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The Dialectics of the Diasporic Self: Parent-Child Relational Dynamic Among South Asian Immigrants in the City of Waterloo in Canada

ABSTRACT

"To preserve dress…culture, that isn't possible for kids…staying in this country. You can't teach the culture, but the language you can give": This was a comment made by one participant in my research on the parent-child relational dynamic among South Asian immigrants in the city of Waterloo, Canada. Children, born in Canada or brought here at an early age, quickly learn English that enables them to master the "Canadian" social norms faster than their parents who experience an extended period of cultural transitioning, let alone master the linguistic and cultural nuances of English. I discovered that this was a bone of contention/conflict between parents and their children. In most families, conversations take place in two languages simultaneously: Parents speak their native language while children reply in English. My paper examines how such a diasporic linguistic behabiour could pose prospects as well as challenges. Further, such conflicts are two-layered: the external conflict refers to the exteriorization of their strained/straining relationships while the internal refers to an inner conflict of the immigrant self. These two layers are though dialectical in nature, and each adds to the intensity of the other. My analyses are based on the empirical data I collected through semi-structured interviews from 11 South Asian immigrant parents between May 2014-April 2015, and interpreted them using a constructivist grounded theory method.

INTRODUCTION

According to Statistics Canada, 20.6% of the total population of Canada consists of immigrants,[1] and it is estimated that almost one in two Canadians could be an immigrant or the child of an immigrant by 2036.[2] Canada's population grew by 5.9% from 2006 to 2011, which is the highest rate of increase among the G8 group nations during the same time.[3] Approximately 56.9% of all new immigrants who arrived in Canada between 2006 and 2011 were from Asia,[4] and among them, the people coming from the South Asian countries constitute the largest "visible minority" group in Canada with a total of 1,567,400.[5] Even in the Region of Waterloo,[6] a large portion of population consists of the "visible minority" people emigrating from the South Asian region – India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Nepal. More than 25% of the immigrant population in the Region of Waterloo comprises of people of Asia, and 40% of them are from South Asia.[7]

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[1] Statistics Canada, 2011. http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-010-x/99-010-x2011001-eng.cfm

[2] Statistics Canada, 2017. http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/170125/dq170125b-eng.htm.

[3] Statistics Canada, 2011. http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-010-x/99-010-x2011001-eng.cfm

[4] Statistics Canada, 2011. http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-010-x/99-010-x2011001-eng.cfm

[5] Statistics Canada, 2011. http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-010-x/99-010-x2011001-eng.cfm

[6] The Regional Municipality of Waterloo is a regional municipality located in Southern Ontario, Canada. It consists of the cities of Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge, and the townships of Wellesley, Woolwich, Wilmot, and North Dumfries

[7] Region of Waterloo Census Bulletin. Ethnic Origins, Visible Minorities and Aboriginal People. 2006. http://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/discoveringTheRegion/resources/Bulletin_8.pdf. Retrieved on 23 November 2013.

According to the second report entitled Language Projections for Canada, 2011 to 2036, the continuation of immigration trends would contribute to the growth of the population whose mother tongue and language most often spoken at home is neither English nor French.[8] The number of people who often spoke a non-official language at home more than doubled between 1971 and 2006, from 1.6 million to 3.7 million (Dagenais, 2013: 286). In 2011, the population whose mother tongue was neither English nor French totaled 6.9 million and accounted for 20.0% of the Canadian population. In 2036, this population could reach between 10.7 million and 13.8 million people, or between 26.1% and 30.6% of the Canadian population. In 2011, this population had speakers of nearly 200 different languages. This situation means that issues relating to languages other than English or French continue to be overshadowed. By 2036, more than one-quarter of the Canadian population would have a mother tongue other than English or French.

Racial hierarchies and language ideologies favoured French and English dominance and reinforced the marginalization of indigenous groups defined in terms of the socially constructed and assigned category of race. Articulations of racial hierarchizing that underwrite current Canadian language policies can be traced to the era of liberal policy-making that began in the early 1960s and, in particular, to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (RCBB) (1963– 1970), which gave rise to the Official Languages Act (1969) and in turn to Canada' s policy of multiculturalism (1971).[9] Language policy is emotional because it is connected to identity and when language policy involves education the emotionality increases as parents express fear for their children and their children's future (Hicks, 2013: 33). According to the *Economist*, whenever a language dies, a bit of the world's cultured, history and diversity dies with it (Hicks, 2013: 33).

The official Languages Act of 1969 granted French and English equal status as official languages; the second amendment of the this Act in 1971 made Canada the first country in the world to make multiculturalism an official state policy (Guo, 2013). Within the bilingual framework, language acts as a main vehicle for immigrants' integration who are expected to assimilate linguistically into the French or the English, although they are free to preserve their traditional cultures and languages. Similarly, while multiculturalism suggests that newcomers are free to preserve their traditional cultures, bilingualism implies the assimilation of immigrants into the cultures of the two founding races (Huo, 2013: 28). Three philosophical positions in particular inform multicultural policies and practices in general -- conservative, liberal and critical -- and Canada adopts conservative and liberal approaches to multiculturalism by endorsing consensus conformity and accommodation (Huo, 2013: 27). The flaw of such multiculturalism is the separation of culture and language which is an integral element of culture (Huo, 2013: 27). Huo (2013) therefore argues that Canadian biculturalism that defines English and French as the official languages deemphasize the languages of other cultural groups.

The national language debate has often focused on the use of English and French, but both of Canada's official languages were preceded by the languages of the Indigenous peoples and succeeded by many other European and non-European languages. In a virtually monolingual society, language policy is usually concerned exclusively with promoting an approved, standard

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[8] Statistics Canada. http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/170125/dq170125b-eng.htm.

[9] Haque, Eve, & Patrick, Donna. (2015). Indigenous Languages and the Racial Hierarchisation of Language Policy in Canada. Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 36(1), 27-41.

grammar of the common language, but in Canada the term is more often associated with a situation in which several languages are in contact or even in conflict. Language policy in Canada is designed to influence the relative use of the various languages in whatever ways are currently judged to serve the general interest. As those perceptions change over time, so does the consensus about what constitutes linguistic justice. Language policy is an evolving accommodation to changing linguistic circumstances and the social and political climate. Non-official linguistic communities continue to support the learning of their ancestral languages through community classes and even private schools.

I have chosen the South Asian immigrants living in the Waterloo region for the study for three main reasons. First, although the South Asians comprise by far the largest immigrant population in the Waterloo region, there has been limited research done on the topic in question. Second, the South Asian immigrants, though they come from different cultural-social-political backgrounds and speak different languages, they have a common identity characterized as a "collectivist" culture, and they are often guided by more or less clear and tight social-cultural norms and values (Triandis, 1995), whereas Canada is an "individualist" culture, and its norms are often less prescriptive. Third, my own subject positioning as a landed immigrant to Canada from South Asia raising a daughter here, while both of us are going through the process of acculturation, is what essentially fascinated me to the study of interpersonal dynamics between South Asian immigrant parents and their children in the Waterloo region. The researcher's own experiences and subject positioning has acted as a sensitizer to frame the orientation and focus of the study.

Although in the Canadian immigration policy and politics, the term "South Asian" is used to denote people from multiple ethnicities, religions and nationalities, South Asia is neither a homogeneous cultural group, nor a single political entity. People coming to Canada from South Asia practice different sets of beliefs, values, and behaviours based on their religion, language, country of origin, social context, and even individual experiences. In this paper however, whatever their ethno-cultural-religious-linguistic backgrounds, what I assume is that children of immigrants, be they born in Canada or brought here at an early age when their parents immigrated, quickly acquire the Canadian social-cultural-linguistic practices and values, whereas their parents find it challenging to easily negotiate a balance between the two cultures – the culture of the country of origin and the culture of the host country. More importantly, immigrant parents want their children to retain and practice the social-cultural values of the country they originally come from while their children, whose acculturation process happens faster than their parents' prefer the "Western" ways of doing things. Even the nonchalant questioning of the parental social-cultural values makes immigrant parents fear that their children will forget their traditions and cultural heritages, and ultimately discard their cultural identity. As a result conflicts and tensions result from what Berry (1997) calls the "acculturation gap"[10] between the immigrant parents and their children.

METHODOLOGY

The present research has been conducted using the grounded theory method (Glaser & Strauss, 1999; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) that helps construct a theory anchored in the data, not in the preconceived notions of the researcher. The grounded theory method is thus a theory-building approach, and not the one that tests a theory for its validity and applicability. The grounded theory

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[10] Berry, John W. "Immigration, Acculturation, and Adaptation." Applied Psychology: An International Review, 1997.46 (1). 5-68.

is a methodology of generating meanings and frameworks of human phenomena inductively. Since the grounded theory is mostly used in conducting qualitative research in areas where there exists little prior study, and very limited scholarship exists in the area of South Asian immigrants in the Waterloo region, the grounded theory is deemed suitable for examining the subject in question. The main purpose of the study was therefore to listen to the participants' narratives and lived-experiences, and create meanings out of those narratives.

The grounded theory method is not a monolithic, rigid theoretical approach; it has several variants. For the present research, however, the constructivist grounded theory was deemed pertinent also because it aligns with the researcher's understanding of a truth. The constructivist grounded theory defines theory as an interpretative endeavor and understands the researcher as an integral part of the data. Two schools of thoughts prevail more than others when it comes to theorizing based on the grounded theory approach: objectivist and constructionist. Constructivism is a research paradigm that denies the existence of an objective reality, "asserting instead that realities are social constructions of the mind, and that there exist as many such constructions as there are individuals (although clearly many constructions will be shared)" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989: 43). The subjective interrelationship between the researcher and participants is crucial, and the meaning is constructed from this interaction. Researchers are part of the research endeavor rather than objective observers, and their values must be acknowledged by themselves and by their readers as an integral part of the outcome.[11]

Prior to the collection of data, an application package was prepared and submitted to the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo. Following the official approval of the research application, qualitative data were collected from research participants through in-person, semi-structured interviews. However, the interview guide did not restrict the generation of the data. A total of 11 South Asian immigrants (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal) currently living in the Waterloo region were interviewed. It was assumed that, though the conflicts between immigrant parents and their children start quite early on, they become manifest and more pronounced when the children enter the teens and begin questioning the practices that their parents want them to embrace. While recruiting the participants therefore, only those people who had children from the age group of 11-18 were included. The length of period they have lived in Canada did not prevent potential participants from taking part in the study; they could have immigrated more recently or a few years ago. Similarly, the children could have been born in their countries of origin or here in Canada following their immigration. The Kitchener-based community organizations that serve the newcomers for their integration and settlement in Canada were chosen to connect with the potential participants because it was presumed that conflicts tend to become more pronounced among new immigrants during the initial acculturation period. Once the immigrants have been here for a long period, they become more used to the social and cultural values of the host society.

The community organizations were approached through a letter describing in detail the objective of the study and its significance. Once the organizations approved and provided their consent, they were provided with a flyer that was posted on the organizations' notice boards. Only a total of 4 willing participants could be accessed through the gatekeeping organizations. Since this did not

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[11] Mills, Jane, Ann Bonner, and Karen Francis. "The Development of Constructivist Grounded Theory." International Journal of Qualitative Methods 5 (1) March 2006.

meet the required numbers of research participants, the other 7 participants were accessed through a snowball sampling method. The research participants themselves were asked to connect the researcher with the future participants from within the network of their acquaintances. The willing participants were contacted through the telephone and the ones who met the eligibility criteria were recruited for the research. Although efforts were made to ensure representation of both male and female parents so that the experiences of both male and female parents could be incorporated into the study, the number of female participants exceeded the number of male participants. Among the 11 participants interviewed, only 3 of them were males while the rest of them were females.

Once the interested participants were contacted, they were briefed about the purpose of the study verbally at first and then through a formal letter that provided them with detailed information as to the objectives of the study, process of keeping their names and identities anonymous, confidentiality of the information they would share during the interviews, and the length of time they would be interviewed for. The informed consent from each of the participants was received for the conversation to be audio taped. Upon receiving their informed consent, at the mutually agreed upon venue and time, the participants were interviewed based on the semi-structured interview guide. The participants were asked to share their personal narratives and experiences on two main areas: first, how the conflicts with their children have impacted their relationships with them; and second, what coping mechanisms the participants have used in responding to such conflicts. Interviews were conducted until a point of saturation was reached, as indicated by the recurring themes and the emergence of clear patterns. The triangular work of data collection, coding and data analysis continued hand in hand.

Once the interviews were conducted, they were first transcribed and shared with the respective interviewees. The participants' identification, their real names were kept anonymous, and pseudonyms were used even when the data were stored on the researcher's laptop. Other than the study purpose, no information gathered in the process of data collection was shared with any individuals or organizations, and the participants were not coerced or obligated to take part in the research.

In the present study, the term "South Asia" has been taken as a single entity. The rationale behind treating the whole of South Asia as a single entity was that though the people immigrating to Canada from different South Asian countries belonged to different cultural, social and ethnic backgrounds, all of them shared some common social values as reflected in many ways such as respect for old age and authority, collective instead of individualistic way of life, interdependence between family members, friends and relatives, correlating age with wisdom, taboos on dating and restrictions on sex, patronization of children, and strict discipline. Additionally, this group of people exercised a great deal of parental authority in parenting. While recruiting the participants, no distinction as to when they immigrated to Canada and for what reason, what age group and financial class they belonged to, and their educational and occupational statuses was made. Principally, the potential participants could have immigrated for various reasons, and they could have lived here for any length of time; however, most of the participants turned out to be landed immigrants, the length of time the participants had lived in Canada ranged from 2 – 11 years.

For the sake of consistency, all the interviews were conducted in English. As the objective of the present study was to obtain the interviewees' own narrative accounts of challenges of having to deal

with their children and the impact that the conflicts had had on their relationships with their children, the questions focused more on the conflicts, along with any evolutions and changes that happened in their relationships since they immigrated to Canada. The interview started with general questions (e.g., Can you please tell me something about your children?) to more focused questions aimed at explicating details (e.g., Please describe the conflicts that you have had with your child/children? Please describe the causes of those conflicts).

Each interview lasted for about 60 minutes. In addition, the interviewer also maintained a detailed research journal with notes following each interview. In addition to the verbal data, the memos, nonverbal cues, and other salient features observed during the interview were also taken into consideration while interpreting the data. Since data collection and data analysis in the grounded theory method occur simultaneously, the recurring concepts and emerging themes were identified as they emerged with consistent frequency within and across interviews.

The data were imported into the NVivo 10, the qualitative data analysis software, as an aid in identifying dominant concepts, categories, and themes. The coding scheme was continually reviewed back and forth, and updated as additional interviews were conducted. The data analysis was conducted using the grounded theory techniques of constant comparison and open, axial, and selective coding.

LIMITATION
For the sake of consistency, all the interviews were conducted in English. Since the first language of all the 11 interviewees was not English, the researcher could observe that most participants were struggling to find exact words and phrases to express the nuances of their emotions and feelings. In qualitative research the data gathered in black and white are the raw fabric out of which a theory is woven, and if the research subjects cannot represent their versions of the "reality" by means of words and narratives, the theory which is the end-product of the entire process would be built upon the words that could not accurately represent their views. The researcher kept asking this question throughout the process: Had the participants been given a chance to speak in their own mother tongue, would the research findings be more robust and penetrating?

Second, the present research has not incorporated the perspectives, narratives and experiences of the children of South Asian immigrant parents living in the Waterloo region. Since the purpose of the present study was to explore and analyze the post-immigration experiences of South Asian immigrants with a focus on relational dynamics, it did not include the voices, views and versions of the children's lived experiences. When one middle-aged participant who immigrated to Canada in 2010 was being interviewed, his daughter who was listening to the interview entered the conversation and shared her experiences of how she felt when she first came to Canada and struggled to adjust to the Canadian social practices.

Third, most participants in course of sharing their diasporic stories, anecdotes and incidents, admitted that their children held conflicting and contradictory opinions at times resulting from their assimilation into the Canadian social-cultural ways of life. However, none of the participants was willing to define their relationships as a "conflict." This suggested that the word "conflict" for South Asians implied a more serious issue that is beyond their control. The South Asian immigrant parents' reluctance to admit conflicts with their children even when they had real issues indicated

that reluctance of admittance to having conflicts with children would prove their own failure of having failed to exercise their parental authority and power.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Although there has been considerable research on issues pertaining to parent-child relationships in other parts of the world, especially the United States of America, limited research in this area was found in Canada, particularly among diasporic communities. The Waterloo region is no exception to this, let alone the South Asian immigrants. Let me therefore focus the literature review on parent-child relationships in general particularly focusing on problems arising out of what Berry calls the "acculturation gap" between immigrant parents and their children, and then move on to the literature on the South Asian diasporas in Canada.

In the process of acculturation, children who were born in Canada or brought up here quickly assimilate the social values of the host society, whereas their parents adhere to the values and ideals of the countries of their origin. Similarly, as immigrant children are immersed in the individualistic culture at school and among their peers, they may take on the new culture's values more rapidly than do their parents. In such a situation, the potential for intergenerational conflict would be enormous. Due to this, there exist a number of differences in the ways the "first generation" and the "second generation" immigrants look at life as a whole. Abouguendia and Noels (2001) argue that the intergenerational cultural conflict is typically strongest between first-generation immigrant parents and second-generation children, who have been raised in different cultural contexts. The conflict results from the change in the parents' roles following immigration and resettlement on the one hand and on the other, it results from children's assimilation of the culture of the host country (Tyyskä, 2008).

However, Lalonde and Giguère (2008) contend that the identity of a bicultural individual is contextually driven and usually only one culture becomes salient in a particular situation (58). The immigrant children's behaviors are largely determined by their native culture at home and by the "Canadian" culture at school. Conflict between the two sets of cultural norms of the bicultural individual is more likely to manifest when the two cultural identities are simultaneously salient to the individual, and when the two identities evoke two sets of norms that are incompatible with each other (58). Conflict could happen with parents or peers. Nonetheless, Lalonde and Giguère (2008) emphasize on the intrapersonal conflicts experienced by children who feel "torn between two cultures" (58).

Similarly, Berry (2005) maintains that in course of adjusting to the dominant Euro-Canadian culture the adult immigrants and their children must make two critical choices related to their cultural preferences: first, how much of their cultural heritages and social practices to retain, and second, how much of the host country's culture to assimilate (704). Similarly, Shariff (2009) claims that the collectivist orientation of the South Asian culture promotes the primary importance of the welfare of the family, which usually includes grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, and in such a cultural paradigm, individuals are expected to sacrifice their personal desires to ensure the well-being of their families when individual and group goals conflict (37). The way in which the very self is defined and understood is different in the context of the collectivist culture. Shariff (2009) contends that an individual's self itself exists in relation to others, and pursuing personal goals and desires that conflict with family goals is perceived to be selfish (36).

Wakil, et al (1981) state that the immigrant parents experience severe tensions and conflicts when it comes to the differing attitudes toward dating and marriage practices (934). However, in a study conducted among Chinese immigrants in British Columbia, Costigan and Dokisthe (2006) state that the children who participated in the study reported relatively low levels of conflict with their parents, few depressive feelings, despite the presence of parent-child differences in acculturation 1259). There may be situations, however, in which immigrants' children are required to choose between the values and identities of their family and those of the receiving culture.[12]

Audrey Kobayashi, a cultural geography professor at Queen's University, argues that the children of immigrants "feel torn" about their identity, adding that they sometimes "express their conflict by asserting their Canadian-ness, other times they express it by talking about how they feel excluded" (quoted in Reiti, 2012). Moreover, the cultural identity of bicultural individuals is contextually driven and usually only one culture will be salient in a particular situation. For example, immigrant children's behaviour may be largely determined by their heritage culture when they are with their family and by "Canadian" culture when they are at school. Clément and Noels (1992) have referred to this phenomenon as "situated identities." Living in such a terrain of cultural fluidity entails both risk and prospect: failure to converge the cultures might result in the children being further disintegrated, while the proper convergence of values enriches their experience and outlook.

Dating, and particularly dating a member of another cultural group, has the potential not only for intergenerational conflict but also for an internal cultural conflict for second-generation immigrants. Forging an intimate relationship with someone from another cultural group can be seen as jeopardizing heritage culture continuity (Uskul, Ayse K. and Richard N. Lalonde). The South Asian perspective on marriage is somewhat at odds with the Western perspective, as marriage is often seen as an alliance of families rather than two individuals (G. R. Gupta, 1976; Katti & Saroja, 1989). Arranged marriages are quite common in South Asian cultures, and they can be seen as fulfilling the needs of the family rather than the individual (Dion & Dion, 1993; Goodwin & Cramer, 2000; Naidoo & Davis, 1988). In such arrangements, future partners are introduced to each other after families are carefully screened for factors such as its reputation, its economic standing, and the education of the future husband/wife in order to ensure successful matching between the two families (Bhachu, 1985; Goodwin, 1999). Family approval of a future spouse is necessary, and children are not as encouraged to follow their own decisions as they would be in a Western culture. This view on relationships can serve an additional function within immigrant South Asian communities, namely to protect relationships from being formed between members of different cultural groups and thereby ensuring cultural continuity (Uskul, Ayse K., Richard N. Lalonde).

In collectivist cultures, childrearing emphasizes reliability, proper behavior, and obedience to authority, most notably to one's parents. Furthermore, parent-child relationships are expected to take a precedence over peer and sibling relationships. Individualistic cultures, however, de-emphasize vertical relationships (e.g., parent-child) and encourage independence and self-reliance in their childrearing. Thus, children who absorb the new culture's individualistic values may find themselves in direct conflict with their parents' values and expectations (Hynie, Michaela). Younger

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[12] Hynie, Michaela. "From conflict to compromise: immigrant families and the processes of acculturation." Taylor, Donald M, ed. *Diversity with Justice and Harmony: A Social Psychological Analysis.* Metropolis Project and the Strategic Policy, Planning and Research Branch of Citizenship and Immigration Canada. 1996.

immigrants may experience conflict between their parents' traditional cultural values and the contrasting values of the dominant culture (Mona Abouguendia and Kimberly A. Noels).

DATA ANALYSIS

All 11 audiotaped interviews were transcribed verbatim and shared with the respective participants to ensure that the transcriptions were accurate and that they did not misrepresent the participants' views. The constructivist grounded theory approach was used in analyzing the data. According to Charmaz (2014), the grounded theory method entails the following three coding processes: open coding, axial coding, and finally thematic coding. Charmaz (2014) states that the researcher in the process of grounded theory coding enters "an interactive space that pulls you deeper into the data and keeps you involved with them far more than a casual reading fosters" (115).This is the locus where interactions between the researcher's interpretative faculty and the participants' representations of their realities interact with each other. Though the processes are outlined in linearity here, the coding and data analysis did not take place in subsequent order; the coding and the analysis of the data occurred back and forth during data collections, and also following the completion of the interviews.

According to Corbin and Strauss (1990), in open coding conceptual labels are assigned to preliminary groupings of words, phrases and similar occurrences (LaRossa, 2005). The groups of words and sentences were put together in similar conceptual baskets. As Strauss and Corbin describe open coding as a procedure where "all the data are broken down into discrete parts, closely examined, compared for similarities and differences, and questions are asked about the phenomena reflected in the data''(LaRossa, 2005), the researcher examined the participants' statements closely, questioned them and deconstructed them to as many meaningful fragments as possible. Similarly, Charmaz (2014) maintains that the open coding is a "heuristic device to bring the researcher into the data, to interact with them, and study each fragment of them" (121). In this process, no preconceptions of the researcher were allowed to affect the meaning-making processes.

Glaser (1978) emphasizes: study the emerging data (Charmaz, 115). Several issues began to emerge as potentially more dominant because of their reoccurring presence in the participants' narratives. As an aid in the data analysis, the NVivo (Version 10), the qualitative data analysis software, was used. The data were initially imported into the Internal; nodes were created based on conceptual similarities; the nodes were narrowed down into categories. Likewise, the Classification and Query wizards were utilized to further explore concepts, synthesize themes and analyze subtle connections or disconnections between concepts. The concepts and categories were merged together to create themes that were further analyzed to discuss the parent-child relationships among South Asian immigrant parents living in the Waterloo region. The final list of themes was prepared, and here follow the outcomes of the analysis.

FINDINGS

Several thematic patterns emerged during the data analysis, and these themes shed light on how the South Asian immigrant parents living in the Waterloo region defined their subjectivities and perceived the relationships with their children in the Canadian diaspora. The analyses indicated that the South Asian immigrant parents (a) have conflictual relationships with their children resulting from "acculturation gap," (b) harbor fears that their children will ultimately lose ties with the social and cultural values and practices of their countries of origin, and (c) go through inner conflicts

within their own selves and hold ambivalent attitudes toward the country of destination. The respondents also suggested that the conflicts could be better managed should there be some kinds of societal external interventions in place, which could either be from schools, community organizations, and/or local/municipal governments. Overall, two layers of conflict exist: first, the South Asian immigrant parents are confronted with inner conflicts that result from having to struggle in a diametrically different socio-cultural new homeland; and, second, the South Asian immigrant parents are in conflicts with their children though they emphasize that those were not the "serious" issues. Furthermore, some participants reported that the outer conflicts with their children, though not directly caused by the inner conundrums they were going through, could have some indirect correlation.

INTERNAL CONFLICT
Nostalgia
One woman from Pakistan who immigrated to Canada in her mid-forties became nostalgic when she recalled her life back there: I had everything back home: I had a car and a driver always standby; I had a servant to cook food for me and wash my clothes. Most participants were quite articulate in expressing the sense of loss for culture, food, feasts, and social systems; they fondly recalled their socio-cultural practices such as festivals, joint family system, the support and help they received from their parents, aunts and uncles in raising their kids back in their countries of origin. The sense of loss or nostalgia could also be discerned through their body language. However, the moment they make a mention of things they have lost after having immigrated to Canada, they hasten to mention how the loss is compensated for by what they have already gained and hope to gain in the host country. The "self" the South Asian immigrants thus oscillates between two extremities: they have a strong dislike to what they call the "Western individualistic" values, but at the same time the other side of their subjectivity becomes instantly active and hastens to point out that the Canadian society has offered them a great deal of good things which they would not otherwise have been able to achieve back home. One participant, a middle-aged woman raising two teenaged children here, said: I don't really like the way my children behave…but there are so many good things here.

Challenges to gaining "respectable" employment
A majority of the participants interviewed emphasized the discrepancies between what they expected to gain moving over to Canada, their new homeland, and what they actually experienced in their practical life here. One of the things that they have to struggle here is the lack of what one participant called a "respectable" job. One other participant described her odd job as a "precarious" one in which she has to go to work whenever she gets a call from her employer. One other participant, who used to be a medical doctor and university teacher back in Nepal, shared his bitter experience of having to struggle for a decent living this way:

> …we should also be able to have a living through a job, so that we will have a dignity. Where is our dignity if we don't have a job? It doesn't have to be a job that you had back home; at least it has to be a job that should be respectable, hmm…not respectable, but at least a job that you, your training and education should fit in, that gives you a minimum level of satisfaction which is lacking.

Similarly, another participant, who was a high profile university administrator in India and holds a PhD, finds herself in a sort of limbo here as she is has failed to at least get an office job, despite the

fact that she responded to more than "one thousand" postings. Not having good employment has made her undecided whether she should stay in Canada and keep fighting against the odds here, or change her decision, go back to India and try to regain the things she had left behind. The participant, on the one hand, is not happy with not having a decent job here, and on the other, she cannot leave her only teenaged daughter here by herself since the daughter, who it in Canada, is quite unwilling to return to India with her:

> Right now I am in fact contemplating on my future course of action—if I don't find a right job I am thinking of going back to India. But my daughter doesn't want to go back; she prefers it here. I can't leave my daughter alone so.

Disillusioned self

One other theme that emerged as a preponderant idea throughout the narratives was a certain realization of disenchantment with the glorified notion of the West in general and the host country in particular. One participant, whose decision to immigrate to Canada, originated from what he had heard about Canada:

> Initially I did think that the people were very polite and the system was very supportive. As time went one, I began to realize that what is superficial isn't the truth that is behind their appearance. Because it could be misleading although people may be welcoming, it doesn't mean that you get what you want- could be volunteering job, or simple marketplace where you may not get what you want.

A deep-rooted feeling of disillusionment with the glorified notion of the new homeland pervades this participant's narrative. At the same time, he hastens to generalize human nature and philosophizes his outlook on life and comments:

> So natural human behaviors are common all over the world: they all have little bit of reservation, little bit of greed, little bit of selfishness. The participant on the surface isn't true…that is behind their appearance. Because it could be misleading although people may be welcoming, it doesn't mean that you get what you want.

Ambivalent attitude toward host country

Most participants' narratives revealed an ambivalent attitude toward the country of destination. The double-edged psyche is at work here. One side of the self dislikes the realities they are loving with, and other side of the self is fascinated with what they have achieved. One participant, who comes from Pakistan and has five daughters in their early childhood to late teens, is fearful that his daughters would defy him; however, he reflects back on the positives of the Canadian society at the same time:

> School has provided a very positive atmosphere for them. It isn't like parents searching for a job and getting frustrations. For them it's always a learning experience. I don't think they've been discriminated or let's say bullied by peers or neglected by their teachers.

Similar to this participant, most participants, when they talked about things that they had a dislike to, switched back to the things that could not have been possible back in their home countries. This shows that the immigrants have developed an ambivalent relationship with the host country: fascination and repulsion, love and hate, and the sense of loss and gain define their subjectivity. Likewise, one woman participant is in her middle age and comes from Bangladesh, while she was

quite critical of the social-cultural values her children have assimilated here, expressed a positive view:

> You know I was in my country I had to get a car and a driver always standby for her [daughter] safety and security, but here I don't have to worry about it. Even for me I was worried about safety and security. I never used public bus in my country: I had a car and a driver in front of my house. But it's amazing here. I really appreciate the bus service, on time always.

Psychological compensation

Despite all hardships and "acculturative stress" the participants have lived through, what they are highly optimistic about is the hope that their children will get good education here, and they will one day be able to live a happy and satisfied life. One participant, who immigrated to Canada from Bangladesh in 2010 and has a teenaged daughter, said: Here our main concern is education. This is a developed country; education is good. Our children can gain good education. They can get good degrees and can serve the people. Similarly, another participant from Nepal also shared similar views:

> School has provided very positive atmosphere for them. It isn't like parents searching for a job and getting frustrations. For them it's always a learning experience. I don't think they've been discriminated or let's say bullied by peers, or neglected by their teachers.

EXTERNAL CONFLICTS

Almost all the participants interviewed were little hesitant to use the word "conflict" to describe the relationships with their children, although they shared many incidents and times when they had conflicts with their kids. However, they came around to the point that the problems resulted from the acculturative differences between themselves and their children. Instead of admitting that they have issues with their children and acculturative problems, they incline to point out at their acquaintances who have the issues. As if he was relieved for not having to experience the way his people did, one participant from Bangladesh enthusiastically shared:

> Sometimes it's very difficult…I know some people. Some people are seriously shocked. Some people living in Kitchener-Waterloo, I talk to them, they're seriously shocked about the culture. In their culture girls are very conservative; they put on closed clothes, but here most of them are free. They're shocked. Some of the issues are shocking, very shocking but it has nothing to do.

In their narratives, the reasons why they had conflicts with their children, the frequency of conflicts, the ways in which their children reacted to their parents, have a great deal of similarities. Some subtle differences are there, and these differences result from a number of factors such as the length of time they lived in Canada, the age of their children, and even the children's gender account for the nature of conflicts with their parents. Some of the most salient reasons of conflicts and tussles between parents and children include: staying out with friends, not letting parents know when children go out, spending most of the time with mobiles/laptops, not paying enough attention to study, use of 'rude' words with parents, disobedience to parents, freedom not properly used, assimilation of the western "individualistic" culture, showing no interest in their own cultural and social activities such as festivals, decreasing/distorted use of native languages at home and even with friends from the same countries, use of some English words and phrases that have derogatory meanings in native languages, not sharing responsibilities with families, showing no attachment

with families and relatives, lack of discipline, lack of respect for parents and elders, and at times children being over-smart. All of the issues are narrowed down into the following major themes.

Parental authority

When asked what he thinks is the main challenge to parenting here, one participant who comes from Nepal and has a daughter in her early teens, said that the main challenge is "how to keep our children in our grip" and moves on to add: "how to make them follow our own cultural practices…our religious values, cultural values, rites and rituals. Another participant, who comes from India, questioned the parenting system itself and the way children are brought up in Canada:

> I don't understand why parents can't shout at the child in the public place. I don't think it is good for a parent not being able to tell a child what she really feels like. It feels like the parent is begging the child to ask him/her behave well. I don't think this is the right way.

Here is another participant from Nepal, who stressed upon the importance of abiding by the parental regulations at home, said: Though the freedom of expression is good for them, we have to stay within the rules and regulations of home. There are times when it's difficult to try to change their behaviors because they're obstinate.

Collectivism versus individualism

For most participants, one of the things that they did not like about their children while they are growing up here is that they think that their children are becoming more and more individualistic and thinking in terms of "me" and "my" rather than "we" and "ours." They were of the opinion that the main place where the children learn these collectivist values is the "joint family" and grandparents in particular would inculcate those familial, social and cultural values into the tender minds. What the immigrants miss the most in their new homeland is that their children are away from that kind of social and family setup. One participant, who comes from Nepal and has a daughter and a son in their teens, said:

> I think the children would learn more, socially and culturally, in a joint family and they'd also learn some behavioral things from their grandparents. That is being missed… Here parents have to give more time to their work. So in comparison I could give more time to my kids back in Nepal, but I am not able to do that here.

Some participants were familiar with the terms "collectivism" and "individualism" and frequently used them to show the differences between themselves and their children, while others shared incidents that illustrated how the subjectivity of the children is shaped by the western individualistic culture. Here is an incident shared by one of the participants to show how his daughter does not care about sharing responsibilities at home: I could ask her …what I should say…hmm…why don't you make tea for me? I ask her to do that but she doesn't do. You know I consider home a home only when members participate on something. Similarly, another respondent shared the same experience and defined the differences between himself and his daughter: When I ask her to do or that, I follow my own epistemology, my own worldview. So her attitude and perspective is quite individualistic—she always tries to be independent (thinks for herself).

Respect for elders and authority

Most participants expressed their dissatisfactions at how their children do not show any respect for parents and elders, and for them, respecting parents and elderly people is an integral part of culture.

One of the reasons that creates conflicts between immigrant parents and children in Canada is the degradation of this social value in children. One of the reasons of conflict that the immigrants have with their children is because the children do not show any respect to elderly people and parents. Some participants seemed to take this for granted, but others considered respect for elders as an indispensable part of their cultural matrix. One participant from India emphasized on the need for children to show respect for and obedience to parents. He said that the times when the children do not listen to him and use "disrespectable" words, conflicts happen:

> I have been brought up in a very strict manner where we respect our elders. Yes I do get disappointed when children use words that are disrespectable. Although I remind them from time to time, they keep harping on the same thing. That is a problem.

Native language versus English

Most participants indicated that most of the time conversations with their children at home take place in two languages at the same time. The immigrant parents speak in the native language while their children answer back in English. The respondents said that it is important for their children to remember their native language as the language is the carrier of cultural values. One participant, who comes from Pakistan and is rearing three children here, was quite emphatic about the use of the native language:

> And there's a connection between mother tongue, hmm…we should respect language and culture. To respect we should maintain the language and should teach our children the language. To preserve dress and culture isn't possible staying in this country. You can't teach the culture, but the language you can give.

Speaking two languages sometimes creates communication problems. One participant said: We speak in our own language, but she replies in English; sometimes that seems to be problematic to understand what we are saying because she has been widely influenced by English words and language that makes the conversation sometimes uncomfortable.

Dating and marriage

Although most respondents did not like the idea of allowing their children to pick a girlfriend/boyfriend of their own choice, some of them took a rigid stance while some others were slightly liberal. What accounts for this difference is perhaps the differences that exist between various subcultures in South Asia. In particular the social practice that lets children to have a girlfriend/boyfriend comes as a big shock to those people who come from such a society where marriages are arranged by parents. One participant from Bangladesh sounded quite strict about this:

> The situation of boyfriend or girlfriend is established culture here. For us we aren't used to this. That is why we avoid that kind of situation. We try to convince our children—you can't do like this, and our culture doesn't permit. For them it is common for girls and boys to be mixed. We're little bit strict with that sort of thing.

Likewise, one participant who immigrated to Canada in 2008 from Nepal, said that he is not worried about his children assimilating the Canadian culture as much as he is worried about them marrying someone from a different culture, marrying multiple times, or getting divorced. He expressed his anxiety this way:

> What we are sometimes afraid is that maybe, I'm being conservative, when they marry they'd marry someone from a different culture and community. Maybe they might get a

divorce in the future and not live a happy life. Sometimes we think about that and think maybe it wasn't a good decision to come here.

However, some participants said that they would have no problems even if their children picked their own boyfriends/girlfriends, but he obviously preferred an "arranged marriage" to what he called "love marriage":

I suggest them if you have love affair, then they should tell us. Otherwise, we'll manage an arranged marriage and for this we go back home and get them married. That way you can marry someone from our culture and society so that in the future you won't have any problems or have a divorce. That way there'll be no future uncertainty for you.

Though the participants said that they did not like the western marriage system in which girls/boys are free to choose their own future spouses, they sounded quite confident that their sons/daughters were not interested in having boyfriends/girlfriends. Here is what some of the participants said:

P1: My daughter herself isn't keen on making a boyfriend and my son isn't keen on making a girlfriend… I wouldn't recommend her till, I mean, everyone has their own opinion, maybe do that after the age of twenty or so.

P2: No my daughter is very open to me. She'd talk to me if she'd anyone in mind. She and I have very transparent relationship with each other. We are very open.

Role reversal: children being teachers to parents
Most participants also mentioned that their children have been their teachers in many ways teaching them how to get from one place to another, how to buy food and even with English accent and words. A majority of participants took this role reversal as something natural and even expressed their happiness for having to learn things from their children, adding that it was much easier to learn from kids. One participant from Bangladesh was happy to share that his daughter always cautioned him if he mistakenly spat in the public places: Whenever I spit in the public, my daughter always comments this—why do you do this—the Canadian people don't like this. Some participants, however, considered this as something antithetical to the traditional parental authority, and this is what one respondent said when asked what he feels like when he has learn things from children: She gives advice she's learnt from the society, but not me, because I'm a different kind of a person. Maybe she might have tried to say something to me, but I don't listen.

Two cultures
Most respondents opined that their children find themselves living between two cultures, but such a cultural locus is advantageous because they can look at the world from two perspectives and choose the one they find themselves more comfortable with. A middle-aged woman participant from Nepal remarked: This is, I think, a good thing for my kids. They can look at things from two perspectives, which is good. However, another participant from Bangladesh differed from the idea that his daughter was living in two cultural realms: I don't think she is living that way—she hasn't shared anything about that with us, and that means that she is good. However, his daughter, who was listening to the conversation, entered the room and presented her narrative during the initial cultural transitioning into the Canadian society:

The fact that I had good English and I wasn't in ESL very long, and I've seen friends in ESL having a very hard time talking to others. They kind of stay in their own group-- they don't talk to outsiders very much. If I was in ESL, I'd probably a different person

> than I'm now… People also see you differently if you can't speak English. They look at you as an immigrant and they look down upon you.

Most participants emphasized on the challenges they were confronted with rather than the acculturation stresses facing their children. However, one participants, who is a father of a teenaged son and a daughter, shared what he thought his son had gone through during the first few months following their arrival in Canada:

> For my son, who was popular in school, liked by teachers, had many friends, the first eight or nine months he was (pause). He must have faced some hardships—where am I? How should I cope with this system? All this I'm just reflecting and saying. I don't exactly know what happened, but this is I think what happened. He must have had a tough time to make friends, trying to adapt to a new system, trying to adapt to school system. And of course he missed his friends back home. After I asked him after a few months –do you like to go back to Nepal? He said he liked to go back to Nepal. That means that he didn't like it here and wanted to go back—he was in a dilemma. And when he turned from school, I didn't find him too happy.

Conflict management strategies

Most participants emphasized that the best way to resolve conflicts with children would be to teach them the social-cultural values and make them retain them. One participant from Bangladesh said: it is important to give time to your children: you sit with them, you share with them your past experience and what you have learnt- good experience, good things, good deeds. Some others pointed out the need for their communities to organize frequent community social and cultural events so that their children could at least be familiar with the traditional cultural and social practices.

De-acculturation efforts

All the participants acknowledged that they had conflicts children resulting from the "acculturation gap." But some participants shared that they even tried to prevent their children from assimilating the western social-cultural practices. One participant from Nepal made what I would like to call a "de-acculturation effort" in an attempt to have his daughter retain his own social-cultural values:

> Last year what happened is...well, on the Halloween day she (daughter) forced me to buy the dress. At that time I convinced her that the Halloween isn't to be compulsory for us. We are still not familiar with the importance of the dress. I told her to be clear about the value of the dress and only ask me to buy it for her. So later she accepted my proposal and said she would try find it out, and this we found equilibrium.

He also shared that his daughter learned about the cultural meaning of the Halloween and got him to finally buy a costume for her.

Parents should refrain from contradicting each other while dealing with children

Some participants pointed out that children become obstinate and defy parents' authority when the parents hold contradictory views when it comes to things like counselling or giving advice to a child. When a child feels that he/she is being backed by one of the parents, the child always tends to be obstinate. One respondent from Nepal said:

> Oh, yes for conflict resolution both parents have to come to a single conclusion. But my wife sometimes is the problem—if I say something to the daughter, my wife takes the

side of the daughter. Then she thinks I have someone backing me so why I should follow this guy's instructions.

Share the problems
Several participants said that the first important step to conflict resolution would be to share the problems with someone. However, they admitted that they so far confined the issues only between the two spouses. Although one participant from Nepal said that he received counselling from one of his close relatives when he had issues with his wife, but he refrained from resorting to any external counselling when it came to conflicts with children:

> She's been a lot of help during these two years. She has helped solve lots of things. That is good for me. For children it is not good to expose internal things even with a relative…exposing children's behaviors to a third person might have a negative impact.

"Frank" conversation
Almost everyone interviewed suggested that they should talk to their children frankly and openly if there is anything that they do not like, or if there is anything that they want their children to follow. One participant from India said:

> I don't have to worry about my daughter since she came to Canada when she was sixteen, and she holds on to the Indian culture. To the contrary, another participant from Nepal shared: I am not worried about the problems with my daughter now; what I am really worried about her is- what will happen if she marries someone from another culture? What will I do if she has a divorce and has multiple marriages?

EXTERNAL INTERVENTIONS
Those immigrants, who came to Canada after their children were old enough to speak the native language and understand the social and cultural values, were not as much worried as the ones whose children were too young, or those whose children were born after they immigrated to Canada. Several respondents indicated that some kind of external intervention or facilitation, whether be it through schools, community organizations, municipal/local government bodies, would help children to better understand the "acculturation stresses" and reconcile their two cultures, two identities and two sets of values in an organic way. When asked if they realize the need of any external support system, most participants said that having some kind of support system in place would be helpful. This is how one participant from Nepal put it:

> There could be parent-child counselling services…hey, there is counselling service out there; let's go there. Then we could discuss this. If there're little bit scared at least, they're going out to the society, they have to be careful. …I think this kind of external support system is necessary because you can't beat up your child inside home. When asked who could provide that kind of service, he said: the school could do this, the community organization could do this, the municipality and the city hall or the ministry could do this.

DISCUSSION
The data in the current study were elicited from the South Asian immigrant parents living in the Waterloo region, asking questions pertaining to their experiences of parenting, particularly relating to parent-child conflicts resulting from acculturation in their new homeland. A majority of parents shared narratives fraught with a two-tiered conflict: the inner conflicts within their own "self" that

reflects the psychosocial state of the South Asian immigrants, and the external conflicts with their children, and these conflicts are largely the outcomes of what Berry (2003) calls an "acculturation gap" between the parents and children. The "immigrant self" cane be characterized by traits such as nostalgia, despair for the lack of gainful employment, disillusionment, ambivalence, and some degree of narcissism. According to Berry's acculturation strategy, all these outcomes are the results of the acculturation strategy of separation, or the concomitances of having failed to adopt the strategy of integration in the host society and culture.

Similarly, the South Asian immigrant parents consider the following issues to be the causes of conflicts with their children: nonconformity to parental authority, adoption of western "individualistic" culture, lack of respect for elders, use of English at home and derogatory English phrases, and dating and marriage. These are the values that the South Asian people highly regard, and when the parents see their children adopting the assimilation strategy, they fear that their children will ultimately eschew their traditional values. Some parents admitted that the inner turmoil within their subjectivity contributes and adds to the external conflicts with children. However, what is to be noted here is that though the parents shared many incidences and stories to describe their relationships in the wake of their arrival to Canada, they hesitated to use the word "conflict" to define the relationships.

Most parents emphasized that the discrepancies they found between what they expected prior to their arrival in Canada and what they really experienced here, especially around employment-related issues, pain of having to leave their ageing parents back home, cutthroat competitive job market, and devaluation of their experiences and qualifications acquired back home. Only a few participants mentioned that they were psychologically prepared to face the ultimate outcomes no matter what happened since the decision to immigrate to Canada was a well-thought out, conscious decision. Concerning the employment challenges facing immigrants as a whole, Salman Akhtar (2011) observes that the antecedents and consequences of having immigrants deprived of employment could "range from deficit job-related skills through challenges of acculturation to racial and ethnic discrimination and prejudice" (38). Akhtar (2011) calls the initial period a "transition penalty", which has considerably lengthened in Canada over the last two decades (36). In addition to having to deal with their own psychosocial problems, the South Asian immigrant parents are confronted with the relational problems with their children, resulting from the "acculturation gap." This way, the South Asian immigrants are doubly-burdened, and find themselves oscillating between the new homeland and their countries of origin.

Joseph Trimble (2003) argues that the acculturation process is not a unidirectional course of cultural change in which only the immigrants receive values from the host culture. Trimble moves on to say that acculturation is indeed "multifaceted and that true assimilation may never occur" (7). The change that happens is discerned in both cultural spheres, and assimilation is not the only acculturation option available to the newcomers; multiple acculturation strategies are at their disposal13. It was Berry who developed a model of acculturation that looks at the processes of acquiring the host culture and retaining the heritage-culture as two separate dimensions. Within these two dimensions, the immigrants can choose from what he calls the four acculturation

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[13] *Trimble, Joseph E. "Introduction: Social Change and Acculturation."* Chun, K., Organista, Pamela Balls, & Marín, Gerardo. (2003). *Acculturation: Advances in theory, measurement, and applied research* (1st ed., Decade of behavior). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

categories—assimilation (complete adoption of the host culture at the cost of the heritage culture), separation (rejection of the receiving culture and retention of the heritage culture), integration (both adoption of the receiving culture and retention of the heritage culture), and marginalization (rejection of both the heritage and receiving cultures)14.

The collected data demonstrate that the South Asian immigrant parents and their children have diametrically different acculturation preferences; the parents tend to incline more toward separation, while their children prefer assimilation. Hence, two acculturative strategies are at work simultaneously: the children are tilting toward the Canadian culture as reflected on their personality while the parents are pulling their children toward the culture of the countries they come from, and the social-cultural values associated with them. Since the children acquire the heritage values in a joint family system by grandparents, uncles and aunts, and since the children in the host country are away from that social system, they naturally acquire values and norms from schools, friends, neighbourhoods, movies and the media.

Separation as an acculturation strategy places a great deal of value on the culture of the country of origin and avoids interactions with the host culture. The data showed that no participants were in favor of complete separation. One participant, who has lived in Canada since 2008, sounded quite flexible with his children adopting Canadian ways of doing things:

> For the society, hmm… people have to live in society. Living in society is just like a horse ride. If you want to ride on a galloping horse, you have to maintain your pace with the pace of the horse, you know. If you don't, you'll fall down. What I think for my kids is that they have to gallop with the flow of the Canadian society.
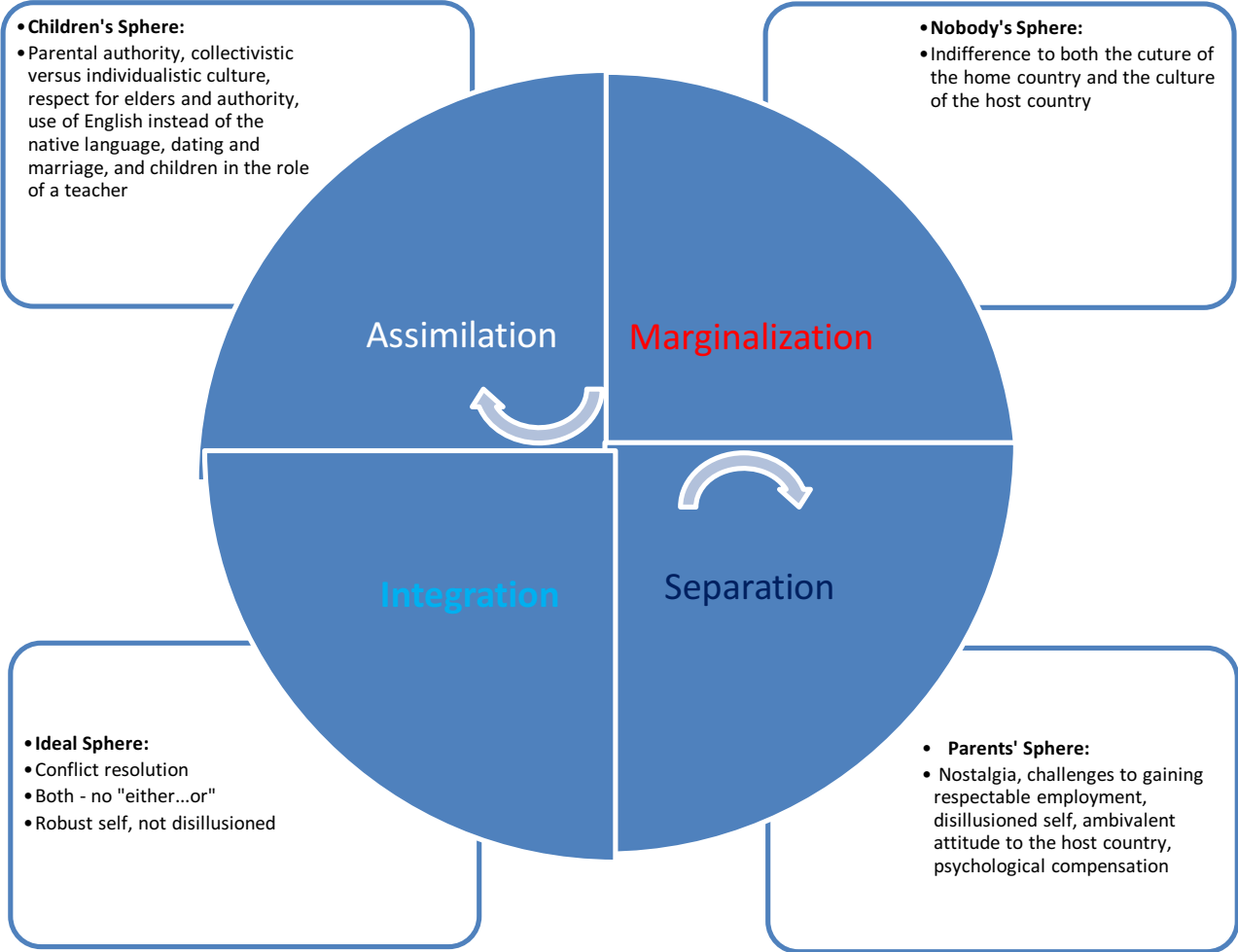
Integration refers to embracing both the host culture and the native culture simultaneously, and most parents emphasized on the need for their children to balance both cultural identities. Most parents said that they want their children to learn the Canadian social-cultural values; however, they also emphasize that "there are certain things we can't compromise." Moreover, the parents want their children to keep the native values intact and immaculate. Berry states that it is not that easy to maintain such a fine balance between the host culture and the home culture. Integration strategy can, therefore, be pursued only in societies that are explicitly multicultural and in which certain psychological preconditions are established (24)15. However, Chun and Akutsu (2003) argue that the two different sets of values can go hand-in-hand since "adoption of individualistic values in a new culture does not preclude the maintenance of collectivistic values" (101).

The fourth acculturation strategy is marginalization that refers to a lack of interest in either maintaining the original cultural values, or seeking interactions with other cultural groups. Though in a fluid society, adopting the complete marginalization strategy may not be practically possible, no participants were in favor of this acculturation zone.

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[14] Berry, John W. "Conceptual Approaches to Acculturation." Chun, K., Organista, Pamela Balls, & Marín, Gerardo. (2003). *Acculturation: Advances in theory, measurement, and applied research* (1st ed., Decade of behavior). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
[15] Berry, John W. "Conceptual Approaches to Acculturation." Chun, K., Organista, Pamela Balls, & Marín, Gerardo. (2003). *Acculturation: Advances in theory, measurement, and applied research* (1st ed., Decade of behavior). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Diagram A: Acculturative Strategies & Conflicts

- **Children's Sphere:**
- Parental authority, collectivistic versus individualistic culture, respect for elders and authority, use of English instead of the native language, dating and marriage, and children in the role of a teacher

- **Nobody's Sphere:**
- Indifference to both the cuture of the home country and the culture of the host country

Assimilation   Marginalization

Integration   Separation

- **Ideal Sphere:**
- Conflict resolution
- Both - no "either...or"
- Robust self, not disillusioned

- **Parents' Sphere:**
- Nostalgia, challenges to gaining respectable employment, disillusioned self, ambivalent attitude to the host country, psychological compensation

As illustrated in Diagram A, the parents and the children are in two opposite acculturative spheres; the children are being pulled back by the parents' acculturation strategy of separation while the children do not want to come out of it. Neither children nor parents are in favour of the marginalization strategy. The acculturation strategy of integration is the ideal sphere, where both immigrant parents and children can feel at home, and this is cultural realm where the children's bicultural self becomes more robust and the parents' disillusioned and distraught self feels integrated and owned.

However, the data in the present study show that the South Asian immigrant families are on a trajectory of decreasing integration, and the parent-child relational dynamics is on a trajectory toward increasing separation. Most participants, especially those who had younger kids, expressed their fears what if the widening acculturation gap between themselves and their children become much wider in the future. Hwang's (2006) has developed what he calls an "acculturation distancing theory" that is defined as the "problematic distancing that occurs between immigrant parents and children that is a consequence of differences in acculturative

processes and cultural changes that become more salient over time" (397)[16]. However, as Hwang (2006) maintains, not all acculturation differences are problematic; only the persistent and widening differences create problems.

Looking at the parent-child conflicts in a different light, some parents viewed their tussles merely as generational problems, rather than the ones caused by the "acculturation gap." One participant, who immigrated to Canada in 2010 and now lives in Waterloo with three children, said that some of the parent-child issues are more intergenerational than acculturative:

> They take sometimes food with laptops, this isn't because of this culture or that culture. This is sometimes up to them. They take their food to their room with their laptops. But I like everyone sit and eat together. It is actually generation problem.

Most parents, however, held that it is not easy to distinguish intergenerational problems from acculturative issues between parents and children. Sometimes the problems are intertwined in a complex manner. For instance, desire for more freedom and autonomy is considered to be a natural psychological change in adolescence, and the parents could likely take children's demand for more autonomy as an influence of the western culture. Some parents mentioned the fear of losing control over their children as a major issue that keeps them always worried. Shariff (2009) says that granting more autonomy to the children is not considered desirable in the South Asian culture since it implies a failure of good parenting. In such a situation, the parents may look at their children's demand for freedom negatively, causing more parenting stress among South Asian immigrant parents. Consequently, the parents could react to their children's "divergent cultural preferences with anger, increased levels of monitoring, and psychological control (i.e., instilling feelings of guilt and shame) to redirect their children's behavior"[17]. A woman from Bangladesh expressed her anxiety this way:

> They don't take it that seriously but for me whenever my children are going outside, they should at least inform me they are going. I think it's their responsibility to let me know that, and it's not that I'm not trusting them. Sometimes he argues with me—mum, it's not possible every time.

Similarly, a majority of the parents shared their stories of how they were helped and taught by their children during the initial period of transitioning into the Canadian society. The parents looked at their children's role reversal in two ways. Some parents said that they were happy to learn from their own kids, and it gave them some kind of joy to see their children's intelligence. One participant from Pakistan was happy to share how she was helped by her children:

> There're lots of things on computer that I don't know. They helped me and in that sense they're my teachers. Thy told me lots of things about where to go for what, how to catch a bus and all that.

However, a few parents said that they did not like the way they were being taught by their children, who learned things here. It is perhaps because in most South Asian subcultures, only

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[16] Hwang, Wei-Chin. "Acculturative family distancing: theory, research, and clinical practice." Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training. 2006, Vol. 43, No. 4, 397–409.

[17] Shariff, Aneesa. "Ethnic Identity and Parenting Stress in South Asian Families: Implications for Culturally Sensitive Counselling." Canadian Journal of Counselling / Revue canadienne de counseling / 2009, Vol. 43:1 35.

elders are fit for teaching and the children's job is to be obedient to elders and learn from them. A male participant from Nepal, who has lived in Canada for three years with teenaged son and daughter, expressed his dislike this way:

> I think it is mainly behaviorly things that I want them to change which they don't. They are accustomed to it, they don't want to change. For example, I want them to go to bed around twelve and get up at six. But they stay until 1 at night and get up around nice in the morning. I say that this isn't good sleeping habit. And especially my daughter is quite obstinate- she does nothing. I rely on my son to get most of the things done.

Shariff (2009) maintains that in the South Asian culture, parental gender roles tend to be clearly defined, with mothers being traditionally responsible for doing daily household chores and be involved in child-rearing activities, while fathers are responsible for breadwinning for the family and disciplining children (41). The fathers who are brought up with this cultural value deeply rooted in their minds become more stressed when they realize that their children are not in their hands. Within the context of differential parenting responsibilities, South Asian fathers' heightened stress may be partially explained by their responsibility for managing and enforcing appropriate behavior in their adolescents[18] (41). When fathers fail to succeed in disciplining their children's behavior, and in particular the "character" of their daughters, they experience increased stress and feel as if they have failed in their parental duties[19].

When asked if they ever talked to their children about the challenges they had to face during the initial transitioning of their children into the Canadian society, most of the parents said that they did not. Since the parents themselves were immersed in dealing with their own social, economic and psychosocial, they were indifferent to the acculturation stresses that their children had to go through. The sudden intervention of the Bangladeshi teenaged girl could be interpreted as an outlet to her pent up emotions of suppression and pain. Such a situation could be extremely detrimental to the wellbeing of the children. Akhtar (2011) asserts: "Often, however, the immigrant parents are too overworked, tired, and struggling with their own psychosocial turmoil to the extent that they cannot pay attention to their child's distress. Under such circumstances, the early experiences of biculturalism become traumatic and intensify early developmental conflicts, setting up a vicious circle whereby problems at school and problems at home begin to compound each other (166).

The data also revealed another important dimension of the immigrant children's psychology. Akhtar (2011) argues that the children of immigrant parents feel ashamed that their parents are different from those of their friends and peers, and keep complaining about their parents' English accent, dresses, and even the foods they cook since they are not the ones familiar to the dominant society[20]. The desire to have the things that the dominant Canadian society has and also the desire to imitate their accent is the result of living at the margin. One of the parents, who has

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[18] Shariff, Aneesa. "Ethnic Identity and Parenting Stress in South Asian Families: Implications for Culturally Sensitive Counselling." Canadian Journal of Counselling / Revue canadienne de counseling / 2009, Vol. 43:1 35.

[19] Shariff, Aneesa. "Ethnic Identity and Parenting Stress in South Asian Families: Implications for Culturally Sensitive Counselling." Canadian Journal of Counselling / Revue canadienne de counseling / 2009, Vol. 43:1 35.

[20] Akhtar, Salman (2011). *Immigration and acculturation: Mourning, adaptation, and the next generation*. Lanham: Jason Aronson.

lived in Canada for almost 5 years and has two children, shared how his daughter, who is in her teens, talked to her mother one evening:

> You aren't learning English quickly. Sometimes they say—mum, you have to learn English fast so you can go with us and talk outside too. They're more concerned, they want their parents to be like other parents. They want us to speak English very nicely.

The children of the immigrant parents desire what they do not have; they desire what the dominant culture deems proper. In this context, the fact that the immigrant parents do not speak with a proper Canadian accent produces a feeling of interiority. What this subtly implies is the children's psychological desire to have their parents just like the parents of other Canadian peers.

When asked if they see the role of any external agencies to resolve the widening cultural distancing between the parents and children, almost all the parents emphasized that the parent-child relational issue is an internal, domestic problem, and if the parents allow the issue to be dealt with outsiders, it would be demeaning to children. Here is what one of the participants said about how he felt about seeking outside support in parent-child conflicts:

> For children it isn't good to expose internal things even with a relative. Just scaring them saying things like—I'll tell this to someone else. Initially I used that tactic but alter I thought that was going over things. It's ok if I expose my things to her but exposing the children's behavior to a third person might have a negative impact.

However, most parents were of the opinion that any third party interventions that aim to educate their children about the acculturation stresses and issues, that would definitely support to resolve the issues. Similarly, they also stressed upon the need to get their children involved in their cultural and community functions and events so that they would keep connected with their original norms and values.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study has investigated the acculturation-related problems confronted by the South Asian immigrant parents in the Waterloo region. The South Asian countries have a "long history of common way of life among the peoples inhabiting the Indian subcontinent" and what commonly characterizes them are some social values such as strong kinship ties, interdependence, and a great respect for age and authority, and this is what gives "South Asia" a single common identity.

The immigrant parents reported that the parent-child relational dynamics in the Waterloo region has altered resulting from the two acculturation strategies adopted by the parents and children. The children's acculturative mode is assimilation while the parents' acculturative mode is in actuality separation though they claim that integration is what they want to embrace. Consequently, the South Asian parents have experienced a two-tiered conflict: the conflict within the "self" and the conflict with their children. The internal conflict has caused a divided/split mentality, whereas the external conflict is socio-culturally estranging themselves from their children leading to what Hwang calls the "acculturation family distancing." The parents emphasized that they have discerned the widening distancing in areas such as demand for greater

autonomy, respect for parental authority, togetherness and sharing in the family, gradual disinterest in their original social and cultural value systems, degradation in collectivistic attitudes, use of certain 'rude" English words, and dating and marriage. Although almost all the participants emphasized that they do not intend to define their relationship as a "conflict" and that the problems are not "serious," they felt the need of addressing the issue at different levels. No respondents wanted the direct interventions of any third party into their strained relationships; however, any external interventions that aim to education their children about the challenges relating to cultural and social transitioning from their home countries to the Canadian society. The acculturation strategy of integration is the ideal sphere, where both immigrant parents and children can feel at home, and this is cultural realm where the children's bicultural self becomes more robust and the parents' disillusioned and distraught self feels integrated and owned.

Since the children were not part of the study, their narratives and experiences have not been included in here, except presenting their issues from their parents' perspectives. However, what the present study revealed is that the children, who are naturally living through the identity formation phase, have adopted assimilation as an acculturation strategy, whereas their parents want them to be disinterested or at least keep embracing their original value systems.

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