational employment. Chris and her family settled in Mississauga Ontario, a major metropolitan city next to Toronto.

Lived Experience of Acculturation. When discussing the impact of Canadian society on how Chris practiced Bengali culture, she explained that because of multiculturalism, she has not felt limited or hindered. She acknowledged tangible and observable differences (such as accent or clothing) that may lead to some discrimination. However, she did not believe that these were hindrances towards her practicing her culture.

Chris saw very little patience evident in Canadian culture because she saw people in the dominant culture as impatient, demanding, and aggressive. When situations of discomfort or confrontation presented themselves, "I would have been very, very intimidated to speak my mind. I would be very hesitant to tell them how I felt and I would have been fearful..." (Chris, line 56). The factors that changed Chris's hesitation were participation and interaction with people in the dominant Canadian culture, and working outside of home, as well as having years of experience of living and raising children in Canada. As a result, she became more certain of herself, and more assertive.

Chris enjoyed living in Canada because of freedom to do what she wanted. Yet, she believed Canadian families were more fractured than Indian families; Canadian society tended to be very individualistic. Really, "it's a very 'me-me' society" (Chris, line 99). Though not explicitly stated, she valued the ideas of mutual care and the role of extended family in overall family life that prevailed in India. Chris resolved the impact of Canadian culture on her own experiences by not having the same expectations of her children. She did not necessarily want

her children to look after her because they were raised in Canadian culture and did not have the benefit of constant extended family involvement. The recognition that not all reciprocal family care-taking acts were possible upon immigrating shows that Chris has adapted to Canadian society.

Chris proudly maintains the Bengali language and Hindu religion. She is pleased that her children understand and speak Bengali, which tells her that she has “accomplished something” in terms of helping them adjust to Canada while maintaining some Bengali perspective (Chris, line 66). In essence, her accomplishment as a parent is represented in the achievement of balance in her children – their full participation in Canadian society while maintaining Bengali culture by practicing its language. She maintains her religious practices by praying once a day for a few minutes and attending all the community-based religious functions. Expressing mixed feelings, Chris also stated that family hierarchies were maintained. In other words, her husband was the leader of the family and maintained his authority. However, she noted, “...the mother is the keeper of family. Without the mother, I would say most families would be destroyed. However, you have to get along with your husband if you want to stay in the marriage” (Chris, line 93). However, because traditional cultural gender differences were maintained, Chris did not feel valued in her marriage.

Felt Impact of Immigration on Parenting. Chris had to compromise on how much influence she had over her children. She expressed concern that if she were to assert herself too much, they might resent this control and become more distant. In this regard, relinquishing control was more of “...a compromise. I would say it’s not really giving up” (Chris, line 115). In essence, Chris assessed the competing influences on her children between her Bengali values

and those of the dominant Canadian culture. She adapted by adhering more to Canadian ways; this strongly represents a strong acculturation on her part, as an immigrant. She explained that in India, children obeyed their parents but, in Canada, the children rebelled. Chris said she wished her husband more easily adopted Canadian parenting ways by being less controlling. For example, Chris's husband frequently made academic decisions for their children without consulting them. This was very difficult for her because she witnessed her children being "caught between two cultures.... They were more influenced by the white culture and white kids. So they thought that their parents should be behaving similar to other parents and being treated that way at home" (Chris, line 144).

The value of children's accountability to parents was important to Chris and her husband. For example, due to their investment in their children's education, they expected that their children would be more forthcoming with their marks and educational plans, and to be included in any decisions. It was particularly difficult when her children asserted their independence and withheld information. She was also aware that her children did not share much with her and her husband about their dating habits, which went against Bengali expectations of control and relationship mitigation. The acculturative dissonance between the parents and the children was then felt by Chris insofar as she felt less included in her children's lives as they became more independent.

Stated Coping, Strengths, and Resilience. Chris demonstrated resilience by persisting in acculturating. She relied on her ability to tolerate differences in order to cope with her children's increasing independence. Chris's strength lay more in her perspective of valuing family harmony, to avoid becoming rejected and distanced. Therefore, she learned to accept

many choices made by her children and to raise few objections: "...I want them to be happy...if they are not happy, then we will not be happy. Have they married according to my choices? No.... Finally, we have accepted it, but we had to go through a lot" (Chris, line 75). This acceptance and perseverance demonstrates Chris's fortitude and resilience.

Chris also talked about the need for having patience and determination in order to cope with the changes resulting from immigration. She also talked about being able to foresee things. She said she was intelligent and could think things through. In other words, she always assessed problems, determined the right course of action, and drew on her patience to work through them. Chris was asked about the importance of family and close friends as coping resources. She said that her husband consistently relied on members of the Bengali community for companionship and inclusion, and she saw these as aspects of coping. However, for herself, Chris said she was not so reliant on the Bengali community. In fact, it was surprising that she relied more on her Canadian colleagues and less on the Bengali community. She felt that her Canadian colleagues were more supportive, accepting, and understanding of the contributing factors around her marital challenges than her Bengali counterparts. This speaks to the inherent cultural expectations of husbands, as leaders in the home. Perhaps, in Chris's work in social services, her views on equality made her very aware of the inequality in her own marriage. As such, religion was important to her because, "it gives me strength, it focuses me, it helped me cope with my stress...I think it has helped me to see the light and dark" (Chris, line 262). Chris also saw hope as a major coping strategy. She always looked ahead towards the future, hoping that challenges would be resolved at some point. She always hoped for happiness, family closeness, and togetherness.

Expressed Identity Reformulation. Because of immigrating, Chris said she had learned the value of being assertive. She claimed particular success in her employment: “I was lucky to have a good job. And I was extremely happy with my job and I really liked working and in that way, I think I have been successful” (Chris, line 215). Driving and keeping her own car, provided Chris with freedom and independence. Chris could do what she wanted in Canada with very few limitations. Immigration also provided Chris’s children with opportunities for education and greater career success, and Chris expressed pride at witnessing this success of her children as well as for herself as a mother. In retrospect, Chris felt guilt about her children because they were caught between two different cultures. In essence, while her husband tried to maintain some of the inherent authority in Bengali and South Asian culture, she saw the value of compromise and patience. She said, ‘if I could turn the clock back, I would have been more assertive. I would have been more vocal. And face the consequences, whatever would have happened” (Chris, line 283).

A major impediment towards more successful parenting and a happier life was the difficult relationship that she had with her husband. In Chris’s narrative, she stated that her marital relationship was not ideal. Her husband was not supportive of her, highly controlling at home, and controlling of their children’s activities. Chris wanted to parent with balanced authority, where her children’s perspectives mattered and decisions about them included their input. While she recognized the need to compromise with the children, her husband maintained an authoritarian and patriarchal approach; he negated, dismissed, and undermined her. As a wife, and as a mother, Chris suffered in isolation and became exhausted in always trying to soothe her children who were under their father’s control. While she acknowledged

that such marriages tend not to last in Western cultures, she retained her cultural (and gender-bound) obligation to stay with her husband for the children and for the sake of family.

Nevertheless, she appreciated what she did have in her life. Apart from her two children becoming successful, she has grandchildren, remained pleased with her career, does not have to worry financially, and enjoys good health.

5.3.7 Arpita

Arpita came to Canada from India in the mid-1970s when she was in her early 20s. She had an arranged marriage in India to a man who had been to England and who was then pursuing career interests in Canada. Arpita has been in Canada for about 40 years. She, her husband, and their children lived in various metropolitan cities in Canada for about 15 years, before settling in Toronto. She identifies as Hindu in faith though she practices in her own way. She has two children, both in their mid-thirties, and she has one grandchild. She obtained an undergraduate degree while in India, and has worked in customer relations (financial services) for the past 25 years while in Canada.

Lived Experience of Acculturation. Prior to coming to Toronto, Arpita and her husband had settled in different parts of Canada, largely due to her husband's work opportunities. The importance of language acquisition and competence was primary, because she perceived this as a way to fit into Canadian society quickly. Therefore, for her, the preservation of Bengali culture was less important. Having a few Bengali friends was sufficient: "As long as we had friends that we can talk to in Bengali, that was fine" (Arpita, line 22). She noted, however, that in moving to cities with higher numbers of Bengalis, this helped to maintain more of the culture

because of the numerous Bengali functions and religious services: “That’s when we really began to think about getting our homeland back in a smaller way” (Arpita, line 25).

Initially, Arpita experienced feelings of exclusion and discrimination, which motivated her to do more to fit into Canadian society quickly. Especially when wearing the traditional Indian ‘sari’²⁰ and when speaking, she was aware of stares because of her clothing, her Indian accent, and lack of language skills. Paid work opportunities were the primary vehicle for learning the language, as well as earning an income, and fitting in. “The motivation for me to go to work was to get money but also be more exposed to the language so that I could pick it up faster” (Arpita, line 35). In coming to Toronto, the size of the Bengali community and the multicultural nature of the city helped to diminish her feelings of discrimination. Toronto gave her more freedom and pride in practicing her Bengali culture and being Indian. “Here, I feel proud to be Indian, proud to be wearing a sari on the street, you feel proud to be an Indian” (Arpita, line 40). With regard to maintaining Bengali culture in Canadian society, Arpita explained that it was a personal choice; if immigrants had a longing and desire to keep their culture, they could indeed do so, but this was rooted in the immigrant’s willingness to find such venues (friends, community, and personal practices).

Felt Impact of Immigration on Parenting. With regard to the impact of immigration on parenting, the absence of extended family in Canada was the primary loss for Arpita. She explained that in India, the family was not composed of a nuclear unit; instead, it was composed of an extended family including grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins. In this

²⁰ The sari is the traditional clothing that Indian women wear. It can be made of various materials and in a great variety of styles. Certain colours and styles are worn for different occasions or life stages.

regard, she states: "...we had uncles and aunts and their kids and grandmother and we shared cooking and everything so it is not just one person is doing all the '*sasan*'²¹, everybody is involved in it. Not just one person is doing discipline. So you learn from everybody. And if you do something wrong, they won't wait for your parents, they will take care of it whether you like it or not" (Arpita, line 119).

The lack of extended family in Canada meant increased isolation and competition between immigrant families. Arpita could not rely on extended family to share in the care, support, and discipline for her children. She found that her children (and their families) became increasingly materialistic and competitive with one another and, therefore more isolated from one another. This combination (competitiveness and lack of extended family) also resulted in decreased parental control over children. While she herself did not experience this first-hand, as a parent, she saw this in other Bengali families and could foresee how it could be similar for her family.

Arpita provided her children with minimum direction in regard to learning about Bengali culture. When they were younger, she exposed them to music and community events, but later became more heavily involved in transporting her children to mainstream activities such as sports events to help them better fit into Canadian society. Therefore, "...because the kids were involved in many Canadian activities, it was hard to keep the balance between the Bengali parts and the Canadian parts but we chose to involve them more in Canadian ways, the reason being is that this is how they can mix better with the community and they can grow from

²¹ *Sasan* is a Bengali word meaning rules, governing, authority and management. It roughly means running the business of home, household, and family.

it..."(Arpita, line 182). Arpita also discussed the importance of an inherent interest on the children's part to explore their Indian culture. Otherwise, she would be forcing them into something for which they had no interest.

According to Arpita, some Bengali ideas of authority-oriented (such as unchallenged deference to authority) parenting are ineffective. Consequently, she chose to promote the importance of open and consistent communication with her children. Again, she explained that in India, the presence of extended family shared the authority to do the following: 1) enforce a consistent home management and family living, and 2) to raise children with very similar rules and discipline methods. However, she also explained that the same relatives who would share in disciplining a child "...will probably ask the parent 'why are you still mad?' So lots of people in the family take care of everybody" (Arpita, line 235). In other words, extended family members mediated parent-child conflict and misunderstanding. In contrast, in Canada, such a lack of involvement by an extended family further diminished parental authority over their children. Moreover, what caused tensions between Arpita and her husband were the differences in their parenting approaches. Whereas Arpita wanted to be more family-oriented, her husband was less so inclined. Arpita's husband worked late hours and often away from the home often, and there was no extended family to support Arpita and her husband, as parents. Further, Arpita's husband would impose decisions and undermine her during her absences from home, creating additional conflict in their marriage. In contrast, in India, extended family involvement not only perpetuated parental authority but also served to mitigate parental and marital conflict.

Arpita talked about being pleasantly surprised when one of her children demonstrated Bengali cultural practices related to the topic of respect. She recalled a time when one of her children became successful in their career. Without being asked or told to do so, the son offered his '*pronam*²²' to a grandparent. Arpita had talked about this practice when the children were young and demonstrated it, as part of her normal way of living, but she never once demanded or expected her children to do so. She stated, "...some kids, they learn when they are watching. You may not think that they are picking it up, but they are picking it up" (Arpita, line 337). Arpita was surprised by this action because she and her husband were always emphatic in not forcing their children to maintain Bengali customs and instead, promoted Canadian practices.

Stated Coping, Strengths, and Resilience. Arpita noted patience as her primary attribute, especially in volatile situations. She also noted sacrifice as part of being patient, seeing a greater good, and assessing situations to know when to intervene. She relied on a sense of discretion and an attitude of hope as important factors in her resilience. Arpita said that she ensured some stability in her family life by relying upon patience, the ability to wait, and her own assertiveness skills. She pointed out that "it is not because I happen to be Bengali; it has more to do with individual circumstance and situation" (Arpita, line 391). She acknowledged that putting things into perspective was also useful in coping and, when things were difficult and she was sacrificing too much, she would always remind herself that others were experiencing even more difficulty. Though not actively religious, Arpita relied on acting

²² *Pronam* is a term in the Hindu context that means prostrating to deities and elders. A younger person offers *pronam* (respect, forgiveness or blessings) to elders by touching the elders' feet and then touching their own head.

out principles of good behaviour. “I teach my kids that you don’t have to go to temple to be a good person. As long as you stay good and honest, that is your temple” (Arpita, line 331).

Expressed Identity Reformulation. The changes to Arpita’s own sense of self due to immigration are numerous. These range from being independent, being competent at running a household independently, and fitting in. She could complete indoor and outdoor chores. She enjoyed a positive workplace identity of which she is proud. She compared her success in Canada to what she perceived would have happened had she stayed in India and has “...become a very confident woman who really feels proud about herself whatever I do.... Because of immigration, I am who I am today and I’m a better person” (Arpita, line 290).

Arpita has mixed feelings about her identity as a parent. On the one hand, she was very aware of the affection and care her children held for her. She was also committed to being there for them for any of their needs. She was well aware that she did not expose them to significant aspects of Bengali culture, but felt no major regret over this. She spoke about her loyalty, consistency, and availability to her children. She supported them in their every activity so that they had every opportunity to fit in. On the other hand, she tempered her commitment to her children with an unexpected loss of closeness with them. Arpita compared her family’s closeness to that of other Bengali families, and desired “...more closeness, more openness, more communication.... not only just me, but as a whole family so that they enjoy coming home so that we can laugh and talk” (Arpita, line 308). She witnessed other Bengali families where the interactions between parents and (adult) children were far more frequent and provided a stronger sense of closeness. After further analysis, Arpita said that the lack of closeness between her and her adult children could be attributed to patterns and themes in her own

marriage. She cited examples of these themes as the differences in childhood experiences between herself and her husband, their differing experiences of upward mobility, differences in family income, and differences in values about parenting. In her own marriage, therefore, the lack of similarity in values, marital distance due to work commitments, and varied expectations of the children led to inconsistencies within the family with which the children had to contend. She was aware that her parenting style differed from that of her husband, but remained silent and did not raise this as an issue in the marriage.

5.3.8 Deepa

Deepa was 22 years old when she came to Canada in the later 1960s. She has been in Canada for almost 50 years and is in her early 70's now. She had an arranged marriage in India to a Bengali man who had been working in Mississauga for about three years. Deepa obtained a Bachelor's degree in Science while in India and several years after coming to Canada became employed by a municipal government doing clerical and customer service work. She is currently retired. She has two children who are in their mid-40s; she also has four grandchildren. She has been to India twice.

Lived Experience of Acculturation. Deepa's initial adjustment to Canada was a challenge because she was shy and culturally socialized to be polite. Her husband and relatives back home challenged her shyness in a supportive way. Her husband and relatives told her that, "if we were going to have a good life here, then I needed to learn to fit in" (Deepa, line 31). Nevertheless, similar to other respondents in the study, Deepa found language to be a major barrier. In addition, she talked about cultural nuances shared by some cultures. As an example, Deepa's loneliness reminded her of what it was like in India in terms of family and

friends dropping by without notice. She talked about a certain level of casualness where people in India felt very comfortable to go to one another's homes. Without access to phones, there was no way to communicate with one another and, therefore, people would generally learn to welcome one another without any reference to hardship or inconvenience that such impromptu visits might ordinarily cause. In Canada, people seemed more private and kept to themselves. In this regard, "when I would get to know some people I would always... I would not know whether I could go to their houses and just drop in" (Deepa, line 42).

Deepa said she never had any particular problems practicing Bengali culture. However, "sometimes there are some questions that people might ask which are confusing for me to answer but nobody asks these questions" (Deepa, line 58). She credited Canadian society and multiculturalism as a place where people from various countries could associate and get along, while maintaining their own cultures. Deepa maintained relationships within the Bengali culture with people who were similar to her. She claimed to be generally successful in keeping family values of religion and culture, and was pleased that her children followed many of the customs. In order to fit in, Deepa did not force her children to speak the Bengali language and even though she had some regrets, she was pleased that they understood the language. She also provided a major insight. "It is through the language that our children have learned the customs" (Deepa, line 80). This suggests that the very nature of the Bengali language was not only a means of communication but also a vehicle for transmitting cultural and religious values and principles.

Felt Impact of Immigration on Parenting. Deepa talked about her initial adjustment to Canada as positively impacted by her children. Specifically, her children taught her how to

operate in Canadian culture and provided her with specific instructions about participating in different holidays in Canada. She talked about Halloween, Christmas, Easter, Valentine's Day, Remembrance Day, and Thanksgiving as times during the school year when she learned about Canadian activities and customs associated with these religious/cultural events. While Deepa did not initially understand some of these events, she better understood through her children, their teachers, and neighbours, and participated in these activities.

Deepa acknowledged that, to a point, her children lost parts of their Bengali heritage. She felt pressure from relatives living in India who raised concerns about her children losing their roots and becoming less associated with Bengali culture. However she said, "I wanted my kids to fit in and also I think I should tell you that I know two or three Bengali families who were very adamant to hold onto their culture and they did not like Canadian culture.... So they did not let their children be in any Halloween or Christmas outfits or traditions or celebrations" (Deepa, line 101). Consequently, Deepa believed that overall she balanced the incorporation of Canadian customs with the maintenance of her Bengali heritage.

One of the most salient challenges for Deepa revolved around the differences in parenting between what she knew in India and what she witnessed in Canada. Canadian parents tended to be lenient, permissive of disrespectful behaviour, and too flexible with dating. She did not like these aspects of Canadian culture and remained always fearful that her children would be getting into dating and, in particular, early sexual activity. In response, Deepa and her husband "told our children they are not allowed to date and they should be very careful of these ways because they are not good ways" (Deepa, line 128). In further addressing some of these parenting challenges, she and her husband would talk with them about some of

the religious ideas and cultural expectations, but not to force them. Instead, there was much discussion and talking to the children about parental expectations and the dangers of starting behaviours that the parents did not appreciate. In addition, she and her husband placed particular emphasis on educational achievement.

Stated Coping, Strengths, and Resilience. With regard to changes as a result of immigration, Deepa was pleased because she taught her kids to be kind, respectful, and to follow rules. She credited herself and her husband with striking a balance between being strict and yet being particularly open, especially to their children's friends. In contrast to other Indian families that she knew, Deepa was much more inviting to her children's friends. She also credits her husband for being an open and engaging person with whom many children could easily relate, "even though we were Indian and had a different accent and our food would smell strange, our children's friends liked us because we were funny and because we always tried to welcome them to our house", (Deepa, line 171). Deepa believed very strongly that while she was proud of being Bengali, she also wanted to ensure that her kids fit in. In this regard, she would not cook Indian food for a few days (to avoid the cooking smells) so her children would not feel embarrassed if their friends came. At times, she acknowledged anger with her children because she perceived that they were ashamed of the Bengali heritage, but she and her husband chose to "bite our tongues" (Deepa, line 185) because for them their children fitting in was a priority.

What helped Deepa adjust to Canadian society was when she shed her shyness. She developed a natural curiosity, which helped her to be respectfully inquisitive. She was happy to learn from Canadian people who were very willing to teach her about the nuances of Canadian

culture. Deepa's husband's prior immigration to Canada and his knowledge of the culture was useful because he taught her about many Canadian aspects of living. In addition, Deepa began to know many Bengali people in Toronto and the Mississauga areas. "So we relied on each other. I can tell you that it is nothing like India where we could be taking care of each other's children but I was happy to see that we could form our own community here" (Deepa, line 203). Frequent participation in Bengali cultural community and religious functions also helped Deepa to adjust to Canadian society yet maintain her link to her country of origin.

Religion was of particular significance for Deepa. It served as a safe haven for her and helped her to relieve worries or challenges and focus instead on the 'here and now'. This helped her to be more observant and caring as a parent because she wanted her children to not just to fit in but also to succeed in Canada. What also helped Deepa is her knowledge surrounding Canadian history and Canadian current events. Her workplace helped her to cope because she was well equipped to converse with people, and she became increasingly knowledgeable about Canadian customs, as well as current issues.

Expressed Identity Reformulation. In addition to having more freedom and knowledge as well as daily living skills, the experience of immigration gave Deepa the opportunity to become open-minded as well as provide her with very strong friendships and financial stability. She discovered that people in India could be closed-minded. Immigration forced her to become increasingly aware of the world and therefore, more open. She credited the values of multiculturalism as a way for her and her friends to be more accepting of others. Deepa made a poignant statement about her identity: "So I made Canada my home and I am proud to say

that I am Canadian and, even though I may not look like the typical Canadian, in some ways I am more Canadian than the Canadians who are here” (Deepa, line 222).

5.3.9 Parvati

Parvati came to Canada just before she turned 20 years old in the late 60s. She has been in Canada close to 50 years and is now in her mid-60s. Parvati’s husband had lived in Canada for about three years before he returned to India to marry her. Parvati is a Hindu and has returned to India eight times since her immigration to Canada. Her children are in their early 40s and she has three grandchildren. Parvati completed her college education (health services) when her children were in their early teens. She worked part-time until retiring a few years ago.

Lived Experience of Acculturation. Canadian culture had generally not limited Parvati practicing her own culture; “It has allowed me to practice my culture as long as I do it at home and also in a controlled environment like a club or a temple” (Parvati, line 16). She said that Canadian culture however limited the practice of her own culture. For example, she could not go out as frequently as she would in India wearing her sari and her ‘*sindhoor*’²³. This limiting of her culture felt as if “we are outsiders and this is not my country” (Parvati, line 24). While this feeling was present initially, it was less prominent as she adjusted to Canada. Parvati went on to explain that with food and religious practices, as well as social expectations, she had to adjust differently. Specific to family expectations, she also had to adjust her ways of parenting in order to fit better into Canadian society. While Canadian society has not been entirely

²³ *Sindhoor* is a fine red vermillion powder. Women typically take a coin or finger, immerse it into the powder, and make a short line in the part of their hair. It indicates a sign of being married.

restrictive, it definitely altered these aspects of her life. At the same time, government funding of her temple as well as cultural activities allowed her to practice her culture freely.

Parvati practiced most of her Bengali cultural values within her home with her family and with close friends. She does not believe that she let go of much of her Indian culture but she did have to change her ways to adjust to Canada's more "convenient culture". For example, wearing Western clothes became more convenient to her, though she does not see this as "letting go". Parvati maintained the importance of family values, respect for parents, responsibility for parents, and dedication towards children but, conversely, she did not appreciate the Bengali and Indian expectations for women around self-sacrifice, staying home, and not having financial control. "These parts of Bengali culture are harder to understand and deal with" (Parvati, line 57). She did note however that these kinds of ways of living changed in India, as well, "Even in India, if a woman is working, then people support her to work. I think that is for everybody's benefit...now, a woman has some control over her finances. So things have changed in India too" (Parvati, line 59). Parvati enjoyed Canadian values with respect to freedom of expression, the right to pursue one's goals, more equal standards for girls, and multiculturalism. She enjoyed learning about various other ethnicities and different parts of the world. Aspects of Canadian culture that Parvati did not like included racism, overall disrespect towards people, potential negative influences on children, and isolation between families. In general, however, her adjustment made her increasingly accepting of various kinds of situations, circumstances, and people.

Felt Impact of Immigration on Parenting. In terms of parenting, Parvati wanted her children to feel like Canada was their home. "This is a little bit different for me because Canada

does not always feel like home for me...when you're faced with racism, it is difficult, but other than that, you live here so this is your home. Especially because I have lived here for 45 years, this is my home. I have grown up here more than I have grown up in India" (Parvati, line 93).

Parvati and her husband spent time talking to their children about their Bengali heritage and culture. This came from relating stories about their family back home. She also talked about her pride in being Bengali and of placing importance and value on certain parts of being Bengali and, thereby, imposing them on her children.

She acknowledged that teaching Bengali values was difficult because of the lack of consistent and constant Bengali influences. Because her children were attending Canadian schools and mixing with various people from numerous backgrounds, Parvati's children experienced a decreased influence of Indian culture and more influence from Canadian and other cultures. "So when we teach them that your family values are different than Canadian values, it is confusing for them, and they cannot visualize what is going on in terms of looking at the reciprocal part of family living. This makes it more difficult for them." (Parvati, line 120).

As a parent, she learned to accept more from her children, she learned to listen to them more, and take into account her children's viewpoints and perspectives. Since she wanted her children to be happy, she had to permit certain behaviours and ideas even if she had particular reservations. She asserted the importance of striking a balance. With regard to discipline and child rearing, she noted the prevalence of corporal punishment in India; however, she also emphasized the presence of extended family members to assist and support with overall discipline and parenting.

Similar to other participants in the study, Parvati talked about the value of having a supportive and pervasive environment full of relatives, family, and friends who would convey common child rearing attitudes and behaviours. Parvati has taught her children to respect their family, stay close with family, respect elders, obtain a good education, and be honest. She and her husband promoted the importance of respecting culture and having a belief in religion. Moreover, Parvati used her culture and religion to give her strength and peace, and to have faith in humanity and human life.

Stated Coping, Strengths, and Resilience. With regard to personal strengths, Parvati relied on prayers and inner strength as primary areas of resilience. She attempted to see the positives in every instance of challenge or adversity. She put considerable thought into analyzing certain events and this was helpful in terms of coping with stress. She also coped by always examining the benefits of living in Canadian society. Parvati was raised with a particular sense of responsibility towards raising children. Having this inherent sense of duty and obligation to her children helped her to raise them to be happy and successful. The achievement of relative financial security was a success for her. She did indeed, rely on her friends in order to cope because through friendships “we get to talk about our experiences. We get to compare with each other’s understanding and we get to look at what they have learned. You draw from each other’s experience” (Parvati, line 202).

Expressed Identity Reformulation. Because of immigration, Parvati became much more open-minded and somewhat independent. She has always been a ‘good’ (being kind, friendly, flexible, law-abiding, cooperative) person and very accepting of others, but immigration helped her to fine-tune these values by exposing her to a variety of peoples in Canada. The most

significant losses for her and her children because of immigrating were the connections to family. She missed the closeness of relatives and thought her children missed these kinds of experiences. However, the losses were tempered by gains in knowledge about other people's cultures and values. Parvati incorporated the values and perspectives of other people into her own. Her children benefitted from immigration because they took advantage of opportunity and could pursue their own dreams.

5.3.10 Ranjan

Born in India, Ranjan came to Canada during the mid-1970s while in his mid-20s. He moved from England where had lived for a few years. Now in his mid-sixties, he has been in Canada for about 40 years. He has returned to India four times since immigrating to Canada. His reason for coming to Canada involved work opportunities. Ranjan has a Master's degree in engineering and was largely employed in management types of positions. He had an arranged marriage (in India) after visiting England; he and his wife have two children now in their mid-30s, and one grandchild. Ranjan and his wife lived in a few cities for about 13 years within Canada before settling in Toronto. He is currently retired.

Lived Experience of Acculturation. Ranjan's adjustment to Canada was not significantly challenging because he was exposed to Western culture in having attended an American university while in India, and having lived in England. Ranjan and his wife lived in Western Canada before moving to Toronto. He noted covert forms of racism. "There are a lot of sublime things going on, innuendos and things like that" (Ranjan, line 29). Ranjan's already established work opportunities helped him to adjust to Canada with relative ease because he did not have to learn a brand-new culture in terms of the work environment. He explained that

while in India, because of his exposure to Western culture, he was already letting go of many Indian and Hindu expectations. For example, with some humour, he said, “I ate pork and that didn’t help. Pork and beef. These things didn’t help” (Ranjan, line 43). However, they did make acculturation easier. He also had to learn to drink alcohol and change some of his dietary habits because people in England do not eat their food as spicy as in India. On the other hand, these experiences (while in India and England) helped Ranjan associate with others more easily and, therefore, his adjustment to Canada was much simpler.

Ranjan was never religious and not raised in a religious family. He did not have the same religious expectations and restrictions that other Bengalis might have had. He did have to get used to the violence that he witnessed in sports while in Canada. He also had to get used to a sense of superficiality in the workplace. For example, if somebody were to offer him a job in India, this could be taken for granted. In Canada, however, people’s promises could not be trusted. In terms of retaining any part of Bengali culture, Ranjan always enjoyed music and literature. A pertinent issue Ranjan discussed throughout the interview was his perception of Canada as a classless society. He talked about Canada being more receptive. “There is racism everywhere, even in India, more profound in India because of the caste system. But otherwise, Canada is a classless society” (Ranjan, line 96). In his experience, Ranjan claims that in Canada, the most significant place where he felt like an outsider was when his children played hockey and he was an active participant. “I felt like I was out of class. Being an immigrant, and being a coloured immigrant, I felt that I was always playing second fiddle. So I did not fit in...I accepted the fact that I wasn’t part of the mosaic in that respect” (Ranjan, line 99).

Felt Impact of Immigration on Parenting. In Ranjan's time, a common ideology was, 'spare the rod, spoil the child'. Ranjan would like to have parented in some of the same ways that he himself was parented in India, where children would be punished for doing things that were bad, but "in Canada, corporal punishment is unheard of. In fact it's frowned upon and it's a criminal offense...It was hard for me to let go and watch all the nonsense that was going on but I had to" (Ranjan, line 133). Ranjan's primary wish was to ensure that his children could fit into Canadian society. In much of what Ranjan said during the interview, he was supportive and entirely encouraging of whatever choices his children would make. In this regard, he had no qualms about his children marrying into any cultural background; he believed his job was to support their full integration into Canadian society and that, for him, meant a very assertive approach to respecting their choices. In addition, Ranjan supported every activity in which his children were engaged; not only did he encourage their participation, Ranjan himself also actively participated in the related adult and parental activities (i.e., coaching).

Similar to other participants, Ranjan recalled that most societies outside of Canada were regimented and people were far more cooperative. In Canada, people seemed to be separated from one another and there were many "non-sharing attitudes" (Ranjan, line 142). He struggled with watching his own children begin to fall into these kinds of attitudes. However, the desire to ensure that his children had every opportunity to fit into Canadian society meant that he had to forego some of these Indian values. The exposure to Canadian culture and the desire to provide his children opportunities necessitated Ranjan's identity as an overprotective father. Ranjan talked about the adage, that 'failure was not an option especially as an immigrant" (Ranjan, line 162). He experienced some levels of discrimination where his

educational qualifications were not readily accepted when he immigrated to Canada. He had to start all over again and fight for everything that he wanted in terms of success and achievement. In this regard, he took on the attitude that failure was simply not an option for him. This translated into his parenting practices, as he made sure that his children would not have to struggle as hard as he did. He wanted to insulate them from discrimination and, in order to do so, he wanted to help them become fully Canadian.

Ranjan was very clear that he imposed the value of respect in his children. He does not believe this is a strictly Bengali concept; his experiences related to being non-judgmental came from his own family of origin. As such, while his family was raised in a very cosmopolitan sense, he also experienced his family as somewhat judgmental, especially involving caste, and the constraints surrounding whom one could marry. As such, while his interactions with others cut across religious, class and gender lines, these lines were explicitly imposed when it came to marriage. Consequently, Ranjan became a very strong proponent of equality and respect for others. Further, a very important facet of Ranjan's parenting was the value of automatically respecting one's elders. This, he claimed to be an Indian concept that was not often evident in Canada. "You look after your own people, and multiply that several hundred million times, and that becomes a society...I grew up in that environment. I like to think that I look after my mother very, very well. And I don't expect anything in return from my children" (Ranjan, line 232). He believed in the value of giving and embodying the expectation of taking care of one another within the family. Note, however, that despite the fact that he valued the importance of respecting elders, he did not expect anything from his children. In his mind, he had released

them from these obligations because of the existence of the Canadian social system with its Social Security and universal healthcare systems, which are not present in India.

The most significant concern for Ranjan was that his children lost what he calls the sharing attitude. Ranjan came from a family and a culture where everybody in a family shared things with one another and where everybody reciprocated care and concern for one another. To be certain, there were divisions along caste lines. However, Ranjan observed that in castes, families did indeed share with one another. In Canada, the sharing attitude was missing. Ranjan did not have significant regret about not teaching his children this value; instead, he recognized this as a cultural difference between India and Canada. It was something that he had to let go of in order for him and his children to fit in.

Stated Coping, Strengths, and Resilience. A determined attitude was Ranjan's primary coping strategy and this was encapsulated in his earlier statement: "Failure is not an option" (Ranjan, line 334). He believed very strongly in the importance of self-reliance and self-sufficiency. He claimed his own values in being an ardent promoter of ownership, responsibility, and accountability to the self. He also claimed his health has been something upon which he relied. He was willing to take risks and not to follow the crowd. Religion has not been a primary source of strength for Ranjan. He also explained that while he maintains contact with Bengali friends, he has not at all relied on them for any support. Most importantly, Ranjan believed very strongly in the concept of choice.

Expressed Identity Reformulation. In terms of identity, Ranjan said, "I am more Canadian than I am Bengali and more an Indian than I am Bengali and that's fine for me"

(Ranjan line 294). For Ranjan, it seems that he saw his identity as perhaps larger than being Bengali. In being exposed to many Indian and other cultures, then living in England, and having moved within in Canada, the specific aspects of being Bengali became less salient for him. He seemed to identify more as an Indian and even more so, as a Canadian. Ranjan transcended the differences between the specifics of being Bengali to the generalities of being Indian, in order to adopt the identity (on his own terms) of being Canadian. As a father, his job was to provide for his children and he was very proud of that. He was also very proud to be a Canadian and he promoted Canada at every opportunity. Ranjan had a strongly held opinion that there is no cultural superiority and said, "I'll sock it to you if you tell me that Indian culture is better than Canadian culture. Because I don't believe in that" (Ranjan, line 302). He also expressed his belief in giving. Ranjan expressed appreciation for his upbringing, his opportunities, and his eventual successes. As such, he believed very strongly in providing this to his children and to others.

5.3.11 Kumar

Kumar came to Canada from India in the mid-1960s when he was in his late-20s. Previously, he had been in Europe for about three years. He is in his late-70s now and has been in Canada nearly 50 years. Kumar's primary reason for leaving was to seek work opportunities and further his education. Kumar graduated from college in Toronto with a diploma in engineering. He worked as an engineering manager and is currently retired. He has two children in their 40s and three grandchildren. He has lived in a various parts of Ontario, near Toronto and took his family to India for a few years when his children were younger. Kumar identifies as Hindu and he has returned to India for visits about 10 times.

Lived Experience of Acculturation. When asked about how he practiced Bengali culture while living in Canada, Kumar stated the need for flexibility. In other words, he practiced Bengali culture within the confines of a Bengali club, his home, his family and with friends. However, in the larger non-Bengali context, he adopted Canadian culture. Having worked for 45 years in Canada, Kumar had more opportunities to practice Canadian culture. He said that his community welcomed members of the Canadian culture to observe how Bengalis practiced their culture; “...But in a general sense, we are more working towards Canadian society. So we have adopted this country as our own” (Kumar, line 28). He made a decision that he was not going to return to India permanently, which meant that, “I said to myself and convince my family that this is my country, this is my place, this is my home” (Kumar, line 31). In contrast, the early Bengali immigrants, upon coming to Canada, decided to organize themselves so that they could practice their culture and celebrate their religious and social functions. In addition to practicing Bengali activities and culture, he also aimed to participate actively in Canadian sports and culture.

Kumar did not believe he was limited in the expression of his culture. Whereas in India, one could practice their culture because it was everywhere, in Canada, he contained his religious expression and cultural expression to certain areas (home, family, cultural centre, friends’ homes), but within these areas, he practiced fully. He only regretted one aspect of immigration. Kumar would have liked to retire in India but his economic circumstances prevented this from happening. In addressing this loss, he resolved to simply accept these circumstances because “this is my home, this is my place, I have to live my life here” (Kumar, line 64).

Kumar appreciated the multicultural aspects of living in Canada. The integration of various ethnicities, cultures, and religions was fruitful and communication was key in supporting one another, especially ethnic minority immigrants. Integration also required Kumar to compromise on certain values and rules. He related that Indian culture tended to be very strict and children were required to be respectful to family as well as to other people. Children were also expected to look after their parents when they entered older age. He says that these values had to be compromised. Furthermore, integration has meant that for Kumar, various aspects of Bengali culture such as art, music, literature, and drama became somewhat diminished, especially amongst the second-generation, Canadian born children of Bengali parents.

Felt Impact of Immigration on Parenting. Initially, Kumar's parenting style was similar to his parents' approach in India. However, he recognized that being in Canada required him to be a little bit more relaxed. Such changes in parenting style were difficult and caused him some consternation. "Sometimes I think we are confused because we don't know whether it's good or not" (Kumar, line 127). This comment speaks to the challenges associated with balancing the values from his home culture with those of the host country. He recognized that he could not push his children to adopt Bengali cultural ways. He acknowledged that if the children defied their culture or rejected it, this could be a sign of being more influenced by Canadian culture and that he and his wife could not push Bengali cultural expectations. He resorted to recognizing his role as a parent, which meant to push education and financial success. What has been important is the value of get-togethers. In this regard, while Kumar compromised on various aspects of teaching his children Bengali culture, he was pleased to have his children

participate in numerous family and community get-togethers that have perpetuated the maintenance of this culture.

In terms of teaching his children Bengali culture, Kumar and his wife exposed them to certain books and poetic works. He and his wife would try to find English translations for various Bengali books to encourage his children to further explore Bengali culture and heritage. However, as his children grew up, they became increasingly distant from the Bengali language, in particular. While they understand it, they are reluctant to speak it and cannot read it.

Further, he acknowledged that the third-generation (his grandchildren), were even more distant from their original Bengali roots. While he expressed feelings of loss and regret, Kumar said, “We try to answer questions when the kids and grandkids ask us questions. Whatever we know about our learning, we try to teach” (Kumar, line 169). Interestingly, Kumar explained that the knowledge of the first generation of immigrants was limited because they left India at a very early age. As such, in the effort to adjust and to fit into Canadian society, Kumar belonged to a generation of immigrant parents who did not have sufficient time to explore deeply their Indian heritage and roots. Consequently, cultural knowledge was largely transmitted through memories of India based on experiences of his parents and grandparents. For the children of immigrants in Canada, he believed the best venues for the observation of culture in the teaching of certain community values were through weddings and large get-togethers. If they were back home in India, there would be far more intimate involvement in such affairs; however, they tried to replicate this as much as possible in Canada.

Disciplining children in Canada was different than what Kumar witnessed and experienced in India. He recalled corporal punishment as a primary method for guidance and

discipline. Upon coming to Canada, he learned that corporal punishment was not permitted: “In Canada, they say that if you touch the kid, your kid will be gone” (Kumar, line 210). Kumar did not appreciate the extremes of violence in Indian culture; neither did he condone what he saw as the excessive permissiveness in the Canadian culture. Kumar also talked about the importance of extended family in India, but missing in Canada. Similar to other respondents, Kumar related that extended family would mitigate conflict, stress, and tension between any of its members.

Stated Coping, Strengths, and Resilience. In terms of strengths, Kumar acknowledges that he made many mistakes. However, because of these errors of judgment, he had to develop stress management skills, so that his family would not be impacted. As a result of the stress and anger he experienced surrounding adjustment and errors, Kumar relied upon a forward-thinking attitude and his ability to see various sides of the situation. He credited his wife for helping and supporting the family by getting a job later in her life, something that neither of them had anticipated. He relied on being a dependable and committed employee, which helped them to gain financial stability. Kumar also relied on his Hindu orientation in order to cope. Specifically, he used meditation, yoga, and contemplations in the presence of his religious deities. He recalled praying for strength to move forward. This helped him during his initial immigration and upon his return to Canada upon a four-year visit to India. However, as he became increasingly busy with his family, he had less time for religion. The influence of religion came in cycles, and Kumar anticipated that he would be returning to religion once he reached an older age. Kumar also drew strength and belonging from participation in the Bengali cultural community. He enjoyed going to the various Bengali cultural and religious

events as a way to connect with Bengali people; this further helped him retain his Bengali identity and therefore to deal with immigration.

Expressed Identity Reformulation. Immigration caused Kumar to be increasingly independent and he learned not to rely on others. This was due to the absence of close relatives and extended family. Immigration taught him how to look after situations and solve problems. Kumar learned to find a balance between forward thinking and living in the present. In other words, because of the constant worry about future economic stability when he was in India, he brought this worry with him. However, he appreciated what he thought to be the Canadian value of 'living in the present' and combined this with his 'worry for the future' thereby becoming less stressed. He turned his future worries into plans so that he could enjoy his family and friends. Kumar returned to India with his family for a few years but this proved a failure because he tried unsuccessfully to incorporate many Canadian values into his living in India. In the end, he returned to Canada.

Indeed, Kumar benefited from the knowledge and experience in both cultures, however. He learned that culture was larger than he was, and that he had to be the author of his own cultural expression, to borrowing from each one while creating his own. Kumar regretted that his children knew less about their roots and '*gotro*'²⁴, an important part of identity. He felt even more regret for his grandchildren and the potential fourth generation in terms of likely not knowing their Bengali roots at all. While his children gained independence, self-sufficiency, upward mobility and more global knowledge, they lost family connections because their

²⁴ The term *gotro* roughly means ancestry, or tribe, or family lineage.

extended family ties were absent in Canada. The additional support, perspective, and advice that he had growing up in India, were aspects of family living about which his children did not have the advantage of learning.

5.4 Summary

The data and stories presented above are about the parenting experiences of the research participants. These stories shape and reveal how the participants have made sense of their parenting within the context of immigration. They highlight various pertinent concerns and factors related to immigration adjustment, approaches to parenting, resolution of losses, solidification of identity, and articulation of coping strategies. The data indicated an ongoing striving toward finding a balance between retaining values from India or Bangladesh and incorporating dominant Canadian values.

The next chapter will explore themes that emerge from the data above. Gender socialization and expectations influenced how men and women acculturated differently. Gender also influenced the roles and functions that fathers and mothers played in Canada. The degree to which participants employed faith and religion were highlighted, as they adjusted to Canada, altered their parenting expectations, and coped with acculturative stress. Participants also negotiated and balanced between the values and practices of the old country with the realities of daily living in the new. They established cultural communities, met their children's needs in Canada, and found ways to fit in while retaining aspects of being Bengali. Participants demonstrated salient coping and resiliency traits and characteristics as they addressed their ongoing acculturation processes. The overarching sentiment of these immigrants revolved around thinking about the future for the sake of establishing a road to success for the children.

CHAPTER VI DATA ANALYSIS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter consolidates the themes from the data presented in the previous chapter:

1) gender based factors influencing acculturation, 2) the way parents negotiate expectations of themselves and their children across three ‘worlds’ – the past, the present, and the future; and 3) resiliency factors based on the ‘homes’ or spheres immigrant parents employ as they settle and acculturate. However, an unanticipated, yet clear theme of gender based power emerged which shapes this analysis. The chapter concludes with models to describe the processes immigrant parents engage in as they acculturate and parent their children. Table 6.1 below presents the overall themes and subthemes distilled from the data analysis, consistent with IPA.

Table 6.1 Summary of Themes and Subthemes

	Themes	Subthemes
6.1 Initial Entry and Adjustment	6.1.1 Who did what and where	6.1.1.1 The path to Canada 6.1.1.2 “Meetings” at the workplace 6.1.1.3 “Tea” at home
	6.1.2 “He takes care of this life, she takes care of the next”	6.1.2.1 Prioritizing work over faith 6.1.2.2 Faith holding things together
6.2 Negotiating Parenting ‘Worlds’	6.2.1 The world of the father (engagement)	6.2.2.1 Achievement based approach 6.2.2.2 Loss of control
	6.2.2 The world of the mother (concession)	6.2.3.1 Home based approach 6.2.3.2 Loss of relationship
6.3 The ‘Homes’ of Resilience for Immigrant Parents	6.3.1 The home of the self	6.3.1.1 Women’s patience 6.3.1.2 Men’s achievement
	6.3.2 The home of transitioning identities	6.3.2.1 Thinking forward while ‘discarding’ the backward 6.3.2.2 Seeing the future while ‘understanding’ the past

6.1 Initial Entry and Adjustment

While the goal of acculturation for all respondents was fitting into the new culture and making a better life for children, the gender differences existing prior to immigration carried over into the new country. While men and women maintained these roles to retain familiarity, men's power over women increased. Figure 6.1 depicts the process of initial entry to Canada and the adjustments immigrants faced.

6.1.1 Who did what and where?

Gender defined the focus of tasks and roles, which ultimately favoured men and gave them more power over women overall. Men's engagement in the workplace provided increased opportunities for socialization and a faster acculturation, while women's traditional gender role orientation in the home resulted in fewer opportunities for socialization thereby resulting in a slower acculturation.

6.1.1.1 *The path to Canada.*

Most participants came directly to Canada and moved within the country; however, a few travelled and worked in other countries before settling in Canada. Except for Khatun and Rubina, women came to Canada directly, either with their husbands, or alone, a few months after marriage. Men, therefore, had power over women because they came first, socialized faster, and had knowledge of Canadian societal dynamics. Most significantly, this preparation placed men in the position to 'teach' their wives about Canada, thereby contributing to men's dominance and women's subordination. "My father sent me to Canada first because he knew a friend and within four months my wife came" (Shankar - Shankar & Lekha, line 22).

Men's prerogatives for education, financial stability, and opportunity were the motives for the few who moved within Canada. Bashar moved from Montréal to Toronto for his education: "...it was much better for me because I was able to go to college to upgrade my education" (Bashar, line 24). Women explored opportunities for involvement in Bengali communities. For example, Lekha's move to a metropolitan area helped her associate with other Bengalis, and made acculturation easier. "We lived in a city far away from here and there were almost no Bengalis. We came to Toronto and for the first few weeks, we knew nobody but then we got very much involved in our community in Toronto" (Lekha - Shankar & Lekha, line 105). Similarly, Arpita's moves within Canada and lack of a Bengali community affected her adjustment:

There was nobody there from West Bengal or Bangladesh or Bihar, no Bengalis. So, we had to start over again ... Our kids had to adjust and this is where they had the biggest problems because there was no brown people, so no Indians. So, it was very difficult for them [our children] and difficult for us. This is what made things hard. There is much more of racism there [as opposed to a subsequent city we moved to] (Arpita, line 189).

Mothers sought community for their children for connection, which decreased their power because men's roles as providers were more valued as opposed to the home-based gender roles of women.

Kumar went to Germany before coming to Canada and Ranjan attended an American school in India, and then went to England before coming to Canada. For Kumar, moving to Canada was not as much of a shock because of its similarities to Europe. Ranjan's exposure to North Americanized life while in India prepared him for acculturation to England and Canada.

I went to an American university in India. I left home at the age of 16. So it didn't impact me as much. But anyways, the Canadian society was different from the American

Society in India. Coming here and landing in Vancouver was the same as England I guess. So it didn't impact me so much (Ranjan, line 16).

Moving to, and living in another country before Canada gave men an anticipatory understanding about adjustment challenges, and increased men's confidence and competence to settle more easily in Canada. Women who went to other countries before settling in Canada gained more confidence as they adjusted to each country, thereby acculturating faster. However, men still 'led' their families, which maintained their power in the marriage. The function of men 'teaching' their wives about Canada increased their dominance over them.

6.1.1.2 'Meetings' at the workplace.

Men's families socialized them for success. In fact, while men's families socialized them to think practically, women's families encouraged them to rely on their husbands. Men's families helped them in practical ways²⁵, encouraged them to leave home by using familial resources, and supported them to establish themselves in their new country: "We thought it would be good for me to be leaving the country so we found money ... and I immigrated to first Montréal and then Toronto" (Bashar, line 16). Men developed connections leading to opportunities, employment, and financial stability, and thereby, successful acculturation, whereas women largely came to Canada with their husbands, or shortly after marriage. This socialized dependency on men, therefore, carried through, and was enhanced by immigration.

The workplace was a clear outside task, providing men with opportunities to interact with a wide variety of people. As such, men talked about attending meetings where they began

²⁵ For example, men were provided money, plane or boat tickets to travel to Europe or North America. They were given peoples' names in the host countries to contact to secure housing and jobs.

to know people. Men's interactions in work-context meetings helped them learn English at many levels (colleague-to-colleague, worker to manager, and extra-organizational contacts), and experience a workplace culture outside the home: "Well, I was working so I got to practice the language at work and I became more comfortable faster" (Shankar – Shankar & Lekha, line 49). This increased 'comfort' therefore, helped men acculturate faster due to multiple opportunities for socialization. Such 'comfort' increased men's competence in navigating the world and strengthened gender role expectations for men as providers for the family. In other words, men gained credit for two components of initial socialization: increased acculturation outside the home, and being competent breadwinners in spite of acculturation challenges. This increased their power in the home.

Men's power in adjusting to Canada minimized their wives' contributions to overall family stability. Men acknowledged their wives' contributions to family stability, but were reluctant to see them as equal: "... of course, my wife helped *a bit*, she went to school ... she got a job..." (Kumar, line 379). The idea of women helping 'a bit' places emphasis on the importance of men getting paid work to keep the family stable, thereby perpetuating men's dominance over women. Ranjan conceded, "I brought the money home. But money doesn't prepare food in the house so my wife had to do a lot of the work ... so my wife had to manage much of the child rearing" (Ranjan, line 185). However, his statement perpetuates the idea that financial stability (men's role) is prioritized over family stability (women's roles) and therefore, increased men's power in the home. Women had fewer socialization opportunities outside the home, while socialization compounded men's power. As well, men's positioning was to 'teach'

their wives about Canada's customs, thereby perpetuating a dynamic of men's superiority and women's subordination.

6.1.1.2 "Tea" at home.

Bengali women were socialized to retain and depend on their traditional gender role of maintaining the home when they immigrated. Whereas men had contact with many people, outside the home, at various levels, women's interactions were limited to other women²⁶ as they entertained each other (serving tea), taught each other various home maintenance tasks, and took care of one another's children: "While my husband was working, I was at home, so I had to get used to how to turn on the stove and the oven and where to get the mail ... for the first few days, I did not leave the home" (Lekha – Shankar & Lekha, line 44). The home was a smaller, and less rich social sphere for socialization, compared to the workplace. Women's acculturation was therefore slower.

The role of mother further limited women's power. The assumption of traditional roles of performing household work and establishing a stable emotional, spiritual, and cultural space within which children could grow remained uncredited. However, men received double the credit for being both the breadwinners, and the celebrated father:

My husband can show up to all the different functions in Canada but he worked in the day so I would be teaching the kids how to behave in both Indian culture and Canadian culture. My husband can speak Bengali and he can read very well. But he does not pray and he is also very much a part of his work world before he retired. So, I have done most of the work for the parenting (Deepa, line, 182).

²⁶ Bengali women had contact with other women – Bengali, South Asian, and other ethnicities – due in part to the socialization of (Bengali) women to resist associations with men, and to sharing skills with other women to maintain households

While men's socialization in outside (paid) work was valued, women's traditional gender role was a normalized expectation, and therefore, remained invisible and silenced. This marginalization was heightened because men gained credit for achieving immigration goals, negating women's roles for family emotional stability. The imbalance increased men's power in the marriage and the family.

Some women worked outside the home, which helped facilitate their acculturation, albeit at a slower pace than that of men. While women's participation in the workforce increased their power, having to perform both at work and at home, ultimately hindered their power. Arpita succumbed to her husband's pressures to contribute to financial stability: "I think the pressure came out in different ways but the underlying meaning was that the more money we make, the better, because this will help us to build our future faster" (Arpita, line 39). She also gained a more rounded experience of Canadian culture. Chris attributed her assertiveness and confidence to: "... going out, working outside, years of experience, age, bringing up children in this country and evolving within ... probably if it was a few years back when I came in the beginning, I was not so comfortable" (Chris, line 67). These experiences helped Arpita and Chris close some of the power imbalance as they contributed to family finances and acculturated outside the home.

The dual role of worker and homemaker ultimately compromised women's power in the home. Men claimed the power associated with acculturation success, and women's contributions remained silent despite doing 'double duty': maintaining one role (home) and learning another (work). "The difficult part was you'd be coming home and everybody is sitting and relaxing whereas I am toiling in the kitchen ... Going to bed at 11 o'clock and going the

same circle over and over again” (Chris, line 263). The picture is of a woman, tired with career hopes and demands, returning home, to complete domestic duties without additional support (neither chores by the children, nor help from the husband). While for Arpita (above), work provided somewhat more power in the marriage, Chris’s husband adhered to traditional gender roles, which oppressed her.

Parvati referred to ‘sacrifice’. However, sacrifice for women provided tangible benefits for men in terms of compounding their power. Women’s sacrifice was three-fold. First, they had lesser voice in determining family finances. Second, their traditional gender role relegated them to household maintenance. Third, career development opportunities were limited. Such sacrifices disempowered women because men not only retained their power by being the breadwinner, but they enhanced this power through women’s sacrifices, “For women, it’s a different sacrifice. It’s like for staying at home and for financial control, in general. Sometimes it’s because of what works for the family, the woman sometimes has to let the man make their financial decisions...” (Parvati, line 65). Conversely, Arpita did not voice oppression or sacrifice in her overall experience, and she did not permit criticisms of traditional gender roles to diminish her sense of motherhood and womanhood. She compared herself to other women back home:

... I had to work, because I had to run the household, because I had to go do the shopping, multitasking ... But starting from there to where I am today and when I go back to where I see my sister-in-laws and how they are running their lives, and what they are producing, versus what I am producing today, every day, I feel very good about myself that I am here (Arpita, line 311).

Arpita thrived on her achievements of carrying out household responsibilities as well as working outside the home. This may be a function of more liberal marriages, less defined by traditional gender roles. However, Arpita's husband pressured her to find work upon immigration, which represented a sacrifice for her choices at the time. Overall, women gained power in one area of life and would lose power in other areas; men, however, never relinquished power in any area of life – men maintained and enhanced their power at the expense of women's shifting and unstable power.

6.1.2 "He takes care of this life; she takes care of the next."

The issue of power came through in the implementation of faith. The covert and overt permission for men to hold faith less strictly maintained their power in the family because upon immigration, men focused on providing financial stability, while women maintained the home. While Hindu parents were more flexible, and Muslim parents more strongly adhered to Islam, the women from both Hinduism and Islam maintained their family's well-being through faith. Again, faith as a homebound activity was generally relegated to women's roles.

6.1.2.1. *Prioritizing work over faith.*

Men's socialized emphasis on economic and financial roles permitted a decrease in attention to faith upon immigration, which in turn, furthered men's acculturation, and thereby reinforced men's power over women. Men used work as a way to be less tied to faith: "[Praying gave] me the strength to move forward. And that helped me in the beginning. And then gradually, I was so busy with my own family, that I had much less time to spare ... for religion. If I did this, then I would be compromising my family" (Kumar, line 394). The financial

care of Kumar's family took precedence over religion's role in his life. Even dietary choices were more flexible for men, which ultimately helped them adjust faster: "I was not a profound Hindu to start with. I ate pork and that didn't help [keep the faith] ... My family was pretty liberal at that point. So that helps [with acculturation to Canada]" (Ranjan, line 52).

Bashar's family orientation to Islam was measured: "I am not the typical Muslim. I was definitely raised in a very strict Muslim household but there was a lot of freedom ... My father was very much into making sure that I knew more about the world and not just Islam" (Bashar, line 99). He further said:

I still go to the mosque every week but I don't do everything that all Muslims are supposed to do. I don't believe the more hard kinds of attitudes that the orthodox Muslims have so I don't care for any of that. It is much more important to me to be charitable (Bashar, line 117).

Religious flexibility combined with gender expectations for men's work orientation helped men acculturate faster, thereby increasing their dominance over women.

6.1.2.2 Faith holding things together

Women also experienced a less strict adherence to religion; however, they did not have as much flexibility as men. Arpita explained her reluctance for religion, yet her tie to it:

I don't think that I would really need it [Hinduism]. This is because I don't know most of the meaning. Nobody knows most of the meaning. Most people don't really know what they are following. It's because they are told what to do.... "*Egulo Neyom*²⁷", "*Loke bole*²⁸". Who is the 'Lok'? I want to know. But nobody has the answer. So I don't believe in it. But I claim being Hindu because I know little bit of Hinduism because that's what I was told (Arpita, line 98).

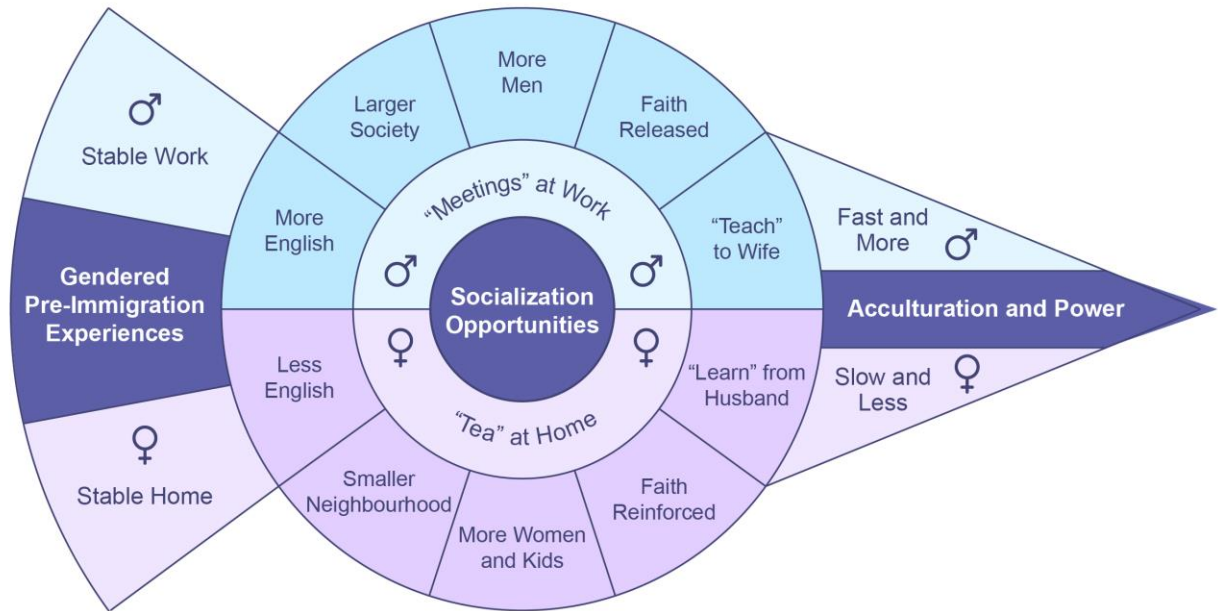
²⁷ "*Egulo Neom*" translates roughly to "These are the rules" or "these are the ways we follow"

²⁸ "*Loke Bole*" roughly translates to "People say...". In English, we use the term "They say", without identifying the authority of the 'they'.

Religion was a regular, home-based activity, relegated to, and imposed upon women, which impeded their acculturation opportunities compared to men, and therefore, decreased their power in the marriage and family. This enhanced power for men because men were relieved of this duty in favour of working outside the home. The home provided a function for private and greater compliance to faith based principles. Muslim participants (especially fathers) had discussions with their children about how behavioural expectations were faith based. However, Muslim mothers helped their children mediate faith's behavioural expression, which resulted in the women, again, using faith as a stabilizing factor in home relations. On the surface, men and women appeared equal. However, in practice, men gained power by imposing expectations and women resorted to finding ways to translate and carry them out. This was a covert form of men's power over women. Whereas for Hindus, men relinquished close ties to faith and left it to women, Muslim men used faith to maintain values and left it to women to implement. In either case, women's attention to faith, combined with household duties, and childcare, added to their remaining in the home, decreased their socialization opportunities, and slowed their acculturation. To borrow a line from the play, *Inherit the Wind*, "So, you [the man] take care of this life, while your wife takes care of the next one" (Lawrence & Lee, 1955, p. 45).

Figure 6.1 below shows how initial gendered expectations and a favoured path for men helped them toward opportunities for greater socialization compared to more restricted ones for women. This resulted in a faster pace of acculturation for men and contributed to men's power and dominance over women.

Figure 6.1 Gendered Socialization Opportunities



6.2 Negotiating Parenting ‘Worlds’

As respondents parented in Canada, the worldviews framing their parenting provided gender-based power discrepancies. Fathers’ parenting focused on active engagement in Canada, while mothers conceded to letting go of parts of Bengali culture in the realm of the home. Further, while fathers’ losses revolved around control, mothers expressed more loss in relationships with their children. These dynamics perpetuated men’s power over women because of the emphasis of outside engagement instead of home-based relationship functions.

6.2.1 The world of the father (Engagement)

When fathers parented, they focused their attention toward helping the children achieve success. They engaged with their children towards activities that would help them assimilate with the dominant culture. This perpetuated their power in the family because it reflected their own engagement outside of the home. Since outside engagement is valued in terms of successful acculturation, they continue to have dominance in the home. However, such engagement toward achievement resulted in greater feelings of loss of control of their children compared to mothers.

6.2.1.1 Achievement-based approach

Fathers engaged their children in embracing the general Canadian emphasis on independence instead of interdependence, in order to help their children fit in and be successful. “It was more important ... to make sure that my children could adjust to Canadian society ... we tried to get them involved in all sorts of Canadian activities, the things that we could afford ... a few sports and a few crafts and things like Scouts” (Bashar, line 163). Ranjan went further, “Not only did I allow my children to participate in these sports, but I also volunteered to be a part of their sports activities. This was important to me for the kids’ sake, more than anything else” (Ranjan, line 156).

Another important aspect of engagement in Canadian society was the shift in values upon immigration, most notably in the direct care of elder parents and relatives. While respondents felt this loss for themselves, they also felt this loss for their children who did not experience the embodiment of the values of sharing and reciprocity. However, Ranjan in

focusing on his children's successful acculturation, differentiated between the lessons of elder respect and filial obligation:

I respect my mother for all the trouble she has gone through. I don't expect anything from my kids. Whatever comes my way from them is a bonus. But respect for elders you have to understand this, there is no Social Security in India ... so you have to look after your own people so that's how you build your society ... I like to think that I look after my own mother very, very well. And I don't expect anything in return from my children ... people expect something in return or they do it because it was done to them, that doesn't hold very well. Things change, societies change, people change and there is always a dynamic in the family ... We have commitments to one another in a family ... So, respecting elders is a Bengali teaching that I have given to my children but I don't expect anything from my children. They are not obligated to me (Ranjan, line 302).

In essence, the focus on success meant that the focus on filial obligation was less highly held in value. This compounds men's power because in addition to men's pre-existing orientation to outside work, they also gain further power by imposing their emphasis on acculturation on their children.

6.2.2.2 Loss of control

Men talked about two aspects of the fear of losing control in their families. First, they discussed extended family and communal living experiences as children back home, with lessons related to coexisting among many family members, sharing of resources, and minimizing independence and privacy. Mutual caretaking expectations necessitated an attitude of sharing. "We take care of each other and we have to live in a family no matter how big or how small, so everything that is mine is yours too because you are my cousin or my uncle or my parent or my grandparent" (Shankar, Shankar & Lekha, line 118). The notion of sharing for men related to the sharing of resources, whereas women did not emphasize sharing resources.

Kumar offered an additional perspective:

The link is lost and gradually the roots are lost too. Because our roots come from something called '*gotro*'. We don't have this anymore. This is a very important thing and they have lost their ancestry and their roots (Kumar, line 346).

Kumar believed his children lost the meaning of family heritage and ties to family lineage and legacy. Cutting off extended family to establish individual identity resulted in a tremendous loss for family identity and legacy. Parents feared their own legacies, histories, and identities would be forgotten with the loss of extended family presence and involvement. The issue of family identity is largely patrilineal and male-dominated. As such, the loss of '*gotro*' represents the loss of generational male power in families.

The second theme was the loss of control in discipline. Participants also talked about refraining from corporal punishment, a normal, acceptable, and even encouraged practice when participants lived back home. Participants felt coerced to parent like 'Canadians' and therefore, abandoned physical discipline. This threat and the resulting fear did not inspire parents to adopt Canadian ways of parenting with enthusiasm. Instead, the fear represented one more way by which dominant society dismissed them:

In India, there are certain things you can do like slapping which we can't do here ... Even though I don't totally agree with the extreme of Indian violence when they discipline their kids there, what I mean to say is that I should not be put in jail if I slapped my child and Canada puts that fear into me (Shankar, Shankar & Lekha, line 222).

Ranjan expressed some struggle in having to adapt to Canadian ways:

'Spare the rod, spoil the child' was the motto in my days ... you were, at the end of the day, punished for doing anything bad. And in Canada, corporal punishment is unheard of. In fact, it's frowned upon and it's a criminal offense ... It was hard for me to let go and watch all the nonsense that was going on but I had to (Ranjan, line 161).

Men expressed frustration and opposition about disciplining their children in traditional, corporal ways. “In Canada, they say that if you touch, your kid will be gone. This is wrong. You can’t just be giving up. This is not the solution to take kids away if you discipline them” (Kumar, line 260). For men, this represented a significant loss of control in the family, resulting in less involvement in home matters, and even more domination and blame toward mothers for not being fully able to control the children.

6.2.2 The world of the mother (Concession)

As fathers engaged their children toward achievement outside the home, mothers focused on acculturation within the home and neighbourhood. Such home-based activities continued to relegate women to having less power in their families and in their marriages. Ultimately, since outside achievements (education and career) were valued, women resorted to better express the feelings around filial responsibility, family relationships, and mutual care. Yet, they felt less valued overall because such a focus was not as deeply valued.

6.2.2.1 Home based approach

In addition to their husbands’ faster acculturation (through outside work), mothers also faced their children’s accelerated acculturation due to school. This double disadvantage (husbands and children) due to their relegation to the home slowed their acculturation and gave them less power. They also felt pressured to concede. When Deepa’s children were young, “they were so small but they were also excited for these holidays and they wanted to be like the other kids. So, I felt like as if there was a lot of pressure to make sure that the kids would be able to fit in” (Deepa, line 106). Mothers accommodated for cultural losses by learning about Canadian holidays and major events. Deepa enjoyed assisting her children to

participate in the recreational aspects of the dominant culture. She wanted to be a parent who was as Canadian as others were:

I had to learn quickly and I had a lot of help from their neighbours and teachers and the kids also were able to tell me what they were doing so this was very helpful to me...it also became fun to have the kids in their Halloween costumes and outfits and to do Christmas things just like the other Canadians (Deepa, line 113).

Home also meant addressing relational aspects of their children's growth in regard to friendships and dating. Children had friends outside of the Bengali culture at school, but the parents set limits on the extent of these friendships. "I don't think I allowed my children to sleep over with people I didn't know. They slept over at people's houses with which only we as a family knew for a long time and maybe these families were from the same background" (Shakshi, line 92). Chris had to let go of her children's dating practices with reluctance: "I couldn't approve from the bottom of my heart ... however, I have to let it go ... I could not practice those things like some other families who have taken their children back home to India for an arranged marriage, I couldn't do that" (Chris, line 78). Parvati said:

Because it's as you live in a country for so long, you learn to accept things the way they are and you have to learn to adapt. For the children to live in this open Canadian society, you ... know that they might choose different lifestyle or different partners and you have to accept that. So, I expected this and I knew that so I had to learn to accept it ... When you are assimilating into another culture, you expect your children to adapt more to Canadian society and you also have to change as a parent (Parvati, line 102).

Mothers faced a dual pressure; on one hand, they felt pressure to comply with their husbands' desires to maintain control of the children. On the other hand, the pressure came from their children to fit in. While there was no tacit endorsement of friendship and dating outside the Bengali cultural norms, mothers understood that further control could lead to the child's

distancing from the parents. Such a dual pressure then placed women in an increasingly less powerful position to that of their husbands.

6.2.2.2 Loss of relationship

The dynamics of relationships shaped mothers' regrets. This gave women less power than men because of the inherent support of fathers' parenting oriented toward achievement. When asked what their children lost because of immigration, all respondents reflected Parvati's two themes: "extended family and cultural values" (Parvati, line 228). The loss of extended family was significant. "I think that my kids have missed out on having their grandparents and their aunts and uncles here. They missed out on family" (Shankar, Shankar & Lekha, line 194). Immigration to Canada cut off access to extended family in day-to-day living. "They lost their grandparents' love. But they have certainly missed their uncles' love and affection. They didn't have the chance to expose them to this on a more regular basis" (Rubina, line 224). Day-to-day interactions between family members and extended family members in Bangladesh and India went beyond conversations and exchanges. Such contact organized family life according to established traditions and values of reciprocity and mutual care, largely within the realm of mothers' lives, and therefore less valued than the realms of fathers:

They have lost what it means to have their heritage and their customs in the daily living of being a family and learning all of the rituals and the ways of being. They have lost the closeness of their uncles and aunts and just being loved by an entire household full of people or a neighbourhood full of people (Lekha, Shankar & Lekha, line 407).

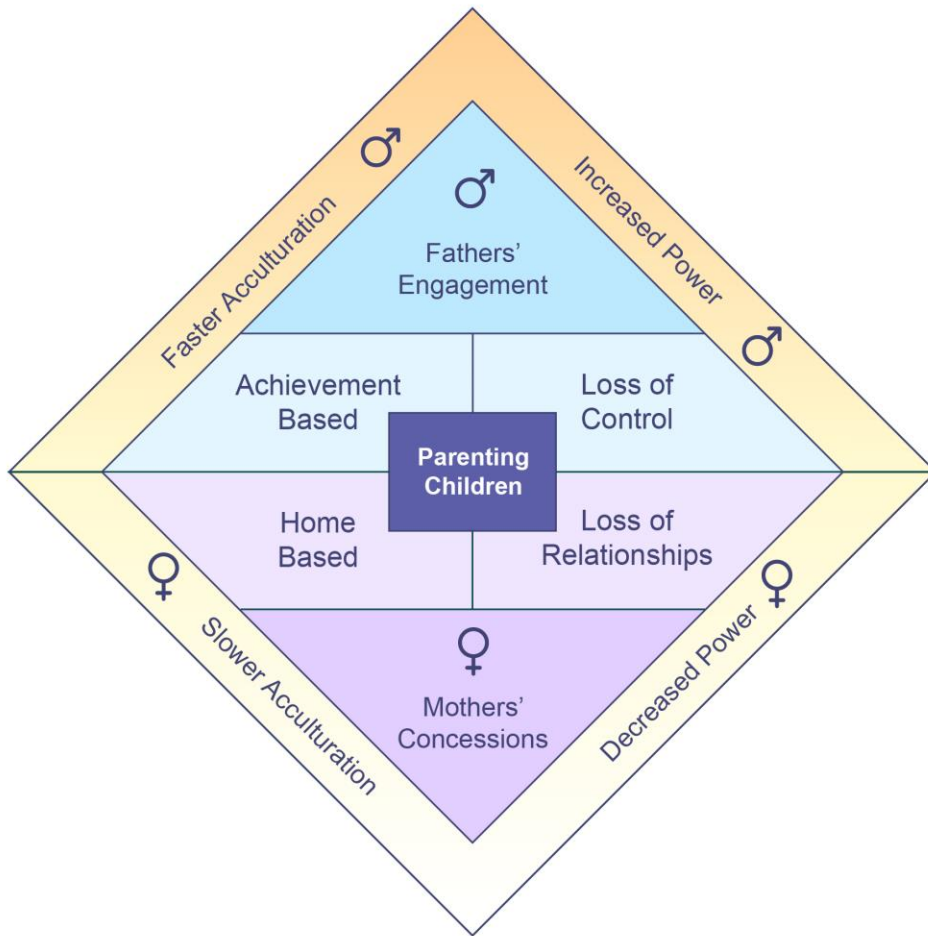
Even in the aspect of discipline, women differed from men. Whereas men talked about the loss of control from discipline, women talked about the loss of relationships that came from reduced discipline. Back home, discipline encompassed several functions (guidance, support,

instruction, limit setting, and punishment) through which children learned family responsibility and reciprocity. Extended family participation in enforcing discipline was important: “Back home ... everybody disciplines everybody else’s child. Everybody is responsible for everybody else’s children. So, taking care of children is not just the mother’s or the father’s job but it involves everybody...” (Lekha, Shankar & Lekha, line, 208). Discipline was a form of guidance - parents expected their relatives’ participation in the raising of their children:

We believe that a child has to learn...good behaviour, from good people surrounding him. If a relative like a cousin or a brother or a sister of mine saw that my child was doing something really awful, and they did not discipline them or tell them not to, then I would feel that they don’t have the best interest of my child (Parvati, line 169).

Women therefore, relegated to home-based functions of parenting, and oriented toward relational aspects of family, felt losses more sentimentally. Since issues of sentiment are less valued than issues of successful acculturation, women’s concerns were minimized. Instead, men’s focus toward their children’s achievement and the loss of disciplinary control served complex functions. First, men’s worlds with respect to engagement meant that their parenting was more valued because they were training their children toward success. Second, they could essentially concentrate on work, thereby further leaving women to mourn the relationship aspects of the family. Mothers’ worlds then consisted of concessions and compromises whereas father’s worlds focused on progress and success. This gave men more power over women. This dynamic is depicted in Figure 6.2 below:

Figure 6.2 Orientation to Parenting



6.3 The ‘homes’ of resilience for immigrant parents

As immigrant parents immersed themselves into Canadian culture, and engaged their children in adjusting to Canadian society, they had to deal with different rates of acculturation between men, women and children, varying power dynamics between mothers and fathers,

and differences in losses as described in the previous two sections. How they coped with these changes is also a function of gender differences. This section examines how immigrant parents used 'homes' as a basis to enhance their resilience and how gender differences in coping continued the dominance of men over women in resilience.

6.3.1 The home of the self

Respondents utilized inner attributes to cope with the challenges of immigration and acculturation, which comprise the home of the self. However, in terms of resilience, gender was again a factor in maintaining men's power over women.

6.3.1.1 Women's patience

Consistent with gender roles, women centred on personal attributes while men spoke to success-oriented attitudes. Women's strengths included minimizing conflict, working collaboratively, and more than anything, remaining patient. They wished to be more assertive with their husbands in stating their opinions on family life and parenting; however, they refrained from doing so and instead, reflected on ways to decrease marital and family conflict. While this is evidence of women's oppression, these strengths contributed to resilience by maintaining whole family unity and integration. Arpita raised the trait of patience:

Patience. This comes from inside. Patience is there because when you go through a tough time, you have to understand that if you take a step the way you want to take a step, what is going to happen? What is the result of that? If you see that if you take a step and that other people are going to get hurt, you cannot do that (Arpita, line 466).

Rubina also reflected this sentiment:

You need to think about things more. We have to ... think about what we are doing with our children, our husband. And what we do with our husband or partner, we can't do

the same thing with their children. So, we have to minimize our conflict and learn to do like ... 'makhan lagana' (using butter to smooth things over) (Rubina, line 259).

Parvati said, "I am a good person. I am accepting of others. I listen to others. I am open-minded, kind, considerate of others, reliable, loyal" (Parvati, line 208). Chris stated, "I have patience. I have determination. I can foresee things. I can cope up with stress. I have intelligence. I can think things through" (Chris, line 300). Women's primary characteristic of patience helped them avoid conflict and maintain overall family unity. However, women appeared to employ patience as a passive strategy to cope with change and adversity. They also used patience as a way to cope with husbands who focused on achievement. That they had to be patient, speaks to their lack of power in marriage and family, because patience required an attitude of letting go, and avoiding conflict, all of which contributed to making concessions, ultimately reducing their power.

Women's patience, however, helped them to be more resilient by more carefully engaging in Canadian society. Chris discussed different activities, "Well going out, working outside, years of experience, age, bringing up to children in this country and evolving within ... I became more certain, assertive" (Chris, line 64). Lekha talked about balance: "... I learned to be a strong woman. I am very well employed ... I am successful in my career. I have been an excellent mother and a very good wife" (Lekha, Shankar & Lekha, line 325). They expressed wisdom about patiently enduring present pain for a fulfilling future. These examples of resilience demonstrate flexibility, hardiness, a willingness to learn, and an understanding and ownership of one's own strengths and efficacy. However, these traits are more pensive and thoughtful, further reflecting women's decreased power to men's.

6.3.1.2 Men's achievement

Bengali men's resilience relied on success-oriented attitudes, reflecting accomplishment, achievement, and taking charge. Since the goal of acculturation was stability, men's traits were therefore more visible and lauded. They even spoke to these traits with more grandeur. For example, "Any environment, I can adjust" (Assad, Khatun & Assad, line 174). Assad drew upon confidence relating to experience and future possibilities by moving elsewhere. Kumar said, "... I learned how to survive by thinking, doing things right ... I have to get bold and move forward and I did it and this helped me to be successful ..." (Kumar, line 309, 374). Internalized pressure and determination was perpetuated among men, and they gained strength from problem solving:

Say after a problem - What will you do? You will give up? No. After that, it's about what is my next option. You will try to educate your children to continue to climb. That is the object. If I lost a job, I don't really think that I lost a job; instead, I think that I have gained. I have a different opportunity. (Assad, Khatun & Assad, line 229).

This attitude of not giving up, of continuing to persevere and reframing failure as opportunity, was a particular strength for many men and evidence of their resilience, which was more celebrated in family success, thereby giving more power to men. In practical terms, Ranjan emphasized taking charge, self-reliance, and responsibility for one's actions:

Failure is not an option. So, attitude is the number one thing. You could blame it on anybody and everybody in society and that goes all the way up to God but that doesn't help you. You have to carve out your own destiny. So, leaving anything to fate or chance is not good. The buck stops here with me (Ranjan, line 420).

6.3.2 The Home of Transitioning Identities

Maintaining identity contributed to resilience and wholeness for the parents in this study. However, a transitioning identity required an evolving transformation. While this process contributed to resilience by broadening parents' skills and strengths, gender played a role in how men and women applied these skills as they evolved and transitioned. In general, even though women's identities were further evolved, the fact that the outcome of acculturation was financial and academic success strengthened men's power over women.

6.3.2.1 *Thinking forward while 'discarding' the backward*

Men took an approach that made the task of acculturation very practical. This practical approach focused on using cognitive (thinking) abilities to move forward in adjusting to Canada. This cognitive approach also required a processing of discarding what was not useful from Bengali culture. This added to resilience for men, which in turn allowed them to acculturate faster than women. Ranjan said,

... you come here and you have to adopt Canadian ways. You have to adapt to these ways. You become a dinosaur if you don't. So fitting in is very, very important. It's more important than anything else I'd say ... sometimes fitting in, sometimes letting go of a few things. And it's about letting go of the bad things that you brought with you because it's for the better, isn't it? (Ranjan, line 460).

The image of the dinosaur elicits metaphors of hanging on to the past, unwilling to change and, becoming obsolete. Concerns about being 'left behind' motivated men to actively solve problems as they emerged, achieve financial stability, seek educational opportunities for children, and establish a sense of belonging. Such active engagement contributed to

acculturation, and enhanced resilience by tapping into strengths to cope with challenge. Men also took ownership of opportunity in Canada, another cognitive activity. Recognizing that such opportunity was limited back home required a decision to discard the negatives of staying in India or Bangladesh. Bashar explained,

Oh, I love the scenery here. I love that there is so much freedom here. I love that people get along nicely here. I like that there is so much variety of food and different people here. I like that the multicultural society makes us get along well. I like that there is more safety here ... everybody tries to learn from everybody else. I like that there is more opportunity here ... my kids can do whatever they want because back home, maybe they couldn't reach their dreams" (Bashar, line 342).

The issue of multiculturalism also provided men with another way to think of being Canadian as a new identity, which facilitated a faster acculturation than for women. Shankar referred to human rights:

... Canada has a multicultural policy and they say that if you fit this into this criteria and if you do your life in these ways, then you are a Canadian citizen so I and my wife have become Canadian citizens for many, many years and we should be able to practice the way we want to practice because Canada is supposed to accept so many people within limits of course (Shankar, Shankar & Lekha, line 253).

While multiculturalism permitted Shankar the choice of remaining in Canada, citizenship formally acknowledged him as a Canadian. His being in Canada for many years was evidence of longevity and legitimacy, thereby giving him the 'right' to be a Canadian. This sense of ownership and entitlement also demonstrated steadfastness, and contributed to resiliency and an identity transition from outsider to legally recognized, full-fledged Canadian. This sense of belonging enhanced men's evolving identity and therefore, gave more power to men than women. Ranjan was more vociferous about his Canadian identity:

Yes, I am more Canadian than I am Bengali, and more Indian than I am Bengali ... my father grew up in the railways so it was a very cosmopolitan society and that's where it

came from ... I left home at the age of 16 so that didn't make me more of a Bengali. And I grew up more so in the Indian culture as opposed to Bengali culture. So, I had way more exposure to other cultures within Indian society ... I am also very, very Canadian. I feel very proud to be Canadian. And I promote Canadianism any chance I get. I'll sock it to you if you tell me that Indian culture is better than Canadian culture. Because I don't believe in that (Ranjan, line 368).

Ranjan saw the benefits of identifying as Canadian, and did not reject his identity as a Bengali.

He established his home in Canada, took advantage of Canadian opportunities, claimed ownership of his identity as a Canadian, and emphasized his Canadian identity. Yet, he respected his Indian origins, thereby promoting identity development, and resilience.

6.3.2.2 Seeing the future while 'understanding' the past

Women's resilience came from a more balanced approach between reflecting on the past and transitioning into a Canadian identity. This approach, though less 'cognitive' than men's, seemed more nuanced and thoughtful about understanding the difficulty in letting go of the past. This comes from women's gendered roles of maintaining the sentimentality of family, the 'home' based functions of faith and family. Lekha replicated lost familial interactions and relationships by relying on Bengali friends to continue a sense of family:

But, this [loss] is made up a little bit by the community that we have built here. So what we have lost and family, we have tried to gain back in our close family friends here. So even though nobody here is related to anybody by blood, they still call them by uncle and aunt and grandfather and grandmother and things like that (Shankar, Shankar & Lekha, line 412).

Though they experienced feelings of regret or nostalgia for their country of origin, women reminded themselves of their obligations to their spouses and children to set roots in Canada:

“But I knew that I should be here because my kids were here, my husband was here. We have many, many friends here. So, I made Canada my home ... even though I may not look like the typical Canadian, in some ways I am more Canadian than the Canadians who are here” (Deepa, line 275). The obligation to men and children placed women in an inferior position to men because while men oriented themselves to acculturation outside the home, women were always compromising themselves to help their husbands achieve these goals.

Parvati spent most of her life in Canada and therefore, her shift in identity, the process of ‘becoming something more’, was a transition between coming from India to learning to feel comfortable living in Canada. The development of competence, self-efficacy, acceptance, and resilience built the home of a transitioning identity:

Especially because I have lived here for 45 years, this is my home. I have grown up here more than I have grown up in India. As an adult, most of my adult life was spent in Canada so I adapted to more of the Canadian ways and I adopted more of the Canadian outlook and the Canadian perspectives and the Canadian ways of living so the Canadian ways of living are developed more for me here than India (Parvati, line 114).

This came with challenges and sentimental regrets: “... Actually, I myself have put a lot of effort to feel at home here. In the beginning, maybe I thought I would want to go back because that was my home and I felt more at home there. Of course ... I felt that in the beginning” (Shakshi, line 176).

Similar to Parvati, Arpita grew up in Canada more than she did in India:

I left home at age 22 and I am here the last 40 years ... I am here more. And I had better be part of here otherwise I am nowhere. I don’t belong there because I don’t belong there. And if I don’t belong here, so where does that leave me? (Arpita, line 124).

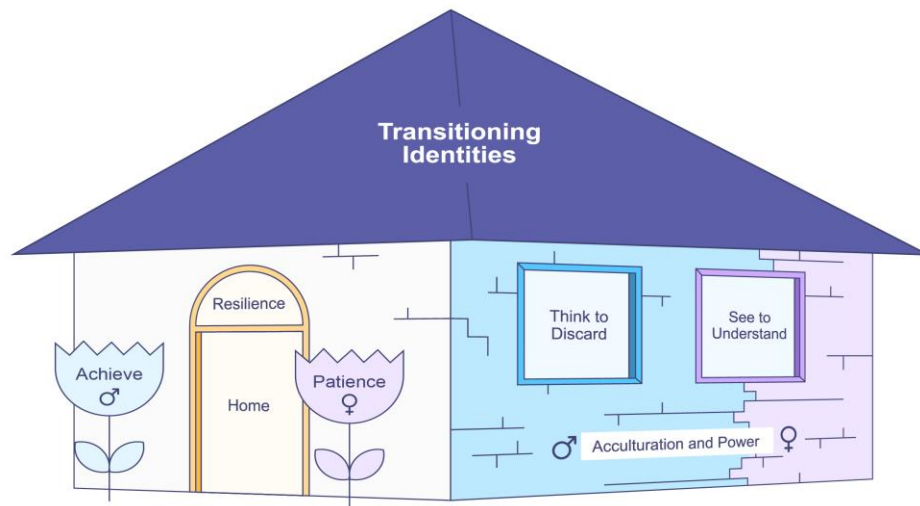
This speaks to identity transitions in terms of women situating themselves between two cultures. Whereas Shakshi saw similarities between India and Canada and was comfortable anywhere, Arpita felt she no longer belonged in her home country and so living in Canada and feeling at home were her choice. She vehemently wanted to belong somewhere and, in recognizing India was no longer her home, she chose to be in Canada and developed her identity in this context. Again, this kind of ownership and choice to belong in a particular place became part of one's self understandings, and therein, contributed to immigrant resilience. For women in particular, however, such choices reflected a more nuanced struggle of having to let go of one culture to belong to the other. Men, being socialized to acculturate, and having exposure to outside work retained their power because the choice to let go of Bengali culture had a more readily available 'guarantee' of sorts by fitting into Canada. Women had to put more effort into these identity transitions, thereby giving them less power. In other words, while both men and women directed effort to acculturate, women's efforts were more covert, therefore affording men more power.

Arpita was emphatic about integration and participation in Canadian society: "You better get used to it, and you better use it!" (Arpita, line 130). The meaning of Arpita's statement is two-fold. First, is the act of getting used to the new society, of acclimatizing to change, dealing with changes in family relations while working toward immigration goals. Getting used to something implies making necessary changes in oneself to maintain normalcy and effective coping. The second part of the statement, 'you better use it' is an appeal, almost a directive, compelling the immigrant to use environmental resources to fit in. Arpita's statement implies immigrants risk integration failure if they do not use the resources of the

new culture to fit in. Action contributes to resilience because it requires problem-solving, engagement, hardiness, and drawing upon supports. Immigrants therefore, acculturate faster when they strengthen their resilience, as they balance between maintaining some of the familiar culture while adopting parts of the new.

In this section, gender role orientation and adherence influenced how men and women coped with immigration and acculturation. Ultimately, men and women had the same acculturation goals: balancing between the familiar and new cultures, fitting in, and assisting children in academic and career success. However, men emphasized attitude, while women emphasized character traits as grounding factors for the family to acculturate. While women identified personal characteristics (inner traits influencing behaviour) when they talked about their resilience, men referred to their attitudes (cognitions shaping behaviour). In other words, women referred to reflective and inherent aspects of their personality and identity, and men referred to methods of interacting with the world. Women used character traits to remind themselves and their family to be 'good people', while men used success-oriented attitudes to remind themselves and their families to 'land on your feet'. Resilience was an outcome, but also a process that took time, understanding, choices, and larger, family oriented considerations. However, since male traits are more valued, their contributions to resilience gave them more power in the marriage and the family. This interaction is depicted in Figure 6.3 below:

Figure 6.3 Homes of Resilience



6.4 Unifying Theoretical Models

This section introduces two theoretical models to understand the themes above. The first demonstrates the most notable influence of gender-based factors on acculturation. The second consolidates the themes above into a unifying process illustrating the interaction between acculturation and resilience, and its contributions to parenting expectations and approaches for immigrants.

6.4.1 The Influence of Gender on Acculturation and Power

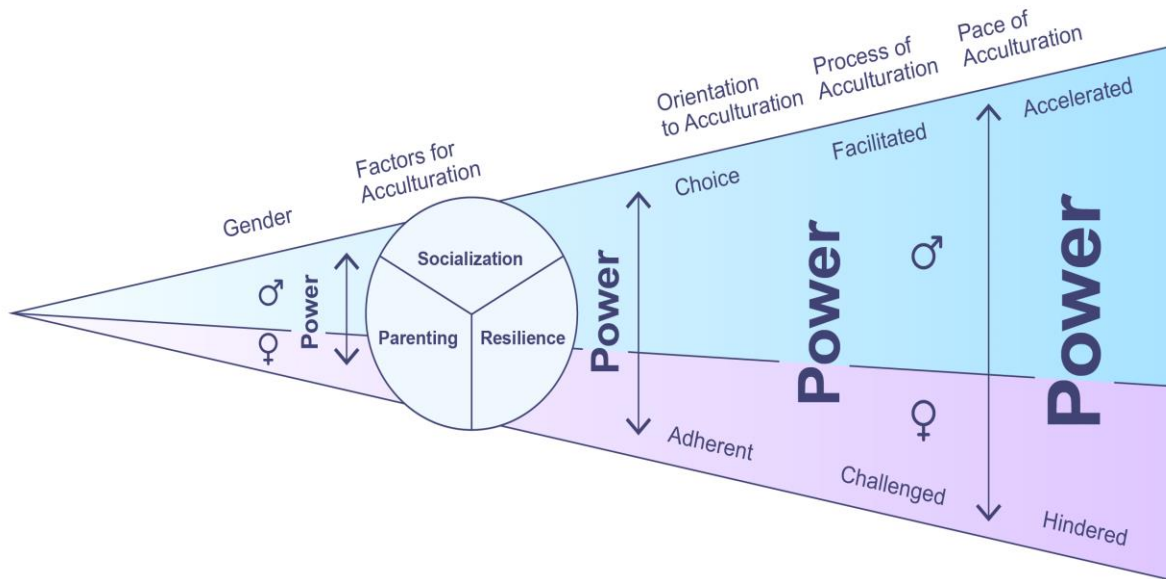
Socialization opportunities, parenting orientations, and resilience factors influenced acculturation. Figure 6.4.1 below depicts the gender-based interaction of these factors and ultimately, how men maintained power. Freedom and power shaped the orientation to acculturation. In general, women's restrictions led to an 'adherent' orientation to the

acculturation process where women obeyed, or remained more closely aligned to gender-based limits, which constrained their opportunities for growth and development. Men had a 'choice' orientation to acculturation due to work opportunities, more time to learn the language, and more forums to learn the nuances of Canadian culture.

Orientation to acculturation led to two processes of acculturation, divided across gender. For men, the 'choice' orientation led to a 'facilitated' process of acculturation whereby flexible and variable experiences led to less strictness or restriction. Women endured a 'challenged' process of immigration as the loss of social and community relations complicated their roles of wives and mothers (Periyannayagam, 2007). Men's simplified acculturation process resulted in amplified power over women.

Acculturation for men and women led to broadened family belief systems, organizational patterns, and communication processes (Walsh et al., 2006). The power differential (Bourhis et al., 1997) led to differences in the pace of acculturation. Men's increased power led to an 'accelerated' pace of acculturation whereas women's decreased power resulted in a 'hindered' pace of acculturation (Hwang, 2006). These facets of acculturation augmented and compounded men's inherent power. While women made gains overall, men's accomplishments overshadowed them and therefore, women's successes and processes were minimized and even silenced.

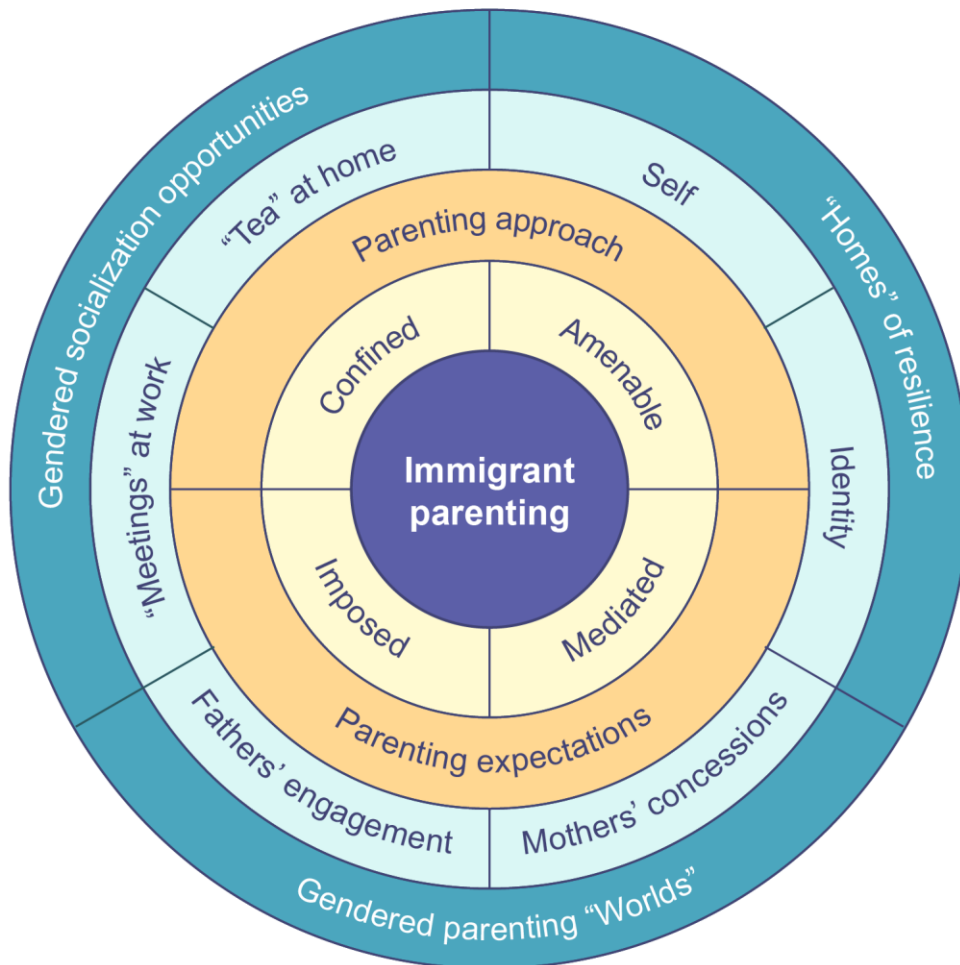
Figure 6.4.1 the Influence of Gender on Acculturation and Power



6.4.4 Overarching model

As a final overarching model for this research, the themes were reviewed and placed into context to examine how they interacted and influenced parenting among Bengali immigrants. After examining the data and the analysis, Figure 6.4.2 was created below. The interactions between the themes produce two parenting approaches and two parenting expectations for immigrant parents. The extent toward which parents use these approaches and expectations depends on how they contend with the overarching themes.

Figure 6.4.2 The Interaction of Expectations and Approaches for Immigrant Parents



The major contributing factors (gendered socialization opportunities, parenting worlds, and homes of resilience) were distilled to the gendered 'stages' of acculturation as described in Figure 6.1 above. The *orientation, process, and pace* of acculturation are gendered and give more power to men. This analysis produced a final framework examining the interactions of the three overarching themes (socialization, parenting, resilience) towards balance between two 'parenting approaches' and two 'parenting expectations'. As the 'gendered stages of

acculturation', the 'worlds of family', and the 'homes of resilience' interact, the family adjusts to living in Canadian society. If a) resilience is limited, b) family values are not balanced, and c) acculturation is at a slower pace, the approach to parenting is 'confined' and limited. This may result in a parenting style reflecting an abandoned-providential approach or a partitioned-austere approach (Dutta & Klein, 2016). If significant mental health issues or parental stresses are difficult to resolve, the parenting approach may be deprecated-detached (Dutta & Klein, 2016). Conversely, if a) resilience is strengthened, b) family values are balanced, and c) the acculturation pace is more comfortable or unimpeded, the immigrant has a more 'amenable' approach to parenting which means they are flexible, adaptive and responsive to change reflecting unified-restorative parenting (Dutta & Klein, 2016). The result of a confined approach to parenting is parenting expectations 'imposed' by parents on themselves and their children. Parents therefore, experience the compounding stresses of fitting in, lean too far into the past and may experience more family discord. Alternatively, if the parent has an amenable approach to parenting, they 'mediate' on their expectations of themselves and their children. This results in flexibility, adaptability, and a more negotiated family life.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter took the clustered data and organized the emergent themes. The nuances of acculturation, parenting, and identity transitions were uncovered as a means to provide greater insight and depth into the experiences of Bengali immigrant parents. The models developed above provided organized approaches to exploring the interaction between the themes from the study. The final model revealed the non-static processes of acculturation,

resilience, and identity formation. While there may be successful and unsuccessful outcomes to immigration, they are a function of the duration of living in a new country, adopting a Canadian identity, and the desire to recall the purposes of immigrating in the first place. In essence, these processes are in flux and interact with one another to inform how immigrants parent their children while they are far from home. Yet, they incorporate their 'far-away' cultural home with their 'here-today' home.

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSIONS

7.0 Introduction

While the choice to immigrate invites adventure and hope, acculturative stresses impose challenges and hardship (Berry et al., 2006), such as acculturative dissonance between parents and their children (Marin & Gamba, 2003). In 1963, when Canada formally permitted immigrants from South Asia, dominant society considered South Asians the ‘model minority’ because of their relatively high education levels, strong family stability, and attitudes promoting assimilation (Henry, 1983). However, this perception neglected to account for the underlying acculturative stresses South Asians endured as they acculturated, which posed a challenge to the model minority label. This research explored the meanings that Bengali immigrants made of how immigration changed their parenting. Facets of acculturation, coping resilience, and identity emerged as influences on how immigrants parented. Most notably, themes of gender, power, and dominance permeated the analysis. This chapter will respond to the initial research questions, discuss the study limitations, and offer implications for practice and research.

7.1 Responses to Research Questions

7.1.1 How have the expectations of Bengali parents shifted for their children from when they first arrived in Canada to now?

The change in expectations of parents for their children emerged from their orientations to parenting (Figure 6.2). Upon immigration, there were clear gender differences between fathers and mothers. While they both hoped for better opportunities for their children, the

change in expectations differed between men and women. Immigration accentuated the gender socialization already present back home. Fathers were *achievement based* and had an *engagement orientation* to parenting and therefore, overtly encouraged their children to succeed at school toward a lucrative career. Mothers had a *concession orientation*, were *home based*, and focused on retaining cultural elements around relationships to mitigate their children's cultural dissonance. However, since fathers were socialized (Figure 6.1) towards *work*, engaged in larger society, with more men, and practiced English more often, their *engagement orientation* in parenting was celebrated because their behaviours were consistent with the overt goals to immigration. In contrast, mothers were socialized to keep a stable *home*, which upon immigration, meant fewer opportunities to practice English, more contact with women and children, and in smaller neighbourhoods. The *concession* orientation to parenting translated to mothers' silenced experiences.

Participants experienced the shift in parenting in their expression of the Bengali value of reciprocity. Bengali parents experienced daily acts of reciprocity back home and 'sharing' was a constant way of being, perpetuated by extended kin. Upon immigration, they altered their expectations for their children because reciprocity was no longer a primary value. Bengali culture values interdependence and collectivism whereas Canadian culture emphasizes independence and individualism. Relating to the change in expectations for children (Figure 6.4.1), mothers were *adherent* to restrictive gender roles, and stricter religious practice, and therefore, the adjustment process was more *challenged*, and the pace of acculturation was *hindered*. Since men had more *choice*, leniency, and encouragement, the adjustment process was *facilitated*. Bengali culture is hierarchical yet collaborative whereas Canadian culture is

competitive and less tied to family hierarchy. Subsequently, Bengali immigrant parents minimized reciprocity and encouraged themselves and their children to compete and be independent. Fathers were more assertive in these areas because of their *work* orientation. They leaned toward a *facilitated adjustment process* whereby expected activities around reciprocity required negotiation. Mothers experienced challenges in maintaining family ties and therefore had to release such expectations of their children for their children to fit in.

7.1.2 To what did they attribute these differences?

Coming to a new country meant that Bengali parents adopted the dominant group's values and behaviours. While not resistant to taking on the new culture, they were reluctant in factors such as discipline, children's friendships, and dating practices. Participants attributed their parenting changes to the learning of a new culture, the need to fit in, and observing the cultural conflict their children experienced. Bengali mothers parented with *concessions* and fathers parents with *engagement* (Figure 6.2). These parenting orientations emerged from pre-existing socialization experiences back home (Figure 6.1). Mothers came from a generally more *adherent orientation* of stricter gender roles, higher religious expectations, and fewer opportunities to socialize. Men came from a more *choice* orientation to acculturation where they could use their gender socialization to their advantage in the home and at work. They could also release themselves from religious ties, and had greater opportunities to socialize. Mothers therefore, maintained ties to the home, while fathers expanded their horizons through work. When some mothers did indeed work, they faced a double oppression of a) the minimizing of their work compared to that of their husbands, and b) continued expectations to perform traditional home maintenance duties.

The *facilitated* process to adjustment also corresponded to parents (fathers) taking an *amenable approach* to parenting as opposed to a *confined approach* (see Figure 6.4.2). Participants recognized the differences between Canadian and Bengali culture. Participants saw a sort of dualism upon immigration. First, certain cultural values and practices from back home were less relevant in the new country. Second, there were advantages in taking on aspects of Canadian culture such as freedom of choice, and expansion of opportunity. The balance between letting go of the old and taking on the new for the sake of their children's fitting in, was the primary factor attributed to immigrants making shifts in parenting. Since men acculturated faster, and women acculturated slower, men's parenting was more amenable to acculturation, whereas women's parenting was confined, resulting in more power for men in their family and marriage.

Respondents also attributed their parenting shifts to their bearing witness to the cultural conflicts entangling their children. Parents demonstrated considerable empathy for their children when they witnessed the difficulties encountered in trying to fit in. The process of family acculturation required the parents to be flexible in terms of career choice, educational pursuits, dating practices, and the sharing of information. Whereas back home they had greater influence and even control over these matters, living in Canada forced them to see their children struggling with cultural values that had less relevance in the larger cultural context. Instead of applying *imposed parenting expectations*, participants applied *negotiated parenting expectations* (Figure 6.4.2). Parents made decisions in favour of their children's acculturation, but sometimes at the cost of letting go of long-standing values.

7.1.3 In what ways did immigrant Bengali parents resolve these differences?

Immigrant parents resolved their preconception of parenting (had they stayed back home) with the realities of parenting (when they immigrated) when negotiating their expectations in various worlds by exploring the past, present, and future of their lives (Figure 6.3). However, men's approaches gave them more power over women. Men more readily *discarded* Bengali culture they considered as hindrances to acculturation and fitting in. They saw the process of letting go of cultural lessons and values as an unfortunate, but necessary reality to ensuring family success and opportunities for their children. Women took a contemplative approach and brought in elements of the past as a way to make sense of the future. As such, they were more patient, and activated sentiment to maintain the continuity between old familiar culture and a future in Canada. This employed sentiment by exemplifying important cultural facets of respect, reciprocity, and deference. The challenge for women was that in maintaining these 'home and family' aspects of living, their acculturation was slower and men's orientation to acculturation was faster and therefore dominant.

A second process parents used in order to resolve parenting differences was engagement in Canadian culture and society. Many embraced multiculturalism and engaged in Canadian culture by stretching their comfort. In addition to learning about Canadian customs, language and nuances in verbal and nonverbal communication, men and women adopted different gender-specific engagement opportunities. Men adopted more of the outside Canadian recreational activities (sports, community events, and travel) while women adopted the home based activities such as cooking non-Indian food and helping the children celebrate traditional dominant events such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter. Again, since the

outside engagement related to men's *work* orientation to acculturation, this gave them more power over women. Certainly, the *engagement orientation* based men's resolutions while the *concession orientation* based women's (Figure 6.2), thereby promoting women's dependence on men. This process of learning promoted involvement and acculturation in Canadian society, albeit a faster process for men than for women. Immigrants resolved cultural parenting differences by actually expanding their own lives as individuals, as employees, as families, and as parents, thereby transitioning their identities. Again, this speaks to the importance of parents addressing the balance between the past, present and future (Figure 6.3).

7.1.4 In what ways was the relationship between Bengali parents and their children different from what the parent expected it would be if they were in India or Bangladesh?

Back home, the parent-child relationship was one based on inherent respect, deference, immediate obeying, and the eventual reciprocity of care. In exchange for parents providing guidance, wisdom, strict expectations, care, and love for their children during their childhood and adolescence, they received doting love, attention, and direct care from their children and grandchildren in their elder years. This cultural practice was reinforced and perpetuated through the presence and involvement of an extended family. The parent-child relationship in Bangladesh and India required parents to be constantly vigilant and children to be constantly compliant in order to maintain the wholeness of the family. Immigration altered the parent-child relationship but parents regulated the relationship by maintaining a sense of living in the 'present' while also negotiating the demands of many worlds (Figure 6.2)

The relationship between parents and children evolved because of the changes in equality between them. Children had an increase in power because of their faster acculturation

in school. Fathers had increased power because of their acculturation in the workplace. However, mothers' power fluctuated and likely decreased (relative to fathers' and children's) because their acculturation was limited to maintaining family life. This does not mean parents relinquished their control over their children. Equality in this sense meant parents considered their children as being capable of expressing what they thought were their rights, and children exercising more choice and responsibility in career and dating practices. An additional facet was the discontinued use of corporal punishment, as discipline, because of the fear of losing children to state authorities. This can be interpreted as a more equal parent-child relationship or at least a decrease in the authority of the Bengali parents over their children. Note however, that in this process, fathers' power and dominance in the marriage and in the family may have accelerated their children's acculturation and possibly increased the children's power over their mothers.

Another difference, closely related to this increased equality, involves the conversations between parents and children. Back home, parents would relate stories and lectures to their children. Immigration, however, required parents to listen more. Parents could no longer dictate terms without listening more fully to their children's experiences and perspectives. Such conversation requires a sort of give-and-take, and while parents certainly maintained their authority, this give-and-take altered the parent child relationship from authoritarian to one that was authoritative. Consequently, upon immigrating, the parent-child relationship included consultation with and acknowledgment of their children's different needs to fit into a new country as opposed to traditional authoritarian approaches by parents and expected deference by children. This led to *negotiated parenting expectations* instead of *imposed parenting*

expectations (Figure 6.4.2). However, managing home and family relegated mothers to more imposed parenting expectations as opposed to fathers who had the power to negotiate their parenting because they were the conduit to the world outside the home.

7.1.5 What kinds of strengths and inherent resilience factors did they draw on to deal with these differences in expectations from the old country to the new country?

This study explored resilience and how this affected immigrants' identity as they acculturated to Canadian life. Referring to Figure 6.3, the study examined how identity and resilience related to parenting. Interestingly, for the men, the most significant factor for resilience was their overt attitude toward success and stability. For women, more covert personal attributes and characteristics related to patience, nurturing, and balance were the most significant factors for resilience. Both mothers and fathers relied on these traditional gender-based attributes toward the mutual goal of successful acculturation for their children's success. However, women's lack of socialization opportunities and home orientation (Figure 6.1) resulted in less overall power for them in their marriages and families. To be resilient, it seems that mothers dug deeper into their patience and perseverance, which are reminiscent of silenced stories.

The participants drew upon values of sharing, familism, and acceptance as ways to be resilient. They also relied on close family friends and Bengali communities as forms for support, care, and mutual nurturing. Most interesting was the sense of ownership immigrants expressed in terms of their country of adoption. In essence, they readily took on Canada as their home country and made active choices to become Canadian on their own terms. This example of resiliency was significant because it not only played a role in the participants'

establishment of their own identity as Canadian, but also laid the groundwork to promote their children's independence and success in Canada.

Finally, it is important to highlight reminiscences of adversity. Participants recalled their experiences of racism and the significant losses they endured because of immigrating to Canada. These reminders assisted the participants to continue to persevere towards the goals of stability and acculturation in Canada. They transformed their identities from Indians or Bangladeshis, to foreigners, to immigrants, and finally to Canadians. The hardships and challenges they endured contributed to their resiliency by helping them to endure challenge while maintaining a vision for the future.

A key issue in response to this research question lies in the word 'inherent'. The word implies already existing, innate, or natural tendencies. While the research revealed that there were factors involving resilience and strength that were indeed inherent, it is most notable that other factors were emergent and linked. However, transformation identities transcended older identities. As such, resilience emerged and evolved out of choice, experience, and wisdom. These factors helped immigrants become increasingly stronger parents as they gained more confidence in parenting 'like Canadians' while maintaining what they believed to be important parts of being Bengali.

7.2 Limitations of the Study

The findings of this study have applications for Bengali speaking immigrants. While there may be some applicability to other South Asian groups, caution is advised. The population studied consisted of Bengali-speaking immigrants, some of whom were from India

(and Hindu) and others from Bangladesh (and Muslim). Therefore, while the terms in Chapter 6 have relatability to other immigrants from the Indian subcontinent or immigrants from other parts of the world, nuances of what the terms mean would for each immigrant group requires exploration. As well, the study focused on people who could afford to immigrate. Such class factors make the study endemic to a middle and upper class of immigrants. Participants in the study were generally well educated and had successful careers in Canada. This makes it harder to apply the findings to people with less education and less lucrative careers. Qualitative analysis requires the use of rich and thick explanations and descriptions; phenomenological analysis employs the science of essences of experiences. These methods facilitate an understanding of the concepts in this study (immigration, acculturation, parenting, coping, resilience and identity), which have application to other populations. Furthermore, the findings of the study invite others to compare and contrast other populations by providing themes, concepts, and models from which to explore theoretical commonality between immigrant populations without losing the nuances of Bengali specific experiences.

The second limitation, inherent in all research involving individuals is a bias toward sample homogeneity. This sample was obtained through word of mouth and the experiences of the participants, by-and-large, are positive (they acculturated and parented with success). Furthermore, all the participants came from middle-class families who had the means to support a move to Canada. As well, in this sample, parents experienced personal success and enjoyed the successes of their children (in school and in their careers). Parents who come from different education, career, and class background would add additional nuance to understanding acculturations. Similarly, voices of immigrants who have not experienced similar

parenting successes or who have had greater challenges in acculturation were not represented in the findings. Their experiences would be valuable in understanding additional dimensions of acculturation and resilience.

A third limitation inherent in this study is its basis in retrospective reflection. Participants in the sample are over 42, and all have children who are at least in their late teens. They have had years (sometimes decades) to adjust to Canadian life. Participants in the study can be said to have acculturated successfully. However, during the process of acculturation (for example, when their children were in their adolescence or even in primary and elementary school), the experiences of acculturation and the subsequent reflections may not have been so balanced and enthusiastic. Indeed, there may have been more revelations of active acculturative stress and therefore, the identification of resiliency factors could be difficult. Yet, it is from this retrospective-narrative perspective that the study extrapolates useful concepts and theory in order to assist new immigrants to maintain hope and to continue to acculturate with balance.

Another limitation to this study is the absence of perspective from the children of the immigrants themselves. While there is much discussed in this study about the influence of immigration and acculturation for Bengali immigrant parents, there would be significant value in exploring the parallel experiences of being parented from the voices of the children. Such an exploration would yield insights into the cultural dissonance, the acculturation processes, and the coping strategies of the children who live in the host country (Canada) while having influences and impositions from the home country (Indian or Bangladesh) via their parents.

7.3 Study Implications

As with any research endeavour, this study has relevant implications that apply to practice in social work and cognate fields. Recommendations for further research follow.

7.3.1 Recommendations for Social Work Practice

Counsellors, therapists, and social workers can benefit from additional perspectives relating to the issues surrounding immigration and acculturation. Specific to Bengali speaking immigrants, practitioners can increase their cultural respect and sensitivity as they determine the nuances and differences between Bangladeshi (Muslims) and Bengali Indian (Hindus). This increased cultural respect and clinical sensitivity can be extended to other immigrant and ethnic groups. Gender role expectations are important for practitioners to consider. The analysis demonstrated a rather gendered approach to acculturation and parenting. Women's experiences are silent and their strengths diminished in favour of men's 'achievement' based acculturation. Practitioners' focus on women's oppression and strength would facilitate an empowerment of the family overall by providing better balance between fathers' assertive *engagement* of their children and mothers' more nuanced 'stability' focus toward family. By extending the study findings to other immigrants, practitioners can assess whether immigrant families have an *adherent* or *choice* orientation to acculturation (Figure 6.4.1) leading to a *challenged* versus a *facilitated* adjustment process. A tendency toward a choice orientation/facilitated adjustment process can be encouraged, so immigrant parents can assist their children to fit into the host culture. Further, the IPE framework has strong applicability for social work practice.

Practitioners are recommended to raise and address the significant losses immigrant parents endure when they leave their home countries. Especially for immigrants from collectivistic societies, emphasizing familism and interdependence, practitioners can offer support as they grieve the loss of extended family for themselves as individuals. However, this loss extends to parents of children who will not experience (in the case of Bengali speaking immigrants) the loss of elders in the family, filial responsibility, adherence to authority, and concepts of sharing and reciprocity. Assisting parents to explore the cultural conflict their children experience will enable practitioners to support parenting changes immigrants make for successful acculturation and support for their children. Practitioners can also offer guidance to parents as they relive and attempt to impose and utilize lessons and values from the home culture in face of the dominant culture. The practitioner's careful attending to various worlds that the immigrant parent balances (Figure 6.2) will facilitate the balance required for the immigrant to both acculturate successfully and parent with equanimity.

Finally, practitioners can draw upon resilience factors inherent in the immigrant's repertoire of coping skills, both inherent and learned. Appreciating the various homes from which the immigrant parent operates (Figure 6.3) gives voice to the strengths immigrants have as they negotiate their acculturation while also supporting their children to fit in and succeed. Drawing upon elements of faith, spirituality, the Bengali community, and encouraging feelings of being at home in Canada will help the immigrant parent to help their children to also feel at home in one country while utilizing what they can from both cultures. Strengthening and solidifying the immigrant parents identity through supporting the processes of acculturation will facilitate a more unified identity, thereby promoting an amenable and negotiated parenting

approach instead of a confined and imposed one (Figure 6.4). An additional use of this study is to assist children understand their immigrant parents and their attitudes.

7.3.2 Recommendations for Research

With regard to further research endeavours, there is value in exploring further the concepts introduced in Chapter 6. Concepts such as *adherent orientation*, *choice orientation*, *challenged adjustment process*, *facilitated adjustment process*, *confined approach*, *amenable approach*, *imposed parenting expectations*, and *negotiated parenting expectations* require operationalization and testing. Researchers can use quantitative approaches to measure the various concepts and models raised in the analysis. Qualitative approaches would provide additional meanings to these concepts. The terms and concepts in Figure 6.2 can be expanded from their models/frameworks as presented here to more precise theory-building for testing through scale construction.

The inherent and learned processes of resilience also require further exploration. While this study was retrospective, a more focused study directed at new immigrants would be beneficial. Such a study can examine the interaction between resilience and parenting as acculturative stresses present themselves and unfold.

Another area for further research emerges from the exploration of gender. While the research project did not seek gender differences in the literature review or in research questions, the analysis clearly revealed a gendered experience of immigration, acculturation, and therefore, parenting. As such, further research can more specifically focus on how men and women are socialized in India and Bangladesh, and how this socialization influences immigration and parenting. Further study would explore how gender socialization influences

men's and women's experiences of marriage, family, racism, workplace identity, and resilience. An area of interest would specifically focus on Bengali mothers' gendered experiences of acculturation and parenting, from a feminist lens.

Finally, further research on applying the concepts in this study to non-Bengali immigrant families would test the salience and applicability of the various models suggested in this research. Various immigrant groups likely have variations of the themes and cultural nuances of the issues presented in this study. These can be uncovered and employed in making meaning of the immigrant parenting experience. For example, future research can be directed at developing surveys and scales measuring acculturation along the continua cited above, for example, *adherent-choice* orientation; *challenged-facilitated* adjustment; *confined-amenable* parenting; and *imposed-negotiate'* parenting. Such scales can be used to examine differences between various immigrant and ethnic groups. Another interesting (quantitative) study could be the exploration of differences in such continua within the Bengali-speaking immigrant population i.e., differences between those who immigrated in the 1960s-70s and those who came in the 2000s. A third study (qualitative) could be an examination of how gender, culture, and ethnicity shape resiliency for various immigrant groups.

7.4 Final Considerations

Parenting is a lifelong, challenging task that encompasses obligation, service, and above all love. Parents have every wish to ensure their children are successful, happy, independent, and productive. Parental investment often necessitates untold heartache and tremendous sacrifice. Such investment is more challenging when parents leave their country of origin and

all that is familiar, to land in a new country with strange customs and discriminatory attitudes. Hope and the promise of opportunities balance the discomfort of newness. This requires lifelong and everlasting courage by the immigrant.

The loss of familiar cultural values and practices are amplified by the loss of pervasive and ever-present extended family who enact these practices in daily life. However, upon immigration, parents live dual lives – one rooted in the familiar past, and one learning the nuances of the present. Through the interaction of the familiar and the new, immigrant parents draw upon and develop resilience in the face of acculturative stresses associated with adjustment and acculturation. Parenting then takes more thought as parents struggle with the balance between imposing the old and embracing the new at the risk of losing the familiar.

When immigrant parents consider their successes, they recognize that their own identities have been transformed from what they once were to who they are becoming. Not only have they become successful parents, but they too are transformed by the act of parenting, and growing themselves. Shakshi states this well:

Gradually as the years progressed, as we progressed, as our thoughts progressed ... Well, it's the same rain. Whether I'm in India or Canada, it's the same rain. This has become a home ... if I am living here, I might as well be here. The 'being here' took root very gradually (Shakshi, line 19).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Research Information Form

June 2012.

Title: 'Baba-Maaer Manush Korar Daitya' (Our Parental Duty of Raising Children): An Ethnographic-Phenomenological Approach to Understanding the Parenting Experiences of Bengali Speaking Immigrants. (*title of project changed in 2016*)

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You are invited to take part in a research project entitled '***Baba-Maaer Manush Korar Daitya' (Our Parental Duty of Raising Children): An Ethnographic-Phenomenological Approach to Understanding the Parenting Experiences of Bengali Speaking Immigrants.*** This form is part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask me. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any other information given to you.

It is entirely up to you to decide whether to take part in this research. If you choose not to take part in the research or if you decide to withdraw from the research once it has started, there will be no negative consequences for you, now or in the future.

Introduction & Purpose of the Study:

Namashkar. My name is Debashis Dutta and I am a social worker, college teacher and university lecturer. I have worked in the social work field for over 20 years and have taught for just over 10 years. I am now pursuing Ph.D. studies and I require your help.

Since the early 1960s, more and more Bengali-speaking immigrants have come to settle in Canada. As someone who was born in Canada to Bengali immigrant parents, I am curious as to the changes that immigrants have had to adjust to as they parent their children. I am curious about what you think about some of the changes you have experienced and how the adjustment to Canada has influenced your parenting over the years. Canada is becoming increasingly multicultural and with this comes the challenge of how to help new immigrants. I believe that there is wisdom in the Bengali culture that needs to be explored. As a social

worker, I'd like to be able to use your knowledge to help other immigrants, Bengali and otherwise.

What you will do in this study:

First, I will ask you to be interviewed by me. If you are comfortable, I will ask your permission to tape record the interview. If you are not comfortable with being recorded, then I will take notes as we talk. We can also conduct the interview over the phone or by Skype. I am also inviting you to participate via email. The interview questions are intended to gather your knowledge, wisdom, strengths and challenges as you have dealt with immigration, adjusting to Canada and how this has changed your parenting.

Second, after the interview, I will transcribe our discussion and then I will give you a copy of what you have said. You can then contact me if there are corrections, additions or other changes you wish to make.

Third, after I have interviewed several individuals (mothers and fathers separately), I will analyze and organize the information into some major categories and themes. I will provide you with a copy of my analysis for your input and advice.

At any time during the individual interviews, you are free to not participate with no consequence to you. If you choose to not participate after the study has begun, I will remove and destroy all your information.

Length of time:

The first individual interviews will take between one and two hours. If there is a need for a second interview, it would probably take about 45 minutes. My hope is that I would be able to work with you over the Summer and Fall of 2012.

Possible Benefits:

For you in particular, talking about your knowledge as an immigrant and as a parent is a good way to acknowledge your strengths and challenges as well your accomplishments. You will help the Bengali-speaking community by bringing to light many of experiences you share. You have an opportunity to provide new immigrants a way to realize that the adjustment to Canadian culture, though difficult, is also fruitful. For the social work community, your participation will help us to know more about how to support Bengali people as they deal with immigration and parenting when they come to Canada.

Possible risks:

Talking about strengths and challenges may bring up difficult memories of your experience in Canada and/or parenting your children. My intention is to acknowledge your challenges but to

focus on your strengths. Regardless, I will provide you with a list of counselling agencies if you believe you need such support.

Confidentiality:

To keep your identity confidential, I will separate your Consent Form from all other information about you. I will keep your information in a locked filing cabinet in my home. If you permit me to record you on an MP3 player, I will transcribe our conversation and save the recording onto two USB memory sticks and keep the sticks and the transcriptions in the locked filing cabinet. The only other person who will have access to your information is my research supervisor, Dr. Ross Klein, and only if he needs to. This is to ensure that I act ethically and that the data is analyzed with integrity. I am required to retain the information in the locked filing cabinet for five years.

Anonymity:

Your Consent Form will be separated from any notes that are taken by me about you. On the top of any such notes, instead of your name, you and I can decide on an alternate name that does not identify you. Where I collect demographic information about you, again, this is to be separated from your consent form and only the alternate name you choose will be placed on it. After I transcribe your interview, your alternate name will be used. Basically, there is no way to link your name to your information. As well, your name will never appear in any report anywhere.

Recording of Data:

As stated above, if you permit me to tape record you, this will be done on an MP3 player after which the file will be saved onto two USB memory sticks. The original file on the MP3 player will be erased. The memory sticks will be placed in a locked filing cabinet in my home. I will only review the tapes to transcribe the interview and to listen for themes. You may have a CD copy of your interview if you wish and you can also have a copy of the transcribed notes.

Reporting of Results:

Your demographic information will remove your identifying information and will only be reported in group aggregate form (in tables and summaries of all other data). Any information from the interviews will similarly be reported in thematic forms and summaries. Some of the words you use however may be quite beneficial in the writing of my report and instead of quoting your real name, I would quote you using an alternate name that you choose. I intend to use the data from the participants in the study to complete my dissertation for the Ph.D. degree. Following the dissertation, I would want to also publish a few articles in journals related to immigration studies, cultural competency and social work.

Storage of Data:

As stated before, your Consent form will be separated from your interview (recorded file and/or transcriptions). These would be kept in locked filing cabinet in my home for five years.

Sentiment of Thanks:

For your participation in this study, I will offer you a \$10 gift certificate for either a gas card or a Tim Horton's gift certificate. This is to convey a minor token of thanks for your assistance to me in my research and education.

Questions:

You are welcome to ask questions at any time during your participation in this research. If you would like more information about this study, please contact:

Debashis Dutta, M.S.W., R.S.W. (Ph.D. Candidate)
Phone # (519) xxx-xxxx
Email: ddutta@live.ca or ddutta@conestogac.on.ca

If you would like to speak with my supervisor, please contact:

Dr. Ross Klein, Professor of Social Work, Memorial University
Phone # (709) 864-8147
Email: rklein@mun.ca

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research (such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant), you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at icehr@mun.ca or by telephone at (709) 864-2861.



APPENDIX B: RESEARCH CONSENT FORM

I, the undersigned, understand that

- I am voluntarily choosing to participate in this research and can choose not to participate at any time with no consequence to me whatsoever.
- I have read the Research Information Form and I understand its content, intent and purpose.
- My information will be kept confidential and my participation will be anonymous.
- My information will be reported in group aggregate form and my name will not appear in any research reports, anywhere. My statements may be used, but will not be linked to my name.
- I was given the opportunity to ask questions and I am satisfied with the responses. I am keeping the Research Information Form and a copy of this Consent Form and can contact the researcher or the supervisor for further questions.
- The audio recording and/or any notes about me will be kept in a locked filing cabinet and will be retained for five years.
- I may be contacted by the researcher for clarification and I will receive a copy of my transcript and/or recording if I so desire and I can contact the researcher for changes and clarification
- If I wish to have copies of summaries of the research, I can do so by leaving my contact information on the Contact Information Form
- The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If I have ethical concerns about the research (such as the way I have been treated or my rights as a participant), I may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at icehr@mun.ca or by telephone at (709) 864-2861.

Participant's name: _____ Signature: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone # _____

Researcher's Signature:

I have explained this study to the best of my ability. I invited questions and gave answers. I believe that the participant fully understands what is involved in being in the study, any potential risks of the study and that he or she has freely chosen to be in the study.

Signature of Researcher: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX C: Guiding Questions for Individual Interviews

These questions will form the basis for an informal discussion. While information is gathered, not all questions will be asked.

Demographic section

1. How old were you when you immigrated to Canada? How many years have you been here? Which cities did you live in and why? What year did you immigrate to Canada?
2. What country or countries did you immigrant from? Explain how you came to Canada. What were your reasons for coming to Canada?
3. What is your current marital status? Was your marriage arranged or not?
4. What is the highest level of education you obtained (Choose only one)?
5. What is your current work status? What was or is currently is your occupation?
6. How many times have you been 'back home' since you immigrated to Canada? _____
7. What is your religion? How would you describe your how much you practice and in what ways?
8. Tell me about your children. How many do you have? What are their ages? Were they born here? F not, how old were they when they immigrated here? How often have they been 'back home'? What level of education do they have? Do they currently work? What is their profession or what do you their interest is in? Do you have grandchildren? Tell me about them.

Questions Relating to the IPE Framework

Tell me about the ways in which Canadian culture and Canadian society have impacted how you practice Bengali culture.

1. How has Canada allowed you to express Bengali culture and how has it not?
2. In what ways has your Bengali culture has been merged with Canada's culture?
3. In what ways has Canada made you feel like your culture is less important or more important?
4. How different do you believe this is (as a Bengali) from other ethnicities?

What parts of Bengali and Canadian culture have you kept and let go of?

5. What made you make these changes of 'keeping' and 'letting go'?
6. How have you felt because of this?
7. What parts of being Bengali do you enjoy and not enjoy?
8. What parts of living in Canada do you enjoy and not enjoy?

Talk about your overall parenting style and how it has changed as a result of immigration.

9. How important has it been for you to make sure your children follow our Bengali cultural rules?
10. In what ways have you been available to my children for whatever they need? How much of this comes from being Bengali and how much comes from living in Canada?
11. Do you believe that you are a balanced parent, fair, available and caring? In what ways do you show this and how much of it comes from being Bengali? How much of comes from living in Canada?
12. What are the differences between how you were parented and how you parent? How much of this is the result of immigration? How is this different from other ethnicities?

As a parent, how do you feel about your parenting practices due to immigration?

13. In what ways have you been strict, lenient, structured?
14. How have you disciplined your children and how different or similar is it to Canada's approaches?
15. What are the main Bengali values you have taught your children?
16. What parts of Canadian culture have you taught your children?
17. How do you compare yourself to immigrants of other ethnicities?

Talk about your identity (the person you have become) due to immigration

18. In what ways have been successful and not successful in balancing your own Bengali identity with that of Canadian identity.
19. When you compare yourself to other immigrants, what makes you different or the same?
20. How would you describe your identity? What have you gained and what have you lost?

Tell me about your children's identity as a result of how you have parented in Canada.

21. In what ways have your children balanced both their Bengali heritage as well as being Canadian.
22. What do you believe your children and have gained and lost as a result of living in Canada and yet being Bengali? And how do you feel about this?

Questions Relating to Resiliency

1. How have you dealt with stress in your life? What are the qualities you possess?
2. What helped you to adapt to Canadian society? What is it about your personality that helped you adapt?
3. In regard to immigration, who have you relied on to cope (family, friends, community)?
4. How has your sense of being Bengali helped you as a parent?
5. Have you relied on religion to help your adjustment to Canada and parenting in Canada?
6. How is this different from other South Asians, Indians and other immigrants?
7. What do you see in your future as a parent, grandparent, immigrant?
8. What goals have you achieved in your life and how has this shaped you?
9. What are the ways that you have been able to bounce back from challenge, adversity and difficulty?

APPENDIX D: Research Recruitment Poster

School of Social Work

Attention all Bengali-Speaking Immigrant Parents:

Please help me in contributing to an important research project for my Ph.D. studies in social work at Memorial University in St. John's NL.

“What is the research about?” I would like to explore some of the strengths and struggles that you have faced as you have raised your children in Canada. Other groups have had some research done about them, but there is very little about our group of people. I'd like you to help me fill that gap in knowledge. We are growing in numbers and we have some wisdom around parenting that needs to be further exposed.

“What do you need?” I would like to spend some time interviewing you to document your experiences and your opinions as it relates to parenting and immigration. I would spend about one to two hours with you asking questions and having a discussion about your experiences in parenting in Canada.

“How is this helpful?” Social work has done a lot to address some of the needs of immigrants, but I think we have not done enough to really explore some of the experiences around parenting. Your input will help me to provide some specific ideas that social workers and others need as they help new immigrants. You can help by giving me ideas about this. We would eventually formulate a set of recommendations and insights for psychologists, social workers and other professionals that would help them to know more about immigrants and parenting. As well, this would help them understand some of the unique issues around Bengalis.

“What about my privacy?” Your name will not appear anywhere at any time, but your comments could be used to help bring to light the experiences that many Bengali parents endure. I would keep your interviews and consent form in a locked filing cabinet for five years. You are guaranteed full privacy in individual interviews.

Who are you? My name is Debashis Dutta and I am a social worker, college teacher and university lecturer. I have worked in the social work field for over 20 years and have taught for just over 10 years. I am now pursuing Ph.D. studies and I require your help.

“I would like to help, where do I start?” Wonderful! Please email me at ddutta@live.ca if you would like to be involved in this very important project. I can also be reached at (519) xxx-xxxx. I will provide you with all the details for your participation.

Thank you so much

Debashis Dutta, B.A., B.S.W., M.S.W. R.S.W. (Ph.D. student)

(519) xxx-xxxx. ddutta@live.ca

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research (such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant), you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at icehr@mun.ca or by telephone at (709) 737-2861.