An inquiry into the identity constructions of the Bangladeshi diaspora in Greater Toronto Area

through their social networks

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Abstract

This study informs the fields of diaspora and transnational studies by contributing a qualitative analysis of the ways in which Bangladeshi-Canadians construct postcolonial identity in the context of their diaspora experiences. The research focuses on a specific Bengali speech genre, known as *adda,* and reflects on the social practices of Bangladeshi immigrant communities living in Greater Toronto Area. I use *adda* to highlight the voices and social practices of this Bengali speaking diaspora to broaden immigrant identity research through the use of culturally embedded methodologies.

Diaspora research has been strengthened by ethnographies that fore ground issues of power, representation and agency from the marginalized voices of both the researched and the researcher. Inter-disciplinary approaches in diaspora identity research can offer the researcher possibilities to explore culturally relevant sites of knowledge construction.

In this study, I explore two Bangladeshi social networks in Toronto comprised of 10 immigrants and myself, as participant observers. I use Bakhtin's conception of dialogism and Bourdieu's forms of capitals to develop a framework for analyzing the hybridization of our langauge, culture and social practices that Bhabha and Hall understood as third spaces.

The findings suggest that participant voices and social practices resist essentializing their identity into any singularity. The study also discusses the various cultural, social and religious capitals immigrants construct as imagined communities in the diaspora.

With this study, I intend to encourage future research into immigrant transnational networks that strategically reflect differences in class, religion, ethnicity or nationalism. Additionally, I hope to offer researchers a methodological approach to decolonize diaspora

research by incorporating culturally relevant social practices in their inquiry of postcolonial identity construction.

Résumé

Ce travail contribue au domaine d'études transnationales et de la diaspora en apportant une analyse qualitative de la construction d'identité postcoloniale des bangladeshis canadiens, dans le contexte de leurs expériences dans la diaspora.

La recherche se concentre sur un genre spécifique de la parole bengali, connu sous le nom d'Adda et porte sur les pratiques sociales des communautés d'immigrants bangladais vivant dans la région du Grand Toronto.

J'utilise l'Adda pour mettre en évidence les voix et les pratiques sociales de cette diaspora parlant bengali, pour élargir le champ de la recherche d'identité des immigrants, grâce à l'utilisation de méthodes intégrées culturellement.

La recherche de la diaspora a bénéficié beaucoup d'ethnographies qui soulèvent les problématiques de pouvoir, de représentation et de libre arbitre des voix marginalisées, soit des sujets étudiés, soit du chercheur lui-même.

Approches interdisciplinaires, dans la recherche d'identité de la diaspora, peuvent offrir aux chercheurs possibilités d'explorer les sites culturellement pertinents pour la construction de la connaissance.

Dans l'enquête, j'examine deux réseaux sociaux bangladeshis à Toronto, composés de 10 immigrants, y compris moi-même, en tant qu'observateurs participants.

J'utilise le concept du dialogisme de Bakhtine et le concept des formes de capital de Bourdieu, de manière à élaborer un cadre pour l'analyse de l'hybridation de notre langage, culture et pratiques sociales, qui Bhabha et Hall ont compris en tant que tiers-espaces.

Les résultats suggèrent que les voix des participants et des pratiques sociales résistent à l'essentialisation de leur identité dans toute singularité.

L'enquête aborde également les diverses capitaux culturels, sociaux et religieux que les immigrants construisent, en tant que communautés imaginées dans la diaspora.

Avec ce travail, je voudrais encourager la recherche dans les réseaux transnationaux d'immigrants, qui reflètent stratégiquement les différences de classe, religion, origine ethnique ou nationalisme.

En outre, j'espère offrir aux chercheurs une approche méthodologique pour décoloniser la recherche sur la diaspora, en incorporant des pratiques sociales culturellement pertinentes dans leur investigation sur la construction de l'identité postcoloniale.

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memories of our tireless skyping, tedious revisions and realizing that half of all learning lies in ways of connecting with others.

Much thanks goes to the research participants some of whom are my closest friends and whose identities I am not permitted to disclose. They have honored me by sharing their life stories for a greater understanding of Bangladeshi immigrant identities in the diaspora. Lastly it would be unfair without mentioning the help of Financial Aid and Department of Integrated Studies at McGill University for making this academic journey possible for 6 long years.

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Abbreviations

Session MG1	Mosque group interview session 1
Session NG1.2	Neighborhood group interview session 1 at Toronto
	Note: First digit before dot (.) is the serial number of the session
	Second digit after dot (.) indicates the location of the interview; [1 for Mississauga and 2 for Toronto]
NG1.1, T2	Transcript excerpt 2 of first Mississauga neighborhood adda session
Reflexive Journal 3	Third entry in the researcher Reflexive journal
GTA	Greater Toronto Area
BDesh	Bangladesh
REB	Research Ethics Board
JI	Jamaat-e-Islami, an Islamist political party in Bangladesh
AL	Awami League, the ruling party in Bangladesh (1996-2001; 2008-)
BNP	Bangladesh Nationalist Party

P.B.U.H.   Peace be upon him, a salutation pious Muslims used after the name

of Prophet Muhammad

Chapter One: Situating Myself in the Inquiry

Introduction

This inquiry focuses on ten Bangladeshi immigrants to Canada who settled in the suburbs of Toronto and shared their diasporic experiences through their social networks. By social networks I mean the web of social relationships people generally form with others locally or globally through various socially situated practices, not particularly associated with the practice of online communities. I hope to understand and analyze the lived social, cultural and religious practices of their everyday lives that emerged from their social practices in these immigrant groups. These social networks offer pathways into their transnational lives, which include the crossing of multiple borders, languages and/or cultures and thereby the ways of making meaning of their multiple identities across many places and spaces.

The research reflects a postcolonial diaspora identity study of the Bangladeshi middle class in Canada, but is situated within the broader scope of identity studies. To date, the politics of a person's location and voice in ethnographic research on diaspora identity has been complicated by poststructural questions of agency and self. My attempts to speak alongside the many voices of other Bangladeshi immigrants make any singular definition of collective identity problematic at many levels of ruptures and allegiences. In this study, I have often felt like a "halfie researcher" (Abu-Lughod, 1991, p.137) an appropriate coinage for someone "whose national or cultural identity is hybridized by virtue of migration, overseas education, [or] parentage" (Abu-Lughod, 1991, p.137). It has been essential to recognize the continuous shifting political discourses, social practices and cultural norms that characterize diasporas, in a multicultural country as Canada, where languages and cultures get mixed as an outcome of rapid globalization, mass communication and movement of commoditites and people. Many

Bangladeshi immigrants, as part of the global migrant population displaced by various necessities of livelihood now live on the border zones of several cultures and languages where new identities and alliances have been formed. Without a particular and contextualized understanding of this transnational community and their transcultural identities, postcolonial diaspora researcher can be tempted to categorize them as mutually exclusive ties with a land or culture.

The literature on diaspora identity, and different forms of displacement or dislocation for groups is vast. It includes discussion of many social, conscious or cultural modes of production, as well as various spatial movements and hybridity (Hall, 1990; Vertovec, 1997; Clifford, 1997; Tölöyan, 1996; Braziel and Mannur, 2003). Diaspora researchers usually identify people based on the relationships they establish with a particular ancestral land, ethnicity or other unifying forces of globalization. Bhabha, Hall and Gilroy recognize diaspora in the cultural hybridity of migranthood, where home and host cultures intersect culturally and linguistically. In the words of Hall (1990, p.235) diasporas are "constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference." Shifting identities borne out of intermediate spaces that Bhabha (1994) calls the "third space" (p. 219), are imagined and invented. Globalization has disrupted antiquated concepts of dislocation from homelands and created new "epistemological, political and identinarian" reference points in the diaspora (Braziel & Mannur, 2003, p. 4).

The new affiliations of globalization have constructed many middle levels of existences among diasporas in a new mobility as people, goods, and ideas move around more frequently. In this deterritorialized connectivity where old spatial distance loses its significance as these disjointed localities become the center of a new "glocalization" (Bauman, 2013, p.1). Glocalization, borne out of this new mobility, connectivity and social organization, is the future,

the anti-thesis to Huntington's *Clash of civilizations*. I use diaspora in this study to reflect the "myriad, dislocated sites of contestation to the hegemonic homogenizing forces of globalization" (Braziel & Mannur, 2003, p.7). I understand immigrant identities as multiple, ambivalent and heterogeneous, and suggest that immigrants identify themselves in the interstices of imagined and real spaces. These spaces that are socially negotiated and constructed because they are rooted in specific historical and cultural displacement of a people. This thesis recognizes the hybridized, translated and trans-cultural identities of a specific group of Bangladeshi immigrants to Canada whose experiences presuppose a theory on that diaspora that holds their lives in a span of multiple spaces and places of belonging.

The Bangladeshi middle class immigration trend in Canada is comparatively recent, if compared with other South Asian classes of Indian or Pakistani origin. Initial immigration began mainly with students who settled here after their studies in the 1960's and '70s. From this point forward, I use the term "diaspora" instead of "immigrant" in this thesis to convey the ambiguity and instability of identity construction, including all sorts of national, ethnic, religious and linguistic designations. Immigration is not simply a movement across topographical landscapes, but a forward and backward shift in history between cultures, languages, and national and ethnic identities.

Colonial Bengali nationalists have used linguistic and national identity to fire the imaginations of the masses for a political and historic "homeland" since the early 19th century. However Muslims, in a postcolonial society, have also found the idea of belonging to a global *ummah* or community to be an important aspect of their identity as well. I recognize that these various ethnic, national and religious consciousnesses among Bangladeshi immigrants belong to many other diasporas living in Canada. I believe that social networks play important roles as

cultural brokers of identity construction for these groups. With this study, I attempt to find out the cultural, political, religious and historical experiences and practices that have become important to Bangladeshi diaspora as they seek meaningful communication within their social networks in Canada.

This study offers a culturally relevant method of storytelling to explore the identity constructions in oral settings of Bangladeshi social practice. Stories are shared in many ways; they are heard, seen, read, told, performed, painted, sculpted and written. In cultural studies, narratives have been explored as a boundless method of communication. As Barthes (1977) suggests: "Narrative is international, transhistorical, trasncultural: it is simply there, like life itself" (p. 79). Smith (2000) insists: "Narrative language provides access to subjective experience, providing insights into conceptions of self, and identity and opening up new ways of studying memory, language and thought, and socialization and culture" (p. 324). Stories offer up information about our lives and represent our experiences in a particular sequence. In educational research, short stories have been referred to as living narratives (Gergen & Gergen, 2006) because they provide a glimpse into our identities. Narratives are "identity-constituting social practices," (Juzwik & Ives, 2010, p. 41) that we exchange with others to demonstrate how we make meaning of our experiences. I take the position that we reveal ourselves through the stories we tell, prompted by a conscious will to respond to an outer and inner world of linguistic symbolism. Narratives can also help "raise consciousness" (Smith, 2000, p. 329) in communities by creating a shared history and group identity, especially in diaspora studies. Narrative methodology, therefore, offers many interpretive strategies to explore how identities are constructed in a globalized world where possibilities of thinking and being are infinite.

A culturally embedded methodology of storytelling in Bengali language known as *adda*, becomes my method of inquiry into the everyday lives of Bangladeshi immigrants in this study. In this qualitative inquiry, I use a focused interpretation of immigrant identities by bringing multiple lenses within a framework of analysis. I formulate these interpretive methods of inquiry using concepts from Bakhtin's dialogism (1981) as a way of interpreting the dialogue between self and others. I employ Bourdieu's (1977) understanding of social reproduction to explain how our behavior is acculturated socially in competition with others. I also borrow concepts of hybridity from the writings of Bhabha (1990, 1994) and Hall (1990) in the context of cultural diversity that posits identity as a continuous transformation of meaning. I aim to construct a framework using these interpretive lenses to analyze the multiple voices and practices in which immigrant lives are connected across the multiple spaces and places in the diaspora.

The Stories We Tell

In this section, I narrate some personal stories to construct differences or similarities with other Bangladeshis living in the diaspora. My diaspora experiences speak from a collective *we/us* where my stories overlap other stories. This is done to blur *my* own experiences from others to construct a unified *we* within the narrative. When I moved to Montreal as a newly married immigrant, I looked for a social network in a mosque community similar to the one I had left in a university campus in the Mid-West in USA. As an outsider to Quebec, I found comfort in a religious identity that offered the necessary mitigating and mediating role to overcome the intial linguistic barrier that was crucial to integrating into any society. Our past socio-historical experiences construct the choices we unquestionably make in our lives. We are all brought up in different universes of stories, sayings and proverbs, which predispose us to specific worldviews. Pierre Bourdieu, a French sociologist, calls these distinct ways of "standing, speaking, walking

and thereby of feeling and thinking" (Bourdieu, 1977, p.70) the inalienable habitus with which we all grow up. He argues that when our habitus confronts new situations that are not consistent with our familiar social upbringing, it affects us negatively. He terms these feelings, "hysteresis effect" (p.78) or plainly speaking—feeling like a fish out of water. More specifically hysteresis is "one of the foundations of the structural lag between opportunities and the dispositions to grasp them which is the cause of missed opportunities" (Bourdieu, 1977, p.83). It was one fall evening in a pro-seminar course I took as a part of my doctoral study program that I discovered how to react positively with my own hysteresis: a way of writing that suddenly became profusely personal and meaningful. The writings that were meant to be autobiographical narratives and called *memory journals* began with my earliest memories. I wrote the following text about a childhood memory in my doctoral pro-seminar class:

> My first weapon a bow and arrow carved from the verdant bamboo was a gift by a *santal* (aboriginal) who used to work for us, the sole interlocutor from an evanescent life, as timeless as the names of the rivers unchanged, since the days of the Rig Vedas. Half-Hercules, half-man I stood by the river, *karotoya*, hoping to catch a glimpse of the repenting Princess Behula (from the epic *Mangalkavya*), cursed by God, floating helplessly with her snake-bitten Prince. That world took no time to collapse as my already urbanized family slowly moved back to the center, to consolidate our education, future and a greater identity, whatever that meant. (Memory Journal 6, September 2008)

I wrote the texts in the Memory Journal, encapsulating a romantized childhood memory in a frame of movement, from the rural to the urban centers. Our semi-urban life had lasted only two years when my father was called back to the capital city from his outpost in a northern district in Bangladesh, as a government employee. The river of my childhood was a shriveled

canal next to a historical relic from a 7th century Buddhist seat of learning I had visited during that time. I reconstructed that particular childhood memory to present a childhood self in the pro-seminar class in my doctoral program. The process of accessing my earliest memories took place against the backdrop of reading Hampton's (1995), *"Memory comes before knowledge"* in the class. We were asked to write our earliest childhood memories, following Hampton (1995), in the hope of gleaning certain *knowledge*, just as he had wrestled with his own childhood memories, to lend meaning to his own life's journey. The memory work induced by these autobiographical narratives from teacher self-study was designed to bring forth a cultural narrative among doctoral students by "bringing memory forward" (Strong-Wilson, 2006, p.105).

In that pro-seminar class, these vignettes of memory journals were given a public space of significance as I shared them with other international students in a multicultural classroom. I constructed myself in relation to a mythological past as old as the paths of migratory ducks over my home in Bangladesh that was somehow elusively untraced in all my socially prescribed roles as an economic migrant, husband, father, mature student with somewhat unequal citizenship. This notion of historicizing myself in my childhood memory as an observer of a mythological past was also a form of opposition, a way of answering back to the project of academic writing. I evoked the blurring images of a mythologized river with a historicized past from my childhood memory in an attempt to create a "counter-story" (Greene, 1995, p.118) of modernity in response to my non-descript mundane life in Montreal. I framed myself outside the colonial history in my journal entries instead of challenging the master narrative of my newly adopted country of citizenship in Canada. I repeated this process of rewriting a personal past again in the context of my doctoral study, asking members of my social circles in Canada to retell their childhood. These individual stories became a way for me and them to frame ourselves together and

individually, responding to both the past and the present. In a conversation with my neighborhood social network I narrated a memory from my past:

> There is one photo of me…my sister… my brother… is not with us because he lived with our maternal grandmother. He was given to her care because we two brothers were born very close to each other, so it must have been hard for my mother to look after us both. He was given away to my grandmother. In that picture, my sister, my mother, father, myself we are all standing in the beach. There was a sea shell that we had brought back, if you held it against your ear you could hear the sea. We had it in our home for a long time. (Session NG1.1, May 2013)

This story brought to memory the absence and relocation of my brother, who was missing in the picture and hence from our family till he was rejoined with us, from my grandparent's care, at age seven. This particular memory had been stored away and forgotten except in a few testamentary evidences, buried in memory. When I asked my parents about this family portrait, they confirmed that no pictures remain of that particular trip because they did not have a camera back then. Yet so vividly real remains the snap-shot in my mind, till this day, providing a continuity with a past that was stable, happy and unitary. However, "no word is without its intense sideward glance at someone else's word" (Bakhtin, 1984, p.203). I re-constructed a narrative of my childhood in the diaspora as a category of difference from other Bangladeshi immigrants, one where the middle class families take vacations, collect souvenirs, take pictures of those moments and personalize history in their own family albums. I positioned myself culturally as part of a middle class consumption trend that is universally recognized. The childhood narrative was reworked first in the picture as a sign of urban middle class domesticity readjusted for Bengali parlour-talk by archiving its cultural investments. We all return back to

our memories, in an attempt to give our present some coherence, in relation to someone else's perspective. As I began to ascribe experiences to my childhood that were not real but "made real" (James & Prout, 1997) for a specific purpose, it appeared to me that our pasts are invented for our present. James and Prout (1997) write about how "different discursive practices produce different childhoods, each or all of which are 'real' within their own regime of truth" (p.26).

We all grow up immersed in stories most of which are not ours but a consciousness of others. These stories, both written and oral, are part of most childhood experiences anywhere in the world. Our lives are embedded in stories that speak of who we are and who we are not. My own childhood largely formed in informal reading sessions that usually took place in the afternoon when we, the children used to sit around our father, while he fought his siesta. He used to read aloud children's literature available in Bengali—the folk-tales from *Thakurmar jhuli* (Grandma's tales), the epic battles of *Mahabharata* and *Kerbala* and translations of Dickens, Defoe, Jules Verne and H.G. Wells. Other popular translations included Russian folktales from Gogol and Tugeniv (by Progress and Raduga publications) and *The Thousand and One Nights*.

However, the stories that enthralled me most were the ones that were told in family gatherings. Each occasion demanded a different variety. I used to savour the stories of the war of liberation of Bangladesh that were exchanged when father's colleagues came to visit. The liberation war was the last major disaster our parents generation thought they were lucky enough to live through. That was the year the world remembers with George Harrison's concert for Bangladesh in 1971. Social gatherings at home inevitably brought up diverse discussions that ran from alien life in space, to tricks on winning a game of bridge to the incipient third world war. Other childhood stories maintained a trans-generational thread of growing up in different places; mother's childhood in Rawalpindi, in Pakistan and father's childhood in pre-partition Kolkata.

Partition riots in India and Pakistan in 1947 had resulted into the largest cross-border movement in modern history. These stories were full of yearning, betrayal and narrow escapes, narrated in stunned disbelief and gruesome details of horror. The cracks in the macro-history of the world were filled with the traumatic episodes of human sufferings and courage where personal narratives were fitted into the historic montage of time. Mother had grown up in Rawalpindi, a cultural city in what was then West Pakistan. With the creation of Bangladesh, she lost her contact with the place and its people and eventually her first language, Urdu in which she has earned her Masters degree. Her childhood stories too had the elements of a rupture, a temporality followed by another rupture in a classic narrative of uprootedness. Retold from her mother about their death-dodging train rides across the most bloodied borders in recent history, these stories share the same fate of hundreds of thousands of refugees' desperate attempts to find a home away from home. The house they called home for the next 24 years was in a street deserted by the Sikh community of Rawalpindi, called *Arjun-nagar,* in the mayhem of the partition. When I visited that neighborhood, thirty six years after they had left it, the place had gone through several name changes. The newest occupants of that house where my grandparents took up lodging were still living as temporary residents, in fear of eviction notices from the government which still categorizes these houses as 'enemy properties,' abandoned overnight as the original owner became unwelcome enemy in a new state. It seemed obvious that for generations families who lived in these houses, had been no more secure in their homes than those who lived by the sea, always at the mercy of nature. These two braids of a single thread of memory, passed down to us from earlier generations, one of '47 and another of '71, set apart by twenty four years, became seamlessly intertwined with that of my own. My father began to write down some of these memories as he entered his seventieth decade.

My past is held together by a thread of inter-generational childhood memories. These stories, heard many times over as a child, became an integral part of me as they helped me construct a world of stories around me. I reproduce one such story from my father's blogsite. In the following story he distances himself as a narrator, mimicking his voice to that of a historian, rearticulating the history in which he and his children are caught up in the after shock of an air raid during the war in 1971:

> The eerie sound of jets and strafing struck thunder in their hearts. They rolled on the floor to go under the cots and tables whatever was available and collided with each other. I found them in a state of delirium and shock, bodies smeared in dust. [One child] was shrieking and trembling with folded hands [another child] expressionless with head rolling on shoulder. It seems everyone has lost countenance and identity; it was 'Keamat' [dooms day] for them […] (Ahmed, February 27, 2013)

The voice of the narrator, my father, is consciously removed from the *keamat* he describes, who becomes the hapless witness of his children's trauma, whose beginning originated in the tragedy of his own flight as a child refugee. These personal stories nested in the plot of another larger rupture in another life, make them like Russian wooden dolls, each one hidden in the enigmatic fold of another. The story just mentioned does not begin, nor does it end, with my father's memoir but merely points at the eventuality of evanescent life that my grandparents on both sides escaped in the riot-gripped India in 1947, unable to make sense of the fratricidal menace around them.

Oral stories such as these are part of a living history where our lives are caught up in repitition. I realized that our stories collectively become a prelude to who we would potentially

become. This consciousness of our own pasts already populated with other childhoods, pictures, words, people and their lives, into which and through which we author ourselves, makes us partial historians of a counter-history. The narratives of these stories question the historical perspective on colonialism, imperialism or nationalism by appropriating these stories in one's words, speaking through them. Bhabha calls this imitation, "the desire to emerge as 'authentic' through mimicry—through a process of writing and repetition" (1994, p.84). Bhabha's concept of mymosis and hybridity shows how postcolonial writing or textuality becomes a process of repetition of knowledge or power which can be understood by reading between the lines. Bhabha (1994, p.177) calls this identification, through textual representation, a process of subversion and ambivalence:

> [A]gency requires a grounding, but it does not require a totalization of those grounds; it requires movement and manoeuvre, but it does not require a temporality of continuity or accumulation; it requires direction and contingent closure but no teleology and holism.

The partial representations and identity effects I create for my audiences within my writings of my childhood—a mythologized river Karotoya, remembered family photographs and the stories of displacement and war—are just a few examples I give to present the ambivalence of my colonial mimosis in the diaspora. I am not the real author of my stories, as there could be many authors who always exist outside my spoken words. I am the product of a particular historicity of my life experiences to which I have the agency to respond creatively every time someone addresses me. I exert my agency in the way I choose or discard, appropriate or resist certain intentions over others, in my dialogues with other locations of authority by re-positioning my voice. It is in this double voice of orality and its textual representation that these diaspora Bangladeshi lives are presented for an analysis of their multiple identities.

Key Discussions: Identity, Nationalism, Voice, Adda and Agency

In the previous section, I attempted to represent myself through a discussion of my growing up surrounded by stories, both oral and written. I also argued that the personal and the social aspects of our identities are implicated in our stories, which can be analyzed to locate the various consciousnesses to which we speak. I now provide some definitions of the key concepts of identity, agency, power and consciousness to contextualize the theoretical bases of this study that I would present in the next chapter. Within the social constructionist views, identities have been understood along different dimensions such as discursive domains (Brown, 2004); shared membership (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Watherell, 1987); power relations (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004, 2005) or relational with space and time (Norton, 2000). Poststructuralist and postcolonial theorists such as Hall (1990, 1996) and Bhabha (1994) understood identity as a dynamic process of production— socially constructed, negotiated and constituted through discursive practices and representation— with many inherent spaces or places of indeterminacy, ambiguity and contradictions. Interpreting identity as unstable, incomplete and ever-changing product of discourse against exclusionary or inclusionary power play, leaves the role of agency problematic. The meaning of these identities hinges on the sociopolitical meanings of the semiotic systems inherent in their social actions. For Bengali middle class immigrants, *adda*, a situated knowledge construction in the orality, offers such a social action wherein identity is negotiated, constructed and given a methodological consideration, can be questioned for agency.

The one narrative that I have chosen to tell our diaspora stories is *adda*, a Bengali speech genre that I briefly introduce here. According to the Oxford Dictionary online edition, *adda* (pronounced, *ud-dah*) is "a place where people gather for conversation" (*Adda*, n.d.) or an act of informal conversations among a group of like-minded people. The word *adda* denotes both a

place and the action itself. To 'give' *adda*, or *adda deya* in Bengali actually means the situated

activity and the participation in the activity itself. Satyajit Ray, the famous Indian film-maker

shows the origin of *adda* in his movie *Agantuk* (1991) in ancient Greece where rhetoric was

practiced in the pursuance of truth. However *adda* can also be argued as more native to India,

than to Europe as the study of logic had been an integral part of the Hindu and later Buddhist

religious learning, known as *tarka sastra,* in the ancient universities of Nalanda and Taxila

(Vidyabhusana, 1988). The social context of *adda* thus is adversarial to any authority of

knowledge or power. This stylized narrative is important for my inquiry to take place where

history, memory, knowledge and identity intersects in the ruptured spaces and places of a

diaspora.

As a "halfie" (Abu-Lughod, 1991, p.137) researcher who has spent his life traversing

between two different systems of learning, one in Bangladesh and another in North America, my

insider knowledge on Bengali social practice of *adda* is mainly a lived experience. *Adda*'s

lexicological meaning in colloquial Bengali is the place or the act of an engaging conversation

among like-minded people. Seeley (n.d.) introduces *adda* as the cultural space of Bengali

identity construction,—"a combination of 'bull-session', 'kaffe katsch' and 'soiree'"—the most

favourite pastime of every self-respecting Bengali. *Adda* is most aptly recognized in Bengali

language as the speaking-talking-interactive performance within a talking-circle. *Adda* is thus

both a mediated speech genre and discursive practice through and in which (hi)stories are told

and contested. I do not remember when I first began *giving adda*. The Bengali idiom is to give or

strike up an *adda*. It must have happened as subtly as a child starts picking up words and

knowing when to use them.

Bakhtin argues that our "speech turns out to be the key to the nature of human consciousness" (Bakhtin, 1986, p.256). Consciousness according to Bakhtin is constructed in a dialogical interaction where our worldviews are "embodied in voices" (1984, p.296). He points at the intercontextuality of human speech in a plurality of consciousness. Our speeches are not isolated occurances but "living utterance[s], having taken meaning and shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment" (Bakhtin, 1981, p.276). Bakhtin showed how through the mastery of writing, Dostoyevsky, a master narrator of Russian literature was able to make his readers connect with other voices in the text. Contemplating the characters Dostoyevsky created, Bakhtin says that each experience or thought, "lives a tense life on the borders of someone else's thought, someone else's consciousness" (Bakhtin, 1984, p.32). Thus, Bakhtin (1986) displaces the agency of the writer or author from his or her story by linking those utterances to a "chain of speech communication and with respect to other related utterances" (p.93). The diaspora-based *adda* for the immigrant can be seen as an enunciated conversation where all different consciousnesses become animated in a dialogic relationship.

Our identity, according to Said (2006) is "what we impose on ourselves through our lives as social, historical, political and even spiritual beings" (p.85). Hall also corroborates to this multi-dimensional view on identity. He says, "Identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by and position ourselves within, the narratives of our past" (Hall, 1990, p.225). Mere acts of remembering through our narratives, both written or spoken then makes identities a continuous creative play of history, culture and power that is in the processes of becoming. Hall (1996) understands identity as "constructed within, not outside discourse […] produced, in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies" (p.4). I use the word discourse to mean not only

spoken and written language but also social identities used in constructing and legitimizing a certain reality of history. I use discourse as an identity kit in the same way Gee distinguishes discourse from Discourse, with a capital D —to mean "forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes and social identities as well as gestures, glances, body positions, and clothes" (Gee, 1996, p.127). The meanings we give to our pasts "constituted in narrative, always representation, always construction," (Hodgkin & Radstone, 2003, p.2) are neither fixed nor true. We rewrite our pasts with the intent to logically flow into our present with a "mixture of history and myth" (Mitchell & Reid-Walsh, 2002, p.62). Our stories are thus forms that give us a sense of our self, identity and agency by bringing the voices, places and subjects within it into a frame, so that the author or narrator in it can be made visible for further identity analysis.

Postcolonial writers such as Chatterjee and Chakrabarty offer a criticism of history by questioning who owns that history. To them nationalism or history in the Indian context is cultural projects initiated by the elite middle class intellectuals of the nineteenth century. Nationalist sentiments for the elite Indian bourgeois born out of the colonial encounter, "flowed out of an unconcealed faith in the basic goodness of the colonial order and the progressive support of the colonial state" (Chatterjee, 1986, p.28). Colonialism has to be regarded as "the essential condition for the formulation of that agenda" (Guha, 1988, p.3). The argument postcolonial writers make, is from the basis of domination and power in the production of a colonialist historiography. European colonization exported two forms of knowledge in India, a history and a capitalist economics for the Indians to construct a home in its image. Indian history has been told through a double-bind of the "modernizing elite and a yet-to-be modernized peasantry" (Chakrabarty, 1992, p.349). Bhabha too has criticized this normalizing knowledge system of the imperialist nation-state as inherently incomplete and mimetic. Colonial imitation or

"mimicry emerges as the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal. Mimicry is, thus the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which 'appropriates' the Other as it visualizes power" (Bhabha, 1994, p.82). Bhabha observes this mimicry in the postocolonialist writings of Naipaul, Anderson and Rushdie:

> [w]hat emerges between mimesis and mimicry is a *writing,* a mode of representation, that marginalizes the monumentality of history, quite simply mocks its power to be a model, that power which supposedly makes it imitable" (Bhabha, 1994, p.83, emphasis in original).

I speak in the ambivalent voices of these mimic-men, my colonial ancestors whose self-representations, a strategic split between normative history and mimesis have become integral part of my middle-class identity that Bhabha (1994) calls "identity-effects" (p.86). Our stories in the diasporia provide the discursive spaces where identities can be analyzed by explaining why certain narratives are imitated and thus internalized while others are resisted and denied space.

My agency in all my transnational subject positions, hyphenated between my Canadian-Bangladeshi selves, speak from many different voice positions, submitting, resisting, or assimilating the other. Radhakrishnan (1996) brings the question of power in identity by asking "which [identity] has the power and the potential to read and interpret the other on its terms" (p.221)? The many spaces and places of my pluri-cultural and multilingual identities give me the choices to live on the border zones of different languages and nations with a constant re-positioning of identity against a grand narrative of World-history. These shifting identity representations also allow me to appropriate various hegemonies to resist various other racialized and minoritized positions in the state.

I use the *adda* narrative in a decolonial bid to "return the gaze" as Chakrabarty (1992, p.338) hoped to do in *Provincializing Europe* by appropriating the language of the colonizer and get back some of the power that we in the colonized world had lost to speak from our own knowledge. I use the double bind of *adda* as a way of self-identification in this study of Bangladeshi diaspora by resisting authorial knowledge of history and replacing it with another. *Adda* is not only the received language of bourgeois modernity; it is the language of resistance as well. In a globalized modernity, where transnational realities define the politics of identity, *adda* for the Bangladeshi diaspora provides a form of linguistic resistance. *Adda* embodies an in-between space between the hegemonic and the marginal discourses where identities can be ambivalent, indeterminate and fluid in the transcultural spaces of the middle class Bangladeshi diaspora.

Summary of Chapters

In the introductory chapter, I situate myself within the identity transforming stories I grew up with and the role of storytelling in this study. I provide a brief introduction of the key concepts I use through out the thesis with the theoretical frameworks which are discussed in detail in Chapter Two. In the conceptual chapter, I present my focused analytical lenses using dialogism (Bakhtin, 1981) and the theory of social reproduction (Bourdieu, 1977). Bakhtin offers useful heuristic ways to analyze dialogized speech acts through polyphony, expropriation, ventriloquism or double-voice. Bourdieu on the other hand develops forms of capitals which can be individually accumulated and profitably exchanged to increase competitive advantages from others. These two theoretical frameworks as understood by Bhabha (1994) and Hall (1990), offer an explanation of hybrid identities that I apply to understand diaspora immigrants' constructions of their cultural and textual representations. In Chapter Three, I develop my research questions

and the methodological approaches that I use in building the analytical framework to understand

diaspora identity. Chapters Four to Seven are devoted to answering each of the four research

questions starting from the very first that inquires into the cultural and social investments of

Bengali middle class constructions. I answer the first research question in Chapter Four by

constructing the cultural productions of the colonial Bengali middle class (*bhadralok*) using a

postcolonial critique from Nandy (1983) and Chatterjee (1993). In this chapter, I try to show that

the Bengali middle class is a fractured modernity of both provincialized and metropolitan

identities that have not been able to reconcile with their colonial and plural pasts. In Chapter

Five, I answer the second research question that inquires into the site of *adda* as both a

methodology and tool of inquiry. I explore the situatedness of *adda* as a discursive site of

identity construction where the speaking subjects of the participants and their social practices

become the objects of inquiry. I provide brief backgrounds on the two social networks I base my

study on and how the recruitment procedure of prospective participants was carried out. I address

my findings, analysis and discussion of the study in Chapter Six. This is where I formulate a

two-part answer to my third research question that looks for a postcolonial Bangladeshi diaspora

identity construction. In the first part I use an analytical framework drawn on Bakhtin's (1981)

dialogism and in the second part I use Bourdieu's (1977) understanding of habitus and capital as

interpretive lenses to investigate both the voice positions and social practices immigrants use in

their everyday storytelling. Chapter Seven answers the final research question that looks for a

self-reflexive and productive pedagogy in inter-cultural studies. I show the difficulty of studying

immigrant identities from a position of a hybridized subject, through textual representations of

adda where negotiation over voice is always unresolved. I introduce my own reflexivity as a lens

to shed light on the competing multiple selves that often resist my prescribed role as a diaspora

researcher. I propose a more focused interpretive work on hybridization as a survival strategy in the diaspora and transnational spaces that complicates constructions of multiple identities in third spaces.

Glossary

Following is a list of words whose origins are other than English. I make frequent reference to these words in my text:

Adda group	Social networks of informal talking circle
Bhai/Bhabi	Brother/Sister-in-law (Bengali)
Bengali/Bangla	Language spoken largely by people in Bangladesh and West Bengal, India
Bhadralok	Gentry class in Bengali (masculine); Bhadramahila (feminine)
Deen	A way of life that encompasses both spiritual and worldly views. (Arabic)
Dhamma	Code of ethics (Sanskrit)
Glocalization	A portmanteau of globalization and localization, first used in Japanese business practices
Hijrah	Event of Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) journey from Mecca to Medina in 622 AD (Arabic)
Madhab	Religious School of thought (Arabic)
Samajik	Pertaining to a social order (Bengali)
Ummah	Global Muslim community (Arabic)

Chapter Two: Conceptual Context

Introduction

In this chapter, I present my theoretical framework combining two analytical lenses: dialogism and forms of capital. I use concepts of hybridity mainly from Hall and Bhabha; dialogism from Bakhtin and capital from Bourdieu's notion of social reproduction. In this chapter, I mainly articulate the problems of defining immigrant identity construction within the disciplines of diaspora studies and transnationalism. I then introduce the main theoretical concepts of hybridity, capital and dialogism that constitute the bulwarks of my analytical framework.

I take the position that identity is not fixed but a process from which people create new activities, worlds and ways of being. Identity is a "process of becoming rather than being: not 'who we are' or 'where we came from,'" (Hall, 2003, p.4). It is based on an understanding of one's shared knowledge of culture. Cultural anthropologist Geertz (1973) understood culture as the web of significance that we spin around us. Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain (1998) corroborate Greetz's view of culture by linking identity to the way we represent ourselves to others. Greetz (1973) noted that, "people tell others who they are, but even more important, they tell themselves and then act as though they are who they say they are" (p.3). The whole point of a semiotic approach to culture is "to aid us in gaining access to the conceptual world in which our subjects live so that we can, in some extended sense of the term, converse with them" (Geertz, 1973, p.24). Our actions, ideas and stories thus become the text with which and through which we participate in our community and make sense of our world. I am interested in this conceptual world of Bangladeshi immigrants through their social actions of storytelling.

Culture is the context in which human actions and behaviors can be understood. We are all enculturated to think, act and speak by growing up in specific communities validated by specific moral, political or national institutions. However this view of culture as body of ideas transmitted through generations is not static but accepts culture as a set of dynamic and adaptive systems susceptible to change. Bakhtin (1990), another Russian scholar and literary critic whose ideas on double-voicedness in language became famous posthumously, said that, "one must become another in relation to himself" (p.17). Bakhtin (1990) explains how an outside vision of the self enriches one's own life, for in that position one can see and know what the self do not see and do not know from his or her own place. He pointed that in the realm of culture, this "outsideness" (Bakhtin, 1986, p.7) is a constituent factor in understanding the dialogic relationship. I later return to Bakhtin again in the discussion of his dialogism in detail. Dialogism becomes one of the theoretical focuses in this study on voice. French sociologist, Bourdieu, whose theory of social reproduction, developed in the context of colonial Algeria, shows how our identity is enculturated in the societies in which we grow up. He observed forms of capital in our social spaces that we cultivate to increase particular habitus or mentalist dispositions. The dispositions associated with habitus construct implicit knowledge for social action and produce beliefs and perceptions in the individual about existing social structures. Bourdieu's (1977) forms of capital and habitus provide heuristic devices with which to study social and cultural reproductions in a specific society and illustrate why certain social actions are valued differently than others. I use a speech genre as an example of a culturally embedded social action of the Bengali speaking population that I introduce later as a conceptual framework, to understand the Bangladeshi middle class constructions.

Defining Diaspora and Transnationalism

Transnationalism and diaspora are the two main key concepts in global theories of migration. They tend to overlap in explaining the conditions of migration, mobility, technologies and social networks which have defined life in the twenty-first century. Diaspora usually brings to mind the Greek meaning of *dispersion*; sowing of seeds, or migration often through forceful uprooting. If nations are people who are "in place" (Fenton & May, 2003, p.14) in a certain geopolitical entity as the logic goes, then diaspora must belong to those "out of place" (Fenton & May, 2003, p.14) belonging to a larger place linking home and exile. These are the old Diaspora (often written with a capital D) imaginaries associated with the dispersion of people by a variety of economic, political or social forces with or without a homeland to return. From this perception, diaspora is a product of history because of its implicit motivation to maintain a collective memory of a geographic territory and its religio-cultural traditions. There is a conscious effort in the diaspora to maintain a connection and commitment to another land, culture, faith—real or imagined. In this view a diaspora identity is an experience between the two dialectics of location/dislocation and belonging/longing. A broader meaning for diaspora is used to describe people whose dislocation is not only geographical but also related to spaces, often within a group of people with similar histories, with an attachment to other places of origin. In today's world there are probably more than 100 million people residing outside the country of their birth. A famous Canadian author, M. G. Vassanji (2006) speaks about his attachment to multiple places:

> I live on such and such a street, in Toronto or Winnipeg or wherever; I have lived before in other places that I could name for you; I have brought up two or three children, I pay my taxes, contribute to a few charities, try to mow my lawn regularly…This is what I can

write about, this is what the inspiration was, where it took me: a street in Dar es Salam, a

village in Ghana, a tenement in Calcutta. (p.11)

Vassanji points to a cartography of cityscapes where identities are not only postnational

but tied to many places. Gupta and Ferguson's (1992, p.10) concept of community in unbounded

spaces applies to such a diaspora, "where displaced people cluster around remembered or

imagined homelands, places or communities." They reiterated that the forms of unbounded

transnational spaces in which mass movements of people, idea, culture, and technology flow

have rendered any sense of unmoveable identity bounded by space or place improbable.

Diasporas are thus "multilocal and polycentric" (Tölöyan, 2007, p.651) in ways people construct

and lay claims to memories and places making connections to a singular home problematic.

These recent diasporas are considered *transnational* as they "forge and sustain simultaneous

multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement"

(Schiller, Basch & Blanc 1995, p.48). Other diaspora researchers such as Vertovec, agree that

there is a certain overlap between diaspora and transnationalism. Vertovec (1999) believes that

"dispersed diasporas of old have become today's 'transnational communities' sustained by a

range of modes of social organization, mobility and communication" (p.449).

Scholars in the discipline of transnationalism talk about transnational social fields (Levitt

& Schiller, 2004) or networks (Hannerz, 1996) within which migrant actors operate and

challenge the processes of assimilation into the host society both at individual and institutional

levels. The new diaspora (often written with a small d) for example includes not only the migrant

populations such as guest workers, refugees, international students or business communities but

also members of the gay community or environmentalists who unlike the old 'Diaspora' in the

new world are connected through travel, technology and media to multiple societies, homes,

roles, identities, and languages. Within this frame of new diaspora the notions of home are therefore "linked with the issues related to inclusion and exclusion which tends to be subjectively experienced" (Fazal & Tsagarousianou, 2002, p.11-12) through geographical and cultural boundaries. In *Theorizing Diaspora,* Braziel and Mannur (2003) make a distinction between diaspora and transnationalism. They do it by distinguishing the human actors and non-human actors that influence large scale displacements. Diaspora is created by the "human phenomenon" (Braziel & Mannur, 2003, p.15) that include the social, cultural, psychic, and experiential facets of life whereas transnationalism is effected by the impersonal flow of capital, goods, ideas, images and information. The term transnational community has become an analytical category to indicate the crossing of porous borders that challenges the concept of "cultural and historical mechanics of belonging" (Gilroy, 2000, p.123). Bhabha explains that "the creation of new minorities reveals a liminal, interstitial public sphere that emerges in-between the state and the non-state, in-between individual rights and group needs; not in the simpler dialectic between global and local" (2000, p.4). Bhabha's use of interstitial spaces are central to understanding how the new diaspora shifts identities in-between spaces by constructing cultural diversities or differences of nationalities, communities, or moralities. In this study, I use *adda* as a location of that interstitial space where Bangladeshi immigrant identity shifts can be observed and studied.

These interstitial spaces complicate our understanding of histories, language and nations as dialectically co-constructed. Hobsbawm's (1983) invention of tradition and Anderson's (1983) imagined community are concepts that underline the nation-state as an imagined or invented entity existing dialectically with the idea of the homeland. This prompts Pulojar (2007) to state that despite the rise of transnational or cosmopolitan communities, "nationalism is on the increase" (p.90). This is because national identities are historically constructed narratives of

shared, homogeneous and essentialised culture. Global diaspora on the other hand offers "myriad, dislocated sites of contestation to the hegemonic, homogenizing forces of globalization" (Braziel and Mannur, 2003, p.7). Appadurai and Breckenridge (1988) posit that globalization interrupts diaspora as production and reproduction of transnational social and cultural phenomenon resulting in a creolized contestation of culture, literature and politics of identity. Narrowly interpreted, both the nation-state and diaspora have more convergence than divergence as they construct exclusionist categories, by actively mobilizing certain imageries and articulations of differences to exist as opposites to each other. The racialization of Muslims, Jews, Hispanics or Blacks whether in Europe or in North America as unintegratable groups despite their continued co-existence in North Africa and the new world since the fall of Granada in 1492, has its moorings in imperialist hubris but not in cultural diversities found in their cultures and languages.

I do not think that our identities are essentially unitary but they are constructed of hegemonic discourses based on various ethnic, national and linguistic differences. The "domains of difference" (Bhabha, 1994, p.2) are central to understanding how diaspora populations negotiate their national, cultural or religious identities "in-between" (Bhabha, 1994, p.2) spaces. The nation-states, metropolises or neighborhoods provide many spatial and social networks for the different diaspora or immigrant groups to organize and represent themselves. I use the term immigrants interchangeably with diaspora as most immigrants started out as diaspora in the West. Even for second or third generation immigrants home is a place where forein-born people from different corners of the globe land and hold different inclusive or exclusive designations such as residents, citizens, guest workers, international students or other legal statuses. Many Bangladeshi immigrants adopt a moral imagination of being Muslim first before they consider

themselves Bangladeshi or Canadian in the diaspora because it provides them with narratives of purpose and models of action that are spiritually meaningful. The home, alienation and morality points to new ethical judgements between adopting incommensurable cultural values and choosing how to live a good life; or between a desire to return home and continue to suffer alientation in the diaspora. The desire to return sometimes is not the same as a desire to return to a physical place but often to a place in time that is in the past. I consider Bangladeshi immigrants as a transnational community whose lives are bound between multiple spaces and places across multiple ruptures in a complex way. I particularly use the transnational social networks of Bangladeshi immigrants that include their family relationships, religious institutions and social circles as they are connected through different social fields through which they exert power and exchange capital. I use their speech genre and situated social practice in these networks to analyze their unequal power relationship with the host society and culture.

In the previous sections I have attempted to explain the ways immigrants share the overlapping de-territorialized spaces and places with other diaspora and transnational communities of various ethnic, religious, geographical and linguistic affiliations. From the literature on diaspora and transnationalism, I pointed to the ways in which these different aspects of identities are often deflected, mixed or reified to create other proto-nationalist or syncretized identities. Diaspora thus is not only a place from where one is absent but it is also an identity construction within and against the borders of nations and languages in postmodern context. In this study I use the term Bangladeshi immigrants to mean both a diaspora community and trasnational community in which lives are stretched across a globalized diaspora spanning more than one originary place or space. They retain a sense of collective membership and concern for the wellbeing of their imaginary homeland which plays both a symbolic and normative role in

their transnational lives. I use the term immigrant along side diaspora in this study to complicate the nature of diaspora study in a multicultural society such as Canada where the term immigrant limit them from being part of these other diasporas.

In the following sections I introduce my theoretical framework consisting of three interpretive lenses: hybridity, dialogism and forms of capital.

Defining Hybridity: Between Bounded Places and Fractured Spaces

Hybridity is a complicated concept of identity politics in diaspora studies, postcolonial discussions and sociological texts. Multiple definitions of diaspora as discussed earlier makes theorizing hybridity in specific contexts difficult. The forces of globalism joined with identity politics of various categories such as nationalism, religion, culture and ethnicity have made any singular definition of hybridity problematic. Cultural theorists such as Appadurai, Clifford, and Gilroy have used hybridity to focus on the processes of creolization of cultures by way of painful dislocation, trauma and inter-racial exchange of identity. Caryle Philips, a Caribbean author, writes about the impossibility of being attached to any one place with multiple ancestries of African, European, Indian and Jewish roots. Hybridity in this sense is not often a choice, but something that had been thrust upon a people as subjects of a particular history. Postocolonial theorists such as Bhabha and Hall have valorized hybridity to focus on the cultural diversitites and differences instead of underscoring traumatic experiences in the diaspora. Hybridity in that way offers the ethnic minorities in a nation-state a positive identification of "togetherness-in-difference" (Ang, 2003, p.141).

Hall (1996a) coined the word *diasporization* to mean the "process of unsettling, recombination, hybridization and 'cut-and-mix' arising out of 'diasporic experience'" (p.293).

Hybridity in this sense is a universal phenomenon represented in the unequal economic and cultural interconnectedness by way of globalization and mass communication. Global migration is increasingly blurring the boundaries of distinction between the minority and the majority, making societies more heterogeneous with the emergence of a global middle class between the global underclass and a transnational class of the internationally priviledged. Hall (1996c) argues that identities are:

> "[T]he play of specific modalities of power, and thus are more the product of the marking of difference and exclusion, than they are the sign of an identical, naturally-constituted unity" (p.4).

Elsewhere Hall (1996c) reiterates identities as multiple:

> "[F]ragmented and fractured, never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic discourses, practices, and positions" (p.4)

Identity can be both stable and unstable depending on its "strategic and positional" (Hall, 1996b, p.3) advantage. Diaspora identities are "constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference" (Hall, 2003, p.235). Hall (1992) believes that contemporary cultural identities among transnational immigrants oscillate between two opposing collective identities, one unitary and the other hybrid. Identities reactively shift between "attempts to reinstate the boundaries of local, ethnic, national or religious community and a further outcome of globalization that is a greater cultural hybridity" (Hall, 1992, p.304). These cultural differences and similarities between the internal and external boundaries that Hall (1992) talks about in a dialectical tension set the parameters of discursive space in the immigrant

experience. Hybrid identity according to Hall becomes a dynamic process of construction, negotiated and constituted through discourse and representation.

Most postcolonial scholars including Hall and Bhabha agree that identity is performative, multiple and heterogeneous. Bhabha's (1994) concept of identity is similar to Hall's idea of difference borne out of negotiated spaces. However Bhabha brings a new dimension into hybridity from the position of power imbalance through an analysis of cultural signs. Bhabha (1999) talks about hybridization in the sense of negotiation "between texts or cultures or practices in a situation of power imbalances" (p.38-39) and how disadvantages are turned in a split of enunciation, into advantage. Bhabha uses cultural difference as a method of postcolonial resistance to initiate new signs of contestation by moving away from singular marks of class or gender differences. Bhabha believes that hybrid identities which had been negotiated from either singular or collective experiences, point to "an interstitial future, that emerges in-between the claims of the past and the needs of the present" (Bhabha, 1994, p.209). Multiculturalism in Britain is a good example of this hybridity that encourages the South Asians to "reproduce identities sharply separated by religion and language even though they share ways of life that are essentially the same" (Mandair, 2007, p.356). A study on young British Muslims show that, "religion continues to function as the local *community marker part excellence*" (cited in Rai and Sankaran, 2011, p.9, emphasis in original) even among the third generation. This religious hybridity is possibly true among the Muslim diaspora elsewhere in Canada. Identities are thus negotiated through agency, power and differences.

Bhabha (1994) discusses the notion of textual representation in cultural differences as a fractured and unstable process of shift stemming from an unequal position of power. Postcolonial concepts of hybridity problematize any dominant discourse in the diaspora whether it be race,

gender or class. Nonetheless, Bhabha's critique of cultural hybridity may appear essentialized. He writes:

> The representation of difference must not be hastily read as the reflection of *pre-given* ethnic or cultural traits set in the fixed tablet of tradition. The social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation (Bhabha, 1994, p.2, emphasis in original).

Representation to Bhabha is actually a reinventing of the past through a strategy of survival, a shuttling back and forth between national, transnational and international societies from which emerges his concept of "third space, a contiguous relationship between older and newer social and psychic forms" (Bhabha, 2003, p.32-33). In his understanding, "[t]hird Space, though unrepresentatble in itself… constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation" (Bhabha, 1994, p.37). Identity for the South Asian diaspora in Bhabha's writing, is rooted in specific historical and cultural displacement, dating back to its colonial contacts. Culture and identity, according to Bhabha (1994), has no fixed meaning, but opens up an in-between space for ambivalence and re-articulation through the "cutting edge of translation and negotiation" (Bhabha, 1994, p.37). He argues that any knowledge representation through this process can be appropriated, translated and reconfigured into something totally new, something other than "*in-between* space" (Bhabha, 1992, p.37). Hybridity as a transnational space is associated with this in-between-ness or third spaces where the negotiation among identities can occur giving individuals a sense of agency.

Cultural dialogues have been studied as a way of identity construction through negotiation between "sites of agency and locally and globally perceived, conceived, or lived spaces of possibilities" (Maguire, Beer, Attarian, Baygin, Curdt-Christiansen, & Yoshida, 2005, p.1426). Bhabha argues that any knowledge representation through this process can be appropriated, translated and reconfigured to something totally new, something other than in-between. It is this unpresented third space that "constitute(s) the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primodial unity or fixity" (Bhabha, 1994, p.36). According to Bhabha, "[i]t is the difference in the process of language that is crucial to the production of meaning and ensures, at the same time, that meaning is never simply mimetic and transparent" (Bhabha, 1994, p.34). He uses cultural difference as a process of signification of culture, viewed as an authorial "knowledge of referential truth" (Bhabha, 1994, p.33). This cultural difference is similar to Bakhtin's double-voicedness of an utterance "as a link in the chain of speech communication and with respect to other related utterances" (Bakhtin, 1986, p.93). Bhabha seems to indicate that by rethinking the dynamics of writing and textuality one can hope to challenge social structures by changing textual authority. However Bhabha's hybridity negotiates those spaces that are "continually, contingently, 'opening out', remaking the boundaries, exposing the limits of any claim to a singular or automomous sign of difference—be it class, gender or race" (Bhabha, 1994, p.209).

The interconnectedness of the diaspora population with the host country in an unequal position of power, either cultural or economic, defines the current reality of the globalized world. The new minority identity as a production of colonialism creates an "awareness of ambivalence

in our identifications ─with others, objects, ideas, ourselves─and its antagonistic 'choices'"

(Bhabha, 1998, p.124). These minority choices are often double-voiced as Gilroy (1993) speaks

about Black jazz music that cannot exist in "pure, uncontanminated or essential blackness

anchored in an unsullied originary moment" (p.99). What emerges in these third spaces is an

Afro-American "indeterminacy" (Bhabha, 1987, p.181) complicating the concept of culture.

Bhabha cites Prakash Chatterjee, a postcolonial historian to show how the boundaries of minority

literature have been ruptured:

> [I]t is difficult to overlook the fact that…third world voices…speak within and to
>
> discourses familiar to the 'West'…The Third World, far from being confined to its
>
> assigned space, has penetrated the inner sanctum of the 'First World, in the process of
>
> being 'Third Worlded' (Bhabha, 1999, p.363)

 Discourses in the diaspora are grounded in politics of identity where individuals and

groups have always strategically employed their cultural, historical, ethnic and territorial labels

to resist dominant structures both in the home and host cultures. Hybridity has to be understood

outside the traditional sense of acculturation where culture is conceptualized in a fixed territorial

or ethno-religious space, conflated with a cultural or national identity such as Bangladeshi or

Canadian. Such a model of acculturation cannot accurately account for the way the immigrant

negotiates, contradicts and contests homogeneous, stable and unequal power distributions

between two cultures. The "right to narrate" (Bhabha, 2003, p.34) could be one of the ways

transnational immigrants use their cultural, ethnic, and religious identities to signify, to interpret,

to communicate and demand respect. In Bhabha these choices of cultural texts are reflected

ultimately in the transformation of human agency.

I use hybridity to mean the cultural differences and textual representations in identity that reveals the fragmented, fluid and uneven character of the self. Hybridity as textual representation thus allows us to view identity as a positioning strategy for the diaspora individual against any hegemony of power by shifting identity within the interstitital and multiple fractures, borders, cultures, languages or religions for attaining specific goals.

In the following section I discuss Bourdieu's (1977) theory of social reproduction which he developed to explain the origins of social structures and human psychological dispensations. Bourdieu views social interaction in terms of developing certain human capital by changing social practices in order to compete successfully within a specific society.

Bourdieu's Theory of Reproduction, Capital and Habitus

Pierre Bourdieu, a French sociologist whose early research on the concept of social groups among certain desert tribes in colonial Algeria shaped his perception on social space, set forth his views in a Theory of Practice. Some of these thoughts were further developed in *Reproduction in education, society and culture* (1970, 1977b) in the wake of the educational reform movements in France in the sixties. Bourdieu saw little relation between human consciousness and social structure as a historical process. He held that symbolic systems such as language, myth, etc. are "objective structures independent of the consciousness and will of agents which are capable of guiding and constraining their practices or their represenations" (Bourdieu, 1989, p.14). Bourdieu takes a position on our social actions that, unlike Bakhtin, operate from within social structures and the semiotics of language outside independent will or agency. Bourdieu argues that an individual internalizes the social structures and commonly held beliefs, "below the level of consciousness and language, beyond the reach of introspective

scrutiny or control by the will" (Bourdieu, 1979, p.466). Socialization happens almost sub-consciously whereby one "knows[s] without ever having learnt" (Bourdieu, 1979, p.330). Bourdieu (1989) called his work "constructivist structuralism" (p.14) by distancing himself from the mentalist and linguistic structures of Levi-Strauss, which lend significance to semantic signs and symbols.

Bourdieu perceived social spaces as the locus of a constant struggle for power wherein people compete with each other for access to capital or resources. He proposes the existence of social fields as multi-dimensional space of positions based on a principle of economic and social differentiation. Efficiency in the struggle for the appropriation of scarce goods and property can be increased in the social spaces by increasing the powers or forms of capital. Bourdieu categorizes these fundamental powers or forms under various species of capitals such as economic, cultural, social, and symbolic which can be individually accumulated and converted into one another for profits. These species of capitals are expansive and not limited to linguistic, political, military, scientific or technological fields. The structure of distribution in society is reproduced by capital. Social capital "is linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintances and recognition" (Bourdieu, 1977, 46-51). Cultural capital includes a person's social positioning, power, prestige and recognition in the wider social context and one's competency to engage in the field. Institutionalized cultural capital includes one's formal education; informal education includes one's other skills and values transmitted from family, cultural acquisitions and affiliations with power centers. Bourdieu (1984, 1993) argued that cultural capital is closely associated with both economic and symbolic capital although all capitals are interchangeable within a field.

Bourdieu (1986) uses habitus to refer to the way a person knows his or her place in the world by acquiring specific forms of capitals. He says that a child becomes competent in his field as he or she internalizes these capitals from the environment. Bourdieu conceptualizes habitus as an organizing principle that functions as implicit knowledge learned through early socialization, as a "system of dispositions" (Lamaison and Bourdieu, 1986, p.11). A person's dispositions include "bodily postures, and stances, ways of standing, sitting, looking, speaking, and walking" (Bourdieu, 1977, p.15), which construct implicit knowledge for social action and produces beliefs and perceptions in the individual about the existing social structures and agency. He or she may inhabit more than one habitus; however any particular habitus is bound by that group's homogeneity. Thus, habitus becomes embodied practices of moral judgment, ethical commitments, or standards of aesthetics within a particular social space. The habitus is both a set of and source of social practices, deployed to acquire power or change social structures.

The key concepts Bourdieu introduced in his theory of cultural reproduction are species of capital, habitus and field. I briefly illustrate their relationships among them within a social space using a diagram (Fig. 1). A social space can be understood as as a set of distinct fields corresponding to different cultural, social, economic and political practices in a society. The field according to Bourdieu and Wacquant, (2007) is fluid along with the actors, actions, products and practices in that social space and how the groups interact with the fields and acquire capital or power. The field gives meaning to the capital and vice versa. The field is hierarchical because of the unequal access to capital, creating competition for dominant positions. It is important to define the field in which the actor functions in relations to his or her capital. A field's value can be judged from the   competition and through the exchange of different resources among the groups in a society. *Nomoi* (singular *Nomos*) are arbitrary constitutive structures of a field that

gives its capitals certain values. Habitus and capital interact together within a field to produce

practice or social action. Bourdieu argues that the mechanism of capital transfer in a field and

the rate of exchange varies from society to society depending on the volume of capital, nomos

and ease of transfer. The following diagram is adapted from Bourdieu's (1993, p.6) concept of a

field.
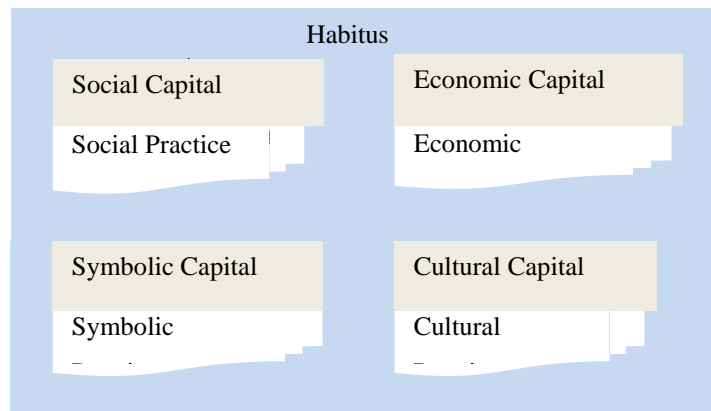
Figure 1: The Concept of Field

Bourdieu's theory of habitus proposes interdependency between the social structure and

its practice. He argues that individuals unconsciously internalize their objective social conditions

through bodily comportments such as class or other social forms of oppression. For example

influential actors of the intellectual community such as teachers or politicians, who can make a

difference in the social structure, are part of the dominant class because they exert cultural

capital. However they still have little impact in the Western society in the "overall field of

power" (Thévenot, 2011, p.57) compared to those who wield economic capitals. His study of the

French education system shows that certain fields of cultural production such as academic

institutions have their monopolies over others as "*there are always, in any society, conflicts

between symbolic powers that aim at imposing the vision of legitimate divisons*" (Bourdieu,

1989, p.22, emphasis in original). For example the richer sections of the society invest in cultural and educational capitals guaranteeing those future social relationships that are advantageous to their children economically. This leads to a problem of an accurate evaluation of "transport of worth" (Thévenot, 2011, p.45) between capitals of different attributes when a social change does take place.

Although Bourdieu's social theory of habitus fails to provide an explanation of social change, it is useful to provide compelling proof of social reproduction when people perform altruistic actions. Bourdieu believes that perception of social space is always plural and uncertain because perception is both a social construction and a product of symbolic power relations between groups. Thinking in this way allows us to imagine the social space as conducive to wider social negotiations and social exchange. All individual action in this way becomes product of fluid social relations which inform social practice and transform social structures. This view supports the idea that practice influences social structures. Bourdieu, Sapiro and McHale (1991) say, "[t]he struggle for autonomy is thus, first of all, a struggle against the institutions and agents which, inside the field, introduce dependence upon external economic, political, or religious powers" (p.663). Bourdieu gives the example of how during the times of economic hardship the universities always opt for autarky, rather than empowering those fields which are instrumental to bring about a change in the nature of control between the state and its auxiliary institutions. He offers the possibility of new practices and perceptions to emerge in the fields of arts, science, politics that can replace old structures in the field potentially reproducing new boundaries through ground-breaking collaboration and negotiation.

In his earlier writing, Bourdieu (1977a), did not offer any "genuine strategic intention" (p.175) for social change in the face of unequal distribution and access to capital. In his later

work, *Reflexive sociology*, he reminds us to "think with a thinker against that thinker" (Bourdieu, 1990, p.49). The theory of reproduction takes into account the agents' representation of their social identity that they constantly perform. Bourdieu (1999) is critical of the way globalization has exported certain social categories such as race to the rest of the Western world where multiculturalism has come to be understood mainly as an ethnic category without any attempt to access the instruments of (re)production of the middle and upper classes. Most of his work focuses on the link between cultural capital and educational attainment although some criticism remains on to what extent the impact of cultural capital on social reproduction and mobility is culture specific (Sullivan, 2002). Bourdieu's theory of cultural production with its limitations on habitus provides a heuristic device to study the field of nationalist practices and perceptions of Bangladeshi immigrant groups in Canada. The production of the Bangladeshi diaspora offers possibilities of identifying the social spaces they occupy, both cultural and religious in nature, where migration specific practices are socially negotiated. One can begin to understand the immigrant social world by investigating the perceptions, forms of capitals and structures that exist in their religious, family and social fields.

Bakhtin's Concept of Voice and the Dialogical Self

Mikhail Bakhtin, a Russian philosopher and literary critic, is best known for his initial contribution to understanding language as mainly an oral form in the development of culture and society. His original thoughts on heteroglossia and carnivalesque were based on his literary criticism of the genre of the novel as the highest form of art in *Rableis and His World* (1984). In his early writings, he uses words or utterances as the unit of analysis to investigate self and consciousness. Bakhtin's concept of the self comes with a consciousness of the other through speech. Bakhtin (1986) believes that "speech turn out to be the key to the nature of human

consciousness" (p.256). He proposes that one "must look at himself through the eyes of another" (Bakhtin, 1990, P.17) asserting that one's awareness of the self and the world enters into one's consciousness through others. Dialogic relationship with the other entails one being "located outside the object of his or her creative understanding—in time, in space, in culture" (Bakhtin, 1986, p.7). Thus, consciousness as a mental function is not an internal function of the self but a social product resulting from external social relations.

From the perspective of metalinguistics, Bakhtin's (1984) concept of language can be perceieved as the journey of any word in the movement of a particular language and discourse through different contexts and power relationships within a linguistic culture or social group. Bakhtin (1981) understood language as a discourse, peculiar to a specific group or society "within a given social system, within a given time" (p.430). It is primarily through the discursive practices of a social language and the resulting texts that we come to know and act upon the changes that take place in our social lives. For Bakhtin any language, whether spoken or written, social or national, is stratified into many dialects, characteristic group behaviors, jargons, etc., where the boundaries between languages are fluid. The languages of professional groups such as doctors, lawyers or researchers are all examples of different social languages.This movement of languages towards a specific community makes languages concrete worlds of "verbal-ideological social belief systems" (Bakhtin, 1981, p.288) that are intentionally shared with other languages. Dialogue encompasses "all human speech and all relationships and manifestations of human life—in general, everything that has meaning and significance" (Bakhtin, 1984, p.40). Dialogism for Bakhtin is a way of knowing the world, the self and others. Bakhtin is interested in the internal dialogism of the word, the semantic and expressive layers that cannot be separated from

the external composition of the word. Nowhere is it more evident than in language's highest art form, the novel.

Epistemologically, Bakhtin's dialogic conception of the world should not be interpreted as mere talk or interaction. Bakhtin uses dialogue in more ways than one: first as a description of language and second, as multi-voice. In this aspect dialogue is an act—a product of discourse shaped by utterances arising from different audiences and social factors. Dialogic interaction is built into the structure of any language. Bakhtin (1986) argues that any word, in any language exists in one of the three ways: as a neutral word, other's word or my word. A musical note could be imagined as a metaphor of language as it comes with overtone, texture, or frequency. A word or even an utterance in the Bakhtinian view can have many voices or intentionalities of others. Bakhtin (1981) uses dialogism in the context of one or many utterances when they come in contact with each other and "interanimate" (p.275) the voices of the other. Utterance is an important element of dialogism, as it introduces the concept of "addressivity" (Bakhtin, 1986, p.95) that requires at least two voices: the author and the addressee or the self and the other. Any understanding of a speech, according to Bakhtin, invites the listener to become a speaker, in one form or other. Maguire (2006) believes that to Bakthtin "the self is answerable and responsive to both self and the other" (para 2). Bakhtin distinguishes an utterance from a word or sentence as a "responsive reaction" (1986, p.91) within a chain of communication that precedes and follows other utterances. Bakhtin (1986) terms this responsiveness "adressivity" (p.91), in his understanding of utterance and agency. The addressee or the other in this utterance can come, dialogically speaking, in many forms. It could be any participant-interlocutor in a face-to-face or ongoing dialogue, an abstract "indefinite unconcretized other" (p.95), to which the speaker has a moral responsibility. Bakhtin's speaker, I or the self has implication for our understanding of

agency. One can claim a sense of responsibility when one holds the self as responsive or answerable to one's own consciousness. Each voice in a dialogue thus represents an agency, formed outside of the other and is mutually responsive. It is this consciousness or addressivity that gives Bakhtin's author a form of self-contained agency.

Another way of looking at the concept of dialogue in Bakhtin is through multivoice or heteroglossia. When the addressee and the addressor come into contact with each other's voices, the self becomes many-tongued, which Bakhtin (1981) calls "heteroglossia" (p.263). Heteroglossia is the condition that ensures the primacy of context over text in any situation. It means that "a word uttered in that place and at that time will have a meaning different than it would have under any other conditions" (Bakhtin, 1981, p.428). Actually heterglossia is a precondition of dialogue, as its absence transforms dialogue into monologue. Heteroglossia is "a struggle among socio-linguistic points of view, not an intra-language struggle" (Bakhtin, 1981, p.273). These points of views are "specific world views, each characterized by its own objects, meanings and values" (p.291-292). Bakhtin saw the novel as a high genre of art, where real life and consciousness intersect in multiple discourses —both textual and social. Bakhtin says, "[a] particular language in a novel is always a particular way of viewing the world, one that strives for social significance" (Bakhtin, 1981, p.333). In his criticism of Dostoyevsky and Rabelais, Bakhtin uses forms of dialogicality such as polyphony, expropriation, ventriloquism and double voice to show how voices are dialogized.

Another important concept closely related to heteroglossia is his concept of carnival, both lived and textual systems of language that celebrate opposition. The concept of carnival is much more complex than double-talk. Bakhtin explores the body as the center of consciousness, before settling on the word as the focus of carnival space. Carnival represents "the bringing together of

that which has been traditionally kept distant and disunified" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 170). Bakhtin uses carnival as a subterfuge against the hierarchy and rigidity of society to celebrate fluidity and indeterminacy. The carnival is a way the dialogical self takes a stance of ridicule, parody, agreement, disagreement, conflict, understanding, or ambiguity toward another individual position or state. Carnival becomes an exploration of otherness in the social, political and religious ways in which society can come together. Bakhtin's understanding of the world posits a double vision of self and other. In the absence of perception, one becomes relative, impartial and incomplete. Bhabha (1986) believes, "our real exterior can only be seen and understood by other people" (p.7), putting consciousness of the self and other co-existing in opposition to each other.

I now discuss two of Bakhtin's most important concepts to analyze construction of language: authoritarian discourse and internally persuasive discourse. Language is perceived by Bakhtin as a conflictual contact zone where many voices compete for dominance and hegemony. In this lingual warfare we constantly position and reposition ourselves in relation to and with other voices. In each social circle of family, friends and acquaintances, "there are always authoritative utterances that set the tone" (Bakhtin, 1986, p.88). Bakhtin (1984) maintains that dialogue can consist of a single utterance in the form of a double-voice with at least two conflicting meanings born of two different socio-linguistic consciousnesses struggling for dominance. Authoritarian discourse is the privileged language that is not context specific and writ large. The authoritarian word according to Bakhtin is:

> [L]ocated in a distanced zone, organically connected with a past that is felt to be
> hierarchically higher….[it] enters our verbal consciousness as a compact and indivisible
> mass; one must either totally affirm it, or totally reject it (Bakhtin, 1981, p.342-343).

Authoritorian discourse "demands unconditional allegiance" (Bakhtin, 1981, p.343) and refuses to engage in a dialogue. Internally persuasive discourse on the other hand is akin to retelling a text in one's own words, gestures and modifications. Our languages by and large are appropriation of authoritarian discourses by re-accenting, reworking and changing the intonation, making it internally persuasive, a process Bakhtin (1986) calls assimilation. It is the manner in which these authoritarian and internally persuasive discourses are assimilated, mediated, and mixed that provides a unique way of positioning oneself ideologically. The "semantic structure of an internally persuasive discourse is open; in each of the new contexts that dialogize it" (Bakhtin, 1981, p.346). Bakhtin (1981) writes that the "internally persuasive word is half ours and half someone else's" (p.345). This persuasive discourse acts as a heuristic device through which we can construct "new insights into its meaning, and even wrest from it new words of its own" (Bakhtin, 1981, p.345). In Bakhtin's discourse of langauge one finds a picture of consciousness within the movements of many voices, and discursive positions from authoritarian to internally persuasive discourse. Thus our everyday speech is full of authoritative discourses, some of which are merged with our voice, and populated with our own intentions, either benign or malicious. One liberates the self from the authority of another's discourse by developing an "independent, responsible and active discourse" (Bakhtin, 1981, p.349-350). It is by developing a critical reflexivity or an awareness of the construction of self that one begins to separate between internally persuasive and authoritarian discourses. This process is important for the development of human consciousness.

Dialogic relationships are thus universal in all human speech and relationships, "everything that has meaning and significance" (Bakhtin, 1984, p.40). Dostoevsky's novels offer Bakhtin a dialogical orientation of voices through which he sees the world. In Bakhtin, our

discursive positions are hidden in the dialogue within other peoples' consciousness in a complex

way and tell us something about our agency. In his book, *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics*

Bakhtin writes about the relational nature of consciousnesses.

> "[C]onsciousness never gravitates towards itself but is always in intense relationship with
> another consciousness. Every experience, every thought of a character is internally
> dialogic, adorned with polemic, filled with struggle" (Bakhtin, 1984, p.32).

It is this process of social negotiation and contestation between the different authorial and

persuasive discourses that adds layers of complexity to the identity construction examined in this

diaspora study.

Another reason why dialogism is a useful method of analysis for this study, is the way

voice can locate the asymmetrical power relationships that exist in a dialogue between the self

and the other. Transnational immigrants accept various racialized categorizations, acculturation

processes, and long-distance nationalisms as they negotiate their hyphenated, fractured or

multiple notions of identities and its spaces/places. The conflict of agency becomes problematic

when consciousness is questioned from the position of power. As I noted earlier, Bakhtin uses

several forms of dialogicality such as polyphony, expropriation, ventrioloquation and double-

voice to analyze voice in dialogues. The polyphony of the dialogical self do not stand alone

separately but rather "talk to each other, inform each other, suppress each other, animate each

other, and so on" (Bhatia & Ram, 2004, p.233). Sometimes the voices perform a dialogical

negotiation by enhancing agency for the self or the other or both. The fluctuations between

voices can easily construct a dialogically plural notion of hybrizied identity that is not

circumscribed by geographical space/time constructs and thus challenges identity as stable and

homologous. Identity processes can be studied by locating ventriloquation between voices which allows the voices to speak through the other by intoning the other's voice. When someone speaks as if someone else is speaking through him or her, that process is called ventriloquation, and can be both direct and indirect. The transnational identity negotiations in the dialogical self can be located through movement of voices between multiple and conflicting positions of power, culture, home, time, spaces and places. Bakhtin's concept of the dialogical self allows us to understand how plural, dynamic and infinite identity constructions are made in dialogue as one's words animate, assimilate and intonate other's voices. Dialogicality captures these heterogenic or variable identities within a single culture, which often go undetected in discourse analysis.

Thus dialogism provides us with an epistemological method of studying heteroglossia through the construction of identities where assimilation or integration is resisted by different modes of dialogization such as polyphony, ventriloquation and expropriation discussed so far. I use dialogicality as a strategy and heuristic device to identify how transnational immigrants do voice positioning to resist multiple other voices in a speech genre, by constructing various discourses and power positions inherent in a language. It prompts one to ask, who is exactly the author of the text when someone such as I —a halfie Bangladeshi-Canadian researcher, speaks up. Particularly important to me is, as Radhakrishnan (1996) asks the potent question, whose voice"has the power and the potential to read and interpret the other on its terms" (p.221)? More precisely, is the *Canadianized* Bangladeshi speaking through the text or would the Canadian voice ultimately submit to *Bengalicization*? The concept of voice not only highlights the plurality of cultures within a single self but also brings out the inherent contradictions, ambiguities and indeterminacies within the voices. Voices challenge the dominant concepts of

integration and models of identity and point to the fluid, dynamic, interminable and unstable hybridized possibilities that exist in the diaspora.

Summary

In this chapter, I present my conceptual framework of inquiry using a focused analysis of two lenses: dialogism (Bakhtin, 1981), forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1977). I also present the theory of hybridity (Hall, 1990; Bhabha, 1994) to situate my own immigrant self between the two dialectics of belonging and of longing for many unbounded places and spaces, both real and imagined. Hybridity as a process of "cut-and-mix" (Hall, 1996a, p.293) mode of surivial makes the transnational crossings through travels, memories and technology seem boundless and fluid. Transnational immigrants use various cultural, ethnic, and religious identities to form intermittent spaces and negotiate between these multiple spaces of inequality. Bhabha (1994) brings a dimension of agency that points at interstitial future(s), "though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation" (p.37).

Bourdieu saw no relation between human consciousness and social structure as a historical process. He perceived social spaces as a constant struggle for power, where people compete with each other for access to capital or resources. Bourdieu (1986) uses habitus to refer to the way a person knows his or her place in the world by acquiring specific forms of capitals from the environment. Bourdieu's accomplishment lies in his theory of social reproduction although the notion of habitus has been criticized for failing to produce social change.

Bakhtin's concept of the dialogical self provides us with a conceptual framework to study hybridized identity constructions in dialogue, as multi-voices or heteroglossia. He is credited for linking individual consciousness with the outside environment and social change. Bakhtin's

concept of dialogism becomes a useful heuristic device to analyze dialogized speech acts to

inquire into their hybridized identity constructions. He is credited for linking individual

consciousness with the outside environment and social change.

Chapter Three: Methodology and Methods

Introduction

I explore identity constructions of a small circle of Bangladeshi immigrant social networks in the Toronto Area drawing mainly from previous methodological research done on diaspora identity. I am influenced by postcolonialist and postmodernist writings by Hall (1990) and Bhabha (1994) on identity in the diaspora context. I also use a culturally embedded Bangladeshi social action called *adda,* as a conceptual framework to understand the Bangladeshi transnational identity that I briefly touched upon in the introductory chapter. My epistemic positions on agency in dialogism, hybridity and habitus have been dealt with in detail previously in the conceptual framework chapter where I discuss my theoretical presuppositions. In this chapter, I provide a detailed description of the methodologies I have used in developing an analytical framework to understand Bangladeshi diaspora identity constructions. I begin by addressing my research questions and situating the diaspora social networks as the study site. I then describe my recruitment process, data collection process, data sets and tools of inquiry. Finally, I explain my methods of data analysis and interpretation that I used to ensure ecological validity throughout the study. Ecological validity is concerned with approximating the real-world scenario in the research design by justifying relevant methodologies and methods of data analysis and interpretation without generalizing the results.

Research Questions

I use the concepts of hybridity, forms of capital and dialogism; three analytical frameworks in the inquiry of Bangladeshi diaspora identity. In the introductory chapter, I have provided some key definitions of the concepts of discourse, culture, voice, knowledge and identity employed in this study. In the theoretical chapter, I have discussed the theoretical

underpinnings of these frameworks to explain immigrant identity constructions. In the following section, I present the research questions to contextualize the methods and methodologies I chose for this qualitative study.

a) What social, cultural and historical investments of the colonial Bengali middle class intellectuals shaped modern Bangladeshi orality?

b) How can I use *adda* as a cultural and methodological tool to analyze the shifting diaspora identity?

c) How do Bangladeshi diaspora immigrants in Canada construct their postcolonial diaspora identity through the social practice of *adda*?

d) What implications do these *adda* sessions have for the postcolonial researcher in bringing a productive self-awareness to his or her own identities from studying other immigrants?

Participants and Their Diaspora Adda Networks

The Bangladeshi diaspora in North America is comparatively young in comparison to other groups from South Asia who began to arrive in the 60s and 70s as post-graduate students (Leonard, 2003; Haddad, 2004). Bangladeshi immigrants began to arrive in large numbers from year 2000 onwards. Statistics Canada (2006) reports, that 70% of immigrants are settled in one of the three large metropolitan cities of Toronto, Montreal or Vancouver. The downtown Toronto business district is home to many Bangladeshi-owned businesses, shopping malls and ethnic food stores where large numbers of Bangladeshi immigrants live. However 7 out of 10 participants I interviewed live in the suburb of Mississauga, which is one of the expanding suburbs of the Greater Toronto Area with a population of approximately 752,000 (Statistics Canada, 2006). Immigrants accounted for 19.8% of Canada's and 51.6% of Mississauga's

population, 70% of whom spoke in a language different than the official languages in Canada (Observation, 2013). In 2011, South Asians were the single largest group of visible minorities in Mississauga, accounting for 25% of the 6.3 million in the country (TD economics, 2013). Although recent Bangladeshi immigration trends and immigrant profiling lies beyond the scope of this inquiry, it would be helpful to have an idea of what sections of Bangladeshi immigrants have recently made the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) their home. Of all the immigrants who arrived in 2011, Bangladeshis accounted for 2.1% of the newcomers. According to a newspaper report, the use of the Bengali language at home has jumped to 40% since 2006 pointing at the rate Bengali speaking immigrants from both India and Bangladesh began arriving thereafter (Canada census, 2012, October 24). A local survey done on 100 Bangladeshi immigrants living in the Danforth neighborhood of Toronto, showed 72% having a Masters degree from their home country with 28% in a technical or professional field (Mostafa, 2013). The survey reported that a high percentage of these new comers (32%) were studying with student loan, second only to those (41%) who were surviving on odd jobs. Of those interviewed, 53%, including the homemakers and students, reported themselves as unemployed (Mostafa, 2013). Statistics Canada showed employment rates among foreign-born Asians at 63.8% compared to the national average at 83.1% (2006). With regard to the study done on Bangladeshi immigrants' perception of their overall situation in Canada, 63% of the participants showed dissatisfaction or offered no opinion, while 8% reported they were very satisfied (Mostafa, 2013).

There were some overlapping demographic similarities with the group studied in the Danforth neighborhood of Toronto and my participants in Mississauga. Almost all of my participants had a university education, half of them from North American institutions and had found employment in fields outside of their area of study. Although I did not focus on my

participants' employment prospects, in the course of my interview it became clear that their "identity capital" (Ho and Bauder, 2012, p.284) enables them to adjust to different social contexts. These social contexts became clear to me as I brought my understanding of Bourdieu's (1977) theory of social reproduction. Bourdieu explained people's behavior through a process of acquiring or exchanging capital to compensate for class, culture, education or other value systems.

Bangladeshi immigrants have gone through the stages of cultural and religious institution building like most migrant groups. As transnational immigrants they too are part of several social groups with overlapping religious or ethnic identities in Canada. In Chapter Four, I focus on the Bangladeshi transnational networks, particularly the social and religious ones in the GTA. Social networks are effective cultural brokers of identity constructions especially in the Bangladeshi immigrant experiences. They play the role of a mobilized diaspora, mediating cultural practices between different entities such as mosques, schools or cultural organizations. Raj (2008, p.147) defines any intermediary agents who "help translate as well as mediate cultural practices between two or more cultural entities" as cultural brokers. Other types of cultural brokers are parents, influential members in the mosque community as well as educational authorities.

By social networks, I mean the various informal sites of family gatherings and forms of organization enabling the immigrants to embody their plural identities in the diaspora. All of my ten (10) participants are either landed permanent residents or naturalized Canadian citizens who either came as graduate students or highly-skilled laborers. They have lived in North America on an average between seven and eight years. Everyone interviewed is a married male, except for one who was divorced and is between the age of 35 and 45. All of my participants come from an urban middle class background in Bangladesh maintaining close ties with home and some with

family or friends dispersed globally. I know some of these participants from Bangladesh and others I have been introduced to, through friends here. All of them agreed to participate in the research by providing their consent in a pre-interview meeting. I emailed the participants the informed consent forms for their own records and asked them to return a signed copy to me. I recruited them for my research from two separate and informal social networks of which I had been part. These social networks are a loose network of mostly nuclear families with extended ties to other religious, cultural and national institutions that fulfill their many identity constructions in the diaspora. I knew two of the ten participants previously, while studying in Bangladesh and later in United States. I met the others in Canada through different social networks. Almost all the participants who agreed to be interviewed, immigrated to Canada, some after a brief stint of work in the US, in the last 5-10 years. They live within a double space (Langellier, 2010) of home and diaspora where the boundaries are not always clearly marked.

I used my personal contacts in recruiting members from two of these informal social networks, one from a mosque they used to frequent and another from the neighborhood where they lived, for the purpose of this study. We met four times at the home of one participant from each group during a three-month data collection period. These informal social networks function as very important sites of connectedness and identity formation for immigrants. I studied the participants' transnational lives by listening to their *adda* as a social practice, which for these participants is a cultural habitus where the interplay of leisure, home and work intersect through storytelling and sharing of food. *Adda* is a highly classed and gendered social practice among Bengali speaking people where relationships are constantly renewed based on mutually beneficial social gains. Access to an *adda* is not open and is usually determined by one's social standing, perceived values and contribution in the group. Mixed-gendered social gatherings are

not the norm among South Asian diaspora communities. My research sites include two conversation groups or *adda*:

a) Neighborhood-based

b) Mosque-based

Five of my participants, including myself, live in a cluster of apartment buildings in Mississauga, which are mostly populated by working class immigrants from the Sub-continent, Afghanistan, Somalia, and the Caribbean islands. Two of them have gone back to school after a gap in employment; one has established himself in a business and the other is a newcomer and is holding down odd jobs. The second group is mosque-based. This group is economically more stable with everyone working in private-sector jobs and attached to a neighborhood mosque where their children receive religious instructions. I used pseudonyms for all the participants and changed their personal information that could be used to identify them. Participation was voluntary and in keeping with the approved guidelines and policies of the Research Ethics Board (REB).

Table 1

Participant profile in the Mosque and Neighborhood groups

Participants (pseudonym)	Number of Years (Canada)	Immigration status in Canada	Degree earned	Field of Employment (Canada)	Field of Employment (Bangladesh)
Mosque-based group					
Johar	7	Citizen	Business Graduate (USA)	Telecom, Sales	No experience
Baha	9	Citizen	Comp. Sc. Graduate (USA)	Government sector, IT	No experience

Khoka	8	Citizen	PhD in Comp Sc. (Russia)	Business sector, IT	IT entrepreneur
Sarwar	7	Citizen	Graduate Engr. (Bangladesh)	Business sector, IT	IT sector
Taukir	4	Permanent Resident	Business Graduate (Bangladesh)	Travel Agency	Marketing Research
Neighborhood-based group					
Hassan	2	Permanent Resident	Graduate Agri. (Bangladesh)	Student (Second career)	NGO work
Ratan	8	Citizen	Graduate Engr. (Bang.) Post Graduate (US)	Customer Service, IT	No experience
Mashuk	7	Citizen	Chartered Accountant (Canada)	Corporate Business	No experience
Sajjad	20	Citizen	High School (Bangladesh)	Private Business	No experience
Hira	1	Permanent Resident	Graduate (Bangladesh)	Temporary work	Corporate sales

Recruitment Procedure

Each conversation group (neighborhood-based and mosque-based) is centered on a particular type of social activity—*adda.* The conversation groups or *adda* groups addressed hereon are both location-specific and activity-specific. The research sites had been decided following mutual consultation with each group. I individually recruited each participant in the two groups. Participants of one *adda* groups did not know participants of the other group and thus had no possibility for cross-group discussion. I give a brief description of the two *adda* groups here:

Neighborhood-based group. Five (5) of the participants and I live in a cluster of apartment complexes in two far-flung neighborhoods in Mississauga and Toronto, mostly populated by working class immigrants from South Asia. Although the neighborhood group is geographically dispersed between two different cities, but for the benefit of this study I have incorporated them as one. Two of the participants in this group have returned to school after a gap in their employment, the third holds an odd job in a grocery store and the last two are employed in the private sector. Most families living in these apartments are single-income households and interact solely within the boundaries of their ethnic identities by a process of exclusion of *others* who are not Bangladeshi. Said (1994) calls this othering a process of re-interpretation of differences in cultural values. For me, the small Bangladeshi community living in these apartment buildings —whose lives intersect every day in their new roles and relationships in Canada as neighbors, compatriots, and co-religionists, worrying about their children's future —is a microcosm of what Anderson (1983) called an imagined community of the Bangladeshi diaspora in Canada. This group regularly meets at each other's home and agreed to be part of this study. The location of the conversations—two different apartment buildings—had been decided among the participants based on traveling distance between the suburbs.

Mosque-based group. Five (5) of the potential participants in this group knew each other through a local mosque in Mississauga. This group, economically more stable and upwardly mobile than the previous group, had been attached to a neighborhood mosque where some of their children received religious instructions. I was particularly interested in this group's identity constructions that had elements of mixing their religious modernities and cosmopolitan outlooks. The social practice in this group was defined by their choosing distinctive religious and

metropolitan identities. The group offered complex layers of Bangladeshi-Canadian national identities syncretized (Vertovec, 1999) with other transnational moralities sometimes associated with Islamism (Riaz, 2009) as part of their globalized identity constructions. They "code-switch" (Georgiou, 2006, p.63) between their multiple religiosities when acting out their situational appropriateness. Participants of this group meet regularly with each other's families in cultural and religious celebrations. For the purpose of this study, the group agreed to meet at the house of one of the participants whom I knew. The venue of the conversation was decided in consultation with the other group members.

Data Collection Process, Data Sources and Data Sets

I used a set of tools to perform a qualitative inquiry on Bangladeshi social networks in Greater Toronto Area. I wanted to explore the nested contexts (Maguire, 2005) of the personal, practical and professional selves of the participants within the political, social and religious discourses that exist in their social conversations. Each conversation group (neighborhood-based and mosque-based) is centered on a particular type of social activity. The conversation groups are location-specific and activity-specific. I held eight group interviews in total—four conversations for each of the two groups— over a period of two months. Each meeting was approximately 90 minutes. The two conversation groups functioned separately and did not meet each other. I used four data sources for data collection. They are: (1) Conversations, (2) Video tapes of the conversations, (3) Transcripts of video-tapes, and (4) Reflexive journal.

Conversations. I consider conversation as a negotiation of meanings in a social setting where both the interviewer and interviewee co-construct their stories and subjectivities (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003). To me, the interview is more than what Holstein and Gubrium (1995) intend by active interview—as encounters that represent meaning-making endeavors and capture

understanding. Gee's (2007) "insider/outsider perspectives" is useful to gain access into location-specific conversations when studying identity questions pertaining to race and religion. The framework I used to study these networks is consistent with Maguire's (1995) conversational interviews, which is closer to the Bakhtinian understanding of voice, where speaking subjects construct meaning through interaction with each other. Another similar interviewing technique, used in cultural studies where Bakhtin's dialogism plays a large part, is "conversation-analytic" (Enk, 2009, p.1282) where participants collaborate, co-construct and negotiate different meanings, by synthesizing a particular meaning, often by agreeing to disagree. Interviews thus become, in Bakthnian terms, the joint production of participants' conversations, multiple voices and socio-cultural discourses. Discourse here is understood as "the organization of language into certain kind of social bonds" (Parker, 2005, p.88). I restructured the interviews based on the informal style of conversations usually found among Bangladeshi middle class orality where participants could challenge, question or share their views and opinions without much inhibition of offending others. In this process the interviews were open-ended with the participants having a wider role in self-directing the conversations than being questioned.

Video-tapes of the conversations. I used audio-video recording devices to tape my interviews. In an *adda* session where participants usually engage in protracted conversations with multiple speakers, voice overlaps could make many vocal cues and actions inaudible to the listeners. Audio tapes alone are not very helpful recording devices in multidirectional conversations especially in a social action such as *adda*. There is much to lose if one simply records the voice. I therefore used one or two audio-visual recording devices depending on the size of the group to capture the interactions. The taped conversations recorded the verbal and

non-verbal cues which serve as important cultural markers of deference, disbelief, happiness or displeasure in any social action. Video tapes of conversations became testamentary evidence of the actual interviews. However due to the nature of informal conversations or adda, interviews occasionally went off on a tangent, posing a challenge to keep the topics relevant to the study. I used an interview guide (see Appendix C) to keep the conversations on relevant topics pertaining to things that interested me and also within the time constraint. Some examples of topics were: a) the challenges of employability in Canada, b) child rearing, c) the role of religious/cultural education in family lives, d) buying a home e) home politics vis-à-vis global politics, etc. The literature on diaspora studies offered valuable insights to decide which stories were relevant to global diaspora experiences.

Transcripts of video-tapes. Analysis of data begins with the selection of an appropriate transcription method. I used an interpretive transcription method proposed by Mishler (1991). I began by looking for methods of documenting stories, particularly embedded in cultural experiences such as *adda*. This was necessary to interpret the "ways of talking, listening… interacting… in particular settings at specific times so as to display and recognize a particular social identity" (Gee, 1996, p.128). The units of analysis I used are mainly the transcribed conversations or texts of *adda* and my responses to the transcription that Bakhtin (1981) would describe as utterances. All responses to a text are also interactions between the reader and the text. The most important ingredient the researcher brings while analyzing interview texts, is his/her judgment call on paying special attention to certain individual experiences and social structures. These are: indications of conflicts, hopes, temporality of events, frustrations and resolutions, isolations and community. Issues of class, gender, ethnicity, hierarchy and power always play out in human interaction (Kanter, 1977). For example in the

following excerpt of a conversation, from the neighborhood group between Sajjad and Hira, the emotion-laden words, in brackets and bold, offer more than just audio data (Session NG1.1):

Hira: [placing his hand around Sajjad] We don't like of a lot of things in our country/ because life is easy/ our country is ours/ that is why we complain about it/ but here we are like guests, no matter how long I have been here.

Sajjad: Here you will ALWAYS be guests.

Hira: He [the foreign doctor] is the same.

Sajjad: [sounding annoyed] You can't remain a guest after that long. (Session NG1.1, Transcript 2)

The transcripts of the video recordings became an additional source of data that helped me to generate notes of participant activities, including those of myself, and record sudden changes in voice, emotion and mood of the storytellers. However audio-visual tapes can make the process of transcription difficult if one is not prepared for contingencies. For example, the way participants changed their sitting places or how their deportment changed while speaking to each other conveyed information about their level of interaction. Furthermore, in an informal setting, conversations tend to overlap as participants do not take turns in talking. I had to come up with a way to represent the nonspeech sounds such as laughter, interjections, interruptions, and other inaudible sentences. As I used only a single audio recording device, transcribing the voice overlaps for meaningful data analysis became quite cumbersome. This led me to note down activities in the video transcripts such as lively debate, heated arguments, light-banter, tacit support, or awkward moments, which helped me to return to the data in detail when I needed

them. I modified my transcription techniques as my data collection progressed. I would get to that part in the next section.

Reflexive journal. As an *adda* participant and researcher, I played an active role in the conversations, taking down notes as I thought of something important during the sessions or after the conversations were over. As a cultural insider, I relied on my insider/outsider (Gee, 2007) perspectives and reflexivity in interpreting and reflecting upon the conversations. I use reflexivity to mean "self-critique and personal quest, playing on the subjective, the experiential and the idea of empathy" (Marcus, 1994, p.359). My reflections in these journal entries included the contextual background of the stories that were told, my own observations of the storytelling and my own responses. I chose to write down certain non-speech and verbal communication such as excited conversations, laughter, gestures, interruptions, or rhetorical flourishes that were helpful in the analysis of the conversations. I included on-the-spot note-taking and post-*adda* reflections in my reflexive journal. These journals helped me to theorize about the relationships among the themes that emerged. I also used this method to remind myself of how I would translate a particular sentence structure or thematize a particular data segment in the transcript. Here is an entry of reflexive journal:

> While asking about their childhood reading habits of books other than textbooks I used
> the term "nishiddho boi" or forbidden/impermissible books instead of the more
> commonly used, "golper boi" or story books. I think most people misunderstood the
> meaning and either refrained from answering or answered in negative because of the
> taboo associated with the word forbidden. (Reflexive journal 8, Oct 2013)

Methods of Data Analysis

  I chose a thematic analysis because of the flexibility it offered in reporting data patterns

without compromising the interpretative richness of the signs and symbolisms of language and

social practices in *adda*. My methods of analyses were thus translating transcripts, developing

themes out of those transcripts and displaying those themes. In the following sections I discuss

the tools of inquiry which shaped my data interpretation:

  Translation. Translating the video transcripts into English was a decision I took in the

early stages of data analysis. It was done to keep data analyses transparent and provide

ecological validity to the processes of interpretation. Although participants used Bangla (same as

Bengali) as the spoken language for recording the interviews, most of my participants use

English at their place of work. Some of them used English to communicate with their children at

home or peppered their conversations with words from English or a vernacular dialect of Bengali

when talking with family or friends. This code-switching is fairly common among immigrant and

diaspora populations. However, my approach was to first transcribe the recorded conversations

verbatim as they spoke and then to translate the text only into English for the purpose of data

analysis. Here is an excerpt of a verbatim transcript using both Bengali and English type faces

followed by a translation:

[০০:১০:৪০.১২] Stripe T shirt person : why, there is a reason . আমার কাছে যেটা মনে হয় । ওকে। বাংলাদেশে থাকলে এইটা হইত না কারন অনেক সময় হয়ত পকেটের সাথে compromise করতে হইত না। টাকা পয়সার সাথে compromise করার দরকার নাই । কারন আমি বাংলাদেশে অনেক উপরি পয়সা পাওয়া যায় । compromise করতে হইত আপনার life style এর সাথে । আপনার honesty র সাথে compromise করতে হইত ।বাংলাদেশে থাকলে । যেটা এখানে এসে করতে হয় না । আমার কাছে এটাই ভাল লাগে । at list i'm honest । আমার কাছে (inaudiable) । যে যা আমি করতেছি আমি সব earn করতেছি এবং সব খাচ্ছি । যেটা হয়ত বাংলাদেশে থাকলে আমার পক্ষে life style বলেন আর social status বলেন social demand বলেন, family demand বলেন হয়ত may not be possible ।

[00:10:40:12] Striped T-shirt participant: Why, there is a reason. What I think is. Ok. It might not have happened in Bangladesh because most of the times you would not be compromising with your pocket. No need to compromise with making money because you can earn a lot illegally.You would have compromised with your life style. You would have compromised with your honesty in Bangladesh which you don't need to do here. I like it here. Atleast I am honest [to myself] (inaudible). Whatever I am earning here I am spending on myself which might not have been possible if I were in Bangladesh. [Due to] your social status, social pressures, or family pressures, it may not be possible. (Session NG2.1, June 2013)

When translating, I tried to keep the meaning closer to its origin instead of translating word for word. This was an important element to keep the context specificity of the conversations intact during translation. For example in the underlined excerpt of the transcript, Ratan, a participant from the neighborhood group gives his reason why it is easy to maintain a high standard of living in Bangladesh. The word he used for extra income in Bengali was "upri" which denotes an illegal source of income. I changed the word 'extra' into 'illegal' (underlined text) to convey a sense of dishonesty in association with extra income in Bangladesh. These interpretations in the transcript through the process of translation shaped the tool of inquiry itself.

Developing themes. Braun and Clark (2006) give a working definition of theme: "A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set" (p.82). My first research question had already been answered from the literature review. To answer the other research questions, I formulated three analytical questions as illustrated in Table 2. These questions helped me to formulate units of analysis that could be organized into meaningful

categories through proper utilization of data sets in the transcript. The first analytical question

answered mainly the themes related to immigrants' cultural, ideological and religious points of

view and practices. The second question identified social actions that took place in both verbal

and non-verbal communication in the *adda*. The third question was to link the themes to the

broader theoretical lenses used in the study that would in turn help me write the last chapter on

my own reflexivity. I used these three sets of categories or themes to develop a more focused

thematic analysis that addressed each of my last three research questions. This assumption is not

inconsistent with data analysis techniques in qualitative inquiry.

Table 2

Steps of thematic analysis

Analytical Questions	Organizing themes
1. How do we make sense of our lives through our speech acts? (focusing on contents of what is being said)	Social, cultural, spiritual, historical elements in conversations
2. What behavioral interactions happen in conversations? (focusing on activity)	Conversational activities (e.g. negotiation, power-play, humor, rhetoric, storytelling)
3. What have I learned from the study?	Taking notes in reflexive Journals making links with literature and themes

Note. Adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006)

I developed a preliminary list to begin my thematic analysis by creating some starter

themes under which I began to group my data sets. There is no concrete rule to determine a

theme, most qualitative researchers suggest using judgment to determine what segment of data

constitutes a meaningful unit. Thus, thematic analysis consists of two tiers:

First level of analysis. I underlined data segments from the transcribed texts and listed them under initial themes from the starter list. Each paragraph of five to ten lines was read to determine what constitutes a relevant theme. The themes were marked along the margins of the transcripts. The starter list was kept on separate sheets of paper for easy reference (See Appendix A). Anything the participants said that sounded interesting to me was earmarked for a new theme, if it did not fit into an already existing theme. I was also looking for particular features of the data set to expand the themes. For example, in the first session with the mosque group (Table 3, row 2) where Baha, a mosque *adda* participant gives a description of his childhood memories of watching TV during which everybody started to talk loudly. Baha's bringing up his childhood memories of TV, shifted the group focus from book-related literacy to fascination with technology. I had to think of somehow identifying these shifting dynamics in the *adda* conversations. These animated activities illuminated the way *adda* conversations functioned by preferring certain discussions over others. This split between what is said and how it is said, led me to think about organizing my data thematically into two major categories that I wanted to track in my transcripts. Often more than one theme were used to describe a unit of analysis by labelling the conversational activities and content of conversation separately. For example when a particular historical account is presented to counter someone's personal account of memory, the contents could be grouped under the theme of 'childhood memory' while listing the conversational activity as 'power-play'. The organization of themes into conversational activities provided a rich layer of interpretation, particularly to analyze identity constructions in *adda* (See Table 2).

The reflexive journals were also thematically labeled. Each relevant paragraph or segment of the transcript that seemed fit as a meaningful unit of analysis was catalogued under

similar themes. This process was repeated and refined until a sufficient repeated pattern of themes emerged. The starter list gradually shrank as I worked inductively to develop systematic themes to fit the texts I was reading. This intuitive process of sorting and culling is a synthesis between the participant conversations and researcher responses. Not all themes emerged as stand-alone themes; some were merged or divided, with new names and labels as there was not enough data to support them. This iterative process led to the second phase of thematic analysis.

Table 3

Emerging Themes in mosque adda

Time	Talker	Themed for particular feature	Conversations	Themed for content
00:15	Researcher	Interruption with a question	<u>Does anybody remember reading storybooks at that time?</u> Like Grandma's collection of tales which was the most common children's primer	Early literacy
00:20	Baha	Interruption by hand gesturing	<u>I remember the high pitched sound</u> *chuuu….eeee* <u>from the back of the TV</u> as images flicked on the black and white screen. <u>The fascination with which we used to gather around the TV</u>!	Particular childhood memory
00:24	Khoka	Everybody talking loudly in agreement	<u>And we used to wait in front of the TV from 5 in the evening, from the time they went on air, just like that.</u>	Collective memory

Second level of analysis. This level includes two cycles of reviewing and refining. The first cycle consists of naming themes, the second phase, of emerging themes.

Naming themes. Each potential category or theme was further collapsed or expanded into new themes depending on my iterative readings of the transcript text. Naming involved grouping the meaningful units of the transcript into condensed and meaningful themes.

Sometimes a single text was marked under several categories. When it made more sense to put it under one category that I felt was the best01 fit, I refined the themes. At other times, I checked for any contextual data set which might require a re-interpretation of the existing themes. Not all themes were used. Some were orphaned categories which were kept aside without trying to force-fit them into the text. The themes began to fall under larger caterories that linked the data segments to the overall data. For example I categorized themes such as financial freedom, religion, peace and access to one's own social groups under the larger theme of 'Disadvantages of living in Canada' (see appendix A).

Emerging themes. At this level the potential themes not only match the data sets but also conform to a relationship among them. As I looked for conversations on similar themes with repeated activities or behaviors—indicating conversational dynamics, social practice, or power-play among other observable things within a nested context—I began to see patterns emerging in the data. It is important that the themes work out a relationship with each other to address the research questions and the broader picture. For example, under the religious themes several other themes emerged such as old age fears, minority rights, cultural insecurity, raising a family (see appendix A).

Data display. Data display is a helpful strategy in the analytical process. The processes of data analysis included creating themes from meaningful units of data, seeking connection among them, explaining those connections and building interpretive themes accompanied by conceptually mapping the data. While themes were built through a reiterative process of synthesizing similar data segments and refining them, I also visually organized the themes and looked for possible relationships among the emerging themes. In this way I was able to see how the data were connected with each other in a broader sense. For example, in Figure

2, I show how the emergent themes such as lack of employment, rights, low self-esteem, and social pressures are grouped under the sub-themes of social, cultural, religious and economic capitals and are related with the larger questions of migration. Through a display of larger themes, sub-themes and emergent themes I show in Figure 2, the relationship between the capitals and the migration path those capitals indicate. For example, low symbolic capital among participants increases the chances of migrating to Canada with a prospect of capitalizing on their children's education. It was also observed for example, that lack of jobs or higher family expectations in Bangladesh, drive many to increase economic capitals in Canada through migration (Figure 2).
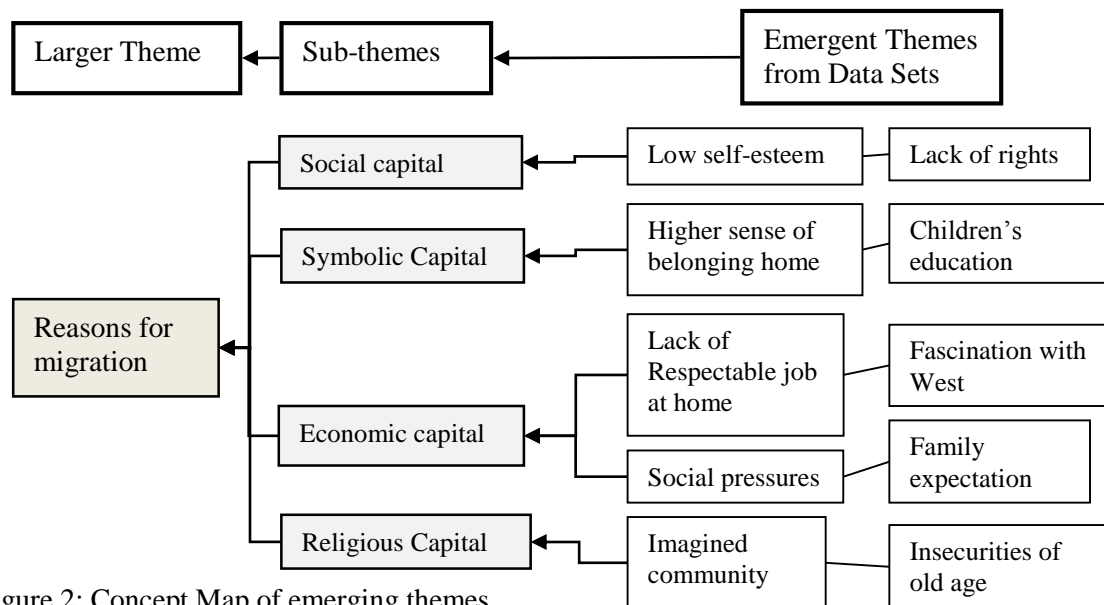
Figure 2: Concept Map of emerging themes

Making concept maps helped to see the emerging relationships among the data sets and the larger themes as well as to find any incoherence in data analysis. Data display as a strategy

helped to reconfirm that the overarching themes and the clusters of data relate in a meaningful way in order to answer the third research question regarding postcolonial identity construction.

Summary

I recruited ten Bangladeshi immigrants from the Greater Toronto Area from two social networks of which I am a part. I situated my study into these social networks because they offer sites of cultural mediation among different global, national, and local communities. I used participant interviews, video conversations, video transcripts and reflexive journals as my data sources. I took a constructivist approach to interview, borrowing ideas from conversational interviews (Maguire, 1995) and conversation analytic (Enk, 2009) to create collaborative conversations with participants. The video tapes of the conversations helped to produce the transcripts that became new data sources of verbal and non-verbal interactions in the *adda*. I used an interpretive transcription method (Mishler, 1991), paying special attention to participant behavior and social practices in the interview. The reflexive journal entries included on-the-spot and post-interview observational notes, my responses to the transcribed text and background contexts of the stories shared. For data analysis, I used thematic analysis for the simplicity and flexibility it offered in interpreting data, without compromising the richness of qualitative data. I adapted my two-level method of thematic analysis from Braun and Clark (2006) beginning with a starter-list determining meaningful themes for data sets. I grouped each relevant paragraph of the transcript as a meaningful unit under similar themes. I repeated and refined this data synthesis between the text and my responses to it until sufficient themes emerged separately. Naming themes involved grouping the meaningful units of the transcript into condensed and meaningful themes which together made sense in relation to the overall data. Finally, I displayed the data using concept maps to see how the emergent themes developed to answer the larger

questions regarding identity construction providing greater ecological validity in my thematic analysis.

With the conclusion of the methodology chapter, I now turn to discussing my first research question on the cultural investments of post-colonial Bengali middle class identity constructions in the next chapter.

Chapter Four: Construction of Bhadralok Identity

Introduction

In this chapter, I give a socio-historical background of Bangladeshi middle class identity construction by drawing on the critiques of Indian nationalist history writing project by prominent Indian postcolonial writers such as Ranajit Guha, Partha Chatterjee and Dipesh Chakrabarty. The Bengali bourgeois consciousness, a product of a modern history of India, was developed by middle class intellectuals in the early part of the nineteenth century. Postcolonial writers agree that an Orientalist discourse of history, in which Europe/Modernity was justified as a narrative of progress, was established mainly on the premise of establishing the rule of law and modern education (Chatterjee, 1993; Chakrabarty, 1992a; 1999b; & Kumar, 2001, 2006). This chapter provides a historical context of how that modernity was launched in the colonial public space by constructing an image of early 19th century Bengali domesticity. Then, I examine the masculinity and femininity of Bengali identity standards developed in the language and practices of '*Bhadralok*' and '*Bhadramahila*' constructions. Thereafter, I elaborate the political aspirations of Bengali cultural nationalism within the postcolonial nation of former East Pakistan and the transformation of it into a variant of geopolitical nationalism in independent Bangladesh. I also provide a religious dimension in the splitting of the two nationalisms and a background of how that split continues to hybridize with other global identities in the transnational social networks in Canada. This chapter thus addresses the first research question by inquing into the history of Bengali modernity and the social, cultural and historical investments that went into developing those middle class constructions. These early Indian middle class investments in education, history writing and nation-buliding hold the key to our becoming modern Bangladeshi diaspora.

The Colonial Field of Nation

The discourse of a national home for the Bengali middle class subjects of the British colony came through derivative discourses of orientalist science and reworked Hindu and Islamic pasts— the product of Indian cultural history writing (Nandy, 1983; Chatterjee, 1993; Chakrabarty, 1992a). This nationalist history writing was a response to the gendered ideology of the British colonialists in reshaping mainly middle class language, interiority and history. The early 19th century Bengali literati, the most cultured section of the middle class, employed a discursive language of reform to reinvent a historical consciousness of an authentic and collective past. This sentiment was clearly expressed in the writings of Bankim Chandra (d.1986), a novelist and author of India's national song (Pillai, 1997, p.229). Chakrabarty (1992a, p.51) cites Bankim, who was clear about his thoughts on who should undertake the burden of history writing:

Bengal must have her own history. Otherwise there is no hope for Bengal. Who is to write it? You have to write it…Anyone who is a Bengali has to write it […] it is not a task that can be done by one person alone; it is a task that all of us has to do together.

Guha calls this nationalist history writing into the collective memory of a people, "an act of appropriation of history by the elite […] on behalf of their project of building an Indian state, of diverse historical struggles of the subaltern classes" (cited in Chakrabarty, 1992a, p.53). History was archived from a collective memory of sacred texts, literary traditions and cultural symbolisms infused with European ideas of nation for the public consumption. Bourdieu (1977) notes that it is important to define the field in which the actors function in relations to the capitals in question. In early 19th century for the Indian intelligentsia that field was the nation and the capital, nationalism. These European ideas did not automatically transfer into Indian or Bengali

consciousness. The colonial context of race or nation was a different construct than what Indians understood as *borno* or *jati*. Tagore gave an alternative translation of nation and nationalism to avoid the trappings of racial difference. Indian intellectuals envisioned nationhood by conceptualizing *samaj,* a communal identity bound by a shared practice or social action. In colloquial Bengali *samaj* can be inter-changed with kinship (*atmiya sajan*) in the same way classmates or co-workers convey a sense of a family. *Samaj* as a group formation did not have a stable boundary. It could include a small company of tea-drinkers who regularly indulge in lively chats or *adda* as well as the chance encounter of passengers in a train who sing together to make the ride pleasant (Mukhopadhyay, 2005). A *samaj* thus could be imagined as a reconstituted moral authority of socially hierarchical groups that exercises an inclusionary or exclusionary practice over the groups, depending on the prestige and power they bring to the *samaj*. Reinventing the societal or *samajik* role to effect an individual sense of duty, was the ethical priority of kinship within the community. Bankim develops this sense of duty or responsibility to the nation by ascribing to the Indian/Bengali self a form of self-negation "to subordinate oneself to others and to *dharma* […] to free the soul from the slavery of the senses..." (Chakrabarty, 1992b, p.346). Gupta (2006, p.277) adds that historically *samajik* regulations on individual and group decisions had been viewed through the prism of *dharma,* loosely translated as the laws of nature expressed in the social order. The online oxford dictionary translates *dharma* as the "cosmic law" in the Hindu religious sense (Dharma, n.d). To translate *dharma* as merely religion gives the *samaj* an unnecessary ideological impetus. Chakrabarty (1999b) explains that the *samajik* (read national) imagination of Tagore can be understood using Benedict Anderson's (1991) idea of the imagined community with a possibility of plural meanings. For Tagore, nationalism allowed the nation or *samaj* to exist in various pluri-cultural lives within the

structures of many religions, castes, creeds, belief-systems and social orders. This historical context of constructing a history for Indian nationalism is important for our discussion of the questions on establishing a link between Bengali middle class social practices and the future of the nation. At the same time, it is also important to understand the socio-historical changes in vernacular eduction with the introduction of modern schools in the middle part of nineteenth century, when local commercial networks began to lose their hold in the rising mercantile economy.

In the following sections, I attempt to locate the structural changes in the family that were brought about in the colonial fields of schooling and socialization to create new social practices among competitive groups to increase their cultural and economic capitals. I employ a postcolonial critique of modern schooling that had embraced a fractured identity as a corollary of the state rather than concerning itself with the traditional role of preserving the moral and spiritual development of the students. I explore how modern education was appropriated or resisted in both the provincial and metropolitan centers to find how the question of the nation was approached discursively.

Two Modernities: Provincial and Conflictual Metropolitan

The need for an English educated class of junior administrators to run the vast colony required the British colonials to raise the stakes of English education by changing the *nomos* of the field. They did so by switching the medium of instruction from Persian and Sanskrit to English in 1835 (Rahman, 1999). Using a trope of colonial space, a postcolonialist writer Kumar (2001, 2006) argues that modern educational institutions appropriated signs of legitimacy as agents of disciplinary power. However in actuality the power was customary than real. Kumar (2006) notes that the difference between the two education systems, colonial and indigenous,

was also one of "theory" and "practice" (p.417). The new education of modernity was made compulsory, thus legitimate to learn, but quite useless in its social practice in the interior provinces. The practical knowledge was always passed down through the social network of communal and familial relations and necessary adjustments were made in the socialization processes as competition for capital grew intense. The colonialist encounter with the English language made it possible for the provincial subjects to re-align themselves along the power spectrum, to strengthen their social relations by continuous syncretisation between the local and global knowledge constructions. Religious and moral teachings for both Hindu and Muslim subjects of colonial Bengal, had always remained outside the function of governance.

I find in Bald's (2013) historical account of one such trading community, in Hooghli, a port in the province of West Bengal, an example of provincial modernity. Displaced by the forces of mercantile economy they established trading outposts across the Atlantic in coastal towns of USA between 1890 and 1920s by expanding their own commercial networks. These semi-literate provincial men dodging the immigration system masked themselves as *Hindoo* merchants in the orientalist image of the Bengali *babu* ─ a Maucaulian "mimic-man" (Kumar, 2006, p.418), English by taste and Indian by color. Unlike their modern day counterparts, they did not leave their homeland behind for better lives across the oceans but made "temporary forms of affiliations in the places they pedaled goods" (Bald, 2013, p.16). These Bengali Muslim seamen traversed the spaces of modernity, increasing their economic capital and redirecting that wealth back in their villages. The habitus (Bourdieu, 1977) of these socially mobile traders who resisted modern education —informed by their indigenous schooling and distrust of modernity's civilizing mission —successfully exchanged their symbolic capital of Orientalism to move through transnational networks. Hybridization (Bhabha, 1994; Hall, 1990) and habitus

(Bourdieu, 1977) as useful concepts, which I have briefly discussed in chapter 2, allow us to understand the shifts in identity formation that were needed to expand commercial networks in the metropolitan markets that stretched from the periphery to the centre. These social networks used the oversight of the then imperial powers and the slippages of state control to socially relate with other networks in important ways, thereby increasing their chances of survival in the competitive metropolitan markets.

The other form of education came from colonial modern schools in the metropolises. Acquiring the cultural capital of modern education became the new social practices of urbanized Bengali intellectuals who consolidated the socio-historical experiences of constructing a future Bengali gentrified class and a national home. The structures of modern schooling changed the doxa of the indigenous sites of learning, forcing the traditional Bengali scholarly communities to appropriate new and often oppositional forms of education, one traditional and one modern. Kumar uses the "plural learning" (2001) of the colonial Indian or Bengali intellectual to question the influence of modernity as a master narrative. In the colonial provinces we find in the acculturation of the middle class identity a rejection of "truths" (Kumar, 2006, p.401) both indigenous and modern, rendering their education at best "incomplete" (p.402). Colonial subjecthood accomplished the reception of an "alternative modernity," (Kumar, 2001, p.101) through an incomplete assimilation of two homologous opposite types of education— the colonial discursive and indigenous plural. Kumar calls this fractured modernity a "conflictual metropolitan" (2006, p.398) identity. Modernism's gift to the Indian/Bengali bourgeois nationalism came with a rupture, a double consciousness of the past—one historical, with a sense of the renaissance and the other, ahistorical, with powerful forms of collective memory (Chakrabary, 1992b, p.349). Postcolonial researchers such as Chatterjee (1986) and Chakrabarty

(2008) have criticized the bourgeois imagination in their failure to distance themselves from the imperialist disciplinary power and its gift, reason. The result was appropriation of capitalist reason into the language of nationalism, without being able to question history or science objectively to create a more equitable nation. Colonial modern education produced two Bengali educated classes: one provincial and another modern, both incomplete in the narrative of the state or nation.

So far, I have used the Bengali middle class construction to understand the habitus of the English-educated bourgeois whose self-identification was bi-furcated between a modern reason and indigenous plural learning. The acculturation of two opposing learning processes— by retaining English, the language of the Empire and vernacular languages— the provincial subjects transform themselves through an identity compromise (Kumar, 2001). This compromise is achieved by a creative "copy" of the original, a product of situational mimesis that Kumar (2006) indicates, is necessary for the purpose of transferring power. The provincial Bengali subject achieves an identity shift from provincial to modern without encountering either a full-scale conflict of or a transformation of ideologies. I argue that this indigenous socialization that Kumar (2001; 2006) talks about is a negotiated knowledge construction that increases one's social prestige and position by investing in specific cultural resources. Chaudhuri (2008) gives a vivid picture of the England-returnee Brahmin sons, who with a peculiar mix of British education, high culture and a certain blend of Hindu religiosity, were quite comfortable in their Barrister's wigs and singing *kirtans* (devotional chants). The transnational Bangladeshi Muslim immigrant, as I show later, shifts his consciousnesses between the modern and moral poles through a mimesis of social practice to increase cultural capitals for different purposes. In the transnational migration routes, learnings involve a cut and mix of different types of knowledge systems, allowing the

immigrant to mimic adoption of assets and resources crucial for material success. In the next section, I explore the transformation of these provincialized modernities in the metropolitan centers in the post-partition Pakistan, especially among its Bengali citizens.

Bhadralok and Bhadramahila Habitus. In Bengali the terms *Bhadralok* (masculine) or *Bhadramahila* (feminine) are normally associated with the prosperous and educated class. It is the counterpart of the English gentry class that entered into the modern Bengali language as a derivative narration of the Victorian modernity. The word itself encompasses the petty bourgeoisie and its trite officialdom that separated the middle class from the rest. In the colonial metropolis, Bengali middle class identity has been contested by the intermediaries of the colonial masters and the ordinary people who are at the margins of middle class social strata. The middle class took it upon itself to shoulder the burden of building a future nation in the spirit and knowledge of European renaissance. The task fell upon the early Indian intellectuals to draw a historical discourse that was fitted for such a magnanimous project. This nationalist history writing was a response to the gendered ideology of the British colonialists in reshaping middle class language, interiority and history. Constructing a nationalist identity became the middle class habitus for the English educated Bengali, which I use in this section to inquire into the construction of the field of nation. I use the word bourgeois to convey a particular historical knowledge production from which vantage point all other histories are claimed to be known. The discursive practices of Bengali middle class "*bhadralok*" identity had been extensively used in postcolonial writings (Mukherjee, 1986, 2000; Chakrabarty, 1992b, 1999a; Mukhopadhyay, 2005) on Indian/Bengali nationalism and ideas of home. I use the word discourse to mean spoken and written language as well as images used in constructing and legitimizing a certain reality of history (Gee 1996). *Bhadralok*, loosely translated as respectable middle-class, was used as a

category of differentiation by the early Indian literati class to self-deride colonial modernity. In the economic turmoil of the colonial administration, where a lot of new money was amassed by Zemindars or landlords and traders of erstwhile low castes, the use of the word *abhijaat* (aristocratic), which was originally the privilege of the Brahmins or the priest class, was appropriated by the new respectable class or *bhadralok,* who became owners of the new knowledge. With the patronization of modern schools, as the new hierarchy of knowledge-construction, the educated middle class or *shikkhito bhadra-sreni*, became the transition narrators (Chakrabarty, 1992c) of postcolonial modernity by contesting orientalist history. Transition narrative of European modernity as a semiotic trope had been used by postcolonial writers discussed here, to understand how categories of homologous sets of opposites such as backward/modern or feudal/capitalist had been appropriately and discursively used to reform the colonial domestic and public spaces of middle class orality. For *Bhadralok* sociality, English education, cosmopolitan outlooks and the ability to access the civil service became markers of culture and power in colonial modernity. However, the social construct of the *bhadralok* as intellectually copious, impractically knowledgeable and averse to manual labor produced the doxa of the colonial middle class field. The conditions of *bhadralok* habitus using Bourdieu's idea of capital was also reproduced for the Indian/Bengali woman or *bhadramahila* in the discourses of bourgeois domesticity where the idea of the truly Bengali woman and a future home for the Indian nation was constructed. The *bhadramahila* stereotype embodied the ideal helpmate of the Victorian man with a "reinvented notion of chaste, sacrificing" (Banerjee, 2004, p.685) Indian/Bengali woman. The received bourgeois domesticity was constructed in a new patriarchy of companionate marriage of liberated men and women with redefined versions of the old.

The nation or home organized within the concept nationhood is most visible in the discursive language of colonial Home Science, as a branch of female education. Hancock, (2001) in her study of Home Science Education in colonial India shows that the Indian home became a site of reconstituted gendered domesticity in response to Victorian conceptions of masculinity and femininity. By early twentieth century liberal feminist reformers took upon manual writing as a discursive site of constructing home both domestically and nationally (Hancock, 2001; Gupta, 2009). The themes of freedom and modernity were set at opposite poles in bourgeois nationalism, where women were "educated enough to contribute to the larger body politic but yet 'modest' enough to be un-self-assertive and unselfish" (Marik, 2013, p.81). The new private modern spaces were marked by ambivalence and contradictions as well. The de-gendering of the private spaces of Bengali *sangsar* or family-life was achieved through feminist struggles by subordinating the domestic sphere to new segregations. These segregated spaces between the erstwhile domestic and the new private could not be achieved without imposing a new orthodoxy on the emancipated role of the female. A social movement of breaking down the system of *purdah* or seclusion initiated by the wives of civil servants were viewed as a death-knell to family life by their husbands themselves. Mazumdar (1989) gives an account of how the men reacted in the setting up of a ladies club (*mahila samity*) in a small town in the 1920s for the Bengali colonial officer's wives in her memoirs:

> They were firmly convinced that the women would abandon their house-hold duties, neglect husband and children, break away from the seclusion of their homes, and eventually compete with them in their spheres of work. In fact, they were convinced that their women would become thoroughly immodest and unwomanly and lost to them forever. (Mazumdar, 1989, p.124)

In actuality, the nature of female education became a discourse of the interiority of both Hindu and Muslim private life, without challenging the existing class or patriarchal hierarchies. The truly liberated Indian/Bengali woman was expected to be too modest to become westernized where freedom meant self-indulgence, and at the same time capable of discharging her responsibilities to the nation in the roles of sacrificing mother and dutiful wife. In the postcolonial literature of Bengali middle class construction, female education has been construed as part of bourgeois sociality in the language of colonial modernity. Chakrabarty (1999a) gives a social history of *adda*, as a reforming space of colonial knowledge production where bourgeois orality was reconstituted as the modern language of the educated middle class by differentiating it from the popular or mass culture. The literary circles or *adda* became the site of middle class discourse on nation building, as classical English genres of prose and poetry became the transition narrative of nationalism through the selective reading of Orientalists such as Comte, Mills and Spensor. Literary *adda* thus became a site of the Bengali *bhadralok* identity performance and accumulation of its cultural capital. In *Provincializing Europe*, Chakrabarty (1999a) challenges *adda*'s orientalist image of a "herd-instinct" (p.114) and reinterprets its discursive practice in literary circles as a reformed space in the civilizing process of Bengali interiority for a future homeland. Modern Bengali writing and orality was transitioned into the Bengali *bhadralok* parlor talk as a derivative narrative of European science, philosophy and discourse. Discussions of Hindu, Bengali or Muslim culture assumed the subjectivity of their fatalism or lack of scientific consciousness from a European "objectivity" (Chatterjee, 1995, p.56-58), which was never questioned but explained in terms of colonialist's lack of the spiritual knowledge. Chatterjee (1986, 1995) explains the dilemma of the Indian/Bengali reformist mind grappling with the two truths, one derived from *dharma,* expressed in moral and social order and

the other exhibited in material possessions of power. Attaining a national culture that could combine both the ideals of material and spiritual wealth became the new religion of the middle class with visible splits on how to achieve this goal. These bourgeois *addas* became the centers where violent or non-violent forms of cultural nationalism were being negotiated germinating anti-imperial aspirations that could turn the wrath of colonial power against the cultural productions of the middle class. The *bhadralok* habitus should be understood within the structures of the two types of learning: one modern-institutional and the other indigenous-familial (Kumar, 2001). Both work as transition narrators of modernity and tradition whose power and status have not been diminished in their own separate spheres of influences. The fact that *bhadralok* identity still has its support base in the urban/rural divide of the postcolonial nation-states points at its further transformations into many transnational modernities in exchange of other transnational capitals.

I began the discussion of *bhadralok* class by defining the field of the *bhadralok* habitus as nation. The discursive nation serves as the field in which the *bhadralok* identity is constructed and accessed for developing new social practices. Thus the *bhadralok* class came to represent the ambivalence of the two oppositional forms of learning and their outcomes. The two types of reason and tradition that *bhadralok* identity represented, also opened up the multiple spaces between two poles of consciousnesses — one modern and the other traditional. The *bhadralok* class historically linked with accumulation of economic capital during the early colonial period held its social prestige until competition from other non-elite merchant classes challenged its dominant positions in the post-partition period. After the partition of India, Bengali *bhadralok* status came to be associated with incompetency as less educated but more financially mobile business classes increasingly competed with them for social prestige. As social structures

changed so did the *bhadralok* doxa, creating a need to adopt new social practices. *Bhadralok* elitism waned as economic competition from non-Bengali political and commercial classes grew stronger in post partition Pakistan. Bengali *bhadralok* sensibilities became more and more an object of social derision for their uncritical imitation of British culture and acceptance of colonial education and its accompanying scientific knowledge (Chatterjee, 1995).

In the next section, I describe the postnational transformation of the Bengali *bhadralok* middle class as citizens of a new country, Pakistan, founded on the two-nation theory to which they had given moral and political support. The establishment of Pakistan, which began as the realization of its religious identity as a nation, began to weaken as the Bengali *bhadralok* identity shifted its position on the cultural spectrum and set about writing another cultural nationalist history foreshadowed in the colonial imagination.

A Postcolonialist History of Bangladeshi Middle Class

Earlier I have discussed, through postcolonial writings, how the *bhadralok* nationalist imaginaries of the nation or home had been contested discursively within a reconstituted and gendered domesticity. The discourse known as the history writing project taken up mainly by the Hindu *bhadralok* —that the nation was imagined romantically by appropriating the language of the middle class —has been accepted uncritically (Nandy, 1983; Chatterjee, 1993; Chakrabarty, 1992a, 1999b). Other postcolonial writers such as Ruud (1999) and Ismail (2008) question the essentialist voice inherent in the critique of Bengali *bhadralok* history. They criticized Chakrabarty's (1992b) *Provincializing Europe* for writing back to the center a historical account of the consciousness of the depressed classes, such as Muslims or women of India, from a Hindu bourgeois perspective that re-appropriated the colonial transition narrative he wanted to write back. The subjectivity of middle class construction in postcolonial analysis becomes a debate

between knowledge as a construction of two different forms of learning — one singular but modern and another plural but indigenous. I examine the *bhadralok* identity using the Bhabha's (1994) understanding of hybridity as a situational identity, necessary for the purpose of transferring power and resource.

With the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, the Bengali Muslim bourgeois identity faced a growing alienation from the West Pakistani business and defense establishments for lacking social or economic capital to contribute in the production of the idea of nation. The field of nation was realized politically but the idea of nation was incomplete. It needed a narrative in which the middle class from East Bengal found themselves absent. In Bourdieu's (1977) words, transaction of capital necessitates a change in social practice to gain advantage over others. The partition discourse of India and Pakistan in 1947 especially on the cross-border migration in Bengal is mainly a narrative of Bengali Hindu middle class nostalgia, trauma and dislocation, quite lacking its Bengali Muslim counter-stories. Rahman and Van Schendel (2003) argue that the assimilation theory, normally used in Bangladeshi history books, of homologous population exchanges undermines the way trans-border migration happened. The assimilation narrative of Muslims from India into Bangladesh (former East Bengal) is too simplistic and leaves out the way new social categories and boundaries that were formed between locals and migrants. The non-Bengali Muslim migrants, or *Biharis* as they are generically called, exchanged linguistic capital with economic capital from the Pakistani ruling class who saw them as Urdu-speaking allies. Urdu, which was the widely spoken tongue of India's Muslims, became the language of a minority ruling class in Pakistan after the partition of India. Though Bengali was the largest spoken language, Urdu was declared the national language of Pakistan. This led to protest by the Bengali middle class to establish their linguistic rights at the national level, a process that began

to widen the rift with the power center. Their position of relative power allowed the Biharis to distance themselves from the local Bengali speaking populations. The ethnic difference between the Bihari and Bengali population was mainly linguistic not religious. On the other hand social relations between the Bengali speaking Muslim migrants from India who came as "exchange" or "optee" refugees and the local Bengali community were kept at a minimum despite linguistic and religious unity (Rahman & Van Schendel, 2003, p.578). Linguistic and religious commonalities did not translate into a total assimilation of the different groups who migrated to former East Pakistan, but co-existed as separate communities. In remembering abandoned villages, Chakrabarty (1995) notes that neither Hindu nor Muslim *bhadralok* who became refugees had any construction of an imagined homeland that included the sacred images of the other. History, nationalism and language are all dialectically produced with sacred symbolisms and imaginations (Anderson, 1983). Bengali nationalism became the signifying discourse of national unity for the Bangla-speaking population after the creation of Pakistan. The language movement of 1952 can be seen as a turning point that coalesced the Bengali nationalism and used it as a wedge against the Pakistani federalism where religion became a political tool of power. A cultural history-writing project for a secular Bengali nationalism took place by archiving the "invented" (Anderson, 1983) past of the anti-imperialist struggle a generation earlier spearheaded by Hindu nationalists in which the Bengali Muslims participated only marginally. Bengali Muslim middle class appropriated the high culture of its linguistic heritage by focusing on the ethnic identity of Bengali Muslims, distancing themselves from Pakistani nationalism, which ended with the secession of East Pakistan as Bangladesh. Modern technologies such as the broadcasting media played a role in constructing a secular nationalist Bengali cultural movement in opposition to the religious discourse upon which Pakistani nationhood was founded (Huda,

2004). The Bengali nation was written into the resistance discourse of Bengali symbolism with reworked memories of the language movement in poetry, songs and other performative aspects of a national identity. The creation of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh led to the creation of two political boundaries, first by re-drawing the political maps of religion in 1947 followed by religious riots, the bloodiest in human history. The second time, an ethno-linguistic boundary of Bangla speaking people created Bangladesh through a civil war in 1971 creating large number of linguistic and ethnic refugees for both Bangladesh and India within new borders. Nation-building turned out to be a hollow "mechanical process" (Ahmed, 2005, p.1042) to the half a million Bihari and one million Bengali Hindu populations ―who became permanent refugees in Bangladesh and India respectively, in which they ultimately refused to participate. Ahmed (2005) describes the process of secession from the Pakistani establishment as an unconscious indoctrination into Bengali nationalism by the provincialized or rural Bengali subjects. This middle class nationalism was always bifurcated between two subjects, "the modernizing elite and the yet-to-be modernized peasantry" (Chakrabarty, 1992b, p.349). Experiences of colonialism seemed to have destined nationalism as an incomplete project for both the Bangladeshi middle class and peasants. The secular discourse of Bengali cultural nationalism forged during the '40s and '60s that ushered political independence of Bangladesh was flagged against the religious nationalism writ large on the two-nation theory attributed to Muhammad Iqbal (d.1938), the architect of Pakistan movement. The theory was formulated to demand separate living spaces for both Hindus and Muslims on the premise that they are separate nations with distinct history, languages and cultures. A deterritorialized Bengali history, which had germinated for a half-century (1850-1900) in the minds of Bankim, Tagore, Dinesh Sen and other Indian literati who embarked on a project of writing a Bengali (Hindu) history was resisted by the Bengali Muslims

in the 1940s through the declaration of Pakistan. That same Bengali linguistic history was again reconstituted for the Bengali Muslims of East Bengal as the basis for a Bengali nationalism to counter Pakistani nationalism. Indian cultural nationalism, which was historically constructed to serve as Bengali Hindu *bhadralok* cultural capital in pre-partition India, was appropriated by the Bengali Muslims to construct cultural differences with their co-federalists that ultimately culminated into the creation of Bangladesh in 1971.

Many Islams. The paradox of Bengali middle class disillusionment with Bengali cultural nationalism began with a series of military coups d'État between the years of 1975 and 1981 following the creation of Bangladesh in 1971. Within a few years this linguistic nationalism was de-cultured and territorialized as a separate political entity by infusing into it a component of religious difference. The construction of Bangladeshi territorial nationalism in the post 1975 period and the politicization of transnational Islamist discourses complicate the Bengali middle class identity construction thereafter. A Bangladeshi territorialized nationalism was invented by the two succeeding military governments led first by Gen. Zia-ur-Rahman in 1975 and followed by Gen. Ershad in 1984, for a number of reasons. The defense establishment in Bangladesh, trained and groomed in the Pakistan army, always considered the proximity of a neighbor with borders on three sides and with a large Hindu population, as a national security issue. A new ideological terrain based on religious differences with India created a territoriality of identity. This was done first gradually by removing secularism as a state principal and incorporating in the constitution "absolute trust and faith in the Almighty Allah" followed by declaring Islam as the state religion (Riaz, 2009. p140). A new Bangladeshi political identity was reconstituted within the geo-political specificity of Bangladesh. This was done by invoking the religious differences with the Indian Bengalis and undermining shared linguistic capital. A

Bangladeshi political nationalism was reconstructed as an ideological opposite to a Bengali linguistic nationalism. The archives of Bengali linguistic and Islamic traditions were evoked to create different cultural capitals for Bangladeshi nationals. These two nationalisms are homologous and not opposites in the sense that both constructs engage modernity for self-identification in a hegemonic or anti-hegemonic way. Religious nationalism was constructed from the indigenous social practices as well as imported from outside with a global aspiration.

Islamic practice in Bangladesh could be broadly categorized as social Islam and political Islam (Riaz, 2009). Political Islam in Bangladesh is linked with transnational Islamism. "Transnational Islamism" is used to convey the global identity of Muslims shaped and experienced as a political community of faith or *ummah* (Riaz, 2009, p.82). With the use of new global media connecting the local with the global, Bangladeshi middle class Islamic identity is also being shaped by the transnational Islamism. Riaz (2009) defines social Islam as the traditionally validated institutions that are loosely interpreted and embody a home-grown spiritual consciousness. Social Islam includes the practices of Sufi traditions, religious cult figures known as *Pirs,* traditional *Madrassahs* and the rural customs. Political Islam, on the other hand, is a moral-ideological import guided by literalist interpretations of Islam with implications of a larger social and economic law where justice for Muslims in other parts of the globe is as important, if not more than attaining personal salvation. Riaz (2009) believes that the lived Islam of Bangladeshi middle class adapted, accommodated and competed with the social and external influences of political Islam. These transnational imports are recent addition to the Bangladeshi religious landscape, brought by the short and long-term migrant populations both in the Gulf regions and the West, challenging the age old customs of social Islam. The new identities attempt to re-define a new religiosity whose ambitions are as much more political than social.

Although social Islam is non-political, within the framework of the nation-state, some networks have developed political aspirations (Riaz, 2009). These two types of Islams work through their political networks within the nationalist framework by turning up or turning down their religious rhetoric in order to establish strategic alliances with other secular/nationalist parties active in Bangladeshi politics. These political networks adopt a garb of social Islam and operate at the national level by controlling large numbers of *Madrassahs* and playing into the ideological differences between secular, nationlist and Islamist politics. With the banning of the largest Islamist political party in Bangladesh, Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), in 2013, the smaller Islamist parties with domestic agenda's of Islamic revolutions are going through a process of tactical repositioning with an aim to set up Islamic rule. The recent Islamist resurgence, spear-headed by Hefajot-e-Islam (Protectors of Islam), a sub-group of the smaller Islamist parties, that catapulted itself in the forefront of Islamic politics to protect Islam from the moral crisis posed by the online activities of secular writers and free thinkers, is an example of such political restructuring.

The question of political Islam in Bangladesh is a highly political issue which has only complicated the two modernisms of nationalism I have elaborated earlier. In the context of transnational migrants, their social, cultural or religious identities are mediated by their social networks. I attempt to explain the transnational Bangladeshi immigrant identity shifts in light of their construction of differences by hybridizing the various forms of capitals that exist in their social spaces. In the following section, I intend to explore the social networks that influence Bangladeshi transnational immigrant identity formation and representation.

Bangladeshi Transnational Immigrant Networks and Their Social Practices

The forces of globalization have created new kinds of markets and opened immigration opportunities for skilled labor in Western European and English-speaking countries in the post

Second World War years. A trickle of regional migration that had begun during the colonial period continued through the post-partition period in India. The early Bengali immigrants from Chittagong and Noakhali regions had arrived as peddlers and integrated with the Latino and Black communities in Jamaica, NY at the beginning of 20th century. Their Sylheti brethren found themselves opening up restaurants in Brick Lane in the '60s. Very few of them were professionals or students. The Bangladeshi transnational communities capitalized on their *bhadralok* habitus to increase their potential for movement through their social networks. However globalization, communication and unequal power distribution, determined what cultural or identity capital would serve the transnational migrants. Although the scope of this paper does not allow me to deal at length with the Bangladeshi migration trend, however, a brief contextualization of the socio-historical context of the recent Bangladeshi migrant population in Canada should be provided to locate the type of nationalism and Islamism that is inherent in their transnational identities.

The Bangladeshi diaspora in North America is comparatively young compared to other groups from South Asia who began to come in the 60s and 70s as post-graduate students (Leonard, 2003; Haddad, 2004). They arrived as university students pursuing higher degrees or entered very highly skilled professional careers and found jobs mainly in their area of expertise. The early entrants in Canada were from a more homogeneous social network of bureaucrats, scholars and different professionals, members of the middle class. A majority of these social classes came from urbanized families with a level of detachment from parochial ties to the country. The majority of the spousal dependents who accompanied these early immigrants did not and still do not work outside of the home. The US DV-1 visa systems was one of the first immigration visa types for which the Bangladeshi middle class began to apply in the early '90s.

However, very few educated middle class individuals were able to take advantage of it because of the system of lottery, not merit that was used to select eligible applicants. The bulk of the educated Bangladeshi middle class was unable to enjoy the gifts of globalization until the highly skilled immigration system, particularly in US, Canada and Australia, opened the flood-gates of exodus hitherto unavailable to them. Bangladeshi immigrants began arriving in conspicuously large numbers in Canada after 2001, mainly as a spill-over effect of the security concerns in United States that did not yet exist in Canada.

Canadian immigration benefitted from Bangladeshi migrants in the last decade by taking advantage of the differences in the immigration system as compared with the USA. A few of those migrants who were absorbed into the demand-driven system of high-skill immigration in Canada were offered secured employment and social mobility as professionals, as long as there was direct skill transfer. The points-system immigration used to determine entry to Canada favors the middle class educated Bangladeshi, who for various reasons has opted for the West as a favored destination. Another reason immigration to Bangladesh is expected to rise in Canada is the decision of US authorities to cancel issuing diversity lottery visa to Bangladeshi immigrants from 2013, due to the fulfillment of allocated quotas. Those who came after 2000 were markedly different from the early migrants in two important ways; they came with their spouses who had brought skills which they could readily transfer in their new environment. Most of my participants, including myself, fall in this group. The second difference was the changing notion of home as postnational states became increasingly unstable, paving the way for transnational migrancy as an acceptable form of dwelling. The rate of immigration from Bangladesh to Canada has increased every year since 2000 with the largest intakes arriving to Canada from USA following 9-11 when the changed political and economic situation became unsupportive for

these middle classes to advance themselves professionally or through entrepreneurship in the US. Although the new immigrants come from economically heterogeneous backgrounds, the socio-cultural context in which they find themselves after arriving in Canada, put them in a state of hysteresis, that Bourdieu (1977) calls the "fish out of water" syndrome. The deskilling and declassing of immigrant professionals for prolonged periods undermine their self-perception as productive citizens irrevocably. The Canadian Labor and Business Center (2002) reports three main barriers most immigrants face in professional occupations. These are: lack of proficiency in official language, problems in transferability of foreign credentials and lack of local workplace experience.

Middle class professionals who migrated to Canada under skilled class or as students primarily depend on institutional and social networks to connect with other social spaces. Networks have been found crucial both at the receiving and sending countries. Social networks play significant roles as "cultural brokers" (Raj, 2008, p.147) in immigrant identity construction by playing the role of a mobilized diaspora, mediating cultural practices between different entities such as mosques, schools or cultural organizations. Other types of cultural brokers are parents, influential members in the mosque community as well as schools authorities. The core/peripheral membership of one's role in a social network also has a bearing on how that network is utilized to increase capital. Immigrants use existing social networks established through interpersonal relations around the globe connecting with members of family, friends and peoples. Social networks serve a base for immigrants to find jobs, housing, circulate goods and services, emotional support, information and socio-cultural reproduction. Life in the diaspora is marked by various degrees of ruptures, isolations and re-connections through various social networks mainly picked from the social spaces of work, school, community and place of

worship. The core/peripheral membership of one's role in a social network also has a bearing on how that network is utilized to increase capital. Differences in members' education, class, and access to resources can determine the fluidity of a social network driven by regionalism, factionalism and elitism. Social networks are a key for social practices and meaningful social actions in the diaspora. Studies on first generation Indian and Bangladeshi middle class immigrant families show that they maintain an exclusively in-group and ethnic social network of family and friends with similar backgrounds and history (Raj, 2008; Ahmed, 1997). These networks are seen as important for the second generation to have for a linguistic, cultural and religious connection with the homeland. Although there is a large presence of Bangladeshi-controlled cultural and religious organizations in both Toronto and Montreal, membership in these institutions are used to exchange sometimes opposing cultural capitals. Attendance at cultural, religious or community events is used as an opportunity for enculturation for the second generation with the site of family playing the central role for language transfer. In an ethnographical study of Bangladeshi immigrant readers of ethnic newspapers in Montreal, Ahmed (1997) showed how Anderson's (1991) imagined community becomes a useful construct for the making of a homeland. Almost three fourth parents in Ahmed's (1997) study said that they send their children to Bengali heritage language schools but expect them to grow up as Bangladeshi-Canadians. Passing the heritage language down to the next generation was also seen as a "moral and parental obligation" (Ahmed, 1997, p.129). The Montreal-based local Bengali language press, *Banglarbarta* reproduced the Bengali nationalist discourse on 21st February, a day commemorated as the Language Martyr day in Bangladesh cultivating the middle class *bhadralok* sentiments of cultural and historical struggles (Ahmed, 1997, p.262):

The brave fight our ancestors fought against British imperialism, in the Khelafat [Caliphate] movement, the peasants' movement, the Pakistan movement, the language movement of '52, the mass uprising of '69, and the independence war of '71.

Postcolonial writers have long claimed that identity politics among Indian and Bengali middle class immigrants has been historically constructed as a cultural project using a derivative narrative of European nationalism and world history (Nandy, 1983; Chatterjee, 1993). The post-national identities constructed through such history writing are often based on historicized antagonism and collective prejudice. Ahmed (1997) corroborates that view in his study of Bangladeshi middle-class immigrants. Among the Bangladeshi immigrant men and women, obsession with the home country's political events and history are a "highly emotional matter" (Ahmed, 1997, p.123). These Bengali immigrants, a large number of whom were political refugees, felt a connection with history "so that their language and culture be kept alive" (Ahmed, 1997, p.151). However Ahmed (1997) believes that their cultural alignment with Bangladesh is a reaction to the dominant culture for failing to gain social mobility in exchange of their career and education.

The influx of millions of Muslims to the West especially after WWII and the increasing number of mosques, madrassahs, and Islamic institutions being estblished has also generated a resurgence of Muslim cultural identity. The transnational Muslims have taken a renewed interest in religion by viewing themselves as part of a global Islamic community. Roy (2004) believes that this resurgence is not a reactive backlash against Westernization and perceived domination but a product of complex forces of globalization, increase in communication and fluid movement of people, practices and ideas across national borders. In recent years a growing demand of religious and cultural rights by the Muslim diapora in Canada and elsewhere in Europe,

especially for implementing *shariah* has been placed in a context of us vs. them. The discourse of "parallel society" (Ali, 2010, p.188) by Muslims as opposed to a model minority that integrates well in the Western way of life has contributed in engendering a perception of Muslims as unassimilable. Structural racism and indigenous patriarchy in the host country has led to even greater forces of patriarchy or returned to regressive "moral bookkeeping" (Moghissi, 2003, p.117) that idealizes tradition and suppresses individualism. In the diaspora, immigrant families usually increase their diaspora capital by socializing with families who instill and reinforce similar values and cultures, thus ossifying their patriarchal norms. Rarely is there border crossing when diaspora form a ghetto away from home, creating insular zones of cultural comfort. In an ethnographic study of 50 Bangladeshi immigrants claiming refugee status in Montreal, Ahmed (1997, p.154) found more than half of the participants identifying themselves as Bangladeshi and a third of them as Bangladeshi-Canadian and none as Muslim. However Islam in the post 9-11 scenario played a major role in identity politics among Bangladeshi immigrants. Ahmed (1997) found that "religion did not emerge as a symbolic meeting ground for the shaping of a Bangladeshi identity" in Montreal (p.124). The religious constructions of Bangladeshi transnational migrants can be attributed to a mix of practices found in social Islams locally in Bangladesh as well as the political Islams institutionalized globally.

Coward (2000) gives an account of the transnational Islamic identity through two major organizations: the Islamic Society of North America and the Islamic Circle of North America with affiliations in almost every mosque. These organizations were formed originally in the '60s and '70s by Muslim students and professionals mainly from the Middle East and South Asia that later branched into many regional chapters. Many Bangladeshi transnational immigrants connect with these organizational activities through their student wings in the schools or from the

neighborhood mosques they attend or send their children for religious instructions. Their regular social practices include holding religious study circles (*halaqa*), fund-raising events for local or international causes, religious festivals, and community events. These two main umbrella organizations have shaped the Islamic culture and practice of the transnational Muslim migrants in North America as their power to sanction and approve *Islam proper* (my emphasis) gets institutional validation. However regionalism and factionalism are common in local mosques and often contribute to members breaking away and forming their own communities. These organizational cultures contribute to a sense of global collectiveness or global *ummah* for the transnational Muslim migrants in Canada, connecting them with many other forms of Muslim lives from the world. The Bangladeshi middle class immigrants' transantional identity includes a hybrized Islamic identity shaped by both the social Islam of Bangladesh and the transnational Islamism of the North American culture. The *bhadralok* social construct should be understood in the light of the socio-cultural and historical contexts of nationalism and transnational Islamism discussed thus far. The Bangladehi transnational immigrant identities negotiate with the multiple and situational identities and constructions to augment their diaspora capitals. The social actions of transnational networks both institutionalized and informal are showcased and projected through different social practices to increase the "Diasporic Capital" (Raj, 2008) creating new knowledge as well as sustaining the old. The Bangladeshi middle class immigrants' transantional identity is performed and showcased in its transnational networks to access various capitals through a hybrization of multifarious cultural, linguistic, religious and racialized identities.

Summary

This chapter has attempted to answer the first research question concerning Bengali middle class (*bhadralok*) identity from a historical critique of colonial space and the production

of the Bengali bourgeoisie as a discourse. The *bhadralok* identity is a construction of the imagined linguistic, territorial and religious identities with both elements of the social and political Islam. Bangladeshi social networks in the diaspora play as "cultural brokers" (Raj, 2008, p.147) in the construction of institutionalized *bhadralok* identities in the host country by transforming linguistic, cultural and religious traditions to compete for diaspora capitals.

I drew the criticism of Indian cultural and national history writing project put forward by noted Indian postcolonial writers (Nandy, 1983; Chatterjee, 1993; Chakrabarty, 1992a) to develop the colonial field of nation where *bhadralok* identity was constructed. This nationalist history writing was a response to the gendered ideology of the British colonialists, reshaping middle class language, domesticity and history as it went. The colonial education system produced two streams of Bengali educated classes: one provincial and another modern, both products of opposing poles of schooling. The *bhadralok* habitus must be understood within the ambivalence of the two oppositional reasons and traditions producing two poles of consciousnesses ─ one modern and the other traditional. Acquiring the cultural capital of modern education became the new social practice of urbanized Bengali intellectuals who consolidated a future Bengali gentrified class and an imaginary national home. With the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 the Bengali Muslim middle class appropriated the high culture of its linguistic heritage by converging on a collectivity of ethnicity, having no social or economic capital to contribute in the production of the idea of nation. In an independent Bangladesh in 1971, a deterritorialized Bengali history written for a bourgeois nationalism became an incomplete project for the Bangladeshi Muslims. A resurgence of pan-Islamic discourse into Bengali middle class identity construction undermined the linguistic nationalism and their

bourgeois politics. *Bhadralok* identity is a hybridization of the various competing religious,

nationalist and linguistic discourses for the middle class Bangladeshi bougeosie in Canada.

Chapter Five: Adda as a Method and Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter, I attempt to answer my second research question, which analyzes how the Bengali social practice of *adda* could serve as a methodological tool for locating Bangladeshi identity shifts in the diaspora. As I have argued before, *adda* is the site of social action for Bengali middle class knowledge construction. A brief socio-historical background of *adda*'s origin in the colonial transition narrative of modernity has been given in chapter Two. In this chapter, I present Bangladeshi diaspora *adda* as a cultural production of the Bengali speaking voices. I begin by introducing *adda* as a conceptual method of inquiry. Vygotsky's (1966) understandings of knowledge construction can be applied to *adda*'s socially negotiated activities. *Adda* as a cultural production of bourgeois sociabilities and exhibition of power play can also be seen as a discursive space of negotiation between the participants. As a member of the mosque based and neighborhood based *adda,* I describe the way I reconstituted them into a research site for my inquiry of diaspora identity. Bangladeshi social networks can be viewed as cultural brokers with *adda* as a socially situated activity where meaning is contested, negotiated and constructed. I then introduce the initial make-up of both the *adda* circles, the interactional dynamics among the participants of each circle and highlight some relevant participant features. I intuited that *adda* as a cultural production of power play could be used to build confidence between the participants and the researcher. I use a narrative style that attempts to give a descriptive account of initial access to an *adda* for someone who is uninitiated in the cultural settings. Secondly, I introduce the concept of liminality to explain the internal dynamics of *adda*. Liminalities are the linguistic signs or behavior, characteristic of small talk or rites of passage, in a socially situated conversation signaling transitions to and from uncertainties in a conversational

situation (Rampton, 1999). As a socially situated oral activity for Bengali speaking people, *adda* has its cultural and semiotic signs and conventions of communication. These are expressions of cordiality, deriding social taboos, observance of religious gestures, exchanges of social cues/chits, joining in light banter, conventions of deference based on age and social status to mention only a few of the peculiarities that every social action develops.

In the following sections, I contextualize *adda* as a culturally situated genre of Bengali middle class social action where diaspora identities lead to a strategic mix of cultural differences and representation. *Adda*'s sociological role as a method of knowledge construction and a research methodology in studying a culturally embedded social action of meaning making is both crucial and necessary to answer my second research question. *Adda* thus becomes a third space to interpret, understand and challenge the multiple power structures in the diaspora and the various ways Bangladeshi immigrants speak about their experiences.

Adda as a Conceptual Method of Inquiry

In qualitative studies there is increasingly focused research on the lived experiences of race, gender and social class on individual perceptions. Diaspora communities usually dwell in multiple locations of contested identities across the myriad ruptures between many different cultures, languages and memories. I use one such discursive location of Bengali identity construction called *adda*, a mediated speech through which middle class (hi)stories are told and contested. I use Bengali or Bangla to mean the language common to the ethnic people of Bangladesh and parts of India, although this study includes none from the latter group. I hold the Vygotskian (1962) view of one's knowledge as the construction of one's social interaction, interpretation and understanding that cannot be separated from the social environment in which it is formed. Learning in social constructivist paradigm is primarily a "social process" that actively

involves others (Shepherd, 2000). Our knowledge of the world is tied to our personal experiences and is mediated through interaction with others (von Glasersfeld, 1989). Thus *adda* affords itself as a methodological framework needed to understand a situated social action. A lexicological inquiry of the Bengali word *adda* (pronounced *ud-dah*) gives the following meaning:

> *Adda n*. 1. a dwelling-place; 2. a rendezvous; 3. a club , 4. a place or institution for practicing anything (such as *adda* for musicians). *v*. to join an assembly of idle-talkers. *a*. fond of indulging in idle-talk. (Biswas, Gupta, & Sengupta, 1995)

In this research on self and cultural identities of Bangladeshi diaspora lives, I look into the situated practice of *adda* and their dialogic interactions through a thematic analysis of their conversations. Any action or activity is interpretable only in a socially relevant context. I believe that speech acts, experiences, memories, and emotions are constructed and enacted through culturally situated genres and, as Atkinson (1995) demands they need to be treated as social actions. *Adda* as a social space of Bangladeshi immigrant networks, showcases immigrant dialogues, experiences, beliefs, assumptions, and references from personal to collective; from historical to contemporary. Immigrant *adda* is a narrative of lived experiences laced with political gossip, TV drama, newspaper columns, re-presentations of global media, and re-telling of other peoples' commentaries; the list is by no means exhaustive. The situatedness of any knowledge construction within a community of practice entails the socio-historical context that the members bring to the negotiation of meaning. In everyday use, adda is understood as a practice of "boon companions" (Chakrabarty, 1999a, p. 110) getting together for long, informal, and gregarious conversations. In the colonial domestic space, debating societies and literary circles could be attributed as providing *adda* its modern sites of cultural production. *Adda*'s discursive space, according to Chakrabarty (1999a), lies in between the public speech and parlor

talk of the Bengali middle class where adda activities included "'everything beginning from Plato―Nietzsche to Bankim―Vivekananda―Vaisnava poetry, Rabindra[nath's] poetry' as well as music, feats, and picnicking" (p. 128-129). Mukhopadhyay (2004) likens *adda* in Bengali culture to the embodied role reversal of social conventions that Bakhtin (1984) calls the *carnivalesque,* where the status quo is subverted through, mocking, satire and challenging norms.

The purpose of using *adda* as a methodological framework is to situate identity construction in a culturally relevant speech genre. In the course of the interveiws, the participants *gave adda* (my emphasis) on their personal, professional, familial and educational history that spanned the times both before and after they had immigrated to Canada. Our conversations in the *adda* groups became the texts or words and the situated activity of *adda* became the semiotic space where our utterances in Bakhtinian terms emerge from concrete dialogic situations. Bakhtin's notion of language is complete "dialogization, when it becomes revitalized, de-privileged, aware of competing definitions for the same things" (Bakhtin, 1981, p.427). Dialogism includes the paradoxical relations among the utterance, language and the verbal-ideological history of the individual. Bakhtin says that one's culture and society plays crucial roles in mediating socially agreeable interpretations through the master tools of language. We cannot understand our own "linguistic habitus" (Bakhtin, 1981, p.62) in isolation from other selves and cultures. Dialogic relationship with the other results in one's being "located outside the object of his or her creative understanding—in time, in space, in culture" (1986, p.7). Bakhtin's (1986) idea of social language, whereby we assimilate other's discourse by re-accenting, reworking and intonating others' words, makes the social action of *adda,* constructivist in nature. Thus according to Bakhtin, one's micro-identity or knowledge of the self and macro-identity or historically situated cultural context, is constituted of one's language and

premised on others' discourse. Bakhtin believes that meaning is depended on the context not on text:

> At any given time, in any given place, there will be a set of conditions—social, historical, meteorological, physiological— that will insure that a word uttered in that place and at that time will have a meaning different than it would have under any other conditions (Bakhtin, 1981, p.428).

The meaning of any utterance according to Bakhtin is based on multi voice or heteroglossia. Bakhtin's understanding of multi-voice as a milieu of other voices, always present in our language, is crucial in re-authoring ourselves, creatively constructing a consciousness through the other's eye. The middle class Bangladeshi orality in the adda constructs similar spaces of dialogic interaction between the self and the world.

Bourdieu gives us a different approach to identity study using a social practice theory. I have discussed Bourdieu's construction of social practice and forms of capital in greater detail in Chapter Two. Bourdieu understands identity as a system of dispositions that includes embodied practices of moral judgment, ethical commitments, or standards of aesthetics within a particular social space. He calls it habitus (1977) —both a set of and source of social practices. *Adda* could be understood in a Bourdieuan sense as a habitus or system of mental dispositions such as a manner of speaking and thinking through socialization, which increases certain forms of capital. Bourdieu identifies capitals as social, cultural, economic and symbolic, all of which are interchangeable within a specific social space. The social standing one enjoys in an *adda* network could be understood as an example of a social capital that is linked with one's habitus or practice within a specified field. In a study of diaspora Indian youth, Raj (2008) uses their

personal and social networks in the diaspora as spaces of "diasporic habitus" (p.129) that function as a venue for storytelling, showcasing culture and projection of social status that could be leveraged to create new knowledge as well as to sustain the old. Using Raj's (2008) idea of transnational social networks, I propose viewing transnational *adda* as similar social spaces where diaspora Bangladeshis showcase their capital. Any communicative exchange becomes a reciprocal relationship between speakers and listeners where "texts and textual practices are juxtaposed and interwoven in mutually affirming or contentious ways" (Kamberelis and Scott, 1992, p.364). *Adda* thus provides a space of knowledge construction for Bangladeshi middle-class immigrants and an inquiry into their agency through their situated storytelling, and inter-textual negotiation. It becomes a constructivist-collaborative method of inquiry as participants renegotiate and create new knowledge about themselves and their world, ultimately transforming themselves. *Adda* as a social language of the Bangladeshi diaspora represents the exteriority and interiority of the middle class social constructions of the places and spaces in which they find themselves and from which they are absent. Having given a context for *adda*, the Bengali social practice of identity work, I now turn my discussion to providing a background of the participants who make up these diaspora adda networks in Canada.

Context of Adda, Participants and Places

In this section, I introduce the two social networks under investigation. First, I provide an in depth description and context of the mosque based group, hereafter referred to as the mosque *adda* followed by the neighborhood based group, hereafter referred to as neighborhood *adda*. In the contextual discussion of these two *adda* groups, I sketch participant profiles, their relationship with each other, describe how the *adda* were initially formed and consent for research obtained. In the next section, I elaborate the factors of liminalities and power in getting

access to the two groups, my research sites. I now turn to provide an introduction of the two *adda* networks as a culturally embedded site of Bengali sociability that became the focus of my inquiry.

Background of the Mosque Adda. I decided to call the informal gathering that took place regularly at Johar's home the *mosque adda* because of the centrality of religious life to its participants and what the mosque as an institution holds to their lives in the diaspora. There was another minor reason why the word mosque became associated with the group. The venue of our *adda* was close to a mosque where we regularly showed up for congregational prayers. For reasons of privacy, I decided to withhold the name of the mosque. Johar and his wife Swopna, a Bangladeshi immigrant couple who lived just across the mosque, opened their home to our *adda* research, proved to be generous hosts. *Adda* is the ubiquitous Bengali practice of sociality where conversation is feted with an invitation to eating together as well. His disposition to invite his friends regularly on religious or non-religious occasions had given him a reputation of a persistent host. Johar's *adda* had certain regular and irregular participants. The regular participants were his long time acquaintances who were regular visitors to his house. They included Khoka, Baha, Taukir and Sarwar, all of whom work in the telecom or Information Technology industry including Johar. The irregular participants included Doha, Molla and Azam, whom I have met at Johar's place occasionally at religious festivals such as Eid or Ramadan. They are all Bangladeshi immigrants, some of whom came to the US as students and others to Canada either as students or directly as highly-skilled immigrants. I reintroduce these people in the next section.

In the first *adda* meeting in May 2013, at Johar's home the presence of eight people made it somewhat difficult to open the conversations on a topic that would not only be comfortable for

all to participate but ease our transition into the areas of my research. Moreover turning this social gathering into a site of research required some aspects of their social and religious lives to be brought into the public domain. This also meant that any serious *adda* or sharing of personal beliefs, politics, or professional lives other than childhood memories would be subject to some self-scrutiny, power play and social negotiation. In the second *adda* session at Johar's, our audience fell down to half, with four people remaining, whose names Johar had suggested in the beginning. Molla, Doha and Azam, are not regular attendees of the mosque adda and did not show up after the first session. Khokha declined to continue after the second session. The reasons for dropping-out were all personal in nature. Khokha indicated to me that he was a regular attendee in another *adda* and initially promised to introduce me to that group, which did not materialize as I already had two *adda* in hand. Although they stopped attending in the successive *adda* sessions, they did not withdraw their permission to use their recorded data in the research. Those who remained for the last three meetings were the regular members of Johar's social network. They were Baha, Khoka, Taukir, Sarwar and Johar, hosting us all. I would bring them back again in the following section. We had a total of four *adda* sessions in which we covered varieties of topics relevant to the context of identity construction.

In the mosque *adda*, there was also another subtler kind of division that goes back to our point of arrival in Canada. Doha, Johar, Baha and I all came to Canada via the U.S. after finishing our graduate studies as international students almost fifteen years ago. Our journey goes back many years. The other group, Molla, Sarwar, Taukir, Azam and Khoka migrated in the last six years directly from Bangladesh having worked in various sectors of the textile and information technology industry. Almost all the participants have a Masters degree obtained either from their home country or from the US in Business or Computer Science. Most of the

participants at the mosque *adda* are on their way to become home-owners with a single income. The commonality we all enjoy at Johar's home lay in the shared religious experience, when the men and boys usually walk to the next-door mosque and the women and girls pray at home. The religious experience among them could also be a migration-specific experience as none of the participants with the exception of Johar, had been very particular about going to the mosque before they left the country. The gender separation at Johar's household was generally relaxed as Johar's wife Swopna who would sometimes drop into our conversations to keep check on the food and give us company while other participants arrived.

I had a total of four meetings with the mosque group, where the families had been invited on all occasions except one. To get the men at the mosque *adda* agree to participate in research proved to be easier than to get them show up for the sessions. I consider the first meeting with the mosque group as an important lesson in recruiting participants within in the context of *adda*-based research. *Adda* networks in the diaspora are not normally made-up of the same group of people whose lives intersect at work and during leisure time. They are mainly formed with people from similar socio-economic and ethnic background whose company are sought by invitation only. The importance of certain *adda* networks is also determined based on what it has to offer to other members in the diaspora. After the first interview at Johar's house it became unclear who would commit to stay through all the four sessions. I was surprised to see that all the regular *adda* participants at Johar's place: Baha, Taukir and Sarwar had turned up in all the four meetings with Khokha in two of them. Johar later on told me the reason, which I explain in due course. A chart (Figure 3) of the mosque *adda* group shows the members in dotted lines who attended at least one interview session out of four.
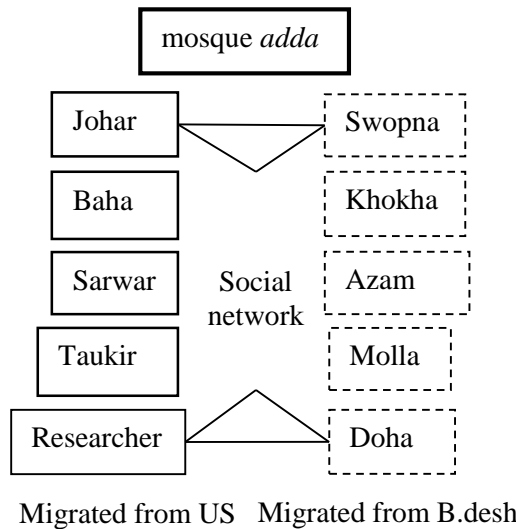
Figure 3: Relational diagram of mosque adda

Johar felt a connection with attending mosques, a spirituality that he developed while studying in USA where I met him almost seventeen years ago. He often said, that "living close to a mosque meant living inside a mosque" (Session MG4, Johar). Generally the attendees at Johar's *adda* could be divided into two groups, those who came to Canada from the United States as the prospect of securing a green card in the post 9-11 days looked unpromising and those who directly came from Bangladesh to secure a better future. Johar, Doha, Baha and I fall in the former and Molla, Azam, Taukir and Sarwar fall into the latter group.

In the mosque-based *adda*, I had asked Johar's help to organize a group of people who regularly meet at his place for social gatherings. I realized that he would be the person to know who might be interested in participating in the *adda* conversations. He gave me four names who would definitely show up if invited. I had been pursuing Johar to have them meet at his house for two reasons. First, they all knew Johar better than they knew me and secondly because Johar's house was closer to their homes than mine. He insisted that I called them up myself, inform them

of my intended research and schedule a date for the first meeting. To that effect I emailed the consent forms to the prospective participants of the study and personally invited them for a future meeting sometime in May 2013. Within weeks I got reply from four people who answered positively for an interview request while others were somewhat apprehensive about a camera interview. As time went by, my hopes of getting any consent form in my inbox grew dimmer. I got hold of Johar frantically, to intervene. My intention at this point was to have them meet and discuss the research up-front.

I asked Johar to suggest ideas on how to get the men in his social network interested in an ethnographic research that inquired into their lives through their *adda*. Johar suggested I make a formal invitation (*dawat*) for lunch or dinner involving the wives of the participants for the first round of interviews. As the host, he played an important role in arranging the first meeting at his home. Traditionally it was mainly the man in the house who hosted the *adda*, playing the role of a mediator by displaying an element of trust among the congregants. In the diaspora, paying a social call to other Bangladeshi immigrants is considered quality time for the whole family, including the women and children. Social gatherings among Bangladeshi immigrants are usually segregated by gender and age if the participants object to a mixed gathering. The participants at Johar's home observed a loose form of gender separation, where the women held an *adda* of their own in the living space, keeping the children busy while the men (of my study) gathered in the basement. The men and women took turns using the dining space, keeping socialization among them to a minimum. Recreational space for Bangladeshi immigrants is still gender-specific and context-specific. The level of gender-mixing in a social gathering often depends on the occasion and crowd-preference. However, these norms tend to be much more relaxed back

home then in the West. Nonetheless an invitation to *adda* brings food and families together, ensuring a safe place for recreation.

On the first day I appeared, fully prepared with my recording and interview instruments. I did not expect eight people to show up for the mosque *adda*. Four of them had been informed by phone and email that the *adda* would be used as part of a doctoral study, the scope and details of which would be explained later after we met. The other four were invited by Johar as potential recruits who showed interest in the study. I began the recording at the first meeting once everybody had been briefed and accepted the terms of the study. Johar told me after the recording session was over that he had asked his wife use her good offices, to invite their spouses as well just to ensure that the men would show up for *adda*. More than research participants, they were his guests. Johar felt that the women were more reliable at getting the men out of their homes if they were invited too. His assumptions on the links between social gathering and the role of the women had proven right when the attendance of the *adda* fell by half. Previously, I proposed that only men should be invited in the following session, minus their wives. The wives were not part of my research but they were an indisputable factor in socializing with other families in the diaspora. Among married couples, *adda* is often mixed gender in Bangladesh. But among the South Asian Muslim Bangladeshi immigrants, the social boundaries that are drawn up along newly adopted religious or ethnic lines make mixed gender *adda* problematic. At Johar's place the *purdah* or seclusion was enforced when the gathering was formal, while with close friends it was a bit more relaxed. I wanted to spare Johar and Swopna, his wife, the trouble of arranging food for the *adda* considering that I had four sessions in mind at their residence. I wrote in my reflexive journal after the second adda session:

Johar blamed the low turn-out in this *adda* on excluding the wives and not announcing

that food was part of the research. Wives were invited to the following *adda* but

entertained in the kitchen by Johar's wife. (Session MG1, Reflexive Journal 7, June 2013)

Food is "integrated" (Session MG1) with invitations, said Khoka, Johar's friend and a

participant. Any social gathering that involves meeting other families inviolably has to be over a

lunch or dinner at the host's house. So there is a tacit invitation for food even if it is a pot-luck.

Otherwise if there is no invitation to attend, weekends are normally spent in the malls, looking

for cultural activities or eating out. Most of participants said that they try to make their family

time educative by visiting the local Islamic center or mosque to participate in different

community services or listen to scholarly lectures in the weekends. However to Johar's wife,

Swopna, it also depends on what the children want, which could mean just staying home or

watching movies. *Adda* on the other hand means hassle-free home-cooked food and

entertainment—two in one! When research invades the private cultural practice of *adda* with a

tacit threat to open it to the public eye, the trustworthiness of the host is bound to be shaken. That

is why Johar proposed that the research study on *adda* should include an implicit invitation

(*dawat*) for lunch. This tacit invitation was necessary to give the meeting a social ambiance,

necessary in his view to remove the tag of research from the *adda*. After all, the participants

were his guests first, then research participants in my study. My intention to hold an *adda*

composed of only men was shortsighted, as it was apparently the women who decided if the

adda was eventually going to take place.

We all sat around the reception room-cum-basement that Johar keeps equipped with a

large wall-mounted LCD and couches on three sides of the wall. On one side there is a bookshelf

filled with religious manuals and commentaries of Quran and Hadith. Hadith is a fundamental

source on the commentary on Prophet Muhammad's (p.b.u.h.) sayings and doings, together with the Quran, these compendium of books provide the primary exegesis of Islamic scriptural texts. A large framed Islamic calligraphy of sacred texts hangs from the wall in a symmetrical balance with pictures of geometric patterns. The interior of Johar's house is ostensibly decorated with Islamic symbolism. There are no statues or portraits or true representations of life-forms in his house, in the iconoclastic tradition of his faith. An electronic door-bell greets visitors with peace saying *Assalamu alaikum* in Arabic only. The visitors can help themselves with an assortment of perfumed oils (*athars*) Johar collected from the Saudi Arabia. He is most comfortable in the traditional Arabic dress gown or *thobe,* a choice of dress he wants his sons to adopt with as much "damn care attitude as a bikini-clad high schooler" (Session MG3, Johar). Adopting an ethnic or cultural dress code as an Islamic practice is perceived as "living confidently" (Session MG3, Johar) resisting the dominant cultural discourse. The diaspora discourse cannot be deployed without reifying the mono-cultural identity of the host country (Dirlik, 2004, p.499). There are two main types of dress codes popular among Bangladeshi immigrants when they reify the Western suits; *Kurta* and *Thobe*. The former is the traditional cultural dress for Bangladeshi male and the latter for Arabs. Kurta, a long loose garb with slits on the sides is more commonly termed as *Punjabi* among the Bangladeshi communities. Most members at Johar's *adda* are *Punjabi-walas*. They wear the Bangladeshi traditional dress most of the time and not the Arabic one. I wanted to have a healthy mix of both in my *adda*. What I found out later in my data analysis was how and what we wear could be one way of mixing modernity with tradition, resisting ossification of both.

Background of the Neighborhood Adda*.* My *neighborhood group* was named such because it situates the context clearly around the locations where it originates. The double space

(Langellier, 2010) of most immigrant lives points to the cosmopolitanism that stems from being connected to not only many different places but also many different people. My immigrant life is actually divided between my old acquaintances from Bangladesh and new ones whom I have met as neighbors at my ever changing places of residence. Hassan, an apiarist and Ratan, a computer engineer, and I all share an apartment complex in Mississauga, a sprawling suburb that is home to almost a quarter of all South Asians in Canada. The cluster of apartments we live in has been home to an expanding crowd of single-parent immigrant families mainly from South Asia, replicating what began as the *Begum bazaar* or wives' enclave in certain downtown locations in Toronto. I was not aware of the coinage until Taukir, an acquaintance from the mosque *adda,* explained the origin of such a slang used in the South Asian community. It is the female-run South Asian households that have given the buildings such a name, what with the men-folk working in the Gulf kingdoms or back home. Even if that were true, I would not have had the opportunity to know it as very few Bangladeshi families lived here. I met them when I relocated here three years ago from Montreal as we looked for a more inclusive neighborhood and school district. With a large mosque facing a major intersection and next to a mall, this was the best residence we could afford on my modest student loan. The school, mosque and mall, all within a walking distance, offered the families in these apartment complexes plenty of opportunities to socialize. However this socialization took place along visible boundaries of ethnicity and religion, especially for South Asian families, as it does in any large city with visible minorities. Hassan's and Ratan's children go to the same school as mine and participate in activities organized by the same neighborhood mall. Here is a relational diagram of the participants in the neighborhood adda:
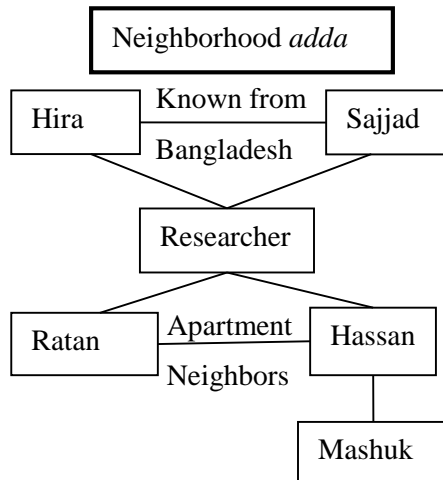
Figure 4: Relational diagram of neighborhood adda

Hira and Sajjad live in a suburb of Toronto that is probably the densest neighborhood of
South Asian descendants in Ontario. Hira is the newest member of our old *adda* networks from
college days. He owned an auto dealership in Bangladesh. His situation can be described as dire,
working under the table at an ethnic store, a situation that all immigrants can relate to. Our
friendship goes back to our college days when we all began to dream of going to the United
States one day to change our lives. We reconnected again through my inquiry into immigrant
lives, one of the ways where researchers bring their lenses to bear on the 'specimens' they think
they know best. Mashuk is the only single individual in our group; a bit of a recluse, he shares a
basement with other single men and was introduced to our *adda* through Hassan. The two met at
an assembly line job in a factory by Lake Ontario where Hassan, newly arrived landed on his
first job. Hassan is an apiarist by training. He worked with bees before he came to Canada but his
heart is in the make-shift school that he has set up in his home village. Mashuk has been

struggling to finish his graduate work, a project that experienced a small set-back with his recent divorce. Ratan has a degree in electrical engineering and works in a tech-support position in an electronics giant. Sajjad, a self-made man, never bothered to finish his university degree and has set himself up financially well compared to others.

In the neighborhood *adda*, food was not used as bait to get the men out of their homes, but getting all of the participants together, with three participants living in Mississauga and two others in downtown Toronto became a major obstacle. It was impossible for Hira to join us without a ride. As a new immigrant in Toronto he depended on public transportation. So I decided to hold two different neighborhood *adda* at two different locations. This allowed the two neighborhood *adda* to remain somewhat loosely linked between two city suburbs. The *adda* with Sajjad, Ayad and Hira represented for me my old relationships of youth, dislocated through the junctures of migration and renegotiated in the fluidity of our new transnational existences. Conversely Hassan, Ratan, Mashuk and I denote a new social alignment of immigrant parents who met in the contact zones of a new country through newly formed social networks.

Hira and Sajjad agreed to meet at a mutual friend's house in Toronto. We chose to meet on weekdays to avoid conflicts with family commitments. Hira had recently arrived in Canada and didn't have transportation, Sajjad agreed to give him a ride. I knew Hira when he worked as a radio jockey back in college in Bangladesh before he moved into corporate sales. Sajjad is a veteran in this group. It has been more than twenty years since he came in Canada as a student. The last time I had seen Hira had been almost sixteen or seventeen years ago. We exchanged calls several times with the intention to meet when I relocated to Ontario almost three years ago. I prepared them briefly about my interest in studying the *adda* as part of my research. I mailed them consent letters promising to brief them more in person. The problem was finding a place to

meet. A restaurant would be too loud, their homes too distracting. Ayad, another common friend

of ours solved the problem. Ayad who worked from his basement, had the whole house to

himself before his wife and children came from work and school. It was decided we would meet

there for two hours for the *adda* before Ayad's wife came from work and Hira's evening work

shift begins.

Both the *adda* were gendered, where our spouses facilitated our social meetings from

behind the scenes, often having their own *adda* going on the side with almost no access for these

adda to cross over. *Adda* as a social practice is traditionally understood as gendered spaces of

socialization. In the diaspora context the nature of socialization among Bangladeshi immigrant

families requires maintaining some old structures of gendered *adda* although Hassan, Ratan, and

I had initially met each other through our wives, participating in the children's activities in the

nearby mall. The three of us soon formed our own coffee time in the nearby mall, out of a need

to spend time away from family with other men. Very often long-term neighborhood *adda*

among Bangladeshi men do not go beyond old circles of family friends, as job instability and

globalized markets make living in one neighborhood to sustain that friendship, difficult. Except

for Mashuk, who had a short but unsuccessful stint with marriage, the rest of us are married with

children. Mashuk was the only outsider from our neighborhood whose spouse we never met. He

was introduced to our *adda* through Hassan. However his marriage status as a single man did not

stop us from passing unsolicited advice on marriage. The neighborhood group was

comparatively easier to recruit. I emailed the letter of consent before we met separately in

Toronto and Mississauga to go over the privacy concerns and research purpose. I recorded two

sessions in Toronto and three in Mississauga but decided to treat them as one group because they

were part of my neighborhood acquaintances, one from my past and the other more recent.

The men in this neighborhood group did not have to be lured into a *dawat* similar to the mosque *adda,* as it happened our getting together was only possible at a time away from our families. Hira and Sajjad mainly came for old time's sake, and for an opportunity to catch some rare *adda* in the busy diaspora life while I went about my research. Ratan and Hassan were part of my neighborhood social network and the only other Bangladeshi families living in the building. By default they became *adda* participants for the purposes of my research. The *adda* gave us as an opportunity to renew our bonds as friends and neighbors, while the research segment was presented as an opportunity to document our lives together. I had to provide repeated assurances of privacy rules in research regarding the video-taped conversations as the general impression about research on immigrant lives was not benevolent. It fed into the general feelings of scrutinizing private (read Muslim) lives in post 9-11 imageries. Despite my best efforts I was unable to shake their initial worries that their lives could have had any research-value other than serve in some inexplicable way as a pretext to a bad immigration policy. Hira and Sajjad certainly had no reasons to be concerned but they were there. Hira said rhetorically, "As long as we are not saying anything against the government what possible harm could arise out of it?" (Session NG1.2). Sajjad responded, "I am among the 99% in Canada, the government has no interest or concern about my life" (Session NG1.2). As a new immigrant, Hira's exposure to immigrant realities in Toronto made him feel vulnerable about opening himself to a research regime especially in front of his old friends. Hira asked if his views on Canadian immigration could get him into trouble in future. I assured him that he did not have to talk about things he felt uncomfortable sharing. I also reminded him of the steps I would take to de-identify him in the transcript.

In my building, Hassan did not have many scruples about the research; he had been thrilled at the opportunity to have uninhabited *adda* and to get out of his house. As a NGO worker in Bangladesh he did not think highly of sociological research and equated any intellectual work as skirting responsibilities for real work, which to him could not be solved by writing academic papers. His enthusiasm lay in getting other Bangladeshis interested in supporting a school that he had set up in his village so "poor kids could get quality education." (Session NG4.1, Hassan). His frustrations were not unlike those of other immigrants unable to find accomplishment in whatever it were they had set about achieving for themselves:

> There is no need to be an intellectual, Shakib *bhai* [addressing me as his brother] my calculations are clear, we have fooled ourselves into believing that all our problems would go away [if we came here], but look what we have turned ourselves into; re-usable bottles, everybody uses us and at the end our place is in the garbage bin. (Reflexive Journal 1, May 2013)

Hassan's resignation at his new role as a manual worker in the diaspora was a feeling of wasted intellectual labor that was prevalent in most educated middle class men. Working in blue collar jobs is a reality most new-comer immigrants accept easily but find difficult to share with others. Ratan had a cautious approach to bringing the private spheres of immigrant *adda* into research. On the first day of *adda* his body posture showed some uneasiness as he sat facing away from the camera, but the force of *adda* soon made him forget the camera. *Adda* means endless interactive conversation with others, through whose eyes one see the self and others. I hoped to take a subjective position, one of telling our stories by telling our *adda*. However *adda* provided such aesthetic and timeless sense of community among Bengali menfolk in the diaspora

that any potential rigors of family time, the presence of the authoritarian state and its research

apparatus meant only a small hindrance that could be categorically ignored.

The Toronto neighborhood *adda* took place at Ayad's home. I set up my video camera

while Ayad took a break from his home-based tech-support work. Ayad represents those two-

income Bangladeshi immigrant families where the wife works full-time. He has recently

purchased a duplex on interest from a bank, something that would be considered outright *haram*

or impermissible in religious legal texts by all in the mosque *adda*. Ayad explains, "If I had the

money to buy a house with full down payment I would," justifying his taking out a bank loan.

Hira was a bit late, he took the subway. Hira started his career as a radio broadcaster although he

had a talent for music. I wonder what made him wind up his auto dealership and start here afresh

in mid-life. Hira talked about the disappointments of city life in Dhaka, the bottle-neck traffic

jams, and the disappearing greenery, the choking of cultural spaces by blatant Western display

ofgoods. Hira weaved a tapestry of words that was not new: "Everybody wants to go out, you

guys came too, struggled a lot. I got the chance, so my kids would have a better opportunity to

study…" (Session NG1.2). Hira's narrative of a middle class individual who leaves the small

town for the big city framed in the age-old patterns of the *nakshi-kantha*, a hand embroidered

quilt displayed on Ayad's duplex wall, is not altogether new. My eyes were caught in the idyllic

tapestry of a village scene typical of rural Bengal. I myself had one of these Bangladeshi quilts

stitched with folk-art hanging on the wall of our small rented apartment in Montreal. We must

have become tired to putting it up and down every year as we moved around the city, and

eventually left it packed in one of our suitcases, the only permanent artifact of immigrant life.

Sajjad said he would not be able to stay for long because he had to pick up his daughter from

school. So I brought out my researcher's hat. Sajjad talked boisterously with the confidence of a

veteran with a been-there-done-that attitude that I felt, made Hira to measure his own words at times. We talked politics, fought over memories, cracked jokes at each other and lamented our collective Bangladeshi lots, a must-do on our lists of *adda*. Chakrabarty (1999a) says that when *adda* adopted the language of colonial Bengali middle class it also required the middle class to give up its dove-tails and pressed cotton shirt for plain coarse khaki (p.115). The Bengali *bhadralok* found a language to laugh at itself. *Adda* in the diaspora often becomes that space of self-expression.

As I said earlier, because of the distance between the two neighborhoods located at Toronto and Mississauga we decided to meet separately in two locations at different times. In Mississauga, Hassan, Ratan and Mashuk, met at my apartment for an *adda,* as we lived in close proximity to each other. In Toronto the *adda* would shift at Ayad's place where Sajjad and Hira could join us. Hassan was the first recruit in the neighborhood group. Mashuk agreed to participate if we did not speak about his botched marriage. We agreed to remove any part of the conversations that one did not consent to discuss. Ratan kept me hanging without saying yes or no. When there was no response after some time, Hassan and I decided to knock on his door. Hassan whispered, "Ratan did not get permission from his wife, *Bhabir khub kora mejaj*" which translates as "Sister is very strict (Reflexive Journal 2). *Bhabi* or sister-in-law as we address a friend's wife opened the door. We found that he had been treated for a coronary blockage recently and had been ordered complete rest. Ratan was watching Bangla news in a Bangladeshi cable TV channel. He was not allowed to get excited but he could not help it in the presence of a company of Bangladeshi men and a raging political movement wracking in distant Bangladesh. We told Ratan that this tension was the last thing he needed rather he was welcome at our place where we were planning to continue our religious discussions. Religion is the only medicine for

griha shanti or marital bliss. Nothing could be better than some spiritual tête-à-tête, *Bhabi* agreed. In fact she informed us that she had already joined a women's religious study circle led by a group of Pakistani women. She seemed very pleased at what she was learning. *Bhabi's* enthusiasm removed the only obstacle for Ratan from participating in our research project. In the neighborhood *adda*, no dropout similar to the mosque *adda* took place. We had a total of five *adda* sessions with the neighborhood groups, two in Toronto at Ayad's home and three in Mississauga at mine. The wives never attended in any of the *adda* directly or indirectly. In fact the meeting time and place were always arranged to avoid any family commitments. Chakrabarty (1999a) reminds us that *adda* was and still is a highly gendered social action in Bengali sociality, where the presence of a female companion could take away from the practice of a congealed *adda*-making, especially among bachelors. For us, a few Bangladeshi immigrant men, trying to get together away from family, any spousal presence would have been inimical to our endeavor.

I found the neighborhood *adda* lacking the sense of sociability that I had experienced at the mosque *adda*. Something of a social cohesion that Bengali speaking men exhibit in their occasional sociability, was missing in the neighborhood group. I do not mean sociability in the sense Bartlett and Holland (2002, p.15) use it, in the context of communication between members of a community of practice, but in general sense to be inviting and cultured in expressions of language and bodily postures. The neighborhood social network of which I was a part had not been able to become regular in its activities and lacked any particular ideological bias around which it could be situated. Furthermore, I was concerned that the research might adversely affect our neighborly relations. I addressed that concern to the neighborhood group in a memo:

I proposed we at the neighborhood group should continue this *adda* because we don't have a space of our own. Ratan and Hassan agreed that although we are all busy but we all need *moner khabar* (food for thought). I linked the need for a community where they could hold religious talk. I felt that the space of religion played a big role in their lives to bring people together around common interests. Although we have an occasional *adda* here or there where we talked over coffee or tea, I felt that it lacked a sense of community. I praised Hassan for not taking our mutual disagreements personally. Overcoming this technicality I felt was necessary for Bangladeshi middle class immigrants to be able to form healthy communities from where all could benefit. (Reflexive journal 3, July 2013)

Out of a need to congregate under religious auspices, we formed an *adda* at the neighborhood level. Not out of any religious conviction, but because this is what Bangladeshi men anywhere have always done to maintain a sense of their *Bengaliness*. Transnational *adda* between different people in different places has been impacted by forces of globalization in its language and form. *Adda* in the diaspora keeps us feeling what it means to be culturally Bengali but its tenor and appearance also changes as the transnational orality of its speakers are mediated by multiple experiences.

Crossing Over into Research from Adda

Entering into a culturally embedded research site invariably needs to be discussed in terms of both liminalities and power. Hence in this section I first provide a background of how liminalities were experienced in both the *adda* groups and how they affected the confusions, transitions and fissures in the conversations that followed. As I have outlined before, liminalities are the linguistic signs or behaviors characteristic of small talk or rites of passage in a socially

situated conversation, signaling transitions to and from uncertainties (Rampton, 1999).

Liminalities in one line serve to renew social contracts and establish a social pecking order. Here

I discuss how my position as a researcher trying to cross over into a private sphere of *adda*

networks for the explicit purpose of opening it up for public scrutiny, destabilized our

relationship in the beginning. I used childhood narratives as a useful context to discuss

liminalities in both the *adda*. I then provide an account of power play in *adda*, among the

participants including myself, and of how humor was used to both stabilize and unsettle the

formal structures of research imposed on a social network of friends and acquaintances. Humor

is a very commonly practiced strategy to converse and communicate, often using double-talk and

ventriloquism to ease social tensions or unsettle relations. Humor is unavoidable in any setting of

human communication. In a Bengali social practice such as *adda*, humor has its own historical

place. However in the research setting, humor became more poignant and nuanced in its

application but showed its presence as a mask in Bakhtinian carnivalesque.

Liminalities of *adda*. I begin by illustrating how the *adda* participants co-constructed

an imagined childhood. I show how the rising tensions of individual selves poised against a

reworked *adda* setting particularly for the purposes of this study, were being deflected in

reestablishing a common childhood narrative. The liminal boundaries of childhood memory

recreated though commemoration and contestation set the stage for resettling an uncertain

relationship between *adda* and research.

Social gatherings provide a break from the routine of work for the immigrant

Bangladeshi. Food with *adda* represents pleasure, conviviality and renewal of social contracts.

Research, on the other hand, represents work, an agency of the dominant culture which opens the

private to the public, making it suspect. I crossed over the boundaries of *adda* by entering into it

with a camera and a questionnaire. This crossover broke the traditional line between pleasure and work that *adda* generally demarcates in Bengali bourgeois domesticity. The questionnaire and the camera constituted tools of intrusion into their private lives and a barrier to the unstructured tempo of *adda* itself. The researcher's prerogative of framing and interrogating participants that he/she exercises through the agency of interview created some initial confusion as the participants readjusted themselves dialogically in the *adda*.

I kept a list of guiding questions as a tool and a license to interfere and interrupt any conversation that I deemed was unhelpful for the study. *Adda* as a practice of modernity has a tendency to spill over into many topics, ranging from soccer to sex education in school and from Bangladeshi politics to the cheapest halal chicken grocers in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Because of the large number of participants, I did not expect everybody would engage with all the topics I had initially wanted to discuss. So I planned to use the questionnaire to intercept topics that might naturally occur but would not be relevant for the research. The participants' reaction to the dual-role of guests and "*guinea-pigs*" (as Taukir, one of the participants referred himself) was apparent in the initial confusion over their expected behavior in the study.

Speaking in social interaction entails awareness of liminal signs to maintain the dominant social order by drawing from a shared cultural inheritance. In every social language, including that of Bengali *adda,* there are characteristic conversational rituals of greetings, apologies, humor, expletives, expression of anger, surprise or even stylized use of proverbs to signal moments of uncertainty. By entering into middle class Bengali orality in a transnational immigrant society, the researcher creates disequilibrium in the liminalities of an *adda* by challenging in-group cultural norms and beliefs. Any cultural readjustment inside a group is met with certain shifts in interpersonal relationships, requiring possibilities of social creativity at the

macro and micro levels. Participation in any social language requires signifying these social markers and de-coding their inherent meanings, without which any social conversation becomes an impasse. I opened the conversations with the question, "What is your earliest childhood memory?" This situated the research right before *adda* could take place around it. Whereas in normative situations conversations just happen, in this research-*adda* it was necessary to re-address the participants with a *research* (my emphasis) question to demarcate the boundaries of *adda* and research without unsettling them from their site of cultural production.

Childhood narratives. I used childhood narratives as a liminal strategy to re-construct the *adda* formations within the two social networks. I framed the reconstituted *adda* by excavating memories that introduced a new way of looking back at each other, with new rules and structures in place. My interview protocol tempered the way conversation would go, at least until I felt the *adda* groups had found a course of its own. Childhood as a construction of storied lives was chosen because it offered fewer liminal tensions between the researcher and the participants in transitioning the *adda* for a research purpose. I borrowed this technique from the "bringing memory forward" (Strong-Wilson, 2006, p.105) strategy to re-construct a childhood for the purpose of research. Teresa Wilson (2003) uses bringing memory forward as a self-authoring inter-textual exercise that invites the participants to locate their private selves in a public space for creating contexts for interviews. This invitation created answerability that required them to think about their own selves and the world from outside, "looking through the eyes of another" (Bakhtin, 1990, p.17) from a unique position of non-replicability. As Bakhtin says, "an utterance creates something that never existed before, something absolutely new and unrepeatable" (1986, p.120). My research memo of the first *adda* at Johar's place shows how

participants reacted to questions regarding their early childhood through silence or mock-

anxiety:

> Nobody volunteered to share my request of childhood recollections before Khoka opened
>
> up. Doha and Baha looked a bit nervous as they sat attentively. Azam touched his beard a
>
> few times. Molla arrived last and decided to sit out of the camera's reach when he was
>
> told that he had just barged into a recording session… (Reflexive journal 3, June 2013)

Although initially the participants were somewhat reticent in accessing archived

memories they chose selective parts from their early childhood memories to construct a narrative

of themselves. By choosing to bring up a certain memory they engaged in a subtle identity

performance that resisted my attempts of imposing a certain kind of childhood in which I was

particularly interested. I asked if anybody remembered the movies and cartoons we grew up

watching. Everybody jumped in to answer in cacophony: "MacGyver, Knight Rider, Man from

UNCLE, Hawaii Five-O, Baron, Manix, Six Million Dollar Man, Star Trek..." (Session MG1).

The following excerpt from the transcripts shows how my attempt to return to childhood TV

literacy was used to co-construct a memory of childhood selves different from what I had

expected:

> Baha: I remember the high pitched sound *chuuu….eeee* [tuning sound]/ from the back of
>
> the TV as images flicked on the black and white screen/ the fascination with which we
>
> used to gather around the TV!

> Khoka: And we used to wait in front of the TV from 5 in the evening/ from the time they
>
> went on air/ just like that. [Voice overlap]

Johar: Power outage was common although there was the voltage stabilizer/ well in the new town it wasn't a big deal but in old Dhaka it was a problem. Sometimes we changed channel by kicking the TV.

Khoka: Indian channels were available during that time

Johar: They were not available from Dhaka

Researcher: They came much later in the '90s

Azam: Remember how people began using cooking utensils as replacements for satellite dishes? Everybody was up attaching pots and pans on their TV antennae shouting out from the roof to somebody below in front of the TV screen/ "Do you see anything!" /and he would yell back/ "Not yet!"/ It went back and forth.

Baha: Yes, Yes

In the previous excerpt of a transcript my attempts to inquire into their childhood TV literacy took a different turn when Baha's memories of childhood fascination with TV struck a chord with the audience. It was a spontaneous construction of their own individual and collective excavations of childhood selves. Fantasizing the television as an object of wonder recreated a time of discovering mechanical wizardry with a child's eye but it was also about the togetherness in that experience of remembering childhood that bounded us instantaneously. Although my attempt to co-construct a childhood narrative as an object of research was met with some initial hesitation, childhood was quickly transformed into a space of creative understanding and commemoration. Remembering one's childhood brings affective pleasure to everyone. It helps to build friendship but it is not done purposefully with that aim in mind. Remembering hides an

implicit invitation to others for the pleasure of finding new meanings. Sarwar wandered into his childhood palate of favorite street-foods such as the spicy hot chutneys and *halim*. I digressed too following his rush of memories of five paisa and ten paisa ice-creams (paisa is the smallest unit of currency). The following journal entry from the mosque-based *adda* talks about finding common ground in shared memories:

> The memory of childhood TV shows was greeted with a burst of cacophony. Like a shower of rain, names of favorite cartoon and TV serials started to pour out from memory. Taukir participated for the first time in this memory exercise. […] Sarwar's memories of street food [*chats*] and my memories of ice-creams from childhood were shared by others as they added the flavors, colors, toppings and shapes to those street foods. (Reflexive journal 9, June 2013)

My inquiry into their experiences with TV programs brought about not only a different construction of childhood much enthralled by the gadgetry of it, but the participants' entry into their childhood memories also retrieved the extreme tastes and colors of street-foods as associated memories. It was clear that the utterance or text from someone's memory created a spark or flash of light connecting individual pasts to a collective past through the access of memory. What makes memory interesting in narrative analysis are the unintended chronological aberrations or misplaced actions and events in which we position ourselves. This exercise of collective memory not only serves the practical purpose of bringing a social cohesion to the *adda* but also constructs multiple cultural, social and linguistic spaces where identities can overcome alienations both in the host land or homeland.

Autobiographical memories of childhood often provide a coherent/divided self with many different identities specific to a particular period, accessed and activated by cues of specific other memories of words, smells and locations (Convey, 2005; Zeitlyn, 2013). Childhood in the *adda* was re-constructed and re-configured in unbounded asymmetry of space and time through the access of affective memories of sound, smell and sensory faculties. Azam's childhood memories of playing ball in the rain, sounds of which he says, he still could remember when he closes his eyes, call forth a different sort of memory of childhood rain. Johar tells a story of his grandfather's cabinet, filled with all sorts of goodies, the peachy smell of which still lingers along with him from his childhood. These sensory memories are triggered by not only in relation to other similar memories but also contested for its significance in the authenticity of the memory work itself, as would become clear in the neighborhood *adda*. The stories from their pasts which includes growing up (*bildungsroman*) in Bangladesh, early schooling and youth were selectively accessed to enact a coherent identity in the *adda*. These stories evolved in the liminal spaces and the uneven power balance between the researcher, the host and the other participants.

The neighborhood *adda* at Ayad's residence did not begin with a childhood narrative as Hira and I had much to catch up with, meeting almost two decades later. The initial conversations were framed as memories of early university days calling us back to a time that needed no introduction but stood as a reference upon which to reflect. Our conversations were hurried, un-*adda*-like, as we rushed to finish our conversations at Ayad's residence before his family returned. I wanted to find out what had finally made Hira an immigrant, an identity that one learns with experience to take in one's stride. Our initial conversation was framed in a light banter on the lessons of becoming an immigrant. Sajjad, who knew Hira longer than I did, took

the role of filling in the blanks. Hira spoke nostalgically about the places and spaces of his past *adda,* spent in the company of many a friend, left behind. He did not hide his melancholy for leaving his friends and favorite *adda* behind, times that can only be brought back in rumination. In memory he returns back to the idyllic walks along the esplanade of the old Dhaka, to take a glimpse at the fair ladies of the *Nawabbari* (Session MG1, Hira). He said that often he journeys back in time and holds a mental picture of where he, Sajjad and others could be found in their youthful *adda*. Hira's internalization of the discourse of dualism, indicates an ambiguity about his imagined home, as he begins to look for them *here* in the *adda,* while looking into his past back *there*. This imagined home included conversations that spanned our college days, almost two decades ago, severed by time and place as we all moved to different directions. The liminalities of our *adda* opened up these spaces of recovery from the haunts of memory, places that had been thought forgotten but resurfaced again to reconstruct a home he once knew too well. Hira constructs his remembered home through the access of *adda* for a collective purpose, of making sense of where he stands today:

> Hira: The position I am in/very different. I am new. Firstly, I am suffering from dualism. Sometimes I think I am doing fine here, for a short period. Sometimes, most of the times, I become nostalgic/ re-living in the past of my own memories.[…] My childhood/places where I grew up/ things which even I thought I had forgotten/ Over here I feel those gaps more intensely. Those places of our boyhood *adda*/ then the *adda* of the university days/ the songs we all sang together with friends/ three of us in a rickshaw singing away. (Session NG1.2)

Childhood narratives served a launch-pad for the research study. These narratives allowed us a way to contextualize each other's social positions, ways of thinking, present and

past lives in order for the *adda* to find its momentum. In the first *adda* conversation at the neighborhood group, childhood memories were constructed around local sports clubs and memories of watching international sports competitions on TV with Ratan, Hassan and Mashuk. At one time, Mashuk adds context to Hassan's childhood memories of World Cup soccer in '86 by correcting him (see Session NG1.1). The conversion centered for a while on trying to guess the year Maradona got his first break in international football. Each one of us pitched our memory against each other's to construct an accurate time-frame.

In the following excerpt Mashuk, Ratan and I engage in a co-construction of adolescent narrative by building on each other's memory cues of a particular event, here the World Cup in 1986.The participants collaboratively represented a past relative to each other's situated memory. Ratan's early school years spent in a boarding school away from home were mostly a series of childhood pranks and punishments. Hassan was a village boy and only became active in sports later in the university. The purpose was to claim a past that was continuous and coherent. For the transnational community this past is also about the present, invented and repeated for the purpose of continuing an imagined diaspora removed in time and space in a single field of social action.

Mashuk: No, no, you couldn't have been in class VII. Because Argentia, Maradona were not that big really back then, were they?

Researcher: No, no, Maradona came much later.

Hassan: Maradona came in '86, back then that many matches were not [relayed] on TV.

Ratan: Maradona came a little later. Back then we used to watch boxing a lot. Mohammed Ali was very famous.

Researcher: When Mohammed Ali came I guess

Hassan: No, not later/ I sat for my Metric [exam] in '89, Argentina won world cup in '86. It was Maradona. I was close. (Session NG1.1)

This co-construction of memory where other texts were borrowed or adapted such as that of the World Cup soccer game in '86 to construct their own childhood points to a multi-voiced intertextuality in *adda*. I borrow the concept of intertextuality of language from cultural theorists who believe that our language is a process of construction of borrowed texts from others imbued with structural features, ideological perspectives, power relations and social alignments (Lemke, 1988; Bloome, 1989). Thus, any communicative exchange becomes a reciprocal relationship between speakers and listeners where "texts and textual practices are juxtaposed and interwoven in mutually affirming or contentious ways" (Kamberelis and Scott, 1992, p.364).

Childhood, as I said earlier, is reconstituted discursively in the narrative experience of these *adda* participants for a specific purpose. James and Prout (1997) talk about different natures of childhood in different discourses with their own regimes of truth. The construction of childhood narratives from adult immigrant subject position is "made real," (cited in Chang, 2010, p.7) in the *adda* as their authentic experiences. These adult experiences are constructions of "history and myth" (Mitchell & Reid-Walsh, 2002, p.62) with the intention of explaining their present as a logical extension of their past. These cacophonous childhood narratives discussed around commemoration of street food or soccer games competing for voice, power and authenticity in the *adda* were erected in an imaginative time frame in reference to each other. As entangled memories, they became anchoring moments of camaraderie and trust in an *adda* as participants co-constructed their childhood as a collectivity of imagined community (Anderson, 1983) in a certain place and in a certain time.

The diaspora networks that immigrants create in a new country usually are based on a memory of a land, a religion or some other category of difference, which are then hegemonically deployed to create new identities. These new identities are often established by redefining the rule of the game, to use a Bourdieusian phrase often narrowly defining one or more of the categories of ethnicity, religion or culture in the group, including some and excluding others. There is power in all social relationships, not just in the homogenizing of network but also in their reification. I now turn to this crucial element of *adda*, its power dynamics, and how socially stratified relations readjust themselves when power dynamics are changed from outside.

Power play in Adda. Humor is an integral part of *adda* conversations, as noted previously. Mujtaba Ali (d. 1974), the master of *adda* literature, stressed humor as a double-edged strategy to seize the audience's attention and break the tension between storyteller and listener. Humor can be seen as the antidote that prevents the *adda* from becoming a monologue, which ultimately decimates the dialogue, as Bakhtin puts it. The introduction of research into the *adda* environment, a sphere for the exchange of social chits, undoubtedly created some sense of didactic pedagogy or symbolic violence. In this section I address how humor was played out in relation to power in a social action such as *adda* and the role of its patrons in mediating *adda*. I address humor in both the *adda* networks together, especially in the initial stages when the *adda* and research overlaps briefly. *Adda* as a socially situated action creates socially identifiable strata and language that are appropriated and sometimes challenged, albeit subtly through humor. Humor, puns, cajoling and jests linguistic maneuvers that are essential parts of any specific social language and setting. These accoutrements of speech are used purposefully in a double-voiced delivery to invest in or divest from social stratifications of power. Bakhtin (1984) uses the concept of *carnivalesque* to explain how social tensions and structures are mocked, derided, and

often resisted by unmasking them as a display of power. It goes without saying that, in any speech genre such as *adda*, where light banter, jokes or cajoling is often the language of communication, their use can be purposefully misdirected and taken too personally. I now proceed to peel off the layers of childhood narratives to show how humor is used as both entertainment and resistance.

The fantasized world of childhood in which the research *adda* was crafted began with a carefully balanced language of jest and humor without disrupting the sense of collectivity. There was a subtle talking order prompted by Johar, the patron in the mosque *adda*, enabling the discussions to be democratic. However participation in an *adda* cannot be willed in the form one expects but can happen from the sidelines. For example in the first mosque *adda* session, Johar tried dragging Molla, who had come late, into the conversations by redirecting certain questions to him, but the latter did not volunteer any information. Although Molla was not participating as others, he was using a type of sharp humor that an outsider could misinterpret as being coarse. For example when Baha was finished narrating his childhood story of getting bumps in his head from his dare-devil stunts by trying to ride a food-trolley at home, the only comment Molla made was to ask if he had lost all his hair from all those falls. These sudden shifts in conversations in a social network are often intentionally done to embarrass or startle a speaker, but they are also linguistic signs and symbols of communication. However the mediating role of humor to create and often iron-out these wrinkles and unruffled corners in an *adda* is crucial to allow it proceed to the next level of camaraderie. Otherwise *adda* could easily fall into the trappings of human shortcomings and lose its essence. There is a subtle balance of humor and censure in an *adda*.

The role of the patron is crucial in keeping the *adda* in order. Each adda has its patron, whose job traditionally as the host, does not take away from his/her editorial-censorial role to

ensure a healthy supply of food and munificence. Johar and Swopna were patrons of the mosque

adda where as in the neighborhood *adda* there was no particular host organizing the spaces as

the adda moved between different locations. The mosque *adda* was thus much more structured in

its culture and rituals whereas the neighborhood *adda,* for lack of a particular place and patron,

could not appropriate a specific character. An *adda* is usually characterized by its main speakers

who through a delicate balance of power and humor, lend it a certain character. One of the

patrons at Johar's home, his wife Swopna mentions what character a patron brings to an *adda*:

> Swopna: It doesn't matter if he/she is better educated, or better looking, those things
>
> don't matter with *adda*. He/she may be funny or may be able to make interesting
>
> [conversations], or is nice to everybody, could be anything. His or her presence makes
>
> my day. I don't know […] (Session MG5)

What Swopna is pointing at, is the funny and balanced side of conversations, subtle

reasons why most *adda* do not continue and become another social call that one exercises out of

necessity and without being engaged. This is also true for both the mosque and neighborhood

adda. *Adda* is after all an oral performance. It offers a social place to caricature structures and

norms. My attempt to bring research into the social networks de-centered both the mosque and

neighborhood *adda* from our socially situated roles. Any new power dynamics that I introduced

through the research invariably required a reformulation of the social language and the

relationship among the participants. One cannot bring about any change in a social action

without reconstituting its structures, both from outside and inside. The mosque *adda* participants

refrained from engaging in political discussions too quickly. They continued to engage with the

construction of childhood, a safe bet, bordering good humored banter but withholding from

moving into discussions that could bring a disequillibrium along the power dynamics in *adda*.

My memo of the *adda* on the first session reads like this:

> When I asked if anybody was active in student politics [in Bangladesh], Azam said
> that the fact that none hadn't been at each other's throat yet indicated that none of
> the participants had been politically active. I think he downplayed politics to keep
> it from spoiling the *adda* as *adda* too often becomes politically heated. That sense
> was shared by Khoka off-camera when he said to me that he would leave if politics
> were brought up and that he didn't feel it was worth coming to an *adda* that cost
> friendships. (Reflexive journal 3, June 2013)

This memo points out an important aspect of the power dynamics and the struggle of voices inherent in *adda* to which I return in the last chapter when I discuss my own reflexivity. From my experiences in various *adda* situations I have seen that different groups have different loci of gravity and thresholds of acceptance to ideological discourses that are seen as counterproductive to their social networks. Humor makes it possible to bring out these social tensions in a constructive way in *adda*. Through his explanation of *Carnivaleque*, Bakhtin (1984) shows how the dominant social order can be derided, mocking social norms. I offer my view of Bakhtin's thought in the following section, on how laughter could be read as a text in a speech genre such as *adda*.

Adda is a social space where participants exercise various dialogical strategies to resist what Bakhtin calls a monologue, either by refusing to make it his or her own, deny other's discourse any space or by parodying that discourse through laughter. Bakhtin (1981) says that every social language is a turf on which many voices and ideological views struggle for dominance. Our voices are constructed in relations to power and positionality of competing

voices, which are present or absent in our dialogues. Every dialogue according to Bakhtin breaks a monologue and every word speaks with and to different other words from different other voices in a language. Bakhtin asserts that we re-author ourselves by choosing our language. The language of *adda,* which includes humor, laughter, jest, or silence, like any social language, is thus not neutral but constitutes a multi-voiced ideological battlefield. The voices in it are engaged in an unfinished dialogue. For all practical purpose humor in *adda* is used for a ubiquitously simple reason—to entertain and construct a common ground so participants could connect with each other. However it also offers a space to consciously create an identity the better to defy social structures. The transcultural identities performed in these transnational spaces such as *adda*, offer transnational immigrants multiple ways to negotiate their identity shifts between languages, borders and spaces. I now briefly discuss the ideological discourses that the two *adda* social groups constructed for a mediated conversation.

In a post-*adda* discussion with Johar in the mosque group, he points at the ways people are expected to socialize with each other in Bengali social circles. Johar says, "Normally when you go to an *adda* you are not served food right away. You need to be able to socialize well, so you are invited again" (Session MG5, Johar). Using humor Johar explains that one needs to be flexible enough to be able to fit into different types of *adda* otherwise one risks not being invited to social gatherings. In plain language, the golden rule of conversation depends on understanding the context-dependency of each *adda* and what is at stake. The ability to communicate meaningfully depends on the tenacity required to speak to the situated discourse in which speaking happens. That is why participants in the mosque *adda* liked to talk about religion and not politics or anything else as is evident from Johar's conversation:

Johar: In our *adda* we like to talk about religion because it is important for us here [in Canada]. We want our kids to follow religion. We go where *deen* [religious life] is being discussed, where we can learn about our *deen* so we can learn something good. Some people are talking all day about cinema, politics, doing back-biting […] (Session MG5)

The social network of the mosque *adda* served the purpose of performing a specific type of identity construction in its transnational context. The *adda* participants at Johar's home spoke to the discourse of transnational Islamism, in its institutional practice by the larger networks of mosques and religious bodies in North America. Using Bakhtin's dialogicality we can locate that discourse. Johar mentions that they do not like to backbite, talk about cinema and politics (see session MG5). Here Johar constructs a discourse of his social language in opposition to the discourse in other social languages where speech is unregulated or not moderated. Religious *adda* thus offers a reformed social space which is discursively constructed by engaging with the other voices that populated it, using Bakhtin. Johar places himself as a moderator of the language he with others constructs and speaks from by dialogically moving his speaking subject or self against other selves.

In the neighborhood *adda*, which was limited to the premises of our apartment building and had no fixed patron, the sense of urgency to have an *adda* was not always there. It could be because we saw each other almost every day and in between running errands. Some of us lived too close-by to have an *adda* with others too far off. Our membership was divided between Toronto and Mississauga. As I have already mentioned, the neighborhood *adda* was split between two sub-groups. An old group of confidants with Hira, Sajjad and myself who knew each other since our days in Bangladesh and another group who knew each other in their capacity of neighbors in Canada. This *adda* fluctuated between memory and discovery. Sajjad

had left his homeland almost 20 years before and Hira had only joined him in Canada less than two years ago. In the transnational spaces their dialogism broke into an ideological clash, albeit humorously.

In the following excerpt I show, Hira's adoption of a religious discourse in an online social networking site was challenged by Sajjad face to face in the *adda*, showing the fissures inherent in transnational relationships. Sajjad and Hira then engage in a subtle power play over their differing religious and secular discourse. Hira finds no harm in "just knocking [the consciousness]" (Session NG1.2) of others without any intention to appear as a religious bigot as his old time friend Sajjad called him. Hira attempts to create an agency for himself in relation to the accusation from his friend, albeit in a friendly manner. Sajjad deploys the dominant discourse of the hyper-state security concerns here to discredit Hira's attempt to speak through an online religious persona on Facebook. In the following excerpt (session NG1.2) Sajjad attacks Hira's social alignment with the new or emergent identity of transnational Islam that he suspects, is increasingly making its ominous presence online. These personal relationships between old friends with their embedded social structures often do not transfer well in new realities especially when ruptured by space and time in the diaspora as they attempt to reconnect without taking account of their own transformations.

> Sajjad: And you my *beta* [chum] these days have become some sort of a preacher!
> Tabligh [Zealous Muslim]/ they have taken over the facebook/ I left Bangladesh because
> of them/ because of the troubles these Mullahs [create]
>
> Hira: Why? I don't write anything silly, *dosto* [my pal]

Sajjad: Everything. If I could ever find Zuckerberg, I would ask him if he made Facebook for propagating Islam.[…] Every single day/ Hadith [prophetic sayings] of the day/ this that/ I mean things from the Quran/ *Beta* [chummy] you have become too much of a Muslim preacher, eh?

Hira: I just/ I just spread the wise words/ just to knock [the conscience of] people/ [reminding of] prayers five times a day etc.

Researcher: Was Hira like this all the time?

Sajjad: Absurd! Hira and I since our half-pant days/ I mean from grade 9, 10 we have been regularly praying/ you know that/ he prays since then. (Session NG1.2)

According to Gilroy (1997) in diaspora, discourse identity has to be understood as dynamic, contingent and indeterminate selves counterpoised to face tensions from cultural differences. In *adda*, the self takes a discursive position dialogically appropriating, denying or parodying various ideological positions to respond. Bakhtin's *carnivalesque* is evident in the way Hira's religious persona online (Session NG1.2) becomes a mock trial between two friends in a new but uneven social relationship in the diaspora.

The other members of the neighborhood *adda* such as Ratan, Hassan and I, without any social commitment other than meeting occasionally on religious or cultural holidays, did not offer much of a prospect for a future *adda* network. We were neighbors in the same building and crossed path several times in the elevators. We would normally fill each other in with the latest update on Bangladeshi politics, the only obsession that seemed to have not sloughed off of us in our diaspora lives. Political *adda* can be highly volatile; not only can it be packed with emotional-volitional voices (using Bakhtin); it is a veritable ideological minefield. Differences of

opinions in politics crept into every other conversation. To begin an *adda* outside politics was difficult to have in my own neighborhood. The childhood narrative we developed did not allow us to look beyond the class, cultural and economic differences that were exposed in the process of excavation. I found our conversations opened up more ideological fissures, as we resisted others by discrediting their discourses. My hope was that similar diaspora experiences could have leveled our differences and worked to our advantage for more coherence as a neighborhood *adda* group.

In the discussion so far, of two *adda* networks I attempted to show how power in the guises of humor can be projected to reshape or unsettle old relationships when established social formations are affected. The paradigm of research ruptured the previous social relations that existed among the participants, creating new strictures such as staying away from political discussions in the mosque *adda* and often opening up old ones as I have demonstrated with Hira and Sajjad. The childhood narrative constructed in the mosque *adda* showed much more instability and fluidity than the neighborhood one. Molla and Taukir refrained from participating in the childhood narrative despite host Johar's insistence. The power relations between too many *adda* participants on the first session made it difficult to channel the childhood narratives as a central point of building trust but it nonetheless gave a platform to build the research questions for the next session. The mosque *adda* became more stable when participants dropped out while the neighborhood adda needed to appropriate a sociability that could reduce participants' political and religious differences. Johar pointed out that the need for religion as a central discourse is to raise a family with Islamic values, as the central focal point of their social network, reducing other fissures that might emerge and fracture unity. For the purpose of research, I decided to introduce more family-oriented and religious discussions that would

stabilize the internal power dynamics in the mosque *adda* without threatening to break it further. The neighborhood *adda* had less chance to remain coherent as it was too ideologized along Bangladeshi political lines.

In the next chapter I explore the second part of my second research question, which inquires into the ways Bangladeshi immigrants make sense of their postcolonial identity constructions in their dialogical interactions in the *adda*. I see identity as both situational and boundary-blurring, in my study of constructionist perspectives that I elaborated in the conceptual context chapter. I use Bakhtin to analyze voice positions because of his belief in human consciousness in a figured world as responsive to an "indefinite unconcretized other" (1986, p.95) not a subjective construct as other poststructuralists propose. Although I use Bourdieu (1977) in another chapter to analyze identity from a social practice point of view, Bakhtin and Boudieu converge on their agreement on the possibility of a conscious position against the structures of oppression rather as a silent subjective. *Adda'*s situatedness with middle class social practice also offers the possibility for identity to be an imagined (Anderson, 1983) collectivity, to be socially negotiated (Vygotsky, 1978). On that basis, *adda* can be studied as discursive practice where knowledge is contested and constructed for a specific goal. Strategies of dialogic analysis (Wertsch, 1991& Weigand, 2009) and dialogicality have been used in narrative interpretation of identity in second language acquisition practice. Here I show the link between voice positions and my underlying theoretical frameworks of transnational hybridity as understood by Bhabha (1994) and Vertovec (2007) among others. Dialogism has ramifications for transnational identity constructions both transnationally and translationally in multiple shifting spaces and places, dialogues in a social network being one such place of performance.

Summary

In this chapter I attempted to answer my second research question by showing how *adda* can serve as a methodological tool in the analysis of diaspora identities. I use two social networks to access the spaces of *adda*, where identities are constructed and negotiated in various liminal spaces of language, memory, power relations and social stratifications. I show how productive remembering of the past, especially of one's childhood evoked by memories and food, allow members of a social group to collaborate in ethnographical work. *Adda* here serves as a venue for performing certain linguistic or religious identities within a social group. I used childhood narratives as a strategy to re-construct trust among the participants within the two social networks by excavating earliest memories and unsettling the spaces of liminalities. Liminalities, to repeat, are the linguistic signs or behavior characteristic of small talks or rites of passage in a socially situated conversation signaling transitions to and from. For example, specific childhood memories were used to self-direct conversations in the *adda*, thus allowing people to realign each other's social positions, ways of thinking, present and past lives for the *adda* to gain momentum. This opens up the possibility of seeing oneself through another's eye to use a Bakhtinian term. Thus *adda* extends the possibilities of interaction across multiple spaces and places relative to each other's situated memory that could then be shared and accessed by others for confidence building. However humor in *adda* played the mediating role of defusing social tensions and resisting social stratification through resistance and mockery, equivalent to Bakhtinian *carnivalesque*. Humor ensures *adda*'s democratic participation because any new power dynamic requires a reformulation of language and the inter-relationship of the speakers. *Adda*'s cultural production among the Bangladeshi immigrants allows the diaspora social networks to function as liminal spaces where new identities are constructed and negotiated. *Adda*

offers the possibilities to understand immigrant identity through an analysis of their voice and

agency in their social, cultural and economic investments in the diaspora.

Chapter Six: Findings, Analysis and Discussion

Introduction

In this chapter, I attempt to answer my third research question by analyzing Bangladeshi diaspora identities using Bakhtin's (1981, 1984, & 1986) dialogism and Bourdieu's (1977) understanding of habitus and capital as interpretive lenses to investigate both the voice positions and social practices immigrants use in their everyday storytelling. This I intend to achieve by dividing the chapter into two large parts.

In the first part, I use Bakhtin's dialogism to locate the voice shifts in *adda* conversations. I identify the various authoritarian or internally persuasive discourses of religion, Westernization and nationalism present in the conversations. I use Bakhtin's dialogic theory (1981, 1986) as used by various language acquisition practitioners, and ethnographers of cultural studies to analyze how self and agency is represented in dialogues of voiceless communities. I intend to show how identities are performed by shifting voices, in immigrant stories to answer one of my research questions on diaspora identity through Bakhtin's understanding of dialogism as a heuristic device. I link the creation of consciousness in voices as a testimony to will social change. Dialogism (Bakhtin, 1981) as the analytical lens establishes the link between hybridization of identity in the transnational spaces and places such as *adda*. *Adda*, as I showed in the previous chapter acts as the site for multiple identity constructions offering a voice analysis of Bangladeshi immigrants using dialogism.

In the second part, I use Bourdieu's (1977) understanding of social reproduction theory to show how people compete with each other for access to capital or resources. Bourdieu's notion of habitus provides a clear link between habitus and capital, between the physical disposition and

social structures ultimately altering the field through practice. I analyze the social actions of my participants by analyzing the forms of capitals that are constructed and displayed in social networks to augment social position and stature in the disapora.

Finally I hope to achieve a comprehensive analysis of voice and social actions in this chapter using a focused analytical framework involves both Bakhtin and Bourdieu to synthesize the underlying concept of hybridized identities in the third spaces. I have already introduced third space identity as understood by Bhabha (1990, 1994) in the conceptual chapter. I bring religious identity of immigrants as one of the visible third space identity shifts and argue that religious practices are strong markers of diaspora capitals. This chapter attempts to present transnational identities of Bangladeshi immigrants as interstitial, fluid and hybridized by analyzing the discourses found in their everyday dialogues and social actions in diaspora networks.

Part — I

Analysis of Hybrid Speaking Positions: A Bakhtinian Perspective

In this section I use Bakhtin's (1986) understanding of authoritarian and internally persuasive discourse to show how the voice of the self repositions itself against other discourses. In this way, the voice creates a conscious agency that challenges the subjective structures imposed upon any language. Bakhtin (1981) believes that an individual's ideological consciousness is bound up with another's ideological consciousness, from which that individual creates his or her language by a process of disentanglement from the authority of received discourses and voices. These repositioning strategies in dialogues can be observed using concepts of dialogism from Bakhtin as a technique in locating the speaking subject. To explain

the concepts of dialogism and speaking subjects, I revisit some relevant literatures from Bakhtinian concept of discourse and human consciousness in the following sections which I had touched upon earlier in chapter two.

In the social action of situated talk such as *adda*, all mediated interactions happen within contexts of power positions where the self dialogically takes an emotional-volitional position against many speaking subjects. Every word we say— Bakhtin calls it an utterance, in a social language impregnated with others' voices or speaking subjects— are born out of a need to respond. Bakhtin says, that "[o]ne's own discourse and one's own voice, although born of another or dynamically stimulated by another, will sooner or later begin to liberate themselves from the authority of the other's discourse" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 138). He believes that this struggle begins in our consciousness, where our voice positions itself against (an)other voice(s) by creatively constructing itself. Our consciousness, as Bakhtin understood it, is wrapped in other peoples' consciousness, starting from the very beginning when we learned language in a specific socio-historical context. He terms the socio-historical experiences through which one speaks as the "authoritarian discourse" (Bakhtin, 1981, p.342), which is connected with the past and hierarchically located somewhat higher than the discourses of others against which he or she takes an emotional-volitional position. Bakhtin asserts that we all choose our language by appropriating this authoritarian discourse, re-accentuating its words, forms and tonalities with our "internally persuasive discourse" (Bakhtin, 1981, p.342). In this process of relational dialogue between the self and the other, in Bakthtin's view, we form an "independent, responsible and active discourse [to become] an ethical, legal and political human being" (p.349-350). We do that by merging authoritative words with our own voice, "to reinforce our own words, still others, finally we populate with our own aspirations, alien or hostile to them"

(Bakhtin, 1984, p.195). These other voices and their intentions leave their marks in our words and language in form of accents and intonation. Bakhtin calls this process "assimilation" (1986, p.89). Thus, by assimilating the discourse of others with one's own accents and intentions, the transnational, immigrant creates hybridized speaking selves and transformative possibilities by constantly positioning and repositioning himself/herself dialogically vis-à-vis other voices. In the following section, I attempt to locate the authorial and internally persuasive discourse of the participants and to analyze their voice movements through any discourse they appropriate in order to reposition themselves dialogically.

My and another's discourse. Here, I analyze the two *adda* networks using dialogical analysis and observe two broad discourses present in the participants' voices. They can be framed in binary opposition of capitalist/non-capitalist or religious/secular discourses, although Bakhtin never discussed discourse within any rigid boundary but saw it as fluid. I present these discourses inhabiting two opposite poles of one contentious dialogue after analyzing the ways essential *adda* participants in both groups, including myself, consciously repositioned their voices to create ideological tensions in language. *Adda* as a social language creates oppositinal positions of voices within the power structure. No speech in an *adda* can be constructed outside the contexts of power, language and group dynamics. In my analysis, I have tried to give preference to those dialogues that convey a clear understanding of the discourses being used, giving a clear view of the speaking positions taken by the other less dominating voices. In the mosque *adda* Johar's speaking position dominated the conversations mainly because he was the host, a problem that did not arise in the neighborhood *adda* because it was de-centralized. However, I found throughout my analysis that the speaking voices held by Johar and Hassan for

example, consistently conveyed several clearly defined authoritative discourses, assimilating and ultimately influencing the other's discourse.

Here I present three main narrators or storytellers who emerged from the two *adda* networks: Johar, from the mosque *adda;* Hassan and Sajjad from the neighborhood *adda*. It is often the case that an *adda* would have its own protagonists and antagonists, where a dialogue would have atleast two opposing discourses with other voices taking intermediate stances. In the mosque *adda,* Johar was the central participant as well as the host. He had established his role as an organizer of social gatherings and was given a patient hearing whenever he spoke. Bakhtin theorizes that any social language is a battlefield of many competing voices, both present and absent. According to him, our speech begins even before our thoughts are transformed into words in moments of listening or silence. It is only by addressing someone that a reference to an authorial discourse is made. I use Johar, Hassan and Sajjad as examples of speaking voices as they re-position their views vis-à-vis authorial discourses of others. Using three examples in the following sections, I cross-examine their voices to seek out the various ways they reconstruct their speaking selves. I also show later in another section, how two different discourses: Islamic religious and Western secular are constructed to hybridize a stable Islamic family identity when I introduce the subject of *hijab*, a piece of garment that has created more controversy than understanding in the West. In the last example I show how Hassan's voice displays agency, mixing various speaking personalities, as he assimilates several dominant discourses from both secular and Islamic traditions to create his hybrid speaking position.

Appropriation of religious discourses in a secular culture. Culture in the West has become a narrative that separates religion from the public spheres of religious minorities. In the mosque *adda,* Islam as a way of life is almost always cast against a larger narrative of consumer

capitalism, as an expression of the secular state. Culture is seen as an anti-religious and amoral trap of the capitalist society to push people to more consumption, to consume the opium of hedonism. Conversations in the mosque *adda* revolved around how authentic religious practices can protect the family from secular influences such as consumerism. It seems that no space in colonial domesticity has been spared by the Cyclops of a transition narrative of modernity as Chakrabarty (1992a) remind us in his *Provincializing Europe*. In the mosque adda, the immigrant's imagined society is marked by the invisible boundaries of a secular culture that is imposed from without and resisted by adopting new religious practices. The reverberations of these practices can be observed more closely upon analyzing participants' dialogues.

Baha, Taukir and Sarwar all gathered at Johar's residence (mosque group), which hosted the four *adda* that took place. The theme of raising families with Islamic moral teachings in a consumerist culture of the West was a consistent theme that emerged throughout all the *adda* sessions. In the following excerpt, Johar remind the mosque participants of a *hadith* narration that contextualizes the life of a believer as a metaphor of trial and tribulation. *Hadith* narrations traced back to the words and actions of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) are considered as one of the foundational texts of the discursive tradition of Islam (Asad, 1986). Scriptural texts from the *hadith*, along with the Quran, together constitute an authoritative discourse for the Muslims in general. I have already discussed Bakhtin's concepts of discourses in the conceptual chapter but once more, put briefly, our authoritarian discourses are passed down from a higher source and acculturated through early unquestioned socialization. In the following excerpt (Session MG3, T1) Johar uses a particular *hadith* to reify and resist the dominant capitalist culture of consumerism. He points to money as one of the ways the family as an institution is tested in a materialist world.

Johar: "[Family] is a test for you" [Hadith narration] exactly. Who are among them? "Your mother, your father, your family, your wife"/ these three [sic] things/ […] Often men love their money too. They don't want to spend even on their kids/ they withhold money from them. These are tests/ […] maybe I did under some peer pressure/ [pressure from] my wife/ for her prestige/ *frestige* [accentuating]. You can't call them prestige/ they are frestige [sounding sarcastic]/ anyway we will go on *Inshallah*. Who's the next speaker? (Session MG3, T1, see Abbreviations)

In a constructive move for a transnational Muslim identity, Johar, negates the other's discourse of the material world which belongs to the Western culture by appropriating the religiously persuasive discourse that views life metaphorically as a test. Here I use the word 'other' to mean anyone who subscribes to a capitalist mode of production, whether present or absent in the audience. Money and prestige are blamed for our materialistic world-view and denied any legitimacy by Johar through parody. Johar re-accents the word "prestige" with hostile intent using Bakhtin's understanding of assimilation, by calling it "*frestige*" (session MG3). Through his intonation, Johar heaps scorn on the dominant discourse of capitalism with his internally persuasive discourse of Islamic piety, transferring legitimacy to it as he challenges the logic of capitalism. Johar depicts the futility of wealth accumulation for those who are already in the grave. He implicates fathers, mothers and children as tests for each other in a figured world of consumerism. The wife "will grab everything from her husband" he asserts before asking "Isn't it like that?" (Session MG3, Johar). He continues, "We do things to make our wives happy, our children happy…but next week could be different" (Session MG3, Johar). With a wave of the hand he indicates how life could be cut short for any one of us, leaving us with nothing but remorse that "we could not give *Sadaqah* [charity]" (Session MG3, Johar). In Johar's

religious narrative the family man is thus depicted as being in a state of trial, fighting a losing battle against the consumer society which ultimately destroys his family. Johar gives a glimpse of how the family becomes a testing ground of identity construction for two competing discourses in transnational social spaces: the 'suspect' consumerist culture and the moral authority of Islam. He positions the family between two ideological extremes, internalizing piety as his dominant discourse a share, denied to those who have sold out to consumerist hedonism. Johar's parodying the word prestige as "frestige" (Session MG3) is what Bakhtin terms a distancing approach from the other's discourse.

Another topic to come up during our conversation in the mosque *adda* was the prospect of marriage, some of the participants being parents of pre-teen or teenage children. On the issue of marriage, the participants preferred the practice of endogamy or marriage within the same culture, provided the faith is the same. Although Taukir said, "that is not a guarantee that they would be pious but at least the [grand] children would be Muslim" (Session MG3). Continuing the religious tradition was considered very important by the mosque group. Marrying outside the faith was considered sacrilegious by all, a fear that caused most parents in the group to remove their children from the public school system and place them in faith based schools.

I now illustrate another topic that was considered a cultural threat for the participants of the mosque *adda*: inter-racial or inter-cultural marriage, which is considered as a cultural threat to preservation of religious identity and heritage in the diaspora. Inter-racial marriage as anathema to the preservation of Islamic identity was emphasized in supporting the practice of endogamy. Johar appropriated the discourse of endogamy, or intra-cultural marriage by re-interpreting a *hadith,* which could also be interpreted as sanctioning inter-racial marriage. He argues from a historical point of view that although Islam permits one to marry to increase social

prestige, the ultimate rationale was to preserve faith. He argues that religious conversion alone is not a guarantee of preservation of faith because one could marry out of love for someone rather than for faith. Johar appropriates endogamy as a stable form of identity transfer as opposed to miscegenation where identity is seen inauthentic precisely because it is acculturated and not biologically inherited. Johar thus took a dialogical position against inter-racial marriage and appropriated the position of marriage "within one's culture" (Session MG3, T2) as a pre-condition for the preservation of faith. By keeping his blood-line pure and Bengali, Johar appropriated a cultural rather than a trans-cultural interpretation of Islam. This view of identity as fixed or stable has its roots in a colonial derivative narrative of orientalism which is found rather commonly among South Asians, irrespective of their faith.

> Johar: […] One should marry within one's status. […] it has been encouraged in Islam to marry outside of one's culture to bring them into Islam/ but now it's better to marry within one's culture/ This is what I got from my study of Islam. So I think it's better to marry within one's culture, unless/ I sometimes joke with my son that if you see some/ sorry [laughs] somebody Black/ she is your sister. So and never/ I always discourage [my son] about White [females] also/ unless she is already a Muslim. […] another special thing about marriage is about happiness. It is proven that people in the same culture they are happy people. […] (Session MG3, T2, see Abbreviations)

Now I contrast the last two excerpt of Johar from Session MG3. In the former (MG3, T1) I show Johar resisting consumerism whereas in the latter (MG3, T2) Johar resists cultural integration using the same religious discourse as the former, only slightly modified. Let me explain by what I mean: In the previous excerpt in session MG3 (p.147-148), Johar had appropriated Islamic family values as a discourse higher than those that brings prosperity and

prestige. In the next conversation, I show how Johar shifts his interpretation from a religious

perspective to a rationalist one when the topic of discussion moved from raising children into

marriage. As I showed previously, Johar rejected the capitalist logic over Islamic piety as a

principal of life in the West. There was no question of reason over faith. Reason was substituted

for religion because, as Bakhtin says, the authoritative discourse cannot be challenged but only

re-appropriated. However in the question of marriage he interprets the *hadith* rationally rather

than literally by validating endogamy over inter-racial marriage as a stronger rationale for the

continuity of religious heritage. His interpretation in support of in-cultural marriage over inter-

cultural or inter-racial marriage is certainly debatable within the context of Islamic legal texts

known as *Shariah.* However Johar's justification of happiness in marriage as a key factor for

one's cultural essentialism rather than a process of enculturation, show that his idea of identity is

rather fixed than fluid, a position he extracts himself from, by appropriating reason to reinterpret

his authoritative discourse. Grewal (2009) takes a similar view in her study of first generation

South Asians where race, gender or class were seen as mutually reinforcing constructs, the better

to consolidate upper-middle class endogamy. Religion is often used to support a racist discourse

of marriage based on orientalist notions of racial preferences perpetuating a form of intra-racism

among South Asian Muslim communities (Grewal, 2009, p.337). This practice, it seems, is not

limited only to immigrants but has also been the experience of Blacks in the US in search of

upward social mobility (Pierre, 2004). Johar's authoritative position on Islamic piety is

reconstituted to address the social realities of his life in Canada. By repositioning his voice Johar

re-appropriates the dominant discourse by re-interpreting the religious texts in the light of reason,

although somewhat ambiguously. This later modification in his position, indicates that identity in

voice is more prone to be hybridized, plural and fluid in interstitial spaces of dialogue than it is

in practice. In the two examples given, first by adopting Islam as a higher discourse than accumulation of material wealth, and second by re-interpreting Islamic text culturally to incorporate a modernist position on marriage, I show how the transnational immigrant uses voice to shift identities and create third spaces (Bhabha, 1994) of belonging by shifting voice positions.

Hijab: questions of beauty or consent. In the following analysis, I propose to illustrate how the *hijab*-wearing woman has been constructed as a choice between two opposing discourses of inclusion and seclusion between the two *adda* groups. The topic of *hijab* came up in the conversations in both the mosque and neighborhood *adda*. I try to contrast the most commonly framed arguments for or against *hijab* in the West as a symbol of a minority faith group. I use Bakhtin's (1981, 1984) understanding of authoritarian and internally persuasive discourses to explain how the discourse of *hijab* was constructed in the mosque *adda* largely as a counter story of assimilation and rejected at least by one participant in the neighborhood *adda*, Sajjad. Although the practice of *hijab* is rigidly adhered to by the wives of mosque *adda* participants, it was rather more losely observed by those of the neighborhood *adda*. I attempt to show how participants in the mosque *adda* constructed *hijab*-clad woman as a rational response to modernism and its secular values by appropriating *hijab* as space of protection. Similarly, I propose to show how Sajjad refuted the same argument by constructing consent as a rational argument and ideological discourse to resist religious dogma. I show that in both dialogical responses the speaking subjects moved to appropriate or reject certain discourses that belonged to others posing a challenge to their own speaking positions.

Since 2007, *hijab* in Quebec has been constructed in the media as symbolic cultural rejection of integration and natural homogenization of Muslim immigrants. The Reasonable Accommodation debate in Québec, within the framework of the Commission of Inquiry headed

by Charles Taylor and Gérard Bouchard, couched in conservative language further stirred an anti-assimilationist view of Muslims among the general public. In certain places where Muslims were more visible, the *hijab* deabte in the public and electronic media was shaped as a greater cultural threat than where they were less visible or at best invisible. Attempts by a large number of Muslims to interpret the *hijab* as a sign of modesty were somewhat diminished by the secular society's—and especially the media's—construction of an alternate discourse of seclusion. *Hijab* was presented as a symbol of the Muslims demand for a parallel society, diminishing *hijab's* idealized value as a sign of modesty as put forward by the Muslims.

Participants in both the mosque and neighborhood *adda* used these two discourses on *hijab* to present themselves as interpreters of religion. I now present two perspectives one from Johar, and the other from Sajjad to contrast how they positioned themselves as a minority community vis-à-vis the dominant culture.

In the mosque *adda*, *hijab* was seen as a fundamental element of a confident Islamic upbringing. *Hijab* became an ideological ground against which the transnational Muslim female within her perceived vulnerability in the Western public domain was dialogically positioned. In the mosque *adda, hijab* as Islamic dress code was embodied and affirmed as a positive identity marker to engender robust identity construction. *Hijab* was seen as a symbol of beauty and confidence that "protects the women from unwanted advances" (Session MG3, Baha) from the outside environment. Johar the host at the mosque group whose wife Swopna has struggled to finally make *hijab* part of her life, framed *hijab* as a standard "of how they [Muslim women] should look like" (Session MG3). He believes that *hijab* shapes one's self-perception in relation to others and to the world. He perceived *hijab* as the embodiment of an Islamic standard of feminine beauty and strength representing a stable family life. By resisting cultural inclusion

within Western society, *hijab* provides a marker of new-found stability for the Islamic family, a status that Johar denies to those Muslims who abandon the use of *hijab*.

> Johar: *hijab* is in Islam. I'm trying to say that they [*hijab*-clad girls] are confidently presenting themselves/ beautiful girls/ those who wear in schools/ that is why they [who don't wear] should/ come to see [Islamic school name removed]/ how the women should look like. (Session MG3, T3)

However, this particular rigid approach to *hijab* that associates Islamic dress codes with having strong moral characters reflected in Johar's speech, was contested by Sajjad in the neighborhood *adda*. Hira and Sajjad are both parents of teenage daughters attending public school. As immigrant parents both are concerned for the emotional wellbeing for their children going to public schools and the pressures of dominant culture, however both reacted to *hijab* differently. Hira wants his daughter to be "Islamic minded" (Session NG1.2) where as Sajjad differs. A teen-ager without a *hijab* in public school is a matter of "tension" (Session NG2.2, Hira) for immigrant parents. Nevertheless, Sajjad took a liberal stand on *hijab* by proposing that *hijab* is a decision that one should take with informed consent and an under-aged girl is in no position to do that. Sajjad said that, "I do not want her to wear *hijab*. I want her to be Canadian, under some circumstance" (Session NG2.2). He narrates a story to share how he went through a lot of hassles in convincing his pre-schooler daughter to put off her decision to wear the *hijab* when she was ready for it. Sajjad said that although he would not approve her of dressing inappropriately, he favored his decision to interfere with her premature affair with *hijab* because "she doesn't wear it now" (Session NG2.2). Justifying his action he says, "I don't want her to be extremely religious. I want her to adapt to the climate she is in" (Session NG2.2, Sajjad). The climate is what both the parents were focusing on but the approach was different. Sajjad

appropriated a discourse of informed consent, a position which views *hijab* as an unnecessary obstacle to inclusion in the dominant society and its secular values. Sajjad saw *hijab* as an arbitrary religious imposition on the child's body that removes her, the right of choice. However, through his own parental discretion he too denies her of the same choice enabling her to follow his perception of dressing up that is appropriate in the secular society. He talked his child into giving up *hijab* because that is what he saw is in her best interest. He provides her the freedom to choose when she comes of age, a choice that many parents in the neighborhood *adda* postpones out of parental concern from prematurely exposing the child to the pressures of a racist discourse of *hijab* or Islam that is already skewed against Muslims. Hira on the other hand who is a new immigrant, views the dominant society as intrusive to his teenage daughter's construction of her own identity. Hira shares his fear that his daughter "is trying to adopt this [secular] culture being influenced by her friends at school" (Session NG2.2). Sajjad blames the school for opening the door of many suspect cultural practices by failing to encourage a healthy culture of competition at a time when the students should concentrate on their future careers. Individualism and secularism are seen as unhelpful distractions by some immigrant parents who exercise a form of symbolic violence either by imposing or denying religious discourse on their children. The following excerpt shows how Sajjad imposes his liberal discourse on his daughter:

> Sajjad: When my daughter was three or four years old, she wanted the *hijab*. I told my wife, "She has no idea what she is getting herself into she needs to be able to make that judgment on her own when she grows up." So I forced her to take it off. It was a lot of hassle. Now she understands she doesn't want to wear it in school. She knows the pressure. (Session NG2.2, T1)

In the neighborhood *adda*, Sajjad did not see *hijab* as a useful symbolism of sacredness to construct a counter-narrative of beauty or confidence that unlike the participants in the mosque *adda,* he felt needed preservation and transmission to posterity. However, Sajjad reasoned with the liberal discourse of consent by appropriating it to question the religious imperative of *hijab* as morally indefensible on a child. Sajjad internalizes the dominant discourse of assimilation that demands the state and religion to be separated in public life. Bringing a rationalist argument of informed consent on the practice of piety and modesty, Sajjad integrates an assimilationist position without questioning the religious injunctions on *hijab*. Sajjad's rant at his wife, "She [his daughter] has no idea what she is getting herself into"— firmly links *hijab* with absent of informed consent. Thus, Sajjad frees himself from ruling on her moral dimension — a space that she needs to address on her own. The child is expected to understand the difference between two moral points of view, one Islamic and another secular and then make a rational choice, an ambiguous proposition.

It is clear that although Johar and Sajjad, participants from two different groups did not know each other but dialogically speaking they both rationalize their own authoritarian position on *hijab* by replacing the other's discourse with a regressive pedagogy of their own.

I now return to the questions of discourses in language when it shifts from opposition to assimilation. Framing *hijab* within a similar binary opposition of secular versus religious tradition, I show that these conflicting positions are neither stable nor permanent but on a closer examination, shifting, by consciously assimilating other's discourse, as Bakhtin shows in his dialogism. In regards to the question of *hijab,* Johar, demarcates the school as a terrain of competing cultures where, once exposed the child will eventually split from tradition, no longer being able to distinguish between the Islamic and the secular elements of culture. He says,

"Unless the girl changes or the father changes […] this will bring separation and problem" (session MG3). He considers identity as stable and unchanging. Sajjad demonstrates that identity is not stable, as he appropriates the dominant discourse by resisting *hijab* but not the Islamic discourse reinterpreting it through an internally persuasive discourse of consent. This sideward glance at modernity resonates with how Johar in the mosque *adda* also appropriated a discourse of rationalism to reinterpret a Hadith that encouraged inter-racial marriage. Discourses are mainly blurred and porous, grey areas, enabling the speaking subject to construct various discourses in relation to other voices in them, appropriating and assimilating with various others. Identity in a dialogue thus offers a way to create many positions of consciousnesses that enable one to speak in relation to another voice or subjectivity without being tied to any singular position. An analysis of Bakhtin's dialogism reveals that both Johar and Sajjad were able to overcome the structures set by traditional versus modern discourses and social practices. They were able to exhibit an agency by embracing other spaces instead of being trapped into the two hegemonic subjecthoods held by the secular state or the religious orthodoxy.

  Religious education versus modern education. In the following example, I compare the postcolonial position of reason as a dervitative narrative of modernity with human consciousness when it comes to account for agency. I argue that dialogism holds a better prospect for the inquiry of human agency than postcolonial theories offer. In Chapter Four, I have developed a Bengali middle class subject position, *bhadralok* identity to explain the discourse of a national home for the British colonial subjects by institutionally validating an orientalist science and reworked Hindu and Islamic pasts— the product of Indian cultural history writing (Nandy, 1983; Chatterjee, 1993; Chakrabarty, 1992a). Postcolonial researchers have criticized the cultural productions for failing to distinguish between the conservative and

progressive trends among the bourgeois that were motivated by neither modern nor nationalist goals (Chatterjee, 1995, p.28). The modern nation is merely a construction of the transition narrative of the European nation using a language of inadequacy where everything in the postcolonial nation is "grievously incomplete" (Chakrabarty, 1992b, p.350). Kumar points at the futility of teaching scientific truths to the rural masses in one of his correspondences echoing, a desperation that has been internalized into the postocolonialist state machinery. The British Resident of Bhopal, writes, "Even if their education in English was completed…[t]he truths, which have cost so much labor, time and expense in inculcating, do not spread, or take root among the people (Indian Statutory Commission 1930, p.388, cited in Kumar, 2006, p.401). The result was appropriating of a capitalist reason into the language of nationalism without being able to question history or science objectively to create a more equitable nation (Chatterjee, 1995; Chakrabarty, 2008). I use Bakhtin's dialogism to question that same reason or agency that postcolonialist authors found lacking in the colonial subject.

In this discussion, I use only two participants from the neighborhood *adda* who appropriated modernity within Islam to hybridize two discourses of learning: one modern and another Islamic. This has ramifications for reforming the *Madrassah* institutions, a source of much political consternation among the immigrants. In Chapter 4, I give a background on the various shades of Islamic practices in Bangladesh and the role of *Madrassah* as one stream of religious education that exist as a socially embedded institution in the pietization practices of Muslims. However, to contextualize the discussions I intend to hold here, it would be helpful to revisit some contextual aspects of lived Islam in Bangladesh and politicization of *Madrassah* education in the nationalist discourse. Islamic practice in Bangladesh could be broadly categorized as Social Islam and Political Islam (Riaz, 2009). Traditionally *Madrassahs* are seen

as validating institutions, loosely interpreting locally produced Islamic practices embodied in a spiritual consciousness through syncretism. The political Islam on the other hand is a moral-ideological import guided by literalist interpretations of Islam for attaining social justice through a practice of individual pietization and social mobilization. Although the social Islam is non-political but within the framework of the constitutional politics some Islamist outfits have developed political aspirations. These political networks using a garb of social Islam operates at the national level by controlling large numbers of *Madrassahs* and playing into the ideological differences between secular, nationalist and Islamist politics. Rural *Madrassah*s are ideologically rooted in the practices of social Islam mainly in the rural villages where modern educational infra-structures are weak and almost non-existent. Lack of public funds in primary education and privatization of religious education has resulted into a proliferation of *Madrassah* in Bangladesh since the '90s with an inflow of transnational Islamism and remittancess especially from the Gulf countries. *Madrassah* education board, which was set up during the colonial period has always operated outside the public education boards with their own curriculum and levels of equivalency with the mainstream education. The four *Madrassah* boards with their separate courses and subjects have been allowed to exist for political expediency as *Madrassah* enrollment, both in primary and secondary levels equal to almost a fifth of that of the government schools. Lack of primary schools also forces many villagers to send their children to *Madrassahs* where outdated curriculums often result into de-skilling of family trades. This results in limited access to professional fields that are available to the students from public stream. The Bangladeshi middle class immigrants' transantional identities are shaped by undercurrents of home-grown social/cultural Islams and the various brands of institutional Islams

practiced in many North American Islamic institutions, creating a hybrid of multiple Islamic identities.

In the following paragraphs, I do a comparative analysis between the voices of two members of the neighborhood *adda* where they reappropriate modernity with their own concepts of education. I focus on Sajjad and Hassan two participants from the neighborhood group, not to marginalize others but only to represent the authoritative discourses in their voices that dominate in the *adda*. The two discourses that I contrast, offer atleast two opposing speaking positions or consciousnesses in Bakhtinian terms.

Hassan, an apiarist by training with a rural upbringing was a student in a *Madrassah* for a short time. He, with my help, proposed to the neighborhood participants to support him run a primary school that he had been financing in his village. Two years before Hassan left for Canada, he had set up a primary school that with a little bit of luck could one day become registered and subsidized by the government. Hassan who grew up in a village says, "I cannot accept that because these children are born to the rural poor they cannot benefit from learning English like they do in the urban schools" (Session NG4.1). The NGOs have mainly filled the vacuum of primary education by running informal schools which could be anything between a make-shift shack of reeds with or without walls to a spot under the shade of a tree. He made a case to the neighborhood *adda* participants to contribute to his cause financially so he could "ensure that they learn English [and] know how to read the Quran atleast" (Session NG4.1):

Hassan: Now I want to ask through you all, to support the work. […] If we could ensure that they learn English/ they know how to read the Quran atleast/ do you know what our main problem is? We don't understand our religion properly.

Ratan: In the light of Quran and Hadith

Hassan: Yes according to Quran and Hadith/ I want to keep an imam who can teach them religion according to the Quran and Hadith/ not misinterpret it.

Researcher: I think if you set up a scientific-minded curriculum, teach English and Quran then people [Bangladeshi immigrants] would want to help you.

Hassan: Science is included in the deen [religious way of life] not detached from it. In our country Imams [clergy] don't have knowledge of science, they have no idea that Quran is science, what will they teach?

Ratan: Yes. They give flawed interpretations of Islam. (Session NG4.1, T1)

Hassan's proposal of rural schooling was encountered with two concerns framed in the comments left by Ratan and I. Ratan's concern was on the religious contents of the learning based on the primary texts of Islam and my concern was the scientific nature of the religious curriculum both of which was answered by Hassan in his bracketing together both modern science and Quran, as non-conflicting and scientific. Hassan's linking science with Quran (Session NG4.1) is based on the assumption that scientific reasoning is not in contradiction to religious reasoning. Hassan reflects an understanding of religion and science which has its base in the writings of 12th century jurist such as Al-Ghazzali (d. 1111) who writes that if Quran is the word of God and Nature is the work of God, then there cannot be any contradiction between them. Ghazzali states that any confusion that may arise between the two could only be due to human failings to understand revelation. In the colonial context, Islamic reformers such as Muhammad Abduh (d. 1905) or Syed Ahmed Khan (d. 1898) embraced a rationalist exegesis of religion to encounter scientific reasoning. They subjected study of religion to the intellectual pursuit afforded through Western science. Proposing that religion and science has no

contradiction, Hassan corroborates this line of argument when he says, "Do you know what our main problem is? We don't understand our *deen* [religion] properly" (Session NG4.1). Hassan's frustration with the lack of enlightenment among the rural masses is premised not on too little religion but on lack of a scientific inquiry into religion, a proposition that postcolonial authors already made. Hassan repositioned himself as an agent of conflicting modernity (Kumar, 2001) by offering his proposed school, a site of two opposing types of education, one modern and another moral. Hassan appropriates the modern education in his religious discourse by suggesting, "Quran is science" (Session NG4.1) by disassociating himself from the discourse of the history of science. Kumar (2001), a postcolonial writer reminds us that the bi-furcated spaces of learning as a derivative narrative of colonial modernity has left two competitive discourses of education: one practical but illegitimate and another real but impractical. Modern education is thus accepted to advance in critical thinking (read scientific) but not the way forward spiritually, the domain where moral and practical teaching has to be done. As both education systems claim a form of truth for itself, the scientific reasoning and the moral absolutist, somehow they are forced to co-exist within the nation's imagination, an ambivalence that has continued since mid nineteenth century.

My argument of a "scientific-minded curriculum" (Session NG4.1) for the school showed that I too appropriated an authoritative discourse of scientific truth, which gave a sideways glance, as Bakhtin calls it, to Hassan's emphasis on moral teaching. Hassan assimilated my voice as the other's discourse of 'science as the truth' (my emphasis) by responding creatively as: "Quran is [a book of] science" (Session NG4.1). In this dialogue, Hassan joins scientific truth with his authoritative discourse of Quranic revelation as the absolute truth making modern education as a prism to understand Quran. Modern education is not seen inimical to religion or

tradition but without proper religious training those texts could be misinterpreted, as Hassan and Ratan warn, leading to confusion. The discourse of modern scientific education is accepted only when it helps to decode proper religious rulings, not when it challenges the basis of moral education. This is a concept that I find is held more commonly by Bangladeshi immigrants in both *adda* groups. Postcolonialist writer Kumar (2006) in her work on colonial provincial schools in India shows how these schools resisted modern education when it was seen going against traditional knowledge.

I now show an alternate position proposed by Sajjad, another neighborhood participant who challenges the social stratification of education by keeping the status quo of oppression at the bottom rung of the society without offering them any way out. The context of this discussion was created when Sajjad, Hira and I at the neighborhood *adda* spoke about the political unrest of March 2013 dubbed as the Shahbag movement in Bangladesh and the role of *Madrassah* students in polarizing the discourse between secular nationalist and Islamist ideas. Sajjad, in the neighborhood group was not convinced enough to believe that modernizing education is going to change the situation on the ground especially when few students leave the *Madrassah* with any specialized skills conducive for gainful employment other than leading prayers in a mosque. He proposes an egalitarian solution of technical training similar to what is offered in the West with an invasive government policy of scrutinizing the courses being taught in *Madrassahs*. This position is also favored by the Western governments. Following is an excerpt of the conversation (Session NG2.2):

> Sajjad: Exactly! My point is this/ if you strike exactly in that spot/ that okay you need to show me what you are teaching there/ let the government go and see for themselves what you are teaching/ just basic Quranic literacy won't do/ you need to offer vocational

training like they do over here after grade 8 or teach them some other trade before they graduate/ then afterwards you give them a choice/ now do you want to be a Mullah [clergy] or a [Machine] maker?

Researcher: Or doctor?

Sajjad: You need to be a little bit brighter for that/ would you become a welder or lead the congregational prayer? Then you will see the difference. (Session NG2.2, T2)

Sajjad refutes the claim that modern or scientific education would make any difference in the way religious education creates an economic under-class. He believes that in an age of globalization, access to market-specific vocational skill-sets would make religious education less attractive to a migrant labor force. Sajjad believes that the *Madrassah* students can be groomed into the blue collar jobs that require hands-on knowledge, not too much specialization. He hopes that given a choice to earn decent living, *Madrassah* students would automatically begin transitioning from religious learning to technical learning. Sajjad however restricts the *Madrassah* students from pursuing medicine or other high skilled professions available to middle class children but offers skills befitting for low paid technicians or manual workers. Sajjad speaks from a voice position of privilege by retaining the right to monitor the *Madrassah* curriculum. He internalizes a discourse of practical education for the rural *Madrassah* students in the same logic as the British resident in India cited by Kumar (2006, p.401) shows his resignation to the fact that despite the best intentions scientific truth "do not spread, or take root among the people." One can easily replace those colonized Indians with these *Madrassah* students in the bourgeois middle class imagination. Sajjad thus by appropriating the voice of the

policy making state denies the *Madrassah* student any such agency other than economic emancipation in a limited manner.

I now contrast the voices of Sajjad and Hassan in order to see how they position their voices along modern education to empower the *Madrassah* students who are seen as disempowered masses, oppressed and denied the gifts of modernity. Earlier, I showed how Hassan made a case for modern education by making religious education a central element of pedagogy. Sajjad on the other hand resists the moral authority of *Madrassah* as a social site of orthodoxy by appropriating the discourse of technology transfer to the bottom rungs of the society as it yields economic freedom for all. The postcolonial frame of reason is ambiguous, incomplete and without any agency that can provide the free will to choose, much less to bring social change. This postcolonial subjectivity in identity is problematic in assigning individuals with agencies. However, Bakhtin's dialogism offers a figured world where Hassan, Ratan and I can all escape that same bourgeois subjectivity by denying each other our own discourses deflecting power and hegemony. As Bakhtin urges us to find our own voices, we respond creatively to ourselves only by challenging other's authoritative discourse. Bakhtin believes that in a figured world, voice represents agency by questioning and challenging structures. Hassan's dialogue in a previous excerpt denotes such agency when he asks, "Do you know what our problem is…they have no idea that Quran is science" (Session NG4.1, T1). Hassan answers himself creatively by appropriating my discourse on science. He denies science any separate space in his argument by focusing on the scientific nature of Quran, a book that most Muslims generally regard as divine, perfect and an exposition of all knowledge. Sajjad on the contrary appropriates modernity by asking the invisible audience, here a *Madrassah* student, "Now do you want to be a Mullah or a Machine maker?" (Session NG2.2, T2). He retains his agency to

choose by reframing the question of education in economic choices. Bakhtin's dialogism gives the Bengali middle class immigrant some sort of agency that the postcolonial writers and poststructuralist authors deny based on their subject positions as colonial subjects.

Thus Sajjad uses the logic of gainful employment as a means to weaken the sources of radicalism. He proposes to incorporate technical education along with religious instructions in the *Madrassah* curriculum bringing it to meet the needs of modernity. Hassan, on the other hand assimilates reason as a product not of modernity, but of science, which can be used to intertextualize religious texts without the received knowledge of modernity, an equally ambiguous proposition. Both Hassan and Sajjad appropriate the modernity to reform religious education for different ends, to stabilize the integrity of the nation, from what they view as the rising instability of religious fundamentalism in Bangladesh which seems to be bursting at the seams.

The discourses of sacrifices and self-interested ends. Did we make a mistake wanting to come to this country leaving our beloved homes? This is a key question that all the participants somehow try to make sense of in our *adda* every time we meet. Unconsciously in hindsight, we all compare our decisions of migration at some point or another, especially when the news of passing away of a near one reaches us, making some of us ask again, if the price of leaving everything was a right choice. To answer this rhetorical question of why one migrates is never simple. The answers are multiple and contested within the many transnational trajectories of places and spaces of shifting immigrant identities. Most immigrants mirror the undemocratic leadership styles in Bangladesh as an obstacle to their returning permanently. They blame their disconnectedness with an on-going political instability, a slew of incompetent governments, growing muscle powers in politics, cronyism in bureaucracy, student unrest and a host of causes

that affect the middle class interest in their eyes. Their new lives in the West are seen as fair trade-offs between being victims of a corrupt oligarchy and somewhat unequal citizens in a more democratized society. The full picture is never clear. However, borrowing dialogism from Bakhtin we can attempt to find the major discourses that migrants construct to give their voice an agency to go beyond them.

Before I delve into the discussions of dialogism, I wish to contextualize the concept of migration in the history of Islam as most participants in both the *adda* speak about their migration from the perspective of *hijrah.* The Arabic word *hijrah* which means journey or travel marks the Muslim calendar which began soon asfter the flight of persecuted Muslims from Mecca, first to the protection of a Christian Abyssinian king Negus and later to the tribes of Medina. Historically migration was understood in the context of seeking sanctuary to protect life, freedom and religion however many Islamic scholars question if *hijrah* would apply to the many economic migrants who travelled to the West for a better life. According to one school of Islamic jurisprudence, the primary reasons *hijrah* may be validated to a non-Muslim land under two conditions: to proselytize non-Muslims and preservation of the way of life (*deen)*. However any legal text in Islamic jurisprudence is subject to many interpretations in one of the four recognized schools of thought called *Madhhabs*. It should be mentioned that the schools of thoughts are not closed system of codified rulings but a continuous body of work that is challenged and evolving within their own discourse communities. Historically, any temporary travel for trade or learning was not considered *hijrah* but a prolonged stay in a hostile land could only happen where religious freedom was guaranteed. The problem with the concept remains because there are no models of Muslims living as minorities before modern times in non-Muslim land for generations (Ali, 2010). According to a Hadith, Muslims believe that God will hold every one accountable

for four things, "his (sic) life and how he lived it, his knowledge and how he used it, his wealth and how he earned it and spent it and his body and how he parrished it" (Jamae' Tirmidhi, Hadith 2424, p.188). Muslims in the mosque *adda*, including Hassan, tries to make meaning of their migration in the context of *hijrah* and rationalizes their living in the West in light of the Hadith.

In the following sections, I asked repeatedly in many ways to both the *adda* groups on reasons they think made their migration valid in hind sight. Several explanations arose out of this inquiry. The *adda* groups favored a migration narrative that appropriated a rationale for migration for a higher cause than mere survival. This discourse of sacrifice, is used to interpret other types of accomplishments than self-interested needs of the economic migratnt, such as increasing one's wealth or social status. A migration story is always linked with a higher discourse of sacrifice that gives collective meaning to others but never for narrow personal goals.

In this section, I analyze migration discourse from the perspectives of two migrants, Johar and Hassan, and through them dialogues that take place between the two *adda* groups. I identify one migration discourse as self-less sacrifice and the other as self-serving. Both types of migration narratives are used in the transnational context by framing their migration either as religiously motivated or economically motivated. In the following sections, I first follow Johar's conversation in his mosque *adda* and frame his migration as a religiously validated one where migration appropriates the discourse of *hijrah*. Later in another section, I follow Sajjad and Hassan who present their migration narrative in the backdrop of a displacement which cannot be termed simply as self-interested but forced or at best coerced and thus made somewhat valid.

I begin with Johar in the mosque *adda* because his perception of migration is strongly linked with preservation of religion, a concern that Hassan raised earlier but for different reasons. Johar sums up his story of migration as a simple choice between lesser of the two evils. He had a family business in Bangladesh and his father had sent all of his sons except one to get Western education. Two ultimately returned but he did not. He obtained tacit approval from his father to migrate to Canada when he came back after finishing his education abroad. He argued through a higher religious discourse the case to migrate where one can practice one's *deen,* which encompasses more things than just one's religion, without being subject to the pressures of the material world. He thinks that life in Canada makes it easy to live a God-centered life, one that he thinks he cannot have in Bangladesh as part of an elite class. He lives next to a mosque so he does not miss congregational prayers. Johar wants to live Islam in its prophetic tradition of moderation, by choosing a middle path. Between living in Bangladesh and living in Canada, he chose the place where religious life can be practiced without making a lot of compromises. He narrates a Hadith of the Prophet that he, "never once chose the more difficult of two matters, so long as the simpler choice was not sinful" (Muwatta' of Malik, Hadith 47.1.2). Johar relates living in Canada with a spiritually rewarding experience which he prefers more than his privileged life in Bangladesh. Johar appropriates a higher moral authority that sanctions him to live where living a good life means practicing one's religion well.

I moved along the time line and asked the participants to imagine themselves 15/20 years down the road when they would start to retire. How do they see themselves in their host country was a question to which I wanted them to respond. Most said that they saw themselves financially independent, maintaining their social-networks; living in close proximity to their adult children. Johar preferred to live with his grown-up kids if they had the financial means.

Taukir was opposed to that idea because "a lot of unnecessary conflict, unnecessary disappointment could be avoided" if the children were to live apart (Session MG3). Johar challenged that idea saying "Why not? Have we not sacrificed a lot for their future, they certainly can live with us, it's a fair deal" (Session MG3, Johar). This impression is quite prevalent among Bangladeshis who use a social construct of sacrifice they made for the future of their children. Taukir, another member of the mosque group, tried to argue that children who live with their parents in this country are "socially embarrassed" (Session MG3), but this realization did not seem to sink in with Baha, Sarwar, and Johar. They all agreed that relationships with married kids are likely to change on the basis of how their children's spouses treat them. This was a matter of concern for them as "nobody could guarantee who they would marry" (Session MG3, Johar). However, there was a hope that children growing in a religious household were likely to take care of aging parents. Johar said that going back home to retire is something he often entertains as an option. He says with a ring of concern, "our children may not take care of us, that fear is always there, and we still can not get along with the idea of ending up in an old home" (Session MG3, Johar). "An old age with not having enough savings is also another nightmare" contended Baha (Session MG3). Sarwar agreed with Taukir that expecting their children to look after them is probably not a wise way to go especially when they like most immigrant parents did not set a good example before them. "The only hope in old age is free medicare in Canada, and the RESP account they force us to open" said, Baha. An excerpt from Session MG3 is given here:

> Johar: […] We have given them [children] a country [Canada] Even if they don't live
>
> with us, they won't have to find another culture [place] for them/ they have everything/

fresh air, food, car, whatever you say and security/ so why not? They may accommodate us/ I think so

Taukir: I disagree with this. My view is totally different/ because charity begins at home/ they are not seeing that we are taking care of our parents/ they are used to a nuclear family/ all of a sudden, they can't/ I can't expect from them/ […] (Session MG3, T4)

Johar, the host of the mosque *adda* here do not hide his true feelings on what he always believes as the ultimate sacrifice one could make by leaving his parents and country coming to another place so he could practice his religion freely. In Islam this type of displacement for one's faith is called *hijrah*, a journey to protect one's liberty and freedom for the sake of God. Johar in the preceeding dialogue (Session MG3) appropriates an authoritarian discourse of *hijrah* in an attempt to free his children of the obligation to find a better sanctuary or culture. He feels that his children are burdened with less responsibilities and struggles compared to what he went through and have a better chance to financially establish themselves. Taukir argues that one cannot expect too much from their children especially when one had left his own folks back home. Taukir counters Johar's argument of the ultimate sacrifice of *hijrah* by replacing it with a discourse of self-interest. Taukir thus denies Johar the agency of absolving himself from the guilt of abandoning his own obligations to his parents by reminding him that charity begins at home. In the mosque *adda*, the discourse of sacrifice appropriated from the concept of *hijrah*, is contested with the narrative of the economic migrant who has narrow self-interested motives. Notwithstanding that motto of self-preservation, most participants agree that holding on to one's faith in the host country is no less of a sacrifice for a higher cause.

The answers from the participants from the mosque adda, provided me useful opportunities to compare and contrast with those that emerged from the neighborhood adda. The question was the same: Why do we migrate and how do we see ourselves down the line making this place a home for us and our children? The answers are starkly different. The neighborhood *adda* were more transparent about their critique of the migration discourse and constructed a creative agency out of the economic struggles that risked looking like narrow personal gains. I start with Sajjad, in the neighborhood *adda* whose candid confessions revealed that the migration narrative needed a greater cause to reconstruct a voice of valor to compensate privileges that one loses by becoming an immigrant from the third world who is dislocated from the periphery and relocated to economically advantageous centers.

Sajjad defended living in the West because of its rule of law and social safety nets that "guaranteed basic livelihood" for him (Session NG1.2). He appropriated a discourse of self-interest by linking his migration with the lack of public safety that is denied to any citizen of Bangladesh. His migration is thus linked with a sense of collective failure that was not labeled on his home country but on his "people [who] are not good" (Session NG1.2, T1). As a Bangladeshi, he accepts the self-blame of being hypocritical, who passes judgment on his own people while being in the comfort among other peoples and other places. By telling the truth about him, in the following excerpt, he liberates himself from the hypocrisy and implicates invisible others in that frame.

> Sajjad: […] I like this country [Canada] because I am happy here. But I don't want to say it. This is what I want to say/Isn't it a bit of a hypocrisy/ that Canadian law and order attracts me and for this reason Canada is a beautiful country [to me]/ That is the reason I am staying here. The same reason I don't want to go back is because there is no law and

order in our country. Our people are not good. But again I am passing judgment on my country sitting here. (Session NG1.2, T1)

I asked him that when one could put the law in one's pocket in Bangladesh taking advantage of the corrupt system why one would want to live here to maintain basic necessities. Assimilating himself with the masses, the 99%, popularized by a social movement called 'we are the 99%' in US, he downplayed any special treatment in the West. By aligning himself with the law-abiding downtrodden, "following traffic rules, standing in lines when paying bills" (Session NG1.2, Sajjad) he rejects the notion of the self-interested middle class associated with moving to a capitalist heaven. The cosmopolitan narrative that Sajjad gave as the raison d'être of his adopted home is the derivative narration of the ordered space of the colonial public domain (Mukhopadhyay, 2002). Sajjad tells his own story of migration by appropriating some bourgeois self-blame but absolves himself from that class interest by aligning himself with the downtrodden have-nots who have secured their lives in the West by removing themselves from a disorderly and corrupt space. The discourse of sacrifice is present in his narrative and he places himself on the side of the have-nots.

Hassan, my neighbor who came to Canada three years ago leaving his job in a NGO for greater economic emancipation, is faced with the dilemma of losing his children to an alien culture by sending them to a public education. Although he has saved enough money which he intends to spend on his children's private Islamic education, his primary motive is to save money back home, not spend it here. He gives a picture of careful financial planning that is hinged on his ability to support a village school, make some investments on his student loans financially and provide a good moral upbringing to his children while he continues his academic enterprise. "Without economic freedom no nation or religion can survive" (Session NG2.1, Hassan) as he

give us his financial motives. Hassan is not dreaming to become rich, he is ensuring a minimum financial safety net by saving a small fortune from his student loan and bursary. The following excerpt from Session NG2.1 shows his own bail-out plans from his own penury:

> Hassan: I have already saved 200-250 thousand taka [Bangladeshi currency] in the first year by working. I have purchased land [in the village] with 200 thousand taka, I can sell it anytime. I have invested in a business 40-50 thousand taka. I have already calculated that in the next 4/5 years/ if I can make 500 thousand taka/ you get me? With 500 thousand cash in Bangladesh I have nothing to worry. And here I am getting $800 for the kids, universal childcare/ every month the loan amount I incur will be paid off from $200 I get for childcare […] (Session NG2.1, T1)

However in the three years he had been here he has realized that the social costs of living that dream are simply too high. Although he talks about how sheer determination got him through the 60/70 hours a week of drudgery ever since he landed, he believes that there is nothing called a free lunch. He believes that the system of social welfare is a trap for keeping the first generation immigrants lured into becoming an under-class, all the while, increasing the chances of their children getting totally assimilated into the Western culture. He thinks losing our *deen* (way of life) for petty hand-outs is a cheap transaction. From this conviction Hassan makes his own rationality of return, rhetorically: "Everybody says that they are here for their children, but my theory says, for them [children] we should go back" (Session NG2.1, Hassan). Hassan thus appropriates the economic contingency to validate his migration but denies that expediency to those who risk a cultural assimilation by prolonging their stay. Hassan assimilates the dominant narrative of the economic migrant who not only secures his financial future by

scraping and saving every penny from welfare and sends back home but he also constructs an equivalent urgency of preserving his own religious heritage.

Hassan's sentiment of cultural assimilation was resonated in both Ratan and Mashuk at the neighborhood *adda*, who believe that the successive generations of Muslims will find it hard to reconcile with their religious heritage, jeopardizing the future of their faith traditions in Canada. They believed that one should take their children back to Bangladesh if one can't ensure the Islamic identity of the next generations. The fear of losing one's religion through successive assimilation was a real fear in both of my *adda* groups however their reification of the dominant culture goes to show how identity is constructed dialogically to counter other hegemonic positions. Ethnographic studies among second generation British Muslims showed that maintaining religious identity with a geographic other place did not turn out to be a threat to assimilation (Bolognani, 2007; Schillar 2004; Ang 2003). In fact Nesbitt (1998) suggests that identity among second or third generation Muslims in Britian is more of a triadic construction with "three axes" (p.189) of religious, national and ethnic identities existing in-betweenness. However, assimilationist fears entertained by Hassan only gives credence to similar Islamophobic discourse that exists in the Western media about a parallel society that Muslims are creating in Britain, Australia, France and Canada by demanding separate legal courts and special treatments.

In the discussion above between the two groups, I show that the questions of migration is always addressed by linking the self to a higher order discourse, for Johar and the mosque *adda* it is seen from a religious expediency where the future generation is secure in their new homeland through the moral struggles of the first. In the neighborhood *adda* migration is framed in the context of a corrupt country and an invasive culture both are suspects to raising a moral

family. The dilemma that is caused in this stark contrast can be solved either by admitting one's self-interest as Sajjad does or by constructing an equally higher moral clause of preserving one's religious heritage that makes migration a short-term option as Hassan sees it. In both cases migration is justified either as a self-interested end or as a feat of self-sacrifice, preventing one from going back or compels one to return home.

The virtuoso economic migrant: A creative hybrid position. Both the groups I studied held on to a discourse of Islam in their dialogues, appropriating or refusing various discourses that supported or contradicted the practices, beliefs, and cultures of being middle class Bangladeshi migrants in Canada. The struggles in their diaspora spaces that I narrated so far through the two *adda* groups, point to the many different speaking positions they adopt strategically and situationally constructing hybridized speaking positions. I focus on neighborhood *adda* and particularly on Hassan's speaking subjects to conclude this chapter's main thesis. I have tried to show using Bakhtin's dialogism how diaspora voices can be analyzed for agency —in their assimilations, and resistances, of the voices of others —in order to overcome hegemonic structures of power in language. Dialogicality offers a possibility to free the immigrant self from its subjective positions. I believe that we take various voice positions in our dialogues with others in order to give ourselves the agency normally denied in our social practices and power relations in an attempt to restructure the social language. By exploring Hassan's voice, I intend to find out how he creates spaces to defy those structures and overcomes his subjective position as a provincialized Bangladeshi Muslim migrant with limited abilities to speak in his second language. Using dialogism, I show that Hassan disrupts various social structures by shifting his voice positions, allowing him a consciousness and agency to choose in

whichever way to deny other's discoursees he finds hegemonic and disruptive for his self-expression.

Previously I have shown that Hassan from the neighborhood *adda* ruled against migration to the West, primarily from his belief that it was no longer viable for the middle class to preserve their ways of religious life from the Western cultural aggressions. In the following sections, I show the movements of Hassan's voice positions appropriating the dominant discourse of the economic migrant for himself who comes to Canada to improve his financial situation. Later he re-authors the definition of poverty not on economic terms but on moral terms. When Mashuk, Hassan's friend in the neighborhood *adda* challenges his view that he most likely falls among the privileged society Hassan repositions himself within the dominant discourse of the poor immigrant by redefining poverty as being morally bankrupt not economically bankrupt. Hassan adopts the economic migrant category for himself who came here for making wealth only to return back. He finds financial reasons more justifiable than adopting discourses of sacrifice that are morally indefensible.

In the neighborhood *adda* the dominant discourse of the economic migrant was challenged by Mashuk, Hassan's friend in the neighborhood *adda* who argued that anyone who has the means to travel to the West and study cannot be considered an economic migrant because they belong to high skilled classes. Hassan on the other hand justifies his economic migrancy by assimilating the dominant discourse of financial expediencey from self-interest to a higher order discourse. In the following sections, I show how Hassan removes the need to permanently immigrate, by thinking through his exit strategy from Canada, thereby creating an agency for himself.

In the neighborhood *adda*, Hassan supports Mashuk's views on middle class migrants as privileged people whose migration is motivated by self-expediency, not dire economic conditions. Hassan gives an example of those who came to Canada, not out of economic necessity but to increase their social position. In the following transcript, Hassan distances himself from those invisible others in his dialogue who got the short end of the stick in Canada for having "high ambitions" (Session NG2.1, T2). He used a double voice of irony to describe his brother's misfortune. Hassan's brother left a secure teaching position in a public university in Bangladesh only to jeopardize his career in Canada by eking out a living. Hassan thinks that his brother's inability to send his children in an elite (English medium) school and a sense of class competition drove him to leave the country. He appropriates for himself financial insecurity as a higher moral cause for migration but lends others the ills of self-centeredness and ambition that propelled them onward to an imbroglio. Hassan derides the discourse of patriotism in a double-talk of the middle class elite, disassociating himself from their "pep-talk" (Session NG2.1, T2) about returning home when they actually plan to stay here. Bakhtin's carnivalesque is very active in Hassan's voice who derides the elite immigrants, in the words of a humorist writer, Humayun Ahmed (2008, p.101) —"happily washing dishes without any remorse," but refusing to do the same back home.

> Hassan: The wealthy always give pep-talk of patriotism. For those who have nothing, these are bookish words. This is reality. You know it. What did I come here for? [To achieve] economic solvency/ nothing else. How long can you struggle? Every moment? Those who have economic solvency but still remain here [in Canada] they too suffer from uncertainty/ for their children.

Mashuk: But still/ this is a big factor for those who came in Canada who were already economically solvent. […]

Hassan: They are high class with high ambition. (Session NG2.1, T2)

I confronted Hassan reminding him that his investments in his own academic future indicate a different type of motivation than an economic one. Hassan then rearticulates his academic goals as a form of "time-pass", as seen in the following transcript (See Session NG2.1, T3). He later admits that his going to school here in Canada is a way to improve his English language skills so he could finish his literacy projects that he had started back home. He assimilates his persuasive discourse of a social responsibility with the higher moral authority of financial solvency and distances himself from the narrow self-interested discourse of middle class ambitions. Hassan finds greater purpose in his migration narrative by linking his own literacy with a cause of social justice such as bringing English literacy back to his village. Hassan thus keeps his agency of sacrifice for himself and denies it to other self-interested economic migrants. Following is an excerpt from the transcript (Session NG2.1, T3):

Researcher: But you…but you are right now investing in yourself. I am not trying to put you on hot spot, I am just telling you. You got admitted to school, you are investing in your own skill. […]

Hassan: You know what? More than preparing myself actually I am just passing my time. I am passing time. This is a big reason. Along with passing time/ my basics [in English] is very weak. Basics in English/ that is why I am studying English. If my English improves, I think when I go back to my village/ my children /the vision I left unfinished back home/ to prepare those children/ […] if I could do that /and another thing is to know

the practical side of social work in this country/ later on [getting into] a course in social

work. That is what you say/ to prepare myself better for that work.

Hassan thus re-articulates his moral compass in continuing his struggle to help his school

and thus the larger society, not a self-ending goal. He rationalizes his lack of skill sets especially

in his second language acquisition and inability to solve his economic insolvency as two reasons

why his "objective of *hijrah*" (Session NG2.1, T4) is to support his vision of returning back

home. *Hijrah* serves as the ultimate test of sacrifice for a higher cause such as preservation of

faith or culture. He acknowledges that he migrated under pressure to prove to this family that he

could change his economic future. However, he replaces his dominant discourse of economic

expediency with his internally persuasive discourse of cultural integration in the West. By

returning home, Hassan appropriates the discourse of sacrifice that he makes both for his school

and his faith. By accepting his deficiencies of migration specific skills such as language and

resources, Hassan rationalizes his true place back home where he can exert the true meaning of

hijrah and the accountability before God. Thus Hassan assimilates his internally persuasive

discourse of cultural loss with the authoritarian discourse of *hijrah* as self-preservation and

makes his return migration a greater sacrifice for faith and tradition than those who migrate to

Canada for self-interested goals.

> Hassan: […] Do you know why I plan to go back? If I stay in this country/ I don't have
>
> that/ like you/ I don't have brains/ Your English is good, you have good skill, I don't.
>
> You guys don't have any money problem. You can overcome problems both at home and
>
> here, but I have nothing. I don't have any skill to study/ I don't have the…to go and work
>
> outside to motivate people like the Sheikhs at [name of Islamic Center removed] But I
>
> can do that in Bangladesh. I have my field there. So, one should go where one is at home.

The objective of *hijrah* [migration] is this. [The Prophet] went from Mecca to Medina, from Medina to […] (Session, NG2.1, T4)

In this section, using Bakhtin's dialogism, I attempted to show Hassan's consistent repositioning of his hybridized voice every time I asked him a question to explain his position on his choice of migration. Hassan as an independent agent did not always take my discourses as his; only when he could use a discourse that was close to his internally persuasive discourse, did he adapt and intonate it. Hassan's most creative agency was his reinterpreting the economic migrant by redefining labor. He appropriated self-less labor of a migrant who not only is committed to free himself from economic shackles but burdened with a social responsibility to fight illiteracy in his village as a true economic migrant. When he was given evidence of his cultural investments in himself by enrolling in school, he re-appropriates his education as a duty and accountability to his family, his villagers and above all to God. By linking his economic goals with a communal aspiration he appropriates the doctrine of *hijrah* to liberate himself from personal gain through an agency of self-less sacrifice. Hassan thus finds a creative consciousness by hybridizing his voices along the many other discourses. Bakhtin's dialogism thus shows us the third spaces where our voices give us agencies that our social practices often fail to produce.

So far, in the first part of my finding and analysis I have used Bakhtin's dialogism as a strategy to analyze conscious speaking positions immigrants take to resist various hegemonic discourses. I have used Bakhtin's (1981) understanding of authoritative and internally persuasive discourses to locate voices in both the *adda* networks. My inductive analysis of voice shows that their authoritative discourses are not stable but shifting by assimilating and appropriating other people's discourse to give them agentive power to resist structures. I cross-examine some key voices from one or both *adda* groups to look for the various ways they negotiated their speaking

selves. In any language, words come predisposed with socio-political meanings and tensions between speakers. *Adda* as a social action offers a power dynamics where certain voices either dominate or resist others in a particular context. I intend to locate the other hidden voices in the dialogue these selective speakers speak to, by questioning their authoritative discourses. These selective voices together with the voices inferred in their dialogues offer us an opportunity to understand how agencies are constructed dialogically with others and the world. Here I have shown how the discourses of secular culture and religion had been readjusted by the participants to create third spaces of existences without embracing either the assimilationist or isolationist views on migration.

This concludes my first part of finding, analysis, and discussion. In the second part of the findings, analysis and discussion, I turn my focus on the theory of social reproduction developed mainly from Bourdieu's (1977) understanding of habitus and capital as interpretive lens to investigate the social practices of Bangladeshi immigrant diaspora. Using Bourdieu's framework of habitus and species of capital I show how the social networks function as important cultural brokers in the transnational fields where necessary capitals are accumulated for competitive advantage.

Part —II

Bangladeshi Hybridized Identities: A Bourdieusian Perspective

In this part, I show how Bangladeshi immigrants construct new embodied practices in their social networks by increasing various capitals and resources for various identity performances. Bourdieu's concept of habitus gives us a clear link between the habitus and capital; the physical disposition and social structures, ultimately changing the field through

practice. This active practice that brings social change is observable in how we overcome a social lag or hysteresis effect (Bourdieu, 1991) in a new environment. I use Bourdieu's concept of social reproduction on Bangladeshi immigrant lives in order to understand how they generate a competitive advantage in their social networks to access relevant capital or resources. Bourdieu's habitus thus forms the second analytical lens to understand the diaspora identity by questioning the behaviors and actions, the Bangladeshi diaspora find meaningful. The structures that emerge by analyzing habitus in a particular social milieu points at the ways a particular group meets those goals or hurdles or overcomes challenges.

I have organized my discussions of Bangladeshi diaspora identity using Bourdieu's forms of capital. I start with thematically organizing the participant stories around the contexts of their migration, their crossing of transnational boundaries and any thoughts of returning to their homeland. I then applied Bourdieu's forms of capital and concept of habitus to interpret the social practices and experiences they construct in their social networks. Themes that emerged from the analysis were clustered around specific capitals and resources that immigrants projected in their transnational social spaces. I use the term transnational to indicate communities that exist in continuous and disjunctured spaces and places connected by "modes of social organization, mobility and communication" (Vertovec, 1999, p.449). Transnationalism as a concept of connecting with many distributed locations and people challenge the notions of old diaspora bound by an original culure or land. I try to explain their diaspora identities using Bourdieu's forms of capitals by investigating their transcultural practices. The forms of capitals that emerged through my interpretive lens on immigrant social practices are: a) Symbolic capital, b) Social capital, c) Family as migration specific capital, and d) Religious identity capital. The religious identity capital has been developed using Bhabha's concept of cultural diversity as a context of

hybridity. Bourdieu's capitals do not explain our moral habitus, however, my experiences with immigrant pietization have shown that piety can be embodied representations in Bhabha's understanding of hybridity. I revisit the relationship between pietization and building religious identity as a strategy of hybridity when I explain the family capital. There could be more than one construction of *Bhadralok* identities that emerge in *adda*, provided that other relevant capitals are strategically mobilized in various contexts. The small *adda* group under I studied, did not offer the possibilities of accessing other non-Islamic faith traditions among the Bangladeshi immigrants but piety was found to be an important aspect of self among all the participants. In each category of capital, I show how the participants performed identities by exchanging capitals in order to increase their respective capital accumulation for a specific goal. I argue that by exchanging various social practices in their transnational field, the immigrants gain better access to new resources and influence structural change.

I now briefly revisit Bourdieu's main concepts of habitus and capital before I delve into this particular analysis. Bourdieu's habitus (1977) is an organizing principle of implicit and embodied knowledge whose structure is shaped by the experiences and rules that applies with the group one belongs. Bourdieu's (1977) forms of capital and habitus provide the heuristic devices to study social and cultural reproductions. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) used the concepts of power and capital to develop species of capital to mean different types of resources such as social, cultural, symbolic and linguistic which could be individually accumulated and converted into one another for advantages. Social capital "is linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintances and recognition" (Bourdieu, 1977, 46-51). Bourdieu regarded Cultural capital as the best form of hereditary transmission of capital. Cultural capital illustrates a person's social positioning, power, prestige and recognition

in the wider social context. It is the perception one develops about one's competency in engaging with others in the field. The different forms of capital are inter-linked and inter-changeable although Bourdieu (1984, 1993) argued that cultural capital is closely associated with both economic and symbolic capital. The value of these capitals depends on habitus, the field under examination and the distribution of capital in the field. Bourdieu also perceived social spaces as a constant struggle for power wherein people compete with each other in access for capital or resources. Social space can be understood as made up of distinct fields corresponding to different practices such as cultural, social, economic and political. Competition for capital also increases the value of certain types of experiencex over others. Bourdieu views social action as embodied physical and mental dispositions learned through socialization, subject to different structural changes in the social space one belongs. I believe that Bangladeshi immigrants use their diaspora networks to strategically access and create valuable dispositions and mechanisms of validation by increasing their diaspora capitals.

Forms of capital and Bangladeshi bhadralok habitus. In the following sections, I attempt to answer the third research questions: How do the Bangladeshi immigrants construct diaspora identity in *adda*? I borrow Bourdieu's forms of capital to explain the way immigrants mobilize various identities to negotiate transnational social spaces. Each participant life-story consists of multiple capitals which offer them ways to shift their *bhadralok* identity that I had sketched in Chapter Four. Each capital in *bhadralok* habitus focuses on a competitive advantage in their respective social spaces. These capitals offer hybrdization of identities as Bhabha (1994) and Hall (1990) used it to mean a pluralized identity position that transforms and translates its differences and ambiguities by contesting its own meanings. I have elaborated on the concept of hybridity in the conceptual Chapter Two. I adopt a composite narrative approach of three

participant stories to interpret and present the data more crediblely by "organ[izing] people's subjective experience into coherent stories" (Auerbach, 2003, p.73).

In the following sections, I discuss the relevant forms of capital followed with the immigrant hybrid identities that emerged in their social practices and interactions. I use a selective number of participants whose speaking voices and forms of capitals constructed agencies different from others. Each voice is a construction of similar other life experiences analyzed by one or two forms of capitals borrowed from Bourdieu. In the first example of symbolic capital, I showcase Hassan, in the neighborhood *adda* as an example of how participants inflate their other identities by challenging certain notions of bourgeoisie as marker of their life accomplishments. In the second example, I focus on Sajjad from the same neighborhood adda, whose maverick criticism of religion itself positions him at odds with members of his own group without jeopardizing his social capitals in the network. The third and fourth examples pay close attention to the prominent members of both the *adda* groups offering a comparative analysis among Johar, Sajjad and Hassan all of whom develop their own religious discourse to construct a robust family identity in the diaspora. However these capitals should be seen as examples of hybridities present in the third space of *adda* where many other capitals are exchanged and reconfigured. Together these capitals form a composite of identities drawing mainly, but not exclusively, on the views and experiences of mainly three individuals from the two *adda* groups. I maintain that this composite narrative approach I have adopted in analyzing the forms of capital, allows for greater depth and sharper detail, while illuminating the seminal quality of Bourdieau's theory of social reproduction.

Symbolic capital. In this section, I explain how immigrants in the neighborhood *adda* used symbolic capitals to identify with other participants in their network. Human beings are

basically self-interested and motivated for setting goals that are not too rigid but display a disinterest to gain honor, reputation, recognition or prestige from others. Symbolic capitals (Bourdieu, 1986) could be regarded as those tangible and intangible goals that win us honor, deference and respect from others. They could be one's education, wealth, taste, skills which increase one's stature in the society. In the following conversations, I show how the neighborhood *adda* participants increase their symbolic capitals and chances to exchange them for other capitals by showing concerns for social justice and moral lacks in Bangladesh. As children from middle class families holding socially respectable positions such as teaching and government jobs, their parents instilled in them a sense of respectability with their future choice of professions which merits social prestige and secured higher social standing. Bangladeshi middle class exhibit certain *bhadralok* habitus, associated with cultural capitals which I have elaborated in Chapter Four. In the colonial modernity the *bhadralok* or middle class obtained a symbolic marker of culture and power because of their English education, a cosmopolitan outlook and ability to access the civil service. However in the diaspora their ability to mimic the bourgeois class, gain modern knowledge and distance oneself from physical labor also determines the chances to compete successfully in their new environments.

I now explain how the neighborhood *adda* became a focal point of increasing symbolic capitals in the diaspora. Ratan and Hassan both agreed that it was the power and respect associated with the government and defence sectors where employment ensured long-term security. Choices on future employment are often instilled in the childhood constituting a form of "symbolic violence" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p.5) in the same sense all pedagogical actions constitute some sort of coercion. However, Hassan and Ratan had different dreams than their fathers. Although a career choice in the police or armed forces could have been more secure

in the long-run than a job prospect affected by global crisis, they gain symbolic capital from clear conscience of earning an honest living. Showcasing their unrealized employment opportunities in Bangladesh as corruptible both Hassan and Ratan increase their *bhadralok* practice of transnational moral selves. Ratan and Hassan exhibit a sense of triumphalism over a corrupt state, a symbolic victory by establishing their connection with higher moral principles of justice and integrity.

Hassan always wanted to go abroad for higher education. He said "all my friends knew that I was going abroad to study" (Session NG2.1, Hassan) but his father wanted to see him as a government officer. It was a matter of social status for him. He preferred father's job preference more than his own, "a job that did not require police verification was not good enough [for his father]" (Session NG2.1). Tragically Hassan's efforts to join the administrative ranks in the government too became futile as he could not clear the viva-voce exam. Hassan thinks that his inability to use appropriate connections, in his words, "jacks" (Session NG2.1, T5) cost him the position. He finally found work in a local NGO that required a "lot of traveling" (Session NG2.1) and time away from his own family. Hassan said that his coming to the West was mainly a family pressure that forced him to migrate to Canada. He always wanted to go to abroad for higher studies but fulfilling his father's dream became an obsession and eventually turned him away from his country. Hassan describes his migration in the following excerpt, as a flight from corruption:

> After I graduated I applied in civil service to fulfill my father's dream. But I couldn't get
> through the viva-voce exam for lack of connections. The person on the interview board
> was known to me, people told me to use my 'jacks' [connections] but I didn't care. It cost

me an entry into the police academy. I was relieved that I didn't have to choose between

corruption and being an honest police officer. (Session NG2.1, T5)

There were other disappointments he mentioned bringing his family by enrolling in a

Madrassah which was seen by his family as career-jeopardizing choice prompting his elder

brother to "fix the madness" (Session NG4.1, Hassan) by arranging a paper marriage for Hassan

before he flew to Canada. An educated middle class working woman, Royeka's marriage is thus

hastened to Hassan who himself is pressured into following his brother abroad, to start a new life

together. Hassan's life story shows the trajectory of middle or lower middle class children take,

whose personal aims risk being subordinated to that of the wishes of other family members.

Hassan's personal decision of going back to *Madrassah* to get moral education was seen as self-

centered and disastrous by his own family. Hassan thus increases his symbolic capital of linking

government profession with corruption. The *bhadralok* (read bourgeois) construction of middle

class ideals such as high thinking and plain living becomes the reference point from where

middle class migration is launched in the opposite direction. It is true that more and more people

in the age of globalization think that their children would live and work in communities other

than they were born. It is also equally true that high consumption has been a strong indicator of

middle class prosperity in developing countries rather than achieving egalitarian benchmarks.

Hassan comes from lower economic background growing up with an imagined community

where socio-economic choices are narrowly defined in terms of economic capital. His migration

to Canada became a necessity to prove to his family that he too could achieve what others did.

Hassan positioned himself as someone who considers himself socially pressured into migration

as the only preferred option left to salvage his wrecked career in Bangladesh. Hassan clearly

points out the link between the pedagogical violence and his decision to leave the country when

he says "parents often motivate us against our will […] you are a good-for-nothing" (Session NG4.1, T2). Although other participants in the neighborhood did not feel that they ran out of options, but what Hassan says is something I could relate to:

> Hassan: […] God has made everyone differently. That's why they teach you human psychology. Everybody's brain works differently. No need to put pressures/ that, "why can't you do this." Those who did it to us/ because of that reason we chose to come here/ parents often motivate us against our will/you are a good-for-nothing/ then you want to prove them wrong/ I went abroad to show what I was capable of doing.
>
> Researcher: and so you proved…
>
> Hassan: [It was] proven that I came/ I can come/I can do that. (Session NG4.1, T2)

Now I turn to Ratan, another participant of the neighborhood group, a software Engineer trained in the US. Ratan, groomed as a cadet ditched a career in the armed forces, a prospect in which many middle class families invest by sending their children to elite cadet schools. Few other career options offered more security and stability than a career in the military when Ratan finished his high school. Hassan in the neighborhood *adda* supported Ratan that it was the power and respect associated with these jobs that made them desirable after martial law was imposed in Bangladeshi in 1981. A job in the Armed forces also meant access to more economic wealth when the Army ran the country for nine more years and became "the king of corruption" (Session NG1.1, Ratan). Ratan went to a cadet college but refused a career in the forces despite the labels of respectability and job security attached to it. With a feather on his cap from an elite school of par excellence, Ratan could pass off as someone with considerable cultural capital. Moreover his degree in both Engineering and Computer Science puts him in a category above

those who would settle for a tech support job in Canada. Ratan in reality runs the risk of losing

his cultural capital considerably by disclosing his current employment. Ratan thus creates

symbolic capital by accepting his present situation as a compromise with his pocket but not with

his conscience. Ratan seems to believe that life in Bangladesh would have made it difficult to

live within his means and ability with self-respect and honesty. However, he acknowledges that

in Canada he is free from the social demands and pressures to earn extra using unfair means.

Ratan appropriates a higher moral authority as the symbolic capital to cover his economic lacks

when I asked him why he thinks everything in life is about compromise. Following is an excerpt

of Ratan's conversation from Session NG1.1, T1:

> Ratan: Why, there is a reason. What I think is/ Ok. It might not have happened in
>
> Bangladesh because most of the times you would not be compromising with your pocket.
>
> No need to compromise with making money because you can earn a lot illegally.You
>
> would have compromised with your ways of living. Compromised with your honesty in
>
> Bangladesh which you don't need to do here. I like it here. Atleast I am honest [to
>
> myself] (inaudible). Whatever I am earning here I am spending on myself which might
>
> not have been possible if I were in Bangladesh. [Due to] your social status, social
>
> pressures, or family pressures, it may not be possible.

Ratan increases his symbolic capital by comparing his life in Canada as financially

compromised but happier in other ways. He says, "I may live a life that is financially not better

than what others live but personally I am good, I am happy" (Session NG1.1, Ratan). Ratan, like

many immigrants, associates a frugal life in Canada as a fair trade-off against earning through

unscrupulous means to fulfill family or social pressures in Bangladesh.

In the neighborhood *adda* Hassan, Ratan and Mashuk agreed with the general perception that migration is mainly driven by economic forces, however, they differentiate their economic goals from the hubris of either cosmopolitanism or narrow nationalism. For instance Hassan in the excerpt (Session NG2.1, T6) rebukes the educated middle class who complains about life in the West as too hard by reminding them of people like Samiruddin, the seaman turned free labor, immortalized in Mujataba Ali's travel stories who jumped ship to escape poverty from rural Bengal. In a symbolic move, he embraces a working class ethics denouncing those educated middle class who turn up their nose at menial labour. He takes pride in his ability to perform physical labor "60/70 hours [a week] in a factory" (Session NG2.1, T6) an experience shared by Mashuk who is struggling to become an accountant while holding down a night-shift job. Hassan's disassociating himself from the bourgeosie that frowns on physical work for its connection with the low brow is a symbolic move from his middle class aspirations. He puns at the shock of those educated immigrants who come for the carrot but get the short end of the stick after entering a labor market that do not work for them. Following is an excerpt from Session NG2.1, T6:

> Hassan: When I first came here, I started working 60/70 hours in a factory. I did not turn up my nose saying those jobs are beneath me, like most educated immigrants do. Everybody wants to change their lives for the better. You have not seen how tough life is in the village. Remember the story of Samiruddin, the seaman from Mujtaba Ali's (1955) story? He jumped ship in New York to work in the construction industry? Why do you think people go to the Middle East to work as manual laborers? It is poverty. What are you going to do with a political map, if you can't eat?

With economic global liberalization, the Bangladeshi middle class has come to deride its ideals of austerity as conspicuous consumption becomes the new marker of social prestige. These ambiguities among the middle class of living the good life but cringing at the prospect of putting hard work to realize its fruits, are revealed in Hassan's conversations. He believes that those who do not need to migrate do so, because of the uncertainty associated with their childrens' economic future. It is not uncommon as Scrase (2002, p.328) notes "to find many *bhadralok* families to be culturally rich but financially poor." Hassan and Mashuk thus increase the symbolic value of their economic capital by restituting honor and dignity in the acts of hard-work and migration.

Hira and Sajjad in the neighborhood *adda* show how patriotism can be used to increase their symbolic capital as responsible consumers of Bangladeshi products in a globalized economy. Both Hira and Sajjad construct themselves as Bangladeshi first by positioning them as not only conscious buyers of Bangladeshi clothes but rediscovering a sense of pride and dignity that had been lost in the uneven power distribution through globalization. By buying Bangladeshi they capitalize their symbolic capital of patriotism and discredit those who view Western brands as symbols of economic capital. Sajjad then renounced those Bangladeshi immigrants who waste no opportunity putting "their homeland down to move themselves up (Session NG1.2, T2):

Hira: Have you got this shirt from Bangladesh?

Sajjad: Yes actually I have.

Hira: No, no/ I know some people in Bangladesh who ask me "Did you get this from Bangladesh?" I tell them, "Yes, I got it from Bangladesh. Bangladesh produces many

good brands/ you can get many good things there." […] What they actually mean is you couldn't buy it from Canada. […]

Sajjad: They try to put their homeland down to move themselves up

The neighborhood *adda* participants highlight symbolic capitals of patriotism and nationalism by shifting brand recognition from Western to Bangladeshi clothes promoting local consumerism. The re-branding of nationalism through a rejection of Western brands in clothing indicates a conscious social action that immigrants take to challenge the dominance of Western markets. Identification with national brands offers a discursive position that needs continuous and collective reinterpretation in the struggle for a democratic social change. Patriotism becomes the basis from which globalization is accessed and resisted by preferring a particular brand recognition. Re-drawing cultural affinities through rebranding, as done by both Hira and Sajjad, diaspora citizens reinvent nationalism as a symbolic capital to defy political boundaries and allegiences.

So far I have demonstrated that neighborhood participants Hassan, Mashuk, Ratan, Hira and Sajjad who at various points appropriated the egalitarian values symbolic of *bhadralok* identity such as hard work, social justice, dignity, sense of duty, patriotism and honesty to increase their symbolic capital in the diaspora. By highlighting their dissatisfaction with the system of corruption both at the personal and state level in Bangladesh, they lay stress on their moral selves and thus their inability to live honorably in Bangladesh. This gives them a sense of symbolic capital. As I have demonstrated, Bourdieu relates symbolic capital to anything that provides people with a sense of worth or respect about themselves. Hassan's return narrative constructed Islamic virtues to exchange them for other capitals which I shall address later when I

discuss family and religious identity capitals, consistent with Bourdieu's assertion that social practices within a single habitus are transferable as people exchange their symbolic capitals for cultural or economic ones.

In the next section, I explain immigrant behavior through Bourdieu's understandings of social capital. I draw on content taken primarily from Sajjad and Hira, members of the neighborhood *adda*. However I have drawn upon life experiences from other members of the mosque *adda* such as Taukir and Baha including my own, to construct cosmopolitan patriotism that is connected with many places and people without belonging to any particular place or culture.

Social capital. Bourdieu (1977) calls the collectively owned capital which can be activated and deployed when desired to increase one's social position as social capitals. Collectivity, Bourdieu argues includes one's membership in network of connections, groups, associations or families. One of the ways people create these categories of differences is by negotiating a value in those membership. For Bourdieu (1977) these "durable networks could be more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintances and recognition" (p. 46-51). In the Indian diaspora in Montreal, Raj (2008) shows how these social capitals are showcased through exchanging social chits of an elite culture in their disposition of food, dress, and use of language according to their social position and aspiration.

Bourdieu's idea of habitus (1977) tells us that the diaspora immigrants shift their investments to those resources and experiences where from they can capitalize. One of the useful ways people socialize is by identifying the prospective social markers of successful people in any network of community. Bangladeshi transnational immigrants use their respective social

networks to increase their social visibility among each other in a stratified hierarchy. Although economic capital is not accepted as a primary raison d'être for migration, it is common place to see immigrants engaged in transferring social capitals to increase their economic capitals. This happens through a demonstration of social practices that increases one's family background and social status to reposition themselves competitively within their social networks. Bourdieu maintains that capitals are exchangeable within the same habitus. In social networks social capital becomes the exchange capital for increasing economic capital. The participants in both *adda* networks increased their social capitals by either ascribing value to their social networks back home or blamed mitigating circumstances as reasons for migration, thus making their social position fluid in relation to others. All the participants in both the *adda* groups seem to agree that political uncertainty in Bangladesh is pushing people both rich and poor to get out of the country. Postcolonial writers link this mentality—of associating inadequacy and deficiency by the middle class in India back to the ideals of liberty, freedom and rule of law —with derivative narratives of European modernity. A language of colonial modernity is used to increase bourgeois penchant for social capital both in the homeland and in host country.

I show how Sajjad and Hira, two of the members of the neighborhood *adda* increase their social capitals in their adda conversations. In his early youth, Sajjad envied the freedom enjoyed by the Western teenagers in Hollywood movies creating an image of the West with its "endless partying and drinking" (Session NG1.2). With a family-owned business he did not have to worry about working for a career like his compatriots, but following his father's footstep was not a choice he wanted for himself. He wanted a particular life, not just any, "the life in those movies…whose wanton abandon attracted me" (Session NG1.2). Sajjad entered Canada on a student visa, never finished his studies and gradually bought a franchise through hard work. This

social capital of success without earning a degree is not lost on him when he rationalizes why he is not going back home, in the following excerpt (Session NG1.2, T3):

> Sajjad: Yesterday I was reading an article about a foreigner, I don't remember if he was from New Zealand or Australia, who set up a hospital in a village in Bangladesh. For forty years he has been living among strangers. Well you don't remain a stranger after all that time. Would I ever go and live in my village? Certainly not! There are no hospitals, no roads, who can live there! The difference between us and them is that they do not destroy public properties if they can't find a job. They come to our country to help our poor and we come to their country to become poor.

Sajjad from the neighborhood adda, uses a transition narrative of the nation-state he has left using a language of inadequacy where everything in Bangladesh is "grievously incomplete" (Chakrabarty, 1992b, p.350). His migration is validated from the point of that incompleteness of a country where foreigners come "to help our poor and we come to their country to become poor" (Session NG1.2). This poverty can only be understood from the plentitude which in Sajjad's impressionable age of twenty something beckoned him with wanton abandon. The West is a potent symbol of progress for the Bengali middle class consciousness which is rooted in colonial modernity. The English language has served the purpose of a "transition narrative" (Chakrabarty, 1992, p.6) of European modernity constructing a bi-furcated view of *us* and *them*, expressing our failures in history or culture in binary opposites such as feudal/capitalist or backward/modern or native speaker/non-native speaker. This fractured modernity allowed us to see the world through the colonial gaze of the other that Franz Fanon (1952) talks about with which we gazed back at ourselves and became aware of our own racialized differences. Within the two poles of imperialist and nationalist imaginations the Indian/Bengali identity was always a

figure of lack which portrayed itself as "modernized elite and yet-to-be modernized peasantry" (Chakrabarty, 1992b, p.349).

Hira, another participant of the neighborhood *adda* and a close confidant of Sajjad whom I introduced before in the previous section, refers to his past professional experiences in Bangladesh as a form of social privilege. Hira migrated to Canada after having worked in various private sector jobs for a number of years. He spoke about various forms of social insecurities as a context to his migration story. Migration was contextualized as a choice of cosmopolitan life, not an economic necessity. Hira's preemptive attempts to leave the country while in college came to naught as his family did not respond favorably to support him financially when two of his best friends had already left for the West. Reluctantly he got enrolled in graduate class while his network of expatriate friends served as his 'informants' (my emphasis) on what he was missing abroad. Hira's lack-luster M.A., was no hurdle in his landing on a job in a prestigious auto dealership back home because he knew someone there. His wife worked in a multi-national company with all the perks of free medicare, yearly bonuses, vacations, commissions—the whole package. Hira and his wife had different skill-sets; sales and human resources and thought of themselves as professionally secured. Nonetheless immigration was an idea he continued to entertain. The distance between his office and his wife's place of work used to take him a breezy rickshaw ride of fifteen minutes but by the time they had their first child the traffic congestion took two hours to clear up. These little things became bigger issues in life: "these daily troubles, the dusty weather," and the child becoming sick (Session NG1.2, Hira). So when his wife's boss persuaded them with his own idea of immigration they got interested in it again. Hira's wistful reminiscing of the social prestige they enjoyed in Bangladesh, as described in the excerpt below,

(Session NG2.2, T3) indicates a completely different reality of how success is a function of one's social standing:

> Hira: So they had fun and work, throwing birthday parties. My wife's birthday cake and everything ready/ happy birthday to you/ she can't believe it. They make a big deal out of it. All the facilities…health facility is free. Every time she was sick. You probably know she was admitted into high-ranked hospitals/ the company bore all the costs. Wherever she was admitted her MD [boss] came/ gave her flowers because she was sick. They could get admitted for free. When my son was born in Bangladesh they refused to pay [the hospital bills] but everything until the baby was born they did/ from medicines to everything […]

The migration narrative of Hira above is written in a language of power and their investment in social networks and resources to capitalize on their social habitus. As I have shown that projecting a privileged life back home, associations with institutional networks and bourgeois modernism translates to a social capital that many immigrants project to compensate for their lack of any accomplishments in the diaspora social networks. I asked Mashuk in our second *adda* at the neighborhood group, what made him stay in Canada ―"*ki niye pore acho?*" Mashuk replied, "*Ami pore nai, ami porchi*" which means, "I am not hanging around for nothing I am studying" (Session NG2.1). He spoke in a double-voice which could mean that he was not planning to stay in Canada forever, just as long as it takes to complete his studies. In Bengali idioms '*pore thaka*' is used to mean to be pre-occupied with something. It could have a finite end such as working towards a degree or can continue infinitely without an end in sight. I said to Mashuk "*porao ek dhoroner pore thaka*" which roughly translates as "studying is also a type of dwelling" (Session NG2.1) hinting at my protracted doctoral journey. Mashuk said that he is

confused if going back would be the right decision after he finished his studies as his family wants him back. Ironically it was his father's wish that had set him on the flight path to Canada. He confessed that his studying to become an accountant was also meant to make his parents happy, a social capital that does not quite reflect on his ambivalence about going back. This view of dwelling-in-studying has become "complicated" (Session NG2.1, Mashuk) for many immigrants like Mashuk and I who wanted to increase their social and economic capital by coming as a student ultimately to become financially independent. In my case failing to do the latter, I have invested in my cultural capital only fearing a social face-loss back home. From Bourdieu's perspective Mashuk and I are trying to increase our social capitals by inflating our cultural resources. This ambiguity is higher among migrants who left accomplished career tracks for a qualitatively better life in Canada, while failing to secure one or the other leads either to self-pity or blaming the system. The initial honeymoon with the glitz and glamour of spacious roads, beautiful buildings and civic self-discipline for the new comer, those that Sajjad defended, become the very object of the immigrant's entrapment into modernity. In the following excerpt, Sajjad justifies this trade-off between having to live one's dreams and eventually accepting the realities of life in the diaspora (Session NG1.2, T4):

> Sajjad: [L]eaving my parents was not an easy decision. I thought I would be able to make them happy by bringing them over here or going back. But life is far more complicated than that. So at the end you realize that you can only make yourself happy. […] This is the reality of life in Canada nobody has time for you, not even your son. Do you think he can afford missing his work for your hospital visits in this country? He would lose his job. […] Your life becomes bound in rules and more rules.

Now I turn the lens of my focus on myself to show how I create my social capitals in my social networks. I justify leaving my homeland by framing my migration narrative in the same escapist frame of failure, lack or inadequacy similarly as other participants in the neighborhood *adda* purports to justify theirs. The *bhadralok* identity I use is the pedagogy of inadequacy to produce social capital through access to Western education, gaining a passport, and ultimately a negotiated membership of the global elite to justify my trajectory of life. My immigration to Canada is framed against the familar middle class struggle for social privilige by securing new identities. The stakes are increased thorugh obtaining citizenship, a doctoral degree and the potentiality of higher employability that fits my socially negotiated position in Canada. My escapism to "hide behind a titular position of the *doctor saab* [respectable Dr.]" (Session NG1.2, T5) is ultimately rationalized as a cultural capital of the *bhadralok* habitus where highly specialized knowledge is traded as an economic commodity. Representing this doctoral work as a way to write a personal history into the Canadian dominant society, I increase my social capital in my transnatinal networks. Following in an excerpt from Session NG1.2, T5:

> Researcher: I made an escape from home. Afterwards when I got my [Canadian] passport I thought I needed to take home something. What will I take back? I have nothing else, no money/ something that is as good as money/ so then I set on achieving an intangible goal/ what is that? The only thing I have is knowledge so I would be able to take back something. I can tell my friends that Yes, you may have made a lot of money but I have brought some knowledge from there. I might not be able to earn anything substantial with that knowledge but that is too much of an abstract thought.

In the conversation held so far, I do not rationalize an economic expediency for myself as Hassan justifies in his migration narrative nor do I view my migration narrative in Canada etched

on the stone. It is true that the flexibility of moving my cultural capital from center to the periphery offers me a social capital that can work both ways. However, my social position as a novice researcher, makes my capital a negotiation between economic and cultural capitals with no fixed exchange value in my translational networks. Associating Western knowledge with power is a redemptive pedagogy of the *bhdaralok* social practice that I uphold to increase my cultural capital in my diaspora *adda.*

Now I turn to the mosque *adda*, particularly to Johar, to show how he narrates his migration experience to increase an enhanced sense of self. Johar deflects his social capital by focusing on the quality of life in Canada. The migration narration of the mosque *adda* participants differed largely from the neighborhood *adda* participants in their showcasing a qualitative improvement in life than what they had before. They described their moving to Canada as "a positive experience" (Session MG2, Khoka); because life here is "tension free" (Session MG3, Taukir) and "worth the bargain" (Reflexive journal 4, July 2013). Most participants said they had "no complain" (Reflexive journal 4) about their new life in Canada. However these improvements in life are not all materialist but emotional, taking precedence over their economic wellness. Social capital in the mosque *adda* was increased through a sense of securing oneself emotively rather than financially. Put in another way, life in Canada is attractive for the mosque *adda* because one can live off fairly comfortably by "working less" (Session MG4, Johar). Johar argues, in the excerpt below, that the reason we frequently *give adda*, is sufficient proof that we have plenty of leisure time at hand:

> Johar: You have 2 days in the week off, that's a lot of time to do nothing. You don't have 48 hours of free time per week in any other place/ you name it/ in the Middle East/ in Bangladesh/ except in North America and possibly Australia.

Swopna: You take your kids for private coaching [in Bangladesh], you are stuck in there/

you are constantly juggling your priorities, attending to social calls, marriage, birthdays

etc./ running errands/ you don't have time for your family. (Session MG4, T1)

Swopna's paraphrasing her husband, contextualizes life back home as a useless pursuit of

materialism and mindless rat race which is left behind in exchange for mental peace and

emotional wellbeing in Canada that Johar gives in his account. The perception of a middle class

culture of "lazy money" (Walton-Roberts & Pratt, 2005, p.186) used in the mosque *adda* is

deployed to project an economic capital back home that is then transferred to increase social

capital in the diaspora. I find this type of social cues increases the social capital by downplaying

their economic motivation in the diaspora and allowing other types of social capital such as

community. I asked all the mosque participants to think of commodities they would mostly need

in their old age in Canada (Session MG3). Without mentioning the health care system, as one

would hope, Taukir mentioned two important things that resonated with everybody: "religious

freedom and a caring community" (Session MG3, T5). In the conversations that ensued,

participants in the mosque *adda* showed less concern on their financial insecurity, state

assistance or childrens' material support but more concern on being active members of the

community (Session MG3). Bourdieu's conception of social capital is exhibited in one's flexing

power and prestige through a network of associations formal or informal. I found that

membership in a community or group in the diaspora is determined by one's ability to project

their social alliances both in their country of origin and in the diaspora. Johar and his friends in

the mosque *adda* display that camaraderie by exchanging their social chits and renewing their

social contracts.

Johar: I agreed with Taukir 100%. Firstly I too have in fact a community like that/ in the making/ I think/ We do monthly programs, picnics/ we too are growing a community spirit *Alhumdulillah* [praise be to God] any way/ we still discuss things like a big family/ *Inshallah* [God willing].

Baha: The proposal is that we buy some plots of lands somewhere/ where we can all live next to each other/ something like that. I am with Taukir. First religion then better community (Session MG3, T5)

The question of social capital, as I showed in my discussions, with both the *adda* groups reveals a number of social practices that enhance one's social capital in the diaspora. The neighborhood *adda* participants increased their social capital by speaking in a narrative of lackings and failure directed at the nation but rationalized moving into the metropolitan centers in Canada to consolidate mere prestige and power. The participants aligned themselves to the wealth and privilege they enjoyed back home making their membership as a currency to expand their social capital. Bourdieu uses social capital as a means to enhance one's position in a group in relation to others in an effort to become more competitive in accessing values that are highly staked in the field. The mosque *adda* participants similarly focused on their community spirit, family's financial independence, ease of life and access to modern amenities to project their future social capital.

Another resource that was used in both the *adda* groups to increase one's reputation was to delineate a set of family values or traditions. Family as a stable frame of reference was frequently invoked in the *adda* narrative by all participants. In these transnational spaces, developing family capital as a trans-generational link is deemed esstential for constructing a

religious identity for many Muslim immigrants. Even Sajjad, whose cosmopolitan parenting viewpoints were too liberal to accommodate traditional religious instruction, had stressed having an open channel of communication with children as vital for teaching sound moral judgment.

In the next sections, I draw on family and then religious identity capital, both closely linked with each other in my study but not necessarily in Bourdieusian perspective. Bourdieu considers family as part of the social capital which provides a stable frame of reference, something that was frequently used in the *adda* narrative by all participants. He did not consider moral self as part of social capital. However in the transnational spaces, developing family capital as a trans-generational link is deemed esstential for constructing a religious identity for many Muslim immigrants. I now analyze two important capitals in the lives of Bangladeshi migrants: family and religious identity capital.

Re-educating family as a migration specific capital. Immigrants show considerable confusion and misrecognition of their family traditions as their familial traditions undergo transformations when rasing their own families in the West. The dominant culture is seen as actively working against the structures of family traditions migrants carry with them. The transnational Bangladeshi immigrants familial doxa goes through similar transformation and reconfiguration as transcultural forces impinge on it. All my participants recognized going through tremendous emotional stress when there was a sense of severance from their home culture and family. Bourdieu and Waquant (2007) ask researchers to find a relationship between a "specific capital" (p.108) and the formation of a field. Restructuring the family starts with restructuring the culture often reinterpreting the rules and traditions of the familial doxa. The re-education or re-structure of family can happen at both formal and informal sites of learning. The main formal sites are pubic schools or faith-based schools and state agencies. Informal spaces are

social networks, electronic media, Islamic centers, people at work, and home-country influences. Immigrant parents often start taking their kids out to religious and family gatherings, to get them familiar with the dresses, food, and customs of their home culture. Enrollment in weekend Quran classes or heritage language schools are common forms of re-socialization. Parents are the most crucial cultural brokers in the diaspora when it comes to socializations.

In the following sections, I compare the familial doxa between two participants from each *adda* group as a migration specific experience. I explain how they use the family as a site of re-education. I first show how Johar in the mosque *adda* views the social structures of Western secular culture as conflicting with his religious and familial doxa obliging him to introduce certain re-socialization practices in the family field. Sajjad, from the neighborhood *adda* failed to see the Canadian culture in similar fashion and thus restructures his familial relationship differently. Identification with the outside culture is a source of conflict for many immigrants. Identity that is closely associated with the home culture is seen more formative in transfering family values in the diaspora than enculturation practices within the larger society. Family values are framed in terms of religiously authentic practices —with blurring of the cultural or traditional boundaries and the potential of these new experiences becoming received wisdom —increasing family capital in Canada. The discourse that sets the authenticated religious practices from cultural heritage is a wide one and part of an onging phenomenon of transnational Islam.

In the mosque-based *adda*, family was debated as a center stage from where identity performances were launched on religious terms by the immigrant parents. Religious practices were regarded as a core value in family life in the mosque *adda*. That included relationship with parents, meeting family expectations, knowing one's position vis-à-vis one's family and God. Family habitus was found to be a migration-specific capital among the participants and

exchanged for other social capitals. In the mosque *adda* most widely held conceptions about the

dangers of secular culture are pervasive sexual permissiveness, disappearing family values and

questioning of faith. Passing on religious education properly to the children was believed to be a

more important family practice in the mosque group than spending time on secular activities with

them such as going to games, movies, or camping etc. Secular activities were considered

important but not essential in forming the family habitus as strongly as religiously motivated

experiences. Sadeghi (2004) also finds family as a strong frame of reference for immigrants'

knowledge constructions. They looked up to their own families and transfered those experiences

by modifying family practices. Religious re-education in the family becomes the social practice

of migration specific capital in diaspora lives. Johar, a central religious figure head in the

mosque *adda*, re-creates his frame of reference of family in Canada based on received wisdom

from his own memories of family life in Bangladesh. Johar develops a liturgy of religious family

practices where the whole family participates in constructing a family habitus. Both Johar and

his wife invest time to learn the Arabic language in a local mosque to perfect their pronunciation

and have put one of their children in a private study circle to memorize the whole Quran. He

hopes that someday his children will fulfill his unmet dream of serving his community better.

Johar, a prominent voice in the mosque *adda*, develops a family narrative around religious texts

by intertextualizing family experiences with religious ones. He frames the family as a migration

specific capital and a space of many trials and tribulations in the diaspora. He rationalizes his

migration specific to his practice of faith, not necessarily for economic gains. Money, marriage

and migration are all intertwined in his understanding of God consciousness. Without spirituality

even marriage could be as much a curse as money (Session MG4, T2). Johar's role as a man of

God, within the family structure is formed of his cultural and religious habitus which serves as a future investment for migration-specific capital. The following excerpt is from Session MG4, T2:

> Johar: The main problem was practicing the *deen* [religion] in Bangladesh. My father reminded me many times that there is no money to be made in the West, but money is here in Bangladesh. He knew money was not my major concern, it was about my religion. […] I came in this country to live close to the mosque, not to make money. Money is a big *fitna* (problem) in this country. If you have too much money you pay too much tax, you have too much stress. Money can create problem in your marriage, it could ruin everything.

Most members of the mosque *adda* saw family as a source of culture and religious practice in terms of protection and preservation. Family capital works specifically in the transnational field to create a set of values that engages with Westernization and consumerization on its own terms. Johar uses a religious discourse to frame family as a field of trials and tribulations. He creates a patriarchal family narrative where the man is at the center and held responsible for everybody including the wife. He portrays the family as a space of materialism and consumption which is driven by societal pressures and vanity. Women without a *hijab* for him, is an ominous sign of impending disasters which should be averted at any cost if the family is to be salvaged. Laxity towards the *hijab* for Johar leads to separation and ultimately breaks down the family structures "unless the father changes himself or daughter changes herself" (Session MG3, Johar). Johar's restructuring a family starts from going back to the religious texts and re-articulating the family's place in religion. Johar recreates the new family structure by reinterpreting it from the scriptures and re-educates his family to pass down these dispositions as legitimate and authentic practice.

Endogamy, or in-group marriage was seen essential to preserve a coherent and continuous family experience that can be passed down. This was clear when Johar brought up his father's wisdom in helping him choose his life partner, Swopna. Johar used a Hadith to sanction a particular form of intra-racism, prevalent among people in the subcontinent where marriage is concerned. His tacit disapproval of exogamy for fear of having racially mixed offsprings has roots in orientalist notions that defines beauty in terms of lightness of skin color. Johar says, "It is proven that people who marry from their own culture are happy people" (Session MG3, T2). Johar's familial doxa is motivated to increase his social capital, from his innate need to preserve the family structure for his posterity. Endogamy preserves the bood-line and thus family capital which can be deployed to re-educate family traditions in the West. Johar believes exogamy or inter-racial marriage with people outside of Islam, can lead to a break-up of marriage because they either have questionable moral conduct or enter a marital relationship motivated by factors other than conversion. He uses religious tradition to back up his argument on how inter-racial marriages in early Islam were done on the pretext to preserve the faith, not out of conjugal love. Establishing religion in the family ensures that the tradition of endogamy continues. Grewal (2009) argues that second generation Muslims usually resist their parent's cultural discourse because Islam becomes a common trans-generational moral ground from where the intra-racism of the parent is challenged. Inter-racial marriages thus challenge the very fabric of authentic religious experience and piety of the immigrant parents. Yet they are the ones who often face resistance from their own children or converts whose experience of Islam is informed by their Western cultural perspectives. Islamic practices by converts to Islam are often seen inauthentic and lacking in religious "essence" (Moosavi, 2012, p.122) which could also be reason for Johar to misrecognize converts primarily less Islamic. Religious practices of converts do not merit

similar authenticity to those of born-Muslims, making households in mixed-marriages as transmitters of adulterated family traditions. Taukir and Sarwar, two other mosque participants corroborated Johar's view on endogamy from their concern of unfamiliarity with different languages and cultures in inter-racial/cultural marriages.

I now use Sajjad's fatherhood as an example of family habitus in the neighborhood *adda*, that serves as an intermediary between two cultures, one in which he was born and the other in which he negotiates his own acculturation with his daughter. Sajjad, a close friend of Hira and father of a teenager views open communication as a way to minimize the cultural intrusion of Westernism and consumerism, the twin-blades of capitalist economy. Sajjad who came over 20 years ago in Canada as a teenager is the only exception whose perception of the West was of moral decadence with "endless partying and drinking" (Session NG1.2, Sajjad). He came because he was fascinated with what the West had to offer. As a parent of a teenager he has developed a different wisdom about his impression of the West in younger days. "This society is designed for that [younger] age not this", (NG1.2, Sajjad). His parenting techniques involve giving reality checks to his daughter about the consequences of making wrong turns in life (see Session NG1.2). Religion or tradition plays little part here. Sajjad's distrust of public education comes from his own experiences as somebody who never finished his school. He believes that immigrant kids, who are not serious in studies, are encouraged to fail otherwise "who is going to become window washers" (Session NG1.2, Sajjad)? On dating especially in the case of daughters, a very sensitive issue for immigrant fathers, Sajjad advices her to be careful on how she should dress because "you will like that kind of attention" (Session, NG1.2). He wants his daughter to "adapat to the climate she is in" (NG1.2) without falling into the trap of religious discourse. Sajjad's approach to force his daughter to take off the *hijab* at the age of four is

similarly far removed from those parents in the mosque *adda*, but something out of his own experience with rationalism (see Session NG2.2, T1). By enforcing a strict parental regime he too keeps the child's options on either *hijab* or dating limited, expecting her to finish college first, something he could not achieve in this country. As a teenager when he came to Canada, Sajjad's family habitus underwent structural changes as he culturally hybridized many social practices that he found legitimate in the new country when interacting with children. He is likely to pass down dispositions which are recognized as legitimately Western dominant family norms. However, many Bangladeshi immigrant parents would find Sajjad's family traditions unorthodox and too liberal. Following is an excerpt of his conversation on his parenting techniques, from Session NG1.2, T6:

> Sajjad: I try to teach my kids that you have a choice in life. Good or bad, it is yours to reap. […] I tell her "If you don't study you will suffer, not me." The other day, I gave her a reality check. She did badly in one of her high-school exams so I told her to start washing the dishes to prepare for her future career in McDonald. It worked. She is not that bad in studies, just lazy. You need to take what is good from this culture and leave the bad. There are no sure-fire ways to success, the risks are too high, but that also means you learn through trial and error. But you need to know what you are doing.

There is a misconception among most immigrant parents that cultural integration especially in public schools risks adopting Western values (e.g. gay rights, pre-marital sex, and secularism) which are incompatible with family values. Most Bangladeshi immigrant parents view these discourses as powerful dominant discourse capable of challenging their family structure. Sajjad plays the friendly father figure to his daughter encouraging her to use her intellect while growing up in a modern secular culture. The modern or secular education is

usually perceived as an arm of the state, a necessary cultural capital that has the potentiality to increase one's material wealth but it can also lead to loss of family capital if the children fail to transfer cultural capital for economic capital. The public education is thus challenged at home by re-educating the family members that can lead to either strengthening or weakening the dominant discourse.

Religion thus came to be understood by the participants in both adda groups as the domain of the family while culture was understood as the domain of the secular state. The split between the religious and secular domain has positioned the family and the secular state along with its agencies (e.g. public school and media) locked in an uneven power struggle with two authoritative but oppositional discourses: one religious and another secular. This separation of spaces between secular and religious discourses that the transnational immigrant has internalized is used strategically to increase family capitals. In the case of Johar, religious values are seen morally superior than cultural values because religious doctrines can be employed to preserve one's tradition. Sajjad considers his past experiences as more reliable than the disruptive discourses of both the secular state and religious doctrines, as transmitters of traditions for enabling family capitals. However both Johar and Sajjad renegotiate the boundaries of the family field using two different approaches. Johar Re-educating family becomes a diaspora specific capital to consolidate the transnational Islamism by encouraging Islamic piety for Johar. Sajjad redraws his family boundaries by adopting an assimilationist approach. In both situations, the family becomes the center of re-education; in one by accumulating religious resources and in another by resisting the religious domain with competing identity capitals. The migrant groups validate different migration specific capitals co-constructing the institutions to cultivate specific practices in the society of residence (Erel, 2010). The ability to convert social resources into a

cultural or symbolic capital that has exchange value reflects the ability of the actors to define boundaries and content of the field of migration specific capital.

Bourdieu considers family capital as a crucial habitus for passing down mental, physical and psychological dispositions that makes us competitive in relation to others in the field. The family holds many complex layers of dispositions which are passed down to us forming our religious, cultural, social and identity capitals. I show the Bangladeshi immigrant family as a migration-specific capital going through re-structuring modes in the transnational field through a process of re-education. Family becomes a migration specific capital by transforming the field of the family traditions through socially networking with similar other families or establishing strong cultural connections with home country. Sajjad, as shown earlier, capitalizes on working class values of honesty and hard work whereas Johar strives for passing the moral education in his children in exchange for competitive family capital. The family is often set against homologous opposites of secular/religious, modern/backward or Western/ Islamic discourses. The family becomes the center of a new patriarchy which increases a form of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1977) by engaging it as an ideological ground of conflicting discourses.

Religious identity was found strongly embedded in the way family life was constructed especially in the mosque group. The re-education process within the family in the host culture cannot be cast only as a religious experience. My study did not include non-Muslim or no-religious participants to explore other linguistic or culturally meaningful ways Bangladeshi families are brought up in Canada. However the close connection of the family doxa and religious re-education in the mosque *adda* found in the context of this study makes me bracket these two capitals together within one identical experience. In the following section, I contextualize the religious identity as a competitive capital, cultivated in the immigrant family

and social networks to increase the practices of Islamic piety. I use only Johar as a prime example to showcase the religious identity capital *adda* as his family embodies a good example of how the spaces of family and religion are bound inseparably. Although Bourdieu's forms of capital is used as the basis of religious identity, the link I intend to draw with pietization and moral self is one that Bourdieu does not entertain. I understand religious identity capital as acculturation of embodied practices of piety in the third spaces of identity construction. Religious identity capital thus expands the discussions of Bourdieu's self in a direction in ways he did not necessarily explore.

Religious identity Capital. Bourdieu's understanding of capital lends itself to appreciate religious practice as a very important social practice in the transnational field. Bourdieu uses the concept of generative dispositions which are normally stable beliefs being passed down through socialization for developing physical or mental characters. However, Bourdieu does not talk about developing a moral sense as a form of capital to increase power, status and prestige in a given social space. Turner (2008, p.125) criticizes Bourdieu's notion of social capital because it treats all dispositions as stable sets of preferences. Talal Asad (1993) and Saba Mahmood (2005) consider the role of embodied practice as constitutive of moral selfhood that dialectically influence each other. Ethnographic studies on converts to Islam in the West particularly on their moral habitus purport to show that certain embodied practices (Winchester, 2008) or authentic practices (Moosavi, 2012) of piety develops a sense of moral selfhood. I take the position that embodied practices can challenge the social structures of power and inequality by hybridizing new identity capitals. Identity capital has been proposed by Côté and Levine (2002) as a set of psychological skills or strengths that individuals or groups use strategically to represent themselves to others. Bhabha's (1994) concept of hybridity allows us to view identity

as a positioning strategy against any hegemony of power by shifting identity within the interstitital and multiple fractures, borders, cultures, languages or religions for specific goals. Religious identity thus becomes a stage of survival for the immigrant family by cultivating and nurturing those early experiences—that Bourdieu so powerfully argues—in developing our mental and physical dispositions. However, hybridization as a strategy of hegemonic or anti-hegemonic stance makes all identities fluid and non-essentialist. Pietization, especially Islamic piety has been proposed as a strategy of hybridization by challenging religious rituals through incorporating "new sacredness" (Turner, 2008, p.133) into the body or mind and expanding or challenging existing social practices. I look into the transnational religious identity of Bangladeshi immigrants as an expanding transnational strategy of decolonization and hybridization. I do not claim any relationship between the moral self and embodied experience however I believe that the practice of Islamic piety as a set of invention of ritual practices strategically performed is aimed to consciously challenge inequality or power or the existing structures of the field. I use piety more or less as a tool of hybridization, not of changing morality.

In the following discussion, I show how Johar and Doha, members of the mosque *adda,* connect themselves through an embodied and collective religious experience to tackle the initital hysterises they had encountered as intenational students trying to fit into a Mid-West campus in the US. These cultural memberships are performed and given validation based on authentic participation. Members of the mosque *adda* who routinely pray, fast or attend a mosque together perform their religious identity to increase religious capital. Later on using Bhabha's cultural hybridity I show that these identities are used situationally and strategically to exchange other social and cultural capitals.

The central religious figurehead in the mosque *adda*, Johar, chose to live in close proximity to a mosque because he wants his family to internalize a mosque centered life. It was a dream that he had while studying in the the USA. Like many of us he along with Baha, and I moved to Canada soon after 9-11as opportunities to secure a green card became dimmer. Living close to a mosque for Johar gives him no excuse to miss the congregational prayers. A close relationship with the mosque was not something he grew up with in Bangladesh but it was a part of his father's lived experience. It was not before the cultural insecurities he experienced in a Midwest college campus in the United States where he was acculturated to the mosque culture again by a group of Muslim students. There Johar befriended another Bangladeshi student, Doha, also drawn into the fold of a multi-cultural Islam. Their construction of a new and enduring religious experiences came through the enculturation of ritualized practices with other transnational Muslims, enabling an embodied sense of *ummah* or brotherhood. Johar reciprocates Doha's role as a transmitter of tradition, who woke them up for morning prayers, something they rarely practiced at home. Johar shows his habitus misrecognizing the new environment by going through similar hysteresis or fish out of water syndrome that Bourdieu (1977) talks about in a new social space. Only through experiencing an embodied ritual practice, both Doha and Johar, were able to access a newly ritualized and embodied identity. This sense of a transnational identity as a collectivity of sacred practice, and embodied knowledge is what gives meaning to Johar and Doha. The following excerpt (Session MG1, T1) is an example of how a new sense of a community and purpose is reconstructed in the diaspora and renewed continuously in the transnational contexts:

Johar: I use this as an example/ when I first came/ although my brother was there/ I am grateful to Doha *bhai* [brother]/ *Alhumdulillah*! [Thank God]. When we were there [dorm

at Oklahoma]/ he slept on the floor/ It's ok/ It's not a big deal right? Waking us up for

fajr [morning prayers] / We rarely did [praying] in Bangladesh. He [pointing at Doha] is

not older than me/ maybe same age/ still [he] taking us to *jamaat* [congregational

prayers] […] (Session MG1, T1)

Johar and Doha experienced a misfit of their religious habitus when they came to the US.

Bourdieu's habitus is considered stable dispositions that are passed down through socialization.

Doha and Johar went through a hysteresis effect in a new culture requiring them to readjust their

religous doxa through a practice of pietization. Through membership into a heterogeneous group

of Muslims, they practice a form of transnational Islam that was embodied with new meanings of

the sacred rituals. Their religious habitus was adapted to the new field to situationaly construct a

hybridized identity for both hegemonic and anti-hegemonic purposes.

Johar uses an interesting metaphor to explain his sense of belonging in Canada. He says

that as a member of a religious minority community, he feels like a newly wedded bride whose

new life starts with hardship and alienation at the two places of belongingness: father's house

(Bangladesh) and husband's house (Canada). He finds himself with dual or possibly multiple

loyalties, each constructing the other. By rationalizing his loyalties as solely religious, he resists

the hegemony of the state as an authoritative institution to which he is married in a citizenship

contract. Conversely as a bride using his own metaphor, he belongs more to Canada than

Bangladesh because a bride leaves one home for another but does not forfeit her *sanskar* or

tradition. This ambiguity is also apparent in the way some Bangladeshi immigrants hybridize

their identity among their religious, cultural and racialized selves. Johar's belongingness with

Canada is thus dialectical and contextual. Using Bourdieu's concept of capital, it is clear that

transnational Bangladeshi Muslims hybridize their religious identity practices in exchange for

other social or cultural or other identity capitals. As Turner (2008) points out that acts of piety do not simply reproduce religious habitus in the diaspora but challenge existing arrangements of religious and secular traditions. Johar's strategic identities could be sometimes passport-specific (Canadian) or ethnic (Bengali) or religious (Muslim). Triangularization of a hybridized identity based on religion, culture and citizenship seems to be contextual and strategic. Hybridizing their identity makes it non-essentialist and allows them to situationally inflate a sense of universal *ummah*-centric identity.

Transnational religious diasporas, make moral and economic investments to "establish and sustain" (McLoughlin, 2010, p.574) autonomous associations to transfer old religious values as well as develop new ones, highlighting the communities' religious profiles. The new diaspora of South Asian immigrants developed and modified new religious identities as they transformed their new transcultural settings, organizations, practices beliefs and the way they understood religion (Cohen, 2008; Rai and Sankaran, 2011). Nationalism was reified and resisted to inflate a diaspora identity of transnational Islamism. The "Muslim first" (Grewal, 2009, p.324) identity is part of a globalized practice of Islamic revivalism attributed to the way transnational Muslims have come to hybridize an imagined modern identity between the many places and spaces of their original homeland and hostlands. Hybridity in this renewed political context may have given them a positive valuation of hybridity (Ang, 2003; Leonard, 2007) but it does not translate into any consensual culture in the host country nor contribute to any new national harmony. Essentialization is a reactionary tendency to invoke a sealed identity as a strategy of power by hypostatizing the collective identity (Rai and Sankaran, 2011, p.12). In using hybridization we find that the politics of religion works to construct either a *ummah*-centric identity or a hybrid identity, depending on the appropriateness of the hegemonic side identity is projected for a

specific end. Although Bourdieu's conception of habitus allows us to look at our social practices as generative systems of dispositions based on the community's socio-historical experiences, the intention of increasing or exchanging one's capital with other capitals in a specific field, makes the case of individual agency problematic. However using Bhabha's understandings of cultural hybridity as translational and transcultural negotiations of power one can view the religious identity capital with a purpose to change the structures of diaspora.

Summary

So far I have provided an analysis using an interpretive framework from two lenses: dialogism and forms of capital. In the first part I have elaborated how discourses in voice can be analyzed using dialogism by locating the multiple voices that emerges dialogically. In the second part of my finding, analysis and discussion I answer the questions of diaspora identity by bringing into focus immigrant social practices. I found that the participants situationally mixed their diasporized experiences to increase certain religious, symbolic or migration specific capitals. Identity performances in the social networks become an investment in cultural, social or economic resources that deem advantageous.

The diasproic capitals I analyzed using Bourdieu focused on Johar, from the mosque group and Sajjad and Hassan from the neighborhood group show how certain forms of capital can be tactically and strategically deflected to increase specific advantages. These capitals create transnational identities into the colonial *bhadralok* habitus which I developed in Chapter Four. The split between the conflictual and provincial modernities allows the *bhadralok* to mimic the dominant cultures to secure socially advantageous positions but suspect modernity's intentions and reasons. I found that membership in a community or group in the diaspora is determined by one's ability to project their social alliances both in their country of origin and in the diaspora.

Economic liberalization in Bangladesh has replaced the middle class ideals of austerity with conspicuous consumption patterns, as the new identity marker for social prestige. The neighborhood *adda* participants increased their social capital by speaking in a narrative of lackings and failure directed at the nation and aligning themselves to the wealth and privilege they enjoyed back home. Social capial was obtained by exchanging it with the symbolic capitals such as prestige and privilege even if that meant by linking migration to a return narrative.

The host country culture is often essentialized into a split between two poles, one religious and another secular, locking the two unbounded spaces of diaspora life into an unequal power struggle. This separation of spaces between secular and religious discourses that the transnational immigrant internalizes, is used strategically where boundaries are often blurred and invented. Migration is addressed by shifting the self within these perceived personal and religious discourses by renegotiating one's position discursively. Re-education of new identities in the family becomes practice of migration specific capital, restructuring the familial boundaries by othering the dominant culture. In the mosque-based *adda*, family was debated as a center stage from where identity performances were launched on religious terms by the immigrant parents. The new family structure often uses religious practices a way to reconstruct new moral dispositions as legitimate and authentic in order to create competitive capitals. The family capital enforces a strict parental regime by limiting the child's choice in matters of faith or culture. The family becomes the center of a new patriarchy which increases a form of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1977) by engaging it as an ideological ground of conflicting discourses.

Chapter Seven: A Critical Reflexivity on Self-Representation

Introduction

In the previous chapter I have attempted to represent our identity through an analysis of our voices and social practices. Identity construction has always been a struggle for interpretation, representation and power at every phase. In this chapter, I discuss my fourth question: What implications do these *adda* sessions have for the postcolonial researcher in bringing a productive self-awareness to his or her own identities from studying other immigrants?

In this diaspora research I have intertextualized my multiple selves with those of others by juxtaposing our stories. Intertextuality is a textual practice when texts are interwoven "in mutually affirming or contentious ways" (Kamberelis and Scott, 1992, p.364). I used intertextualization as a strategy of representation to entangle my writing with my partial and subjective realities as a cultural insider and a marginalized diaspora researcher.

In this chapter, I hope to disrupt the textual coherence of the *adda* narrative by bringing a positional reflexivity. I do that by distancing the voice of the self-representing researcher from my other subjective voices, positioning myself as both an insider and outsider. My intention is to introduce a level of critical consciousness in this chapter—an inquiry into the researcher self and his other subjective voices. I adopted critical reflexivity in Holliday's (2000) understanding of being self-critical through ethical practices of presenting a subjective reality. I criticized my own ambiguities by reflecting on the power relationship between my positioned identity as the researcher and the researched. It is through responsible listening that responsible action emerges. I sought to de-center my voice from those I am speaking with and those I am speaking over.

Positioning Myself in the Research as both Insider and Outsider

Some of the ways qualitative researchers bring a level of critical consciousness into the inquiry of the self is through critical reflexivity and positionality. Critical reflexivity is a "technique [that] aims to acknowledge the partiality of the researcher and thus the distance between representation and 'reality' in the researcher's work" (Holliday, 2000, p.506). Reflexivity in Holliday's understanding is about being self-critical through ethical practices of presenting a subjective reality. The self is always immanent in the process of writing with the researcher, participant and the text. It is this self-awarness in writing as a discourse of reflexivity in which the self can be analyzed by inquiring into the multiple contextual selves. Critical reflexivity, in fact, problematizes the multiple selves that manifest themselves in the text and ensures the ecological validity of the research by sketching complex forms of representation.

In taking a position in writing, the person as an individual is distinguished from the person as multiple selves— "in which a person is momentarily called by the discourses and the world he/she inhabits" (Smith, 1988, p. xxxv). Feminist researchers such as Davis and Harré (1990) have been foremost in using multiple selfhoods as a product of discursive practices. Positioning to them is:

> [T]he discursive process whereby selves are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines. There can be interactive positioning in which what one person says positions another. And there can be reflexive positioning in which one positions oneself. (p.48)

Feminist works as such have often used the knower's interest, location, and situation as subjective realities as standpoints of inquiry to condition knowledge claims and resist the

takeover of their voices by grand narratives. The positioned identity I take in my conversations with my participants is shaped by my *bhadralok* (read middle-class) upbringing in Bangladesh, intellectual acculturation in the West and adoption of an Islamic modernity in my transnational relations with others either as individuals or groups. In my own learning process *adda* played a role in my becoming an *adda*-researcher where stories as formative sites of learning became central to knowledge construction. My early access to the Bengali and English texts, both formal and informal, giving me authorial knowledge of becoming the *intellectual* (my emphasis) subject later in my life, offered me an acute insight into the storied lives of those I studied. My class privileges, bourgeois world-view and travel experiences shaped my social relations and communication with the participants in this study. This reflexive aspect of my research gave me a sympathetic view of the nuances of the socially stratified communities and identities we all create and use in our daily relations.

It has been fifteen years I have been living in North America, and five years since I have become a Canadian citizen. But with regard to my identity no such time-line can be given. Our identities do not need a travel document. Long before I got my Canadian passport, even before I had taken the trans-Atlantic flight, maybe when I first received a postcard from London from an uncle as a child, I began to form a sense of the outside imaginary world. I drew it with crayons, gave it a snow-capped landscape, a strange name, and imbued it with the colors of my imagination. Then in the rhythm of life as I embraced new identities through getting a job, marriage, the birth of a child, a passport, all of them began to overlap without my noticing. These identities gave me a sense of who I was, most often like a pack of cards that give each other meaning. My memory journal 5 (2008) has an entry marking my Canadian citizenship award ceremony as an ambiguous yet symbolic return to the British crown which in the words of the

last Indian Englishman of Bengal, N. C. Chowdhury (1951) "conferred subjecthood upon us but withheld citizenship" (dedication page):

> Upon being initiated as a Canadian citizen, the judge extolled the virtues of multiculturalism, the concept of justice and equality and democratic participation in a liberal democracy before we took the oath of loyalty to the Queen, the republic and its institutions. As a Bangladeshi-Muslim, pledging my loyalty to the successors and heirs of a monarchy under which my forefathers served, toiled and strove to free themselves politically, economically and perhaps culturally for over a century was a moment of personal contemplation. (Memory Journal 5, October, 2008)

My other identities welcomed my Canadianness, somewhat ambiguously but in fact it had been there longer than I could have anticipated, giving the other hyphenated identities of my Bangladeshi-Muslim self a meaning. The hyphen does not indicate which part of my self is submitting to which other part of my self in the Memory Journal 5. Was it my complacent Bengalicized Canadian self that conceded to my acceptance of the Canadian part or was it my Islamized other that made me feel unwelcome in Quebec? It is not hard to tell. My eventually moving away from Quebec in 2010 had something to do with its nationalist resurgence that wrongfully targeted its immigrant population and constant social engineering enforceable by law. It is not surprising that Bangladeshi immigrants like me who came a decade ago showed less cosmopolitanism than those earlier generations of immigrants who were less educated but more willing to assimilate. Leonard (2007) shows how earlier generations of farming immigrants from the Indian states of Punjab exhibited more cosmopolitanism than more urbanized and educated immigrants who came later. I remember how face-veil or *niqab* worn by a minority of Muslim women that covers the whole body with the exception of eyes, became an object to stigmatize all

Muslim women including those like my wife who wear the head coverings known as *hijab,* in the run up to the provincial elections in Quebec in 2007. Five years after the recommendations were published in 2008, the Parti Québécois minority government threatened to pass Bill 60, ironically dubbed the "Charter of Values," which could limit a *hijab*-clad woman from being a full-fledged member of a multicultural society. The stereotypes created by media's objectification of Muslim women skewed the discourse of her right as a full member of the society to participate on equal grounds. Racialized discourse often begins with grand nationalist aspirations by 'othering' a powerless community and making a stereotype of another. The partition of the British India in 1947 was based on the creation of a two-nation theory that grounded religious differences between Hindus and Muslims as a fundamental element of nationhood. My parent's generation saw the creation of another new nationin 1971, when the East Pakistan seceded from its Western part over linguistic differences. The various imagined nationalist projects of the bourgeois nation-state continue to define our transnational identities as new linguistic or religious allegiences are forged by the transnational diaspora.

As an immigrant I stand between two imagined worlds, one of my parents and another of my children. I have not lived in either completely, but I live in the border zones of two cultural imaginaries, which are continuously shaping my present. I find these two worlds are not completely different, but identical to mine in the sense that they are all constructions of modernities with different imaginations of a community to which I claim no part. A part of me melancholically hangs on to the past but a part of me brings multiple interpretations of home based on my emotions, reading and imaginative positioning of self, mediated by my own subjective histories. In this subjective lived history in the diaspora, I locate myself within the social structures and languages, the metaphors, plots and characters of people, through and with

which we have learned to tell our different stories— reproducing the stories of an earlier

generation to make sense of a later, continuously and intentionally. The parting of histories that

began with a lesson in modernWorld-history, creating a gulf between the forgotten past and the

imagined past has resulted in these "alternative modernities" (Kumar, 2006, p.398) of

postcolonial citizens. My language and social structures shift within the multi-selfhoods that I

construct in the liminal spaces between the vanquished plural lives of the past and the

situationally created selves of the present as an outcome of global capitalism. As I traverse the

terrain of other people's stories, populating my language with other people's view-points —

appropriating, rejecting and authoring myself, in Bakhtinian terms —I create a parallel world to

that of the physical world. The unbounded spaces that exist in one continuous transnational

space, link the land and memories of my ancestors to those of my progeny, with my role as the

only connection between the two geographical points. The question remains, as I asked the

participants in my *adda* conversations: Are we going to embrace our diaspora identities or deny

them? And if so how? In the words of a diaspora wife the question is repeated asked within her

quest for a home that does not exist:

> Must we continue to look for 'home' in phone calls, e-mail, the occasional visit, music,
>
> books, plants, work but in this land to which we supposedly belong? Or should we bow to
>
> the inevitable…that 'home' is and always has been in the 'imagined past,' in the mind,
>
> and nowhere else, and give up the search?" (Dasgupta & Lal, 2007, p.321)

Home had always been about inventing traditions. Traditions of imagined us and

imagined others have been constructed in our minds from the very early days of schooling. The

Bengali/Bangladeshi middle class have always defined the nation in a variety of secular-cultural

and religious imaginings. The socialist slogans of egalitarianism construed in pre-independent

Bangladesh, could not forestall the secular-religious division that was to follow. Identities do not stop at the border as new identities of class, gender or race remake new borders. Uma Parameswaran (1998), a Canadian poet of Indian origin, reminds us in her anthology, *Trishanku* how cultural identification continually changes:

> When the snow comes, Ma,
>
> I'll get less brown won't I?
>
> It would be nice to be white,
>
> more like everyone else
>
> you know?

Adda Narratives and the Struggle with Representation

The two *adda* networks I have discussed before, offer somewhat bounded spaces of sharing and collaborating stories of lived pasts and presents that are often at cross-roads in the diaspora. Storied lives of other people offer us the possibility of seeing the other's world through their eyes. My *adda* sessions began with memories that took us back to our individual childhoods or somewhere else and then moving them forward for different purposes than what Strong-Wilson (2006) does in a narrative inquiry. By opening our stories in a culturally embedded *adda* narrative, I hope to set the memory of our collective selves within our cultural worlds. These memories are often implanted with beliefs, values and traditions that do not translate well because they point to different historical beginnings. By remembering my childhood stories in a migration narrative passed down from my parents, I am able to show solidarity with the silenced voices of the global displaced. Rhee (2006) calls this type of re/membering where one becomes a

member again through the process of dislocation and then re-location ― a "double act of remembering" (p.597).

Locating myself as a diaspora researcher and acknowledging *adda*'s role in creating a consciousness of this self, is the first step towards decolonizing my transitive knowledge of my own identity as an individual and where I should belong. As a postcolonial researcher who intends to understand his own migration experiences through different other experiences of home, education and upbringing, I use *adda* as a way of bringing new discourses and consciousnesses into my own sense-making on identity. As Bakhtin says, "consciousness finds itself inevitably facing the necessity *of having to choose a language*" (Bakhtin, 1981, p.295, emphasis in original).

I use *adda* narratives as a way of writing my stories. In so doing, I hope to disrupt the narratology of the dominant academic language in which I write. As a novice researcher my institutional validity, my authority as a non-native speaker in English, and my position as a racialized minority makes this narrativization with and through *adda* as a speech genre, a way of subverting at least one or more structures of power in the dominant paradigm. However "[w]hat emerges between mimesis and mimicry is a *writing,* a mode of representation that marginalizes the monumentality of history." (Bhabha, 1994, p.83, emphasis in original). I want to center my voice as a cultural other by speaking through *adda* but at the same time I want to de-center my voice from those with whom I am speaking. Thus writing becomes the interplay of centering/de-centering myself from this multi-layered power positioning at both the macro and micro levels of identity.

In the following sections, I give examples of how crises of representation can arise between researcher as the writer and researcher as a participant. I used positionality and reflexivity in my writing to critically examine the self that is always partially implicated in the representation. The difficulty was in creating a distance between my textual representation of self and others through intertextuality within the stories of my *adda* participants. I addressed the dilemma of representation to two separate audiences; the participants and the readers; by bringing out some of my own biases as a cultural insider.

Conspiracy theory. The last parliamentary election in Bangladesh held in January 2014, has resulted into a lack of confidence between the two largest political parties in Bangladesh, Awami League (AL), the current party in government and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), a willing opponent. A series of politically motivated trials since 2010, against a crucial ally of BNP, had stalled the process of peaceful transfer of power through democratic means, creating political instability and questioning the legitimacy of the new government. To date, more than 20 central leaders from the opposition have been thrown in jail without trail and 10 top leaders of BNP's staunchest ally, the largest Islamist party in Bangladesh, Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), had been given the death sentence by the government in power for their controversial roles in the war of independence in 1971. Until now two of them have been executed and two others have died while in custody. The rest are still awaiting their punishment. In february 2013 the global media coverage on the street protests that ensued at the Shahbag square, drawing parallels to the Tahrir square, became a source of political discontent here both at the mosque and neighborhood *adda*. The daily street protests, initially attracted a large gathering, at the Shahbag square and continued for six months. The conflict created two opposing groups who called each other by various names such as atheist/fundamentalists or pro-liberation/anti-liberation elements

mainly in the Bangladeshi online communities. The groups with more secular nationalist affiliations included the young and educated people who supported banning the JI party and trying their leaders for alleged war crimes in 1971. The Islamist parties, whose main support base is the *Madrassah* students saw the secular nationalist movement as anti-Islamic, spearheaded by a fringe community of bloggers and agent provocateurs of the West who want to remove Islam from all public space. Both the groups claimed their struggle as sacred— defending ideals of liberty and Islam respectively.

Although nobody said it openly, there was a lot of sympathy for the underdog, JI party, in the mosque *adda*. It was interesting because the JI mainly drew its support from *madrassah* students and none of the participants in the mosque *adda* were involved in political Islam. Taukir was sympathetic to the working class for being complicit through their silence but he pointed the finger of blame at the ruling AL party. He linked the domestic politics in Bangladesh to a larger global problem with Islam. Taukir said, "The problem is the world is against Muslims" (MG4, Taukir). Everybody in the mosque *adda* believed that Islamophobia and erosion of civil liberties in Canada and elsewhere are connected. Almost every participant in the mosque *adda* was inherently suspicious of the media's role worldwide against Islam, and defended the sympathizers of the Islamist party against accusations of inciting violence, when they were deliberately provoked and denied any discursive space.

In a post-interview meeting, I wondered if the Muslims living in the West, the most diverse of any faith communities, fall too often for the conspiracy theories of a crypto-Western agenda of de-Islamization. Taukir said, "conspiracy theory is the last option of the powerless. Muslims in the world currently are powerless to change their fate." (Reflexive journal 6, August, 2013). His patriotic cosmopolitanism blurs into a transnational imaginary of the Muslim Ummah

through which he speaks to a Western cultural threat. What is interesting is that Taukir's language mirrors those European radical political parties of various shades and the Tea Party in USA who employ similar conspiracy theories against Muslims to tighten immigration. His voice plays into the hands of both the extremes of an imagined global Ummah and radical nationalism in the West. Taukir hands part of the responsibility of the political dilemma in Bangladesh to the Islamist politicians who failed to "brand Islam" (MG4, Taukir) positively for the world and part to the "spineless sold-out secularists" (MG4) who do the West's bidding. Taukir places the Islamic movement in Bangladesh as a figure of deficiency, but creatively appropriates for himself a dominant speaking position as a transnational Muslim.

In the previous conversation on conspiracy theories and media's role, in the mosque *adda*, I took an opposing position against the Islamists in Bangladesh, describing them as unprogressive and backwards. Given my bourgeois economic and cultural background, I assumed that the participants in the mosque *adda* would downplay the Islamist rhetoric in the context of Bangladesh mainly because political Islam, in my thought, did not adress the middle class interest of economic development which includes the role of women in society. I was critical of Taukir's framing of Islamist politics in Bangladesh and worldwide as the victim of a policy of de-Islamification by the West. I challenged the conspiracy theory by appropriating for myself a discourse of Islam that somehow existed outside of its Islamophobic discourse. I disregarded the Islamophobic discourse constructed in the media —the senseless killings, uprisings and beheadings in the Middle East with the motivations behind a woman's *hijab* or a new mosque down the street —considering it atbest, as hyper-real. I resisted Taukir's conspiracy theory by denying my Muslim identity a binary opposition to my other identities. Our construction of oppositional positions opened up third spaces of representations where identities

are constantly contested and reconfigured. However I was able to resist any identity from becoming hegemonic by relocating myself in other spaces that Bhabha (1994) calls third spaces. The hybridized positions we construct in our dialogues and practices are permeable and shifting because they resist generalizing tendencies in identity constructions that manifest itself by homogenizing differences. Yet these hybrid positions are ambivalent precisely because they enable us to live in a state of "together-in-difference" (Ang, 2003, p.150). Religious freedom and constitutional guarantees in the West have made it possible for some religious beliefs and practices to play a central role in our transnational identities. These identities use Islam symbolically to construct a "transgressive hybridity" (Leonard, 2007, p.62) of the global Ummah or community. This form of hybridity, which uses a certain category of difference, whether religious or ethnic, for specific goals is not valued positively in the West and is regarded as counter-productive when it resists the project of secularization. Incidents such as the January 2015 shooting at Charlie Hebdo have pushed several governments to take harsher stance on the questions of immigration as anti-immigration marches gather pace in several European cities. These incidents feed into the mistrust of cultural and religious minorities who hybridize into the worst steretypes in which they are described in the dominant discourse. Thus hybridity as a mode of survival, becomes a complicated entanglement of irreducible identities that is continuously shifting, mixing and resisting any determinate end.

In the next section, I further argue how hybridization in third spaces can be reconciled into a truthful representation by revealing the positional identity of the author, here myself.

Political Islam. Among all the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) leaders handed down capital punishment, Delwar Hossain Sayeedi was the only one whose sentence was later commuted to life-imprisonment. This could be partly due to his reputation of being somewhat of a populist

alim (religious scholar) with a large following in the rural areas where the madrassah as a religious institution has a strong social base. He may be a war criminal but many believe that he has been made target of political foul-play because of his large spiritual following. Interestingly, he enjoys a wide support among the Bangladeshi Muslims in the West for reasons I argue are directly connected with the role of religion as an identity factor in the West.

The participants in both the mosque and the neighborhood *adda* seemed to revere this Islamic leader as a renowned *daee* (preacher) of Islam and an esteemed scholar who, in their view, got into trouble for his politically incorrect views. Sajjad, in the neighborhood *adda*, was the only one who disagreed. He depicted Sayeedi as a calculating politician who used religious sentiments to garner public support for his party. He gives an example of how Sayeedi used *waz*—an Islamic cultural tradition of educating the common people through dissemination of religious talk—to gather support for the JI, as a party of the Muslims (Session NG2.2).

Sajjad, who has been living in Canada for more than twenty years, speaks from his lived experiences on political Islam where leaders such as Sayeedi used religious propaganda to muster popular support for a certain kind of political Islamism. Sajjad used a local Bengali slang *mojma* (street-vendoring) to describe how public support could be rallied around a political cause similar to the way street hawkers or canvassers gather a crowd of on-lookers around their cheap products. He used the metaphor of *mojma* to explain how the popular uprising termed as the Arab spring in Bangladesh was framed as a clash of nationalist forces against fundamentalist ones by the government in power and later used for political gain. Sajjad's mistrust of the Islamist politics, what Taukir articulates to have stemmed from a failure to brand Islam positively, makes the discourse of Islam, a highly debatable ground.

My impression regarding Sayeedi, the controversial Islamist leader in Bangladesh was that he was no better than a rabble rouser whose audiences are mostly rural, semi-literate and literalist. I assumed that because his audience was made up of mainly poor agrarian and urbanized political Islamists, their cult-like deference toward him must be either irrational or politically motivated. I was also biased against him because of his alleged role in abetting the persecution of religious minorities during the War of liberation, an allegation he argues the government has not been able to prove beyond doubt. Although that part of history has been contested in Bangladesh ever since the country came into existence in 1971, it is the way religion has been entangled in the politics of nationalism that makes any discussion of religion complex. I have also demonstrated in my theoretical chapter how the metropolitan modernities of the *bhadralok* class are fractured by the plural education, one moral and another modern (Kumar, 2006). My own education and political views were unambiguously divorced from the version of Islamist politics Sayeedi represented.

I was biased against the Islamist discourse in the hands of Madrassah educated pseudo-*ulema* (Islamic scholars) with ideas of the nation based on religion because modernity as we know it —as a derivative discourse of European thought— do not provide any harmonious hybridization of religion and reason. My framing of Sayeedi as a populist and somewhat charismatic speaker with questionable intentions, was refuted by all except Sajjad. The argument they proposed was that the War Crimes Tribunal was a kangaroo court with no strong legal framework, whose motive was questionable as the chielf justice stepped down following a leaked conversation indicating government misconduct in trying to influence the outcome of the verdicts (Wright, 2012). I felt my integrity as a researcher could have been questioned and compromised if I appeared as someone who was skeptical of the idea that Sayeedi or any other JI

leaders were innocent of war crimes. My credibility as a researcher hinged on my ability to distance myself from stating my own political beliefs. Yet it was impossible to do so as I found myself drawn into the arguments as an insider whose views on Islamist politics is also experientially biased. I distanced myself from showing deference to Sayeedi's expertise in Islamic political modernity firstly because he mainly represented a certain class of religious clergy, and secondly because the middle class in Bangladesh has always been adverse to ideas of a nation-state based on theology. At Johar's home, in the mosque *adda*, my dual role as a researcher and *adda* participant crystallized the problem of preserving a semblance of a singular identity without losing some of the privileges associated with being a Bangladeshi and a key informant. My writing took a narrative turn in the text by consciously creating a self through textual positionality (Macbeth, 2001). I argued that Hassan's loyalty to Sayeedi was a result of his upbringing in the rural society where he formed a habitus of piety in the *madrassah*, and deference for the clergy. I disregarded the fact that my own experiences may not be identical to those many middle class who had found the Islamism propagated by Sayeedi as appealing. I positioned Hassan's valorizing Sayeedi as a martyr of the Islamic movement in Bangladesh and as part of a global agenda of de-Islamization that Taukir spoke about.

By presenting myself as the lone-voice of reason in the mosque *adda*, I created a textual presentation of the all-knowing self that is given final say by finding an ally in Sajjad. I found Sajjad's arguements useful to explain the political turf-warfare, between Sayeedi's version of Islamic modernism and the secularist demands of the Shahbag movement. The metaphor of *mojma* explains how politicizing of religion by both the secularists and Islamists actually become a commercial enterprise where the unsuspecting onlookers are taken for a ride. It shows that every pro-democracy movementin the media, including the Shahbag square is not what it stands

for, and certainly not for defending freedom of thought. Sajjad rightly pointed to the movement's dubious origin by calling it a *mojma* or side-show, which supported Taukir's assumptions of a government ploy to lure the Islamists into a trap of violence. I was able to recognize different conflicting allegiances that exist in our language by recognizing what Bakhtin reminds us, that language by definition is heteroglot not monoglot. Had I represented our subjective personalities too narrowly, in binary terms, such as Islamists vs. secularists or progressive vs. fundamentalists, I would have failed to locate the third spaces in which our identities transform, shift and negotiate for something else. Hybridization thus problematizes diaspora identities from taking on unitary positions of ethnicity, culture or religion for the narrative researcher (Young, 1995; Appadurai, 1996; Ang, 2003). It is through a critical reflexivity that he/she constructs trustworthy textual representations among the competing voices and contesting hybridities.

Contributions to Theory and Research

The main contribution of this study of the Bangladeshi immigrant community is to show how *adda*, a culturally embedded methodology, can be used as a third space identity to analyze voices and practices. *Adda* has been used as third space(s) where Bangladeshi immigrants enunciate their religious, cultural, regional or ethnic identities individually and collectively for their interstitial futures in the diaspora. Incorporating *adda* as part of the methodological framework, I attempted to resist the knowledge structures and power in diaspora research by empowering the local knowledge claims of the members of a disempowered community.

The theoretical framework developed, using a focused analysis of both dialogism and forms of capital, offers a postcolonial exploration of identity shifts in voice and practice, answering my main theoretical question. Using dialogism, I have shown in the first part of Chapter Six, how Johar constructed Islamic piety to keep his family from being Westernized, a

prospect that Hassan considered may compel him one day, to return. For example, on the questions of *hijab*, I found that different Muslims create different rational positions to deny the dominant discourse that frames Islam as monolithic and unassimilative. Hassan a virtuoso economic migrant renegotiated his other subjective positions, refusing the fate to become a reusable bottle (Reflective Journal 1, May 2013) at the end.

I used Bakhtin's dialogicality to question the reason or agency that postcolonialist authors such as Chakrabarty (1992a) found lacking in the colonial subject which was understood in a language of deficiency, inadequacy and failure. I show how both moral education and modern education can co-exist as different subject positions in the Bangladeshi middle class construction. Bakhtin's dialogism thus offers a possibility to go beyond the subject-object dualism of structuralists by constructing creative agencies.

Although Bourdieu's understanding of human dispositions has not been used in this study to examine the moral self, I agree with Turner (2008) that embodied moral practices can challenge the existing social structures of power and inequality by reinterpreting the notion of piety in religious or cultural traditions. Religious identity capital was increased in the mosque *adda* to create specific cultural and religious experiences. Everybody in the mosque *adda* said that they were Muslims first, a position that they felt they needed to stabilize. However Johar's using of the metaphor of a *bou* or 'coy bride' showed that immigrant social practices were not etched on stone but shifting in-between spaces. *Adda* as a third space allows new identities and practices to be constructed and exchanged for competitive advantages over others in the diaspora.

Adda can be an effective interpretive lens as a self-study or used in action research by postcolonial diaspora researchers engaged in power-sensitive research that challenges hegemonic knowedge claims. A more focused interpretive work on social networks and their cultural productions such as *adda* to inquire into construction of differences offers the postcolonial researcher a hope to decolonize transnationalism and diaspora studies from the structures of grand narratives.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Migration narratives in the West are usually centered on two major themes of displacement: one is the return narrative, epitomized by Hassan and the other is a modern understanding of the concept of *hijrah* whereby migration is understood as a sacred social contract between the host country and the diaspora. Both ground identity as essentially stable and disregard the fact that yesterday's undersirable immigrants make up a significant portion of Canada's urban population today. Neighborhoods such as Jackson Heights in NY, Danforth in Toronto or Tower Hamlets in London have become second homes for many Bangladeshi immigrants. However from my experience of living in small campus towns in North America, I know that multiculturalism do not take into account the ideological, cultural and socio-economic differences Bangladeshi diaspora population has within its own fold. This study has implications to think about integration policies that help reduce perceptions of religious, linguistic and cultural differences between dominant and marginalized groups. Furthermore a longitudinal study involving specific communities of practice such as teachers or social workers may have implications for wider policy reform in professional development and settlement issues.

An inquiry into the many Bangladeshi social, political, religious or cultural affiliations in Canada, could further enhance understanding what specific role these institutions play in

immigrant identity work and how hybridization constructs or hinders new identities in the transnational spaces. Hybridization is an indicator of resistance to proto-nationalist identity construction among immigrants. Under the current heightened security threat, transgressive hybridities among certain religious or racial minorities may give a false indication that faith based identity is monolithic as a whole. What gets focused is a widening of cultures instead of the diverse, fluid and contextual differences of cultures, classes, subjectivities and histories that exist not only among them but also within them. Framing identity as strategic and hybrid constructions of differences in class, religion, ethnicity or nationalism would complicate research on transnationalism and diaspora. The inclusion of immigrant voices and spaces in diaspora research would challenge the way multiculturalism in diaspora studies is used in opposition to integration.

It is important to understand the continuous shifting identities, social practices and political discourses in this rapidly globalizing society that we construct in our relations with others. Without such a particularistic and contextualized understanding of community and culture, postcolonial diaspora research can easily fall into singular or binary categories of displacement. It is also important to de-center qualitative research from the voice of the researcher who hopes to speak through a community or culture. This qualitiative inquiry into Bangladeshi immigrant diaspora community may encourage more ethnographic and de-colonization work in diaspora studies. Identity work that focuses on social networks that cut across ethnic, racial, religious or gender lines within other diaspora communities would be a way forward into further study in transnational third spaces.

Future Directions

This study has explored only one small homogeneous urban social network while leaving out the small town Bangladeshi diaspora communites whose identity constructions could vary from diaspora groups settled in big cities in Canada. A female only *adda* or mixed gender *adda* may also have implications on gendered study in the third spaces for Bengali speaking diaspora. Traditionaly *adda*'s space as the male prerogative has shaped the bourgeois orality, however the rise of female headed families in certain neighborhoods known as *Begum Bazaar* in the vernacular language may reveal more on the *bhadramahila* habitus in the diaspora. Further research can be done into hybridization strategies among minority within the minorities among the Bangladeshi diaspora, who come as persecuted communities based on religious, political or sexual differences.

One area I have not inquired into in this study is the construction of glocalized spaces that exist in the internet where the global media and Bengali language TV channels intersect rapidly across many different technology platforms. Immigrants negotiate their nationalism, cosmopolitanism and religious identity by making reference to home country politics, movies, soaps, and sports as they are available through cable TV broadcasting and print media. Raj (2008), points to a probable link between identity negotiation among Indian diaspora youth and the production and consumption of India through the Bollywood entertainment industry. The recent trend in Bollywood movies depict the average urbanized Indian family with cosmopolitan affiliations and cultural productions. Similar trends in the cultural productions of urbanized Bangladeshi families with cosmopolitan affiliations have democratized the Bangladeshi diaspora language. With a surge in information platforms such as internet and private TV channels the Bengali social spaces in the media has acquired new languages from plays, talk-shows, religious

discussions and cultural programs produced for the Bangladeshi global diaspora. The link between the social media, technology and middle class consumption trends can be further investigated to show how long distance nationalism, religion and culture work in the diaspora. It is my hope that governments of Bangladesh and Canada may be encouraged to invest into a cultural institution where linguistic and cultural productions can play a more robust role for the Bengali speaking diaspora.

The online social networks offer a field in the transnational exploration of identities in myriad spaces of rupture as globalization constructs communities in the blogosphere. Comparative studies between different immigrant communities or inter-generational studies could also reveal how stories and practices create consciousnesses of self and community. A focused analysis of religious, national or cultural discourses and practices between the first generation and landed immigrants can reveal how new orthodoxies are reimagined and challenged in the diaspora.

Final thoughts

In this chapter, I analyzed my own textual strategies in representing the self in the context of rising political tensions between the Islamic and the Western world. I reflect on the difficulty of narrating my dual roles as a researcher *adda*-member in the respective *adda* networks. I chose not to tell this story from a particular subject position defined as cosmopolitan or transnational or Islamist. I wanted to weave into it the nested contexts (Maguire, 1995) of social stratifications, practices, discourses in different *adda* and their knowledge claims where other identities are then played out. Our identities become mediated by our memories, our beliefs, and our storied lives within multiple spaces opened by the structures of powerful discourses we create consciously.

The Bangladeshi immigrant identity is a blending of many hybridized selves and collectivities. Identity becomes a hybrid construction within the many spaces and places of rupture, resisting against concrete differences. As a Bangladeshi, a Muslim and a researcher my multiple selves bring together the disjointed memories, knowledges and stories of my being— in all my diasporia networks to increase my diaspora capitals. *Adda* for the Bangladeshi diaspora offers multiple ways of representing the continuous shifts and transformations of identity constructions in which we imagine our futures.

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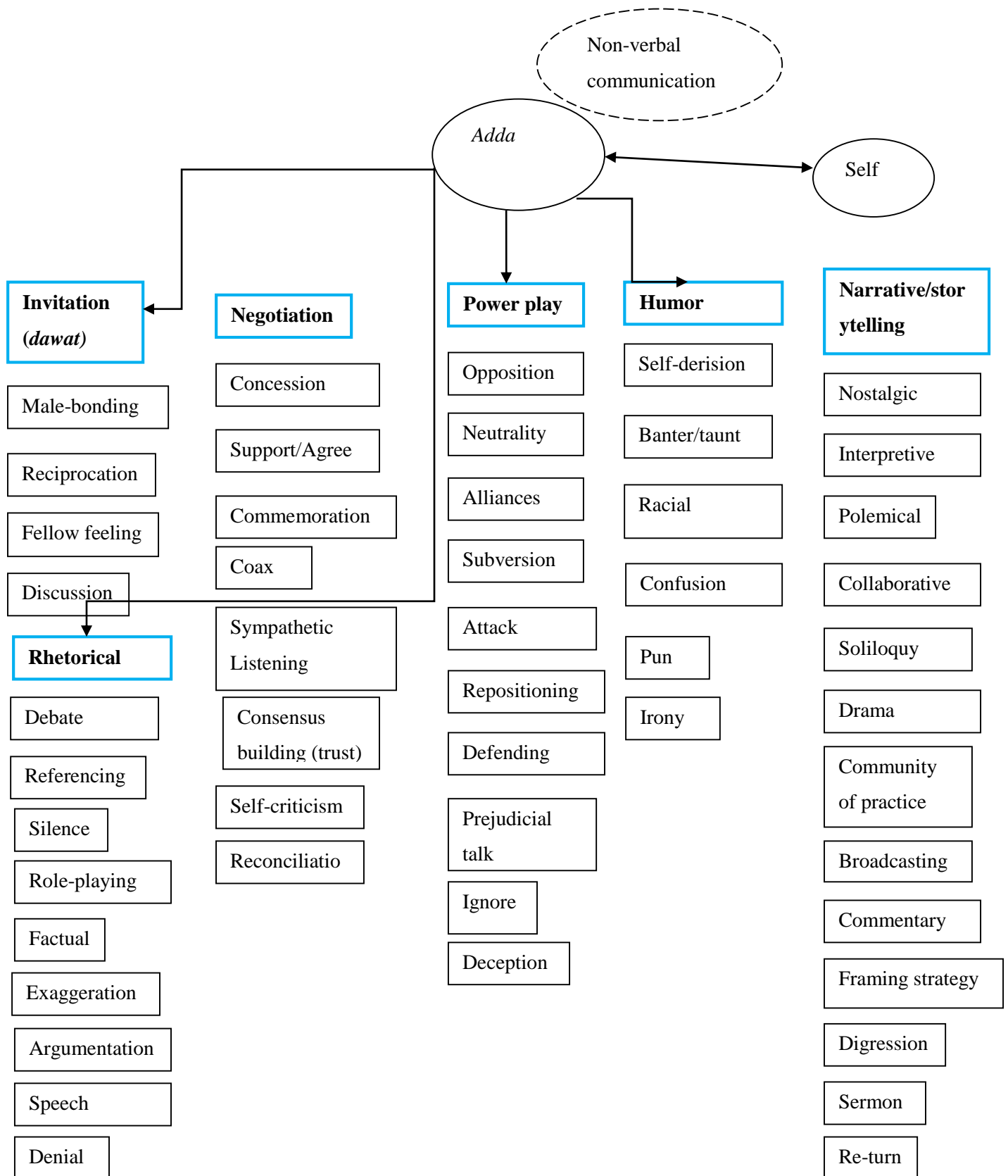
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Appendices

Appendix A: Starter list

Self/Social	Cultural/Religious	Historical/Migration
Childhood learning	Investments	Raising a family
Choices in youth	--EconomicShort/Long term	--Re-education of spouse/children (re-socialization)
Thoughts about career	--Communal/national/personal	--Discipline
Thoughts on going abroad/Reasons for staying	Growing old in Canada	--Appropriate behavior
Childhood stories	--Fears	--Appropriate dress code
--Story-tellers	--Hopes	--Social taboos
Movies/Music	--fall back options	Preferable quality in Children
Sports	Separation between	--Making a lot of money
Reading habits	--Culture and Religion	--Highly educated
Religious life	--Religion and State	--Pious
Childhood place/village	--Citizenship and nationalism	Racial/class/ gender prejudice
Relations with parents/teachers	Self-identification	--rights of other race/class/gender
Remembering history	--as a son/father/husband	--sensitivity to other race/class/gender
Remembering family life	--Canadian/Muslim/ Immigrant	Coping Strategy (re-boudering space)
Moral/scriptural learning	Advantages/Disadvantages of living in Canada	--Religious/social/family activities
Remembering home	--Peace	--Recreation
--nostalgia	--Money	--Re-orienting reading/ news
Validating truth	--Religion	--Relocation
	--Society--Health	

Perception of belongingness/social justice

--from Media

--safety/belonging

--rights/responsibilities

--fear of backlash

Perception of commonality/distance

--with mainstream

--with Muslim identity

--With Bengali identity

Cultural artifacts

--memorabilia

--gifts

Accessibility issues/discrimination/ Integration challenges

--Ethnic/racial differences

--Institutional discrimination

--Structural barriers (linguistic/education)

Living between two worlds

--With family back home

--with larger society

--with children here

Life in Canada

--loss/pain/stress/ dispossession

--gains/happiness/

--Achievements

Re-search

Interpreting pasts/presents

Hopes/visions

Challenges in Canada

--Economic barriers

--Social/cultural exchange

--Religious barriers

--Familiarity

Cultural/religious insecurity

--loss of religious/cultural identity

--westernization/ consumerization

--secularization

--Islamization

Non-verbal communication

Adda

Self

Invitation (*dawat)*

Male-bonding

Reciprocation

Fellow feeling

Discussion

Rhetorical

Debate

Referencing

Silence

Role-playing

Factual

Exaggeration

Argumentation

Speech

Denial

Negotiation

Concession

Support/Agree

Commemoration

Coax

Sympathetic Listening

Consensus building (trust)

Self-criticism

Reconciliatio

Power play

Opposition

Neutrality

Alliances

Subversion

Attack

Repositioning

Defending

Prejudicial talk

Ignore

Deception

Humor

Self-derision

Banter/taunt

Racial

Confusion

Pun

Irony

Narrative/storytelling

Nostalgic

Interpretive

Polemical

Collaborative

Soliloquy

Drama

Community of practice

Broadcasting

Commentary

Framing strategy

Digression

Sermon

Re-turn

Appendix B: Letter of Informed Consent for Participants

Dear Participant,

I am a 5th year Doctoral student at the Department of Integrated Studies in Education, McGill University. My Supervisor is Assistant Professor, Dr. Anila Asghar. I am conducting a study on a selected group of middle class Bengali immigrants in Canada. The study focuses on a) the stories Bangladeshi immigrants tell in their everyday lives b) the role of *adda* in making sense of their hopes, aspirations, challenges, tensions and emotions of living and travelling between two cultural worlds. This study may help us understand how Bangladeshi immigrants construct their social, political, and cultural identity through storytelling. This study may help to expand our understanding of how qualitative research can find ways to study linguistic and cultural minorities and their shifting identities.

I invite your participation in this study. The study consists of observing two (2) separate *adda* groups from two locations, in Greater Toronto Area. Each *adda* group will be studied over a period of 2 months. Each group will convene at least for 4 times during this study period, preferably twice a week. Each *adda* or conversation session will last approximately 90 minutes. To bring some focus and structure to the *adda*, each group will pre-select their topics of conversations before each session, through mutual consultation. My role, as a researcher, will primarily be to facilitate, observe and document the conversations audio-visually.

The *adda* conversations will be recorded audio-visually. The video-tapes will only be used for making video transcripts and will be stored temporarily until all the requirements of the research are fulfilled. Participation is completely voluntary. If for any reason you wish to

withdraw from the study at any stage, your data will not be included in the video transcripts and field notes. You do not have to discuss any information, explicitly or implicitly that may be potentially damaging emotionally, professionally or socially to you or your group. Your identifiable information (name, address, important dates etc.) or associations with any person or organizations in the video transcripts and field notes will be changed to protect your privacy.

You are encouraged to share life-stories, memories, experiences, challenges, lessons, and values as they feel important and relevant to the study purpose. The study results will be published strictly for educational and research purpose. Participants will decide the venue of the meeting based on mutual consultation. If for any reason you wish your conversations be not included in the research audio-visually or in any other manner, you may let the researcher know by indicating you preferred method of participation in the appropriate space below (put an X before your choice):

_____ I will participate in the study during the *adda* conversations and allow the researcher to use my audio-visual data.

_____ I will participate in the *adda* conversation and not this study and I do not allow the researcher to use my audio-visual data.

I HAVE CAREFULLY READ AND UNDERSTAND THE DESCRIPTION OF THIS INQUIRY AND MY ROLE AS A PARTICIPANT.

I UNDERSTAND THAT THE STUDY WILL BE AUDIO-VISUALLY RECORDED
AND ITS RESULTS WILL BE PUBLISHED IN RESEARCH JOURNALS, CONFERENCES
AND TURNED INTO RESEARCH PAPERS

I UNDERSTAND THAT I CAN WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY AT ANY TIME I
CHOOSE WITHOUT ANY PREJUDICE.

Signature:_____

Name (please
print):_____

_____

Designation:_____
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The Research Ethics Board at McGill University requires certain ethical standards be
maintained in any studies using human subjects. Any complaints or problems concerning any
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Appendix C: Interview Guide

1) Pre-school

   a) How would you describe your childhood city?

   b) Who was the best storyteller in your life at this age? Whose stories do you still remember?

   c) Tell us a folktale/kissa kahini which you heard in your childhood

   d) Was TV a big part of your growing up? What cartoon characters was your favorite?

   e) What was your first toy that you fondly remember?

2) Primary school

   a) What children's book do you remember reading when you began to read on your own?

   b) What TV serials/movies did you enjoy while growing up?

   c) Was there a particular event, place or person that fascinated you as a child? Was there a particular reason for it?

   d) Who were your friends at this time what sort of games did you play?

3) High school

   a) What was your first *nishiddo boi* that you read?

   b) Which school did you go to? Why? Did you stay in one school or moved around?

   c) Did you have any private tutors? Do you have any story with them?

   d) Any special teacher in school who got into trouble with or fond memories of?

   e) Did you have a special friend/animal at school or somebody you wanted to be friends with?

f) Did you collect anything at this time (view cards, stamps etc.)?

4) College/University

a) In what way college life was different from school life? What freedom did you enjoy in college?

b) Did you make new friends or hung out with the same group of people?

c) How was your academic life? Did it improve or got worse, why?

d) Who influenced you most during this time (e.g. a family member/friend/author/artist)

e) Did you have a student job? What sort of books did you buy?

f) How did you spend your time with friends? Were you active in any activities?

5) Career in Bangladesh/Canada

a) What kind of work did you find after you graduated/came to Canada or US? What did you have in mind?

b) Tell us something about your experiences as a beginner?

c) What was your family's attitude to your job?

d) How long did you stay with your first job? What were the circumstances for leaving it?

6) Getting started in a new country

a) What type of difficulty was greater to overcome as a new comer: a) skill sets (language, communication), b) structural barriers (employment, racism), c) Readjusting personal/family goals/expectations (job, living conditions, children's education, leaving back parents) or anything else?

b) What frustrated you most: lack of information, lack of opportunity, lack of resource?

c) What type of interaction frustrated you most in the beginning?

d) What kind of people did you befriend in the beginning?

e) What type of conversations did/do you engage in?

f) What form of racism did you normally face in your place of work or in the street?

7) Food preferences

a) What % of your monthly groceries do you spend in ethnic food stores?

b) What desi dish do you fancy to have more often if it were easy to prepare or buy?

c) How similar is the eating habits of you and your children?

d) What sort of food do you prefer to eat out as a family: desi/fast food/Chinese take-out/others/nothing particular

e) What are your snacking habits at home? Desi or North American?

8) Child rearing

a) What form of disciplining behavior do you normally see other parents engaging in with their kids in a public place?

b) What sort of disciplining activities do you normally engage with your kids at home?

c) What sort of place do you feel more comfortable taking your kids for a family outing (such as malls, parks, desi cultural programs, social gatherings, mosque activities)

d) What annoying behavior of your kid would you prefer to change that you feel is embarrassing in public every time you take them out to have a good time?

9) Use of space/place

a) Do you have a book shelf? Where is it? What kind of books do you keep in it?

b) When you think of buying your first house, what particular space in that house comes first in your mind?

c) Where from do you normally get your daily dose of news? (e.g. wife, children, newspaper, colleagues, computer)

d) Where do you normally eat? (e.g. In your dinner table, in the living room, in the car or an office cafeteria)

e) Is there a place you frequently visit on your family outings?

f) What type of activity normally brings you out? (e.g. Dawat, community picnic, lectures in a mosque, games, something else)

10) Married life in Canada

a) What was the biggest item you bought after you got married?

b) Who does what: Calling credit cards; placing orders in a restaurant, Getting kids ready for school; keeping govt. documents; handling pesky telemarketers, making grocery list etc.

c) Which part of your household chores do you enjoy doing most: cleaning, cooking, dishes, laundry, grocery and trash?

d) Do you normally buy unisex dresses?

e) How often do you sit with your kids' homework?

f) How many of you know the following:

    (1) Name of your kids teachers/friends/doctor

    (2) Weekly school calendars/holidays

    (3) Kids vaccination dates/medical history

11) Social life in Canada

    a) What sort of favors do you prefer not asking your friends, is there a reason for it?

    b) What sort of friends do you now mostly interact with? (e.g. Your friends, your wives friends, your kids friends)

    c) Do your friends represent mostly a diverse or similar background and thoughts?

    d) Did you believe in quantity or quality when it comes to friendships?

    e) What do you think is the most important quality in keeping friendships, do you have it plenty?

12) Thoughts about life in Canada

    a) Do you feel good the way you spend your time off? Or it could be better?

    b) Do you feel your life in general has been full of missed opportunities, unmet hardships, plain lucky or something else?

    c) How do you think your parents feel or would have felt about your life without them?

    d) Which category fits your mental frame about your immigration: traveler, stranger, visitor, guest, contractual worker or something else?

13) New Connections in Canada

    a) How many of you know your local service providers personally (e.g. grocer, halal butcher, janitor, mechanic, mailman)?

    b) What activities do you take your children to socialize with other parents (e.g. sports, religious/cultural activities, movies, educational)?

14) Flying to home

a) Is there an airport you prefer to avoid?

b) What question from an airport official/custom official gets you mad?

c) What was the most dangerous parcel you carried for yourself or others?

d) What part of travelling gives you fever?

15) Nostalgia

a) Did you bring in any specific book /songs/movies with you to read when you first came?

b) Are there any specific books/food/cds you bring now?

c) What kind of memorabilia/wall hangings/decoration pieces do you bring now?

d) Are there people you tell yourself you won't meet this time, but can't resist?

e) What sort of things do you find the hardest to explain about life in Canada?

f) Do you call your friends back home? How do you keep in touch?

g) Do you call home more now than before, who do you normally talk to and what are usually the topics of discussion?

16) Retirement and old age living

a) With many parents forced to living away from their children in Bangladesh, what are your thoughts on growing old in Canada? Do you think about it now?

b) As heads of household you will one day hopefully become the first patriarch or matriarch of your family tree in Canada, does that make you feel proud or makes you guilty?

c) Which commodity do you think you would need most in your old age? Social service, financial solvency, time with family, faith or something else?

d) Do have a particular hobby that you want to pursue after retirement?

e) When you see grey haired people in the mall or in the mosque what do you think they miss most, their independence or family?

17) Safety and Rights

a) Do you feel that certain things that are guaranteed for all or are presumed safe to say do not apply to you?

b) Do you feel that misrepresentation of your religion or culture easily becomes the focus of the attention in media rather than the failures of law and order agencies? Why?

c) In a time when your Canadianness and your identity are put in a confrontational position in the media how does it affect your emotional life?

d) Can you remember a story where you comfortably passed yourself as Indian and not a Bangladeshi or a Muslim?

e) After 9/11 many of us overtly became patriotic or at least practiced safety procedures such as self-censuring ourselves when talked over phone about 9/11 or switch into Bengali when we had to talk about it. Do you remember any incident that made you compromise between your right and safety?

18) Self-identificaton

a) Which box do you normally tick off when it asks you to identify yourself racially?

b) Which box would you tick off when your child would come with a prospect for marriage?

c) What is your comfort level if your child chooses to marry someone whose skin tone is darker than him or her?

d) Over here the churches are racially segregated but generally people accept intra-racial marriage as the changing times, but the same can't be said among Desis, our mosques are colourful but our marriage is segregated, why.