

THE CULTURAL MEDIATION OF THE MARGIN

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## ABSTRACT

Identities are never fully unified but are considered fragmented and a process of becoming rather than being, in which the process of identification privileges some and excludes others. Identities also become complicated through the cultural and technological mediation of the dominant ideologies within the mechanisms of power and control. Hence, it requires a cross-cultural fluidity to unpack the alienation and entanglement brought about by the everyday spatial practices of the dominant culture into a space that is also occupied by other ethnocultural groups. The research does not rely on a particular discipline. Rather, it draws on several interdisciplinary fields of study including Canadian Cultural Studies, Visual Culture Studies, Marginality Studies, Ethnic Studies, Identity Studies, and Spatial Studies, as Communication and Culture by nature is interdisciplinary. It challenges the discursive practices perpetuated by the dominant ideologies that shape the identities of marginalized groups in an otherwise hybrid living environment in Canada.

The research uses a triangulation of methodologies: a visual narrative, an analysis of images from two newspapers, and participant interviews to explore the cultural mediation of the margin. The visual narrative analyzes the images shared by the participants as well as the photos taken by the researcher. It also analyzes the images used in two newspapers. The images shared by the participants explore their homes, workplaces, and social spaces, including their culture, festivals, family life, leisure activities, etc. The analysis of the images supplements the interviews, while the visual narrative provides an introspection of the marginal space along with their struggle.

The findings suggest the existence of a hegemonic culture, a set of ideologies and body politics that privilege the dominant group(s) to reproduce a specific national discourse and pedagogy. However, a hybrid form of living also constantly challenges this narrative to facilitate the voices of the other: the marginalized, the displaced, and the immigrants. The research thus expands our knowledge of the cultural production of identities within the national discourse of the so-called multicultural Canada.

## **DEDICATION**

To my dad, Md Fazlul Haque, who will remain in my heart forever.

To my mom, Aleya Haque, who remained strong after my father's untimely death and raised her two children against all the odds.

To my sister, Nafeez Fatima, who encouraged me to pursue the Ph.D. program.

To my lovely wife, Tabassuma Bari, who has been supportive throughout the journey.

To my two precious daughters Raiena Haque and Raiha Haque, who are the light of my life and have gotten used to seeing their father being a student forever.

To the marginal communities struggling to make a better life in Canada.

To the participants who help make it a success.

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## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Brief description of the project

There is a significant difference between the lived experiences and spaces of the margin and how they are perceived and represented. Representations of the margin in the popular media deviate immensely from the imagination and lived experiences of such identities. Determined to re-evaluate the concept of the margin and its space in society, on the one hand, and how these concepts are perceived in the dominant discourse, on the other, I find it necessary to analyze the links between marginal space, mode of production, and reproduction of these ideas. Hence, I have been searching for a conceptual framework that could explain the marginal space not only from a binary opposition but also through the nuances of its relationship with society. The works of Henri Lefebvre, who articulated the concept of social space and spatial inequalities and raised fundamental questions about who has the right to the city, have provided me with a framework to address these questions. Margin is conceptualized here simultaneously as a part of the process of production, a process of becoming, and a social space, as opposed to the Foucauldian concept positing that margins could be revealed through the discursive acts of writing and speech. Lefebvre's oeuvre has become crucial for my research, as my methodology challenges hegemonic knowledge production and takes an alternative route. Margin communicates through language and beyond, incorporating images, interviews, and visual narratives. Also, the research draws on several interdisciplinary field of studies including Canadian Cultural, Studies, Visual Culture Studies, Marginality Studies, Ethnic Studies, Identity Studies, and Spatial Studies, as Communication and Culture by nature is interdisciplinary. Therefore, the research does not rely on a particular discipline.

This project is about how the existence of a hegemonic practice, along with a set of ideologies and body politics, reproduces a specific national discourse to privilege dominant identities, conceived by the margin. However, it is also about how hybrid forms of living constantly challenge that narrative to facilitate the voices of the other: the marginalized, the displaced, and the immigrants. The research uses Lefebvre's idea of space and the margin to conceptualize and expand our knowledge of the cultural production of identities in the national discourse of so-called multicultural Canada.

This is a research-creation project based on images and interviews. Often, marginalized voices neither share a language nor a temporal reality. Therefore, images play a crucial role in both the research-creation part and the analysis. Everyday experiences of the margin have been contrasted with their popular representations in the media, while any representation is bounded by space. However, the problem with the concept of space is that it has been understood in different ways, such as physical space, mental space, or social space. The theory of space has had a strictly mathematical (geometric) meaning for quite some time, associated with empty areas. But its relationship with lived reality, both in terms of physical and social space, has not been clearly defined. "But the relationship between mathematics and reality – physical or social reality – was not obvious, and indeed a deep rift had developed between these two realms" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 2).

For our purpose, we need a clear understanding of social space and spatial practices of the margin. The concept of space, initially within the confines of philosophy, was closely bound up with the 'real' space of the Greek city, but the connection was severed later in philosophy's development (p. 14). Mathematics then took over the problem for some time, which contributed to the abstract logico-mathematical space. However, it did not resolve what Lefebvre referred to as the "practico-sensory realm of social space" i.e. the real space

where social interaction takes place and social life continues, as mathematicians mostly categorized space in purely absolute terms. By the time mathematicians left the issue for philosophy, mathematical theories aggravated the old ‘problem of knowledge’ i.e. how to transition from abstract mathematical space (mental space) to the practical, to the theory of social life (Lefebvre, 1991). The other issue with the concept of space entering the modern field of inquiry through philosophy is that it has been normalized, with no limits whatsoever to the idea of ‘mental space’.

Consequently, the proliferation of attributing meaning to the concept of mental space has become merely a subject of interpretation, which yields innumerable different ‘spaces’: literary space, ideological space, urban space, space of dreams, cinematic space, Picasso’s space, and so on, problematically constituting “the locus of a ‘theoretical practice’ which is separated from social practice and which sets itself up as the axis, pivot or central reference point of Knowledge” but more importantly espousing “a powerful ideological tendency ... in an admirably unconscious manner ... which are perforce the ideas of the dominant class” (p.6). The problem is that the properties attributed to this ambiguous mental space in actuality constitute a social space, composed of dominant ideologies through the reproduction of the conditions of production. Therefore, the notion of mental space produces a science of space that represents the political use of knowledge through power. In doing so, it conceals the process of the transition from mental space to social space.

Lefebvre (1991) develops a conceptual triad to disambiguate the concept of space: spatial practice, representations of space, and representational space. Spatial practice is tied to both social relations of production (the division of labour and hierarchy of social functions, for example) and social relations of reproduction (bio-physiological relations between the sexes and between age groups, along with the specific organization of the family) that

ensures continuity and cohesion (p. 33). Representations of space depict and reproduce dominant ideologies. They are tied to the relations of production that are also relations of power demonstrated in space in the form of buildings, structures, monuments, and works of art, inherently political and belonging to politicians, urban planners, scientists, technocratic subdividers, and social engineers (p. 38). Dominant ideologies are reproduced through a socio-politically constructed notion of scarcity typical of neoliberalism—an abundance of space for the rich and too little for the poor (Elden, 2007, p. 106).

In contrast, representational spaces embody complex symbolisms, either coded or not, which are linked to the underground side of social life and art (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 33). These spaces are produced by the inhabitants and users of the space, such as writers, philosophers, and artists, who directly lived within them before conceptualizing them. They describe these spaces through mobilizing associated images and symbols as a response to their lived experiences. Representational spaces can produce forms of resistance, a way of talking back to the representations of space depicted in the existing mode of production.

The margin is characterized by various spatiotemporal references composed of different identity markers, which include but are not limited to racialized/visible minorities, immigrants, asylum seekers, refugees, women (of colour), the LGBTQ2+ community, Indigenous peoples etc. For instance, in the Employment Equity Act, four groups have been designated for employment equity: Indigenous, members of visible minorities, persons with disabilities, and women (Government of Canada, 2013). Indigenous peoples and members of visible minorities include a long list of identities: an Indigenous is considered a North American Indian or a member of a First Nation, Métis or Inuit, which includes treaty, status, or registered Indians, as well as non-status and non-registered Indians. Visible minority status includes a vast array of identities: Black, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, South Asian-

East Indian (including Indian from India; Bangladeshi; Pakistani; East Indian from Guyana, Trinidad, East Africa; etc.), Southeast Asian (including Burmese; Cambodian; Laotian; Thai; Vietnamese; etc.) non-white West Asian, North African or Arab (including Egyptian; Libyan; Lebanese; etc.), non-white Latin American (including Indigenous persons from Central and South America, etc.), persons of mixed origin (with one parent in one of the visible minority groups listed above), and other visible minority groups (Government of Canada, 2013). This huge hue and colour spectrum comes with all sorts of exclusions or ‘othering,’ as they are judged against a normative ‘White.’ By definition, a member of the minority group is defined as a person other than an Indigenous person who is non-white in colour/race, regardless of the place of birth (Government of Canada, 2013).

It becomes clear from this definition that various nuances of divergent groups have invariably been flattened by categorizing them into a single group. Thus, incorporating the margin in the national discourse must be ambiguous as it creates more definitional categories, such as hyphenated identities—a tag of at least two different ethno-cultural or geo-political identities like Bangladeshi-Canadian. Nonetheless, all these groups are constituted in relation to a dominant group.

Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the word margin as “an area, state, or condition excluded from or existing outside the mainstream” (“Merriam-Webster,” n.d.). The word marginalized was first used in 1968 and is defined as “to relegate to an unimportant or powerless position,” (“Merriam-Webster,” n.d.). Accordingly, the margin is considered an insignificant and powerless position or condition outside the mainstream. Hence, Indigenous peoples, visible minorities, women (of color), religious minorities, ethnic minorities, LGBTQ2+ communities, people with disabilities—anyone belonging to that ambiguous space (and time) of difference is the margin.

Marginality is juxtaposed against a standard ideological marker otherwise known as the normative White European body (Statistics Canada, 2017), a narrative integrated within the national discourse through cultural and technological mediation (as a system and body of knowledge) of power and control. The ideas of nation, national boundary, and intersectionality provide further explanations, which have been elaborated in the literature review section. As this study is limited to the Canadian context, the literature review starts with the concept of nation and positions the margin within the discourse of the nation-state.

Identity is never fully unified, a process of ‘becoming’ rather than being. The process of identification privileges some and excludes others (Hall, 1996). Such becoming can remain in a dormant state before being made conscious, as some latent but repressed ideas are not capable of reaching consciousness under ordinary circumstances (Freud, 2010, p. 4) and may need external stimulus. One such example of repressed ideas would be the latent anxiety embedded in the marginal consciousness that only gets out through external stimulus to make them aware of their position, such as in the event of an attack against the marginalized. Boundaries of these processes are constituted by the coherent organization of mental processes called the ego, subject to disturbances, which are always a process of development (Freud, 1961, p. 14). Such disturbances are affected by externalities such as the hierarchy of identification, discursive social practices, etc.

Lefebvre (1991) argues that representational spaces (of the margin) constitute complex symbolisms, imagined by artists, uncovering the underground side of social life, re-imagining it outside the clichéd dominant-marginal narrative. The space inhabited by the margin has a unique relationship to production. On the one hand, it is a mental space, and on the other, it interacts with social space through the modes of production (including people,

machines, buildings, etc.). Therefore, revisiting these spaces provides us with a marginal perspective as well as spatial practices within the relations of production.

This research interrogates existing discursive practices of various representations by inverting their roles in power dynamics through a combination of methodologies that are marginal to, and outside of, Eurocentric knowledge production. It combines elements of different methodologies, including visual and textual analysis, features of Indigenous methodology, interviews, and abduction methodology. Participants speak in their preferred language, complemented by a visual narrative. I also maintained a journal throughout the research, as I wanted to keep a track record of the trajectory and timeline of the research. The journal traces the development of the project, but at the same time, it reveals the creative thought process behind the research creation. This is a research-creation project with an analytical component. Photography played a crucial role in both the research-creation part and the analytical part.

## **1.2 Rationale**

This dissertation explores intersections of identities, with two dominant dimensions looming large over others: one is the issue of language, and the other is race, often understood as being synonymous with skin color. Race, once thought to be a biological phenomenon, is now understood as a social construct. Recently, the concept has become more problematic. Although racially based social structures clearly exist, their legitimacy is fiercely contested because racial identities can be seen as undefinable and fluid. However, race is still a major component of individuality and group recognition (Winant, 2006).

Besides language and race, the idea of culture also appears in various discussions, even though culture is not a well-defined category. It is not clear, for example, what exactly

people mean when they talk about Canadian culture. The concept of culture, a broad and difficult one, often refers to a combination of overlapping ideas, including language and religion, but it also refers to shared everyday practices of identifiable groups. The concept of culture is thus necessarily ambiguous, especially with so many different cultures coexisting in Canada, where immigration is crucial to the nation's imaginary.

Canada has a labour shortage and until 2020 had a declining birth rate, with a record low of an average of 1.4 children per woman in 2020, well below the average 2.1 needed to maintain a population without immigration. Birth rates started to rebound in 2021 (Statistics Canada, 2022) with 367,684 live births recorded, up by 2% from 2020 (360,552).

Immigration has been a way for Canada to deal with labour market shortages and demographic changes, but addressing issues connected to immigration, such as systematic biases, housing affordability, and health care, have not been sufficiently addressed.

Intersections of race, ethnicity, language, and transnationality thus remain at the centre of this study.

Beyond the categories of language, race, and culture, there are many nuances of intersectionality that need to be addressed. The roots of considering intersectionality can be traced back to the famous speech of Sojourner Truth "Ain't I a Woman?" in 1851 (Brah & Phoenix, 2004), which later regained prominence through Black feminist movements of the 1960s and 1970s (Collins, 2015) and gave impetus to the cause. Moreover, intersectionality is viewed as an amalgam of multiple social markers in a person's identity. Some of those elements could privilege identity, while others may be disadvantageous, but these intertwining elements together shape what is known as life chance opportunities (Crenshaw, 1991). For instance, women of color suffered oppression due to their memberships in minority gender, race, and ethnicity groups. However, in some cases, some of these women

of colour may enjoy the privilege of belonging to a higher class and may also experience heterosexual privilege, but others may be further disadvantaged because of their sexual minority status and being a member of a lower class or socio-economic status. Again, the interconnectedness of these micro-level identities further interacts with macro-level structures such as poverty, patriarchy, and White supremacy. Combinations of multi-level intersectional identities create inequalities and marginalizations (Muirhead et al., 2020). An identity is considered marginal if any number of combinations of these interlocking intersections is found in a body. Therefore, when this dissertation discusses persons who are not native speakers of English (or French in Quebec), though may otherwise be privileged by being heterosexual White males, they would be considered marginal due to their membership in a marginal linguistic group. Likewise, other kinds of intersectionality would render somebody marginal: one may be a native speaker of English but of brown skin colour and therefore marginal.

Even a renewed interest in marginality has failed to explore the various nuances of marginal spaces because academia is dominated by White North American and Western European bodies, privileged in the tenure system, editorial boards, publications, and citation practices (Pearce et al. 2020, p. 6, Chakravartty et al., 2018). Academia lacks inclusivity and diversity. The greater issue, however, is not just about marginal groups moving closer to the centre, breaking silence with a new voice of strength, or even redrawing the circle to be more inclusive. Rather, it is about what Kobayashi (1994) called “erasing the circle, and redefining scholarly endeavors, as a means not only of interpreting, but also of effecting, social change” (p. 73).

The narrative of the nation-state accepts a culturally homogeneous group belonging to a corresponding, clearly demarcated territory as given, natural (Gupta and Ferguson, 1992, p.

12). It fails to include the lived experiences of the margin and marginal perceptions of social space. Marginal identities, in all their various nuances, essentially get excluded from the narrative of the national discourse, as the production of social space still associates, for example, Canadian Culture with a people called Canadians and a place called Canada from a dominant narrative. Although what defines Canadian culture is vague and subject to interpretation, most literature on the production of space and identity excludes marginal interpretations.

This dissertation questions standardized positivist research paradigms that came out of the womb of mainly biomedical and behavioural research following WWII, which has been slowly incorporated in the review flagship practices for all disciplines, including the social sciences and humanities by the late 1990s, affecting ethics and methodologies of knowledge production in the social science and humanities research (Gontcharov, 2017; Hoonard, 2014). The research challenges the dominant mode of knowledge production by incorporating interviews, ethnographic observation, and visual narrative of marginal spaces in its qualitative research approach.

### **1.3 Research objectives, problems, and questions**

My objective is to analyze and interrogate the hypothesis that dominant representations do not endorse the social relations and practices (lived experience) of the margin. I am at expanding our knowledge of marginality in hybrid cultures with a specific combination of methodologies addressing the problematic that the space of the margin is neither clearly defined nor specified, ambiguous at best, an unresolved third space (Bhabha, 1994) similar to what Freud termed memory-residues (2010), or what Foucault called in-between spaces (1986). The study is not only a work in progress but also partly reimagining a field

constituted by spatial dynamics and metaphors that have concrete effects for lived experiences.

My research broadly addresses two questions:

- 1) How does the spatiotemporal reality of the margin deviate from the dominant discourse?
- 2) How does the socio-cultural production of (ideas of) the margin shape marginal identities vis-a-vis a set of dominant ideologies produced and reproduced by cultural and technological mediation?

#### **1.4 Conceptual framework**

My conceptual framework is built on the idea that alternative forms of knowledge production and methodology outside of the positivist research paradigm of Eurocentric knowledge need to challenge a dominant narrative that excludes marginal identities from a holistic and inclusive national discourse. One of the fundamental questions of our time is how we are doing as a society with people from many different backgrounds living and working together. The most pressing and contested question in this regard is to ask: ‘What does it mean to be a Canadian and who has the right to speak?’

Bannerji argues that Canadian identity essentially resides in the ‘colour of the skin’—colour as the equivalent of race—embedded in language as an indirect notion of multi-culture and ethnicity. Unlike radical alternative political-cultural activists, the Canadian state was careful not to directly use the notion of colour in the way it designates newcomers. But colour has been translated into the language of visibility. The new Canadian social and political subject was designated as part of a “visible minority,” stressing both the features of being

non-white and therefore visible in a way whites are not, and of being politically a minor player. (Bannerji, 2000, p. 545)

The concept of Canadian identity emphasizes certain attributes that correspond more with specific bodies, while minority groups are regularly excluded and marginalized (Mahtani, 2001). Besides, although various studies have consistently demonstrated the prevalent problematic coverage of racialized groups in the media, there has been comparatively little research on the *perception* of racialized groups in regard to media representations (Mahtani, 2008, p. 640). Recent immigrants and first-generation Canadians indeed have it more difficult to manage everyday life. However, as Mahtani's study and other empirical evidence suggests, even second and subsequent generations of immigrants with significant cultural and political affiliations to Canada face an enormous amount of obstacles to achieve parity with dominant groups, be it cultural, political, or economic. Inter-generational struggle makes those groups susceptible to racism, and marginalized groups are always wary of discrimination, which remains an underlying condition in public discourse and unleashes itself in the form of violence, especially at precarious times.

For instance, although the so-called "Freedom Convoy 2022" began with the agenda of opposing vaccine mandates, especially for truckers, the underlying agenda for its organizers like Patrick King, who has a history of White nationalism, racism, and xenophobia, was to stop immigration, BIPOC, and LGBTQ2+ communities while promoting White supremacist ideologies and far-right politics (Gilmore, 2022; Schraer, 2022). A partial representation in the protest was evident by the non-participation of the South Asian truckers, who represent about 20% of all truck drivers across Canada. They stayed away from the protest as many of them did not see themselves being represented in the trucker convoy and

were also not against the vaccine mandate. They believed that the protest missed the mark on key issues affecting the industry (Gandham, 2022; Rana, 2022a).

This tactic of excluding the margin from the Canadian discourse is omnipresent, and the fact that what is considered a Canadian identity starts to diminish with every deviation from an idealized Judeo-Christian able-bodied English-speaking White male subject is pervasive. Dominant discourse has a narrow range of inclusivity as to who can pass and who cannot, rather than being inclusive of the various nuances of identities. An Asian body loses its privilege; it is similar if the Judeo-Christian marker is replaced by a Muslim or Sikh identity. If replaced by a man of colour, it loses even more, when replaced by a woman of colour, it is left with nothing normative. The further it moves toward various intersections of identities the further the body keeps losing the privilege and ultimately becomes the absolute other, visibly too minor to be recognized (Haque, 2023).

The narrative of the law is based on “a virtuous tolerance” of diversity that accommodates diversity as long as it is within the limits of its own system of meaning (Berger, 2015, p. 116) and grounded in the culture of dominant ideologies. Anything outside these parameters is seen as problematic (and thus not necessarily tolerated). For instance, there is a gap between what the law says about religion and what it does. Religious minorities experience “legal management of religion in far more political and less pacific terms than these conventional narratives allow” (p. 22). Instead of substantiating the claim of equality when it comes to upholding the religious rights of citizens, the responsibility (or burden) is put on religious individuals to compartmentalize or suppress crucial aspects of their identity to participate in the public sphere (Juric, 2017). This was evident in the introduction of Bill 21 (passed by the Quebec National Assembly on June 16, 2019), which prohibits wearing religious symbols such as crosses, hijabs, turbans, and yarmulkes for civil service employees

in positions of authority, such as lawyers, judges, police officers, and teachers in the public sector, purportedly to confirm the province's secular status (Souissi, 2021). Arguably, this policy violates human rights and harms people who are already marginalized (Canadian Civil Liberties Association, n.d.). Even though the claim is that the legislation endorses religious neutrality, equality, and freedom of religion, in fact, all three principles are compromised in the subsequent parts of the legislation, which "...targets some of the most marginalized individuals in Quebec society, prevents them from fully accessing or flourishing within the public sphere, and exacerbates pervasive discrimination against them" (Sheppard et al., 2021, p. 22). The legislation forces marginal identities, especially at a micro-level, to suppress crucial aspects of their identity, which often comes down to the question of losing a job versus giving away the right to freedom of (religious) expression as guaranteed by The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The debate is said to be a supranational, international, and even a global one, which is complex and explosive:

... the discussion about Bill 21, beyond its particulars in Quebec and Canada, is emblematic of much broader contemporary questions involving the proper authority of the domestic and international spheres, of constitutional organization and international obligation and of democracy, that go to the very heart of the modern rights project – itself increasingly attuned to and torn by pluralist pressures. These questions, moreover, are raised in relation to an issue – namely, how freedom of religion intersects with multiculturalism and systemic discrimination – that is among the most sensitive and divisive in contemporary human rights discourse (Mégret, 2022, p. 219-220).

Even though Canadians of European Judeo-Christian heritage have regularly shown enthusiastic support for ethnic events such as folk fairs, crafts, exhibits, and dance performance, with the increase in the proportion of visible minorities in Canada, their presence appears to be generating growing anxiety, expressed on occasion in a status-

preservationist backlash, to which members of misunderstood and misrepresented religious, ethnic, and racial minorities fall victim.

In Sociology and related disciplinary studies, the focus has been on the problems encountered by migrant groups, such as prejudice in the workplace, in housing, and in public places. The great emphasis on that dimension of the ethnic minority experience has resulted in the impression that the groups themselves are to be seen as problems (Williams et al., 2000). Similarly, even though the goal of interfaith dialogue in the West is to spread awareness and tolerance, an exaggerated emphasis on faith, as in the common phrase “the faith communities,” has a particular Christian slant, with priority given to doctrine and scriptures rather than family practices and values. This has produced a narrative that essentializes religion. Therefore, many scholars argue that the emphasis on congregational worship is a process of protestantizing non-European religions (p. 7). As a result, portrayals of religious minorities are quite often misrepresented (as was pointed out by participant P3 of this research).

The obvious manifestation is an all-too-common media portrayal of Muslims as fundamentalist fanatics, or the Western view of a ‘true’ Sikh as a standardized image of a bearded person wearing a turban (p.7). An alternative narrative, opposed to the dominant perspective on how marginal groups perceive their spatiotemporal reality, is crucial in re-imagining socially constructed marginalization and deconstructing the body politics that usually results in one form of discrimination or the other.

### **1.5 Contribution to the field**

My contribution to the field is a re-conceptualization of the margin from a community perspective. The participants in this research helped produce knowledge of and about their

space while being wholly immersed in their environment. They speak about the things that they find important, about their spatial reality, and they share images with the researcher. Photos depict their spatial reality, and video interviews reveal the representational spaces imagined and perceived by the margin. The researcher also conducted an extensive ethnographic observation of social spaces in a visual narrative, depicting the spatial relations of the margin to the mode of production.

The images taken by the researcher and the participants are juxtaposed to visual representations in popular media through a collage that reveals and draws attention to the contrast between the lived experience of the margin and their depiction in the dominant media narrative, which exposes uneven power relations and struggles of the margin. The collage serves as more than a display of binary oppositions: it constitutes a frame of reference for the lived experience of the margin and a starting point for conversations by generating a counter-narrative of space, uncovering the representational spaces of the margin.

To this end, literature, and what is missing from it, is viewed from a broader perspective that includes oral literature and non-traditional published works. For example, I am also interested in how popular media perceive and represent the margin through images, or the under-representation or stereotypical representation of the margin in various signs and symbols, cartoons, advertisements, billboards, etc., where the marginal experience is either missing or negligible in general. The gaps in literature on the margin has been conceptualized as a methodological gap, a conceptual gap, and a literature gap, all of those missing marginal perspectives, stories, and representations.

The methodological gap exists because academic approaches often depend on one single method of data collection, for example, in interviews, field works or focus group

studies (Ghosh, 2013; Murdie & Ghosh, 2010; Ghosh, 2014), but seldom use a combination of methodologies. The mixed methodology used in this research incorporates oral, visual, experiential, and observable data in order to allow a more nuanced understanding while drawing on both direct and online interactions to analyze and incorporate viewers' feedback.

The conceptual gap is viewed as a flawed perception of the margin based on different markers for non-white bodies from the former colonies to reproduce exclusionary practices that endorse a hierarchy of privileges. It challenges a practice where discussions never concentrate their analysis on White identity but rather blame the non-white, or in some cases the non-heterosexual Other, for being guilty of essentialism (hooks, 1992, p. 30; Kobayashi, 1994). This research addresses the conceptual gap by reversing the role of the margin, for example, rather than taking a top-down approach the research has used a bottom-up approach from a marginal view that is participatory as their participation and engagement mobilize the knowledge creation about the marginal space. The production of knowledge itself takes a non-essentialist, marginal perspective.

The research also addresses the literature gap, as the existing literature mostly talks about the margin from a linguistic, religious, or economic standpoint. There is hardly any mention of the cultural aspect, and culture is often conflated with religion. As I will discuss below, culture does not necessarily denote religion or language, even though these elements could influence culture. There are many more layers of culture, and they could be passed down for generations. For example, Black Americans are considered to have a distinct colloquial use of the language, literature, music, dance, and everyday practices that can be identified as Black culture, as "American mainstream popular culture has always involved certain traditions that could only be attributed to black cultural vernacular traditions" (Hall, 2006, p. 105).

This dissertation conceptualizes the process of cultural mediation in space and moves the discussion forward by contributing to the understanding and reimagining of the margin. The gap in literature is thus seen not only from a rigid sense of the meaning of written words but also from what is represented (printed materials such as text and images in the newspaper analyzed) and practiced in the social sphere.

To conclude this section with an example, I will briefly address the flattened conception of the margin when the term *desi* or ‘South Asian’ is used, levelling all nuances of the geo-cultural space that it refers to. Although it is generally accepted that Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka are integral parts of the geographical region identified as ‘South Asia’, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Myanmar, or Nepal are arbitrarily included or excluded. But there is no ‘South Asian’ monolithic culture. Any so-called ‘South Asian’ festival predominantly showcases a Hindi/Punjabi culture including their film, music, and dance. Those do not adequately represent the cultural diversity of the region, which Ghosh (2013) argued is a project “to map, categorize and denote ex-colonial non-white bodies” (p. 39). It is argued that the government’s use of census categories, along with the methods of data collection, not only conceals the political agendas of dominant groups but is also frequently used for ‘othering’ marginal populations (Appadurai 1993, Kobayashi 1993, Anthias 1999), which, in the case of ‘South Asian’, as Ghosh (2013) argues, “...is not just how the data are collected, but also why and how these are aggregated and further categorized that reflect ethnocentrism and a Eurocentric knowledge production process” (p. 40).

This imposed ‘South Asian’ identity is a myth. There is no single ‘South Asian’ culture (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992; Phadnis & Ganguly, 2001; Ghosh, 2013). However, the Government of Ontario has categorized ‘South Asians’ as a single cultural group by proclaiming the month of May as the ‘South Asian Heritage Month’ (Ghosh, 2013).

Government instrumentalities, along with media and academic practices, have come together to define 'South Asians' as a 'race' in Canada, with serious political implications, as they influence the perceptions and attitudes of Canadians. No academic discipline or spatiality has escaped this process of 'othering', and a rewriting of the terms of citizenship and democracy in society at large is needed to overcome racism (Kobayashi & Peak, 2002).

This research not only challenges the cultural construction of the margin in a dominant discourse that ignores other voices but also the boundaries that exclude some and empower others by mediating a flattened conception of the margin, which has been argued to constitute a form of institutionalized racism (Ghosh, 2013). By juxtaposing the experiential oral and visual narrative of the margin and their representations in the dominant media discourse, the research works as an act of resistance (Hall, 1996; Foucault, 1978) and at the same time widens our understanding of marginality. A re-imagination of spatio-temporal realities can expose underlying tensions within the margin when negotiating the discursive practices of society, dominant ideologies hidden in plain sight, and the response to those. By reversing the process of knowledge production through an interrogation of the ambivalent spatio-temporal reality, the research can provide insights into the relationship of the margin to power, resilience, and struggle.

### **1.6 Scope and limitations of the study**

The research explores the marginal perspective through interviews, photographic images, and subsequent analysis of the first-generation Bangladeshi diaspora. At the same time, it provides a glimpse of the aspirations and struggles of second-generation immigrants regarding their language, culture, and identity. It has a limited scope, but any study is ultimately a study of a part of the population, as it is impossible to replicate an entire

population. Qualitative methods involve a lower degree of pre-structuring and because the diaspora community establishes social and symbolic cross-border ties, it “makes them the most suitable methods for approaching the complexity of diasporic life” (Amelina & Barglowski, 2018, p. 34). The empirical research takes a non-essentialist understanding of diaspora which is neither a stable nor necessarily a fixed category but relies on transnational and other hierarchies and socially constructed attributes including gender, class, etc. built on the social practices of people (Amelina & Barglowski, 2018).

During the research phase of this project, face-to-face interviews had to be postponed for two years because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The focus needed to be shifted toward images, ethnographic observations (technologically mediated from a distance), and subsequent visual analyses. Irrespective of the type of methods applied, the cultural construction of the margin and systematic discrimination against the marginalized remains a reality exposed by the material. The shift to photography has not changed but rather supported the initial hypothesis that the lived experience of the margin deviates significantly from mainstream popular representations.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### 2.1 The production of social space

This research concentrates on cultural productions of the margin for which space, especially social space, is crucial, as it shapes and mediates bodies, including those on the margin. Such cultural practices cannot be viewed as separate from social practices. Hence, the literature review starts with the idea of space and spatial practices of society, which ensure continuity and some degree of cohesion, but at the same time guarantee a level of competence and performance (Lefebvre, 1991). Social space can thus be used as a tool to analyze society and its biases, as it incorporates “social actions, the actions of subjects both individual and collective who are born and who die, who suffer and who act” (p. 33). However, the dominant narrative, an ally of social power, does little justice to the lived experience of the margin, as it withers away quickly:

Like all social practice, spatial practice is lived directly before it is conceptualized; but the speculative primacy of the conceived over the lived causes practice to disappear along with life, and so does very little justice to the ‘unconscious’ level of lived experience per se (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 34).

To capture the essence of that lived experience, photography, and interviews (is a form of oral storytelling, as the participants often engaged in describing their experiences through life stories) have been used to preserve moments of spatial practice that would otherwise disappear. Consequently, the gap of the ‘unconscious’ has been addressed by space conceptualized through interviews, images, and the analysis of that lived experience.

de Certeau (1984) argues that “every story is a travel story—a spatial practice” (p. 115) that involves everyday tactics and is part of them, articulating resistance. de Certeau

defines places as static and spaces as vectors. Stories are mobilized within language through spatial practices. A place is described concerning location, setting, position, etc., whereas, space is expressed as room, expanse, breathing space, freedom, etc. Therefore, place depends not only on positionality but also on occupying space, whereas space is materialized when practiced. Thus, de Certeau perceives the idea of space as a materialization of places through stories arranged in a linear order. The journey does not become a journey until it is told. For de Certeau, narratives are an integral part of human geography, which is also what Foucault (1972) emphasizes when arguing that speaking and writing are essential acts of discourse. For our purpose, the stories of our participants also sum up the spatial practices of the margin.

Two bodies cannot occupy the same place at the same time. They can only be next to each other, but there can be multiple spatial formations (mental, physical, imaginary) in the same instance. Hence, those constitute different spatial realities (Lefebvre, 1991). It depends on who is telling the story, as de Certeau argues (1984), because stories are spatial trajectories. Thus, at the same time and in the same space, there could be a place for both the oppressor and the oppressed. There can always be more than one version of a story, depending on who is telling it and how it is told.

For example, during the Occupy Wall Street movement against social and economic inequality and injustice, there were at least two groups involved: the supporters of the movement, and people and organizations opposing it (corporations and authorities). Both parties might have occupied the same space at the same time; however, they have quite different spatial realities and thus construct two conflicting stories (or more). Besides, analyzing social practice through language is problematic, as it then becomes necessary to determine whether language precedes, accompanies, or follows social space: “Is it a precondition of social space or merely a formulation of it?” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 16). Hence, it

is necessary to emphasize the dialectical nature of the social space, as it is dependent on the set of relations that is a practical relationship. It is a “part of an interaction between ‘subjects’ and their space and surroundings.” (p. 18).

Lefebvre contends that through language alone, it is not possible “to make the leap from exchange (of goods) to use” (p. 19). He proposes to find connections between the inner experience (mental space), physical space (things, trees, touch), and social space (speech, communication). He further asserts that social space is a space of interaction, and language is the primary means of communication—a schema also echoed by Foucault (1972), prioritizing the act of speaking over writing. Lefebvre, however, deviates from the Foucauldian idea that everything communicated through the act of speaking and written language is communicable. Instead, he argues that experience quickly disappears. What exists is memory. Besides, language has certain limitations. Even though we can express a lot with language, emotions such as happiness, melancholy, hatred, or sensations like touch, sexual pleasure, pain, etc. cannot be fully comprehended or communicated through language. We might be able to come closer to describing the incommunicable, and especially poets and writers may get very close to describing feelings, as they have a strong grasp over the language. Still, they would never be able to fully articulate or describe those experiences accurately.

On the other hand, historical time gives birth to space that the state occupies and rules over (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 21). Therefore, the concepts of state and power, along with the idea of nation and nationalism, are relevant for us. But before we can delve into these ideas when we discuss the relations of production to social space within different models of technologies, we need to clarify a few other concepts related to work, product, production, different models of technologies, and their interrelations to social space.

Work is something that is defined as unique and supports growth that cannot be reproduced; for example, nature creates and never produces (Franklin, 2004; Lefebvre, 1991, p. 70). In contrast, a product is something that can be reproduced through repetition, such as an iPhone in the factory.

There are also two distinct models of technologies: holistic and prescriptive. Holistic technologies support the ‘growth’ model, while prescriptive technologies support the ‘production’ model (Franklin, 2004). Most of today's technologies are prescriptive, so they follow the production model. In the production model, a sequence of actions with a certain objective demands a certain order of spatiotemporal exigency. For example, spatial elements like the body, hands, and eyes are mobilized along with materials such as metal, stone, and equipment such as tools, language, instructions, etc. Thus, when describing space, the margin narrates social space that is always about production, materials, and equipment. For example, when P5 shares his images, he is seen with the tools and machines at his workplace, where he encounters instructions in English (a language foreign to him and many others) every day. The production takes place only when his hands, eyes, legs, and body are mobilized along with the tools and machines in space through instructions specified in (English) language.

This project moves from products to production (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 26). Participants are not merely the subjects of study, but produce knowledge about their space, and thus become a part of knowledge production. Instead of being viewed as a ‘product’ of the media and pedagogy, they are involved in the production, i.e. become the producers of knowledge. Again, knowledge production needs to be understood here in terms of the mobilization of bodies, tools, and technologies within language.

However, this mobilization is complicated by various layers of social space, as space is not an empty void but includes humans, matter, and nature. These layers are often presented in their technologically mediated entanglement of humans and nonhumans, folded into each other known as ‘collectives’ (Latour, 1999, p. 180). Consequently, participants cannot be viewed in the isolation of their space, living conditions, workplace, tools, or machines that they are mediated into, as those are all interconnected and difficult to untangle. In part, they are what they do, they are where they live, the kind of tools they use, the kind of food they eat, and the kind of language they use. The productive forces of the current period known as Anthropocene have wreaked havoc or almost completed the destruction of nature, which now appears only as a backdrop or “merely the raw material out of which the productive forces of a variety of social systems have forged their particular spaces” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 31). Hence, to unpack the cultural mediation of the margin, not just the things in space but the actual production of space needs to be reviewed.

Every society creates its own space, which is bound by rules and practices set forth by a code that simultaneously isolates and links various places such as places of worship, places of work and leisure, places of death, places of social interaction, etc. At the same time, social space is the means of communication and engagement, which is of primary concern in this research—the way these means of communication, representation, and language play out in producing such spaces through the cultural mediation of bodies. The spatial practices of society reproduce the existing social relations of production. The representations of space act as a conveyor of knowledge and power, leaving hardly any room for representational spaces (the space of the margin). Representational spaces are confined “to works, images and memories whose content, whether sensory, sensual or sexual, is so far displaced that it barely achieves symbolic force” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 50). The only way representational spaces can

make a comeback is by expressing themselves symbolically. Language conveys social practices and disseminates knowledge. Thus, it is imperative to review how the production of knowledge, using representations and discursive practices, shapes the cultural production of the margin, which the next section attempts to untangle.

## **2.2 The production of knowledge**

Knowledge is produced through the interplay of language and discursive practices of a society, as both participants and researchers are always situated in a specific culture, historical time, and language through which they mediate reality (Heidegger, 1962, Foucault, 1972). Therefore, rather than being an objective description of reality, the production of knowledge is constituted through their (participants and researchers) interpretation of the aspect of reality. The knowledge of the center and the margin is also an interpretive process that opens up spaces unheard of before, newer forms of transnational functionalities and neo-colonial spaces in addition to the previously colonized spaces have expanded into new territories through economic and cultural hegemony. These transnational exchanges produce a new political reality triggered by the massive global flow of labor, capital, and technologies that have built a new kind of culture in Western nations, where conflicting and oppositional forces are at play (Giddens, 1990; Sassen, 1996). The global capital and the new immigrant workforce; for instance, although in constant contestation with each other, depend on each other due to their internal unifying properties (Sassen, 1996, p. 206). This cultural construction, on the one hand, creates a hybrid social space, on the other hand, makes the modern Western nation a gathering of the displaced and migrants (Bhabha, 1994). Margin is a social construct rather than a spatiotemporal continuum (even though it could be identified in relation to space-time, for instance, spatial concentration of ethnic enclaves is Danforth, Toronto, but the same identity may become dominant in another space-time such as

Bangladesh), but it shouldn't be conflated with a 'place' or locale as it is rather a condition of being. The new form of hybrid living inside many Western countries, especially in global cities like Toronto, cannot be articulated simply through binary oppositions but rather as "a temporality of representation that moves between cultural formations and social processes without a centred causal logic" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 202). Therefore, modern nation-states such as Canada are increasingly becoming cultural hybrids; however, there is an obvious thrust for cultural domination of specific group(s) over others. These cultural hybrids have certainly brought in the postcolonial, the diasporic, and the subalterns into the discussion of nationhood.

Moreover, the recent refugee crises have reconfigured immigration policy and border control, where a culture of mistrust is often further complicated by the media framing of refugees and economic migrants as 'security threats' (Ehrkamp, 2017; Kyriakides, 2017). The mistrust and misconceptions have pushed the idea of how and where borders should be manifested and enforced in contemporary times, often pushing borders outside of the nation-states' territories. These were manifested in the European Union and Australia, but also during the US-Mexico migrant crisis (Musalo & Lee, 2017; Morales, 2019), where most of the children and families arriving from El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala were separated from their families and kept outside of the borders. Furthermore, separated enclaves and imaginary boundaries exist within the national borders such as Chinatown, Little India, Little Italy, etc., often as a dystopian view of society. These segregated communities are often pushed toward the edges by the actions of both Ideological and Repressive State Apparatuses. Besides, although Indigenous and Quebecers are considered nations, scholars have raised the question of whether Canada can be considered a nation. To this end, Premier Justin Trudeau articulated a radical and controversial concept when in an interview with the New York

Times Magazine he said, “There is no core identity, no mainstream in Canada,” (Lawson, 2015; Malcolm, 2016). It ignited debate on both sides of the notion of whether Canada could represent a radical new model of nationhood, and consequently, the first post-national state (Biscahie, 2019; Bloemraad, 2004; Foran, 2017; Trebilcock, 2019), even though it’s been criticized as chimeric (Biscahie, 2019). Also, because of its colonial legacy, like all colonial projects, Canada regarded the cultural annihilation of the so-called backward cultures, especially that of the Indigenous peoples, as a natural process of civilization; where, by default, cultural elimination has been an accepted government policy (Neu & Therrien, 2003). Therefore, it is crucial to revisit the concepts of nation and national identity, as they play crucial roles in the cultural production of margin.

### **2.3 Nation, state, and identity**

Nationalism, primarily a political principle, is defined as a sentiment or a movement where the political and the national unit should be congruent (Gellner, 1983). However, it is not a prerequisite for the state and the nation to coexist, as there is evidence of a state such as Canada emerging without the help of the nation, whereas some nations certainly emerged “without the blessings of their own state” (p. 6). State power is linked to the ruling class, and social stratification of power is central.

The nation is an elusive concept, and there are two separate schools of thought. The classical concept presupposes a non-voluntary membership with a common origin, language, tradition, and culture. The other definition assumes of a voluntary formation of the nation, conceived as a group of people aspiring for a common political organization. For the latter definition, the group members’ loyalty is civic, while the former, ethnic or the ethno-(cultural) nationalism presupposes membership in the community having a

natural ethnic-cultural background, in which one cannot choose to be a member. Rather membership is accidental (Kohn, 2017). In this narrative, nationalism focuses on the attitude of the members about their national identity as well as their actions in seeking to achieve (or sustain) some form of political sovereignty. Sovereignty and territory are the usual motivations of any national struggle for independence. The nation has also been defined as an “imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (Anderson, 2006, p. 6).

The Canadian state champions cultural diversity and multiculturalism, and it promotes an abstract form of nationalism that is “unbiased in favour of any special nationality of their own, and generously preaching the doctrine for all nations alike: let all nations have their political roofs, and let all of them also refrain from including non-nationals under it” (Gellner, 1983, p. 1-2). Such a non-egoistic nationalism is rare, as “nationalism has neither been so sweetly reasonable nor so rationally symmetrical” (p. 2). Thus, the Canadian state seems to lean towards the civic or voluntaristic approach that supports a state-like organization—a boundary where violence is legitimized only by a central political authority to whom it delegates this right (p. 3).

This central political authority (ruling class) exercises that right by using force through the police, the military, etc., which Althusser (2001) identified as Repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs). The theory of nationality, Gellner (1983) argues, is based on will and culture, loosely understood as ‘shared’. However, according to Gellner, nations can be defined in terms of will and culture only under certain conditions:

Rather, when general social conditions make for standardized, homogeneous, centrally sustained high cultures, pervading entire populations and not just elite minorities, a situation arises in which

well-defined educationally sanctioned and unified cultures constitute very nearly the only kind of unit with which men willingly and often ardently identify. The cultures now seem to be the natural repositories of political legitimacy. Only then does it come to appear that any defiance of their boundaries by political units constitutes a scandal?

Under these conditions, though under these conditions only, nations can indeed be defined in terms both of will and of culture, and indeed in terms of the convergence of them both with political units. In these conditions, men will be politically united with all those, and only those, who share their culture. Polities then will extend their boundaries to the limits of their cultures, and to protect and impose their culture with the boundaries of their power. The fusion of will, culture and polity becomes the norm, and one not easily or frequently defied (Once, it had been almost universally defied, with impunity, and had indeed passed unnoticed and undiscussed.) These conditions do not define the human situation as such, but merely its industrial variant.

It is nationalism which engenders nations, and not the other way round. Admittedly, nationalism uses the pre-existing, historically inherited proliferation of cultures or cultural wealth, though it uses them very selectively, and it most often transforms them radically. (Gellner, 1983, p. 55)

Gellner's fusion of will, culture, and polity, and especially the proposition of a standardized, shared high culture, is not only based on the assumption of a very rigid and strict set of conditions but also has several exclusions and anomalies. For example, it excludes capital, labelling it as an overrated category and replacing it with education—but what about the poor, the recent immigrants, or the linguistic minorities who have limited to no access to opportunities to higher education? This understanding of the nation promotes cultural homogenization and social entropy (contrary to the idea of multiculturalism and diversity), and supports linguistic standardization—how does it work in instances such as Canada, being officially a bilingual country with many other ethnolinguistic groups? Also, the assumption

of cultural boundaries of certain well-defined, educationally sanctioned, and unified cultures pervading the entire population is somehow problematic and exclusionary, even a myth.

Gellner's argument that in contemporary understanding, nationality may be definable in terms of a shared culture, is only valid insofar as it reduces cultural differences toward homogeneity due to a more fluid and global culture. However, this attempt at cultural homogeneity, narrowing down cultural differences, has often been criticized as Americanization or McDonaldization of culture, which is a proponent of capital. Gellner's thesis in the end even uses culture and nation interchangeably when he writes: "Such a nation/culture then and then only becomes the natural social unit, and cannot normally survive without its own political shell, the state" (p. 143). It involves what Gellner himself identifies as nationalism's self-deception:

Nationalism is, essentially, the general imposition of a high culture on society, where previously low cultures had taken up the lives of the majority, and in some cases of the totality, of the population. It means that generalized diffusion of a school-mediated, academy-supervised idiom, codified for the requirements of reasonably precise bureaucratic and technological communication. It is the establishment of an anonymous, impersonal society, with mutually substitutable atomized individuals, held together above all by a shared culture of this kind, in place of a previous complex structure of local groups, sustained by folk cultures reproduced locally and idiosyncratically by the micro-groups themselves. That is what *really* happens (p. 57).

This impersonal society, in a school-mediated, standardized, homogenized, and centrally sustained 'shared' culture is, in reality, the representation of the dominant groups, and not shared by the entire population. Any single criterion, such as language or ethnicity, or a combination of criteria, such as language, common territory, culture, or any other such 'objective' criteria to explain what a nation is incomplete.

Hobsbawm (1992), on the other hand, treats any sufficiently large body of people whose members consider themselves as members of a 'nation' as such. For Hobsbawm, there is no *a priori* definition. A nation can only be recognized *a posteriori*. The nation is not an unchanging social entity but relates to formation of the modern territorial state. Hobsbawm challenges Gellner's view of a modernization from above, viewing the construction of a nation as a dual phenomenon: Like Gellner, he acknowledges that a nation is essentially constructed from above, but he also insists on analyzing and understanding it from below, "in terms of the assumptions, hopes, needs, longings and interests of ordinary people" (1992, p. 10), an approach that aligns with Roy (1993). But how do these approaches incorporate the idea of identity, and more specifically, a Canadian identity?

McLuhan (1977) argues that all forms of violence are a quest for identity. McLuhan's use of the term 'violence' needs to be understood rather broadly. For example, a debate or a game of soccer would be considered as an act of violence, with two teams engaged in controlled violence. Other forms of resistance, such as symbolic protests, political demonstrations, or even the act of writing could constitute controlled violence. Also, identities are visible at the point of interaction or when they clash. Identities appear homogeneous when they agree, and they appear different and unique only in disagreements. Therefore, violence (not necessarily in the literal sense of the meaning) is a quest for identity.

On the other hand, marginality manifests through a complex system in which discourse posits a dichotomous view of society so that it can appear holistic and representative. At the same time, discourse needs to remain obsessively fixed and yet uncertain of the boundaries of society (Bhabha, 1994, p. 207). Marginal space is produced through social hierarchy and representations. This is echoed in the writings of Mary Pratt (1992), who unravels a 'fixed yet uncertain' discursive exercise that subjugates the margin at

the edges of society in ways reminiscent of the periods of slavery and colonialism—contact zones where “disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination—like colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today” (Pratt, 1992, p. 4). For instance, the deeply entrenched racism towards Black people is exposed time and again through a coerced subjugation of the so-called ‘savage’ African American subject. The name keeps on changing, George Floyd suffocating under the knee of yet another White person of authority, Ahmaud Arbery or Breonna Taylor (Barrie, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2021), but the discourse remains the same, reminiscent of an antebellum South.

The force of traditions becomes visible and potent when disparate cultures meet in contact zones. For instance, intermarriage becomes a major issue for South Asians no matter how Westernized they may be. At the time of marriage, for example, even though the teachings in classical Sikh literature speak against the caste system, the issue of the caste or ‘*jati*’ becomes crucial for many Sikhs. Similarly, Gujarati or Bengali ties may become prominent when marriage plans are made and caught in between cultures: “The question of how to integrate traditional values and westernized attitudes is a common concern. In the 1970s scholars wrote of the second generation as ‘caught between cultures’.” (Hinnells, 2000, p.6).

Pratt also unpacks the meaning blended and obscured in everyday chores, hidden beneath the lines and structures of Eurocentric travel and exploration writings and elsewhere, as these travellers’ tales and adventure stories have been crucial in representing a savage and primitive Other. Western cultural concepts and images portrayed racialized representations of Indigenous communities in film and other media such as ‘red’ Indian, ‘cannibal’ chief, etc. have become fixed and embedded in the psyche of the West from those tales (Meek, 2006),

which provided opportunities for further reproduction of the narrative of the savage and primitive Other (Smith, 2021, p. 8). There are many examples of such knowledge production in popular film and photography, novels and stories, newspapers, and cultural icons including signs, symbols, and other discursive acts beyond language that always remain within the reach of power and control (Foucault, 1972). All these elements point towards that disparate location of marginality that I explore in my research.

To further elaborate on how the marginal identity fits within the present-day discourse of the nation, an analysis of language and its significance in the formation of identities is crucial. Language is a powerful social tool that is also a part of social space.

#### **2.4 Language and religion in the formation of identity**

Language plays a central role in the process of the ‘becoming of identities’ that are arguably always fragmented, never fully unified (Hall, 1996, p. 5). This obtains even more in a place like Canada, where the presence of many different cultures demands a revision of the narrative of nationhood that does not necessarily resolve contradictions in culture, language, class, sex, etc. (Hobsbawm, 1992; Bhabha, 1994, p. 142). The term ‘different cultures’ is used as opposed to multiculturalism, which has been used to organize communities based on racialized identities (Bannerji, 2000, p. 537). Ever-fluid, uncategorized, in-between spatiotemporal references in the becoming of identities pose a challenge to the narrative of the nation, as they not only disrupt the discourse of a nation that assumes the natural conjunction of a singular culture, a people, and a place (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992) but also challenges the boundaries of this imaginary in the confines of global capital.

One of the predominant markers of nationhood is supposed to be rooted in language (Choudhury, 2015, p. 36),<sup>1</sup> even though the material base of nationalism is made up of multiple elements like language, space, religion, unity of economic life, etc. The centrality of language, Choudhury argues, can be understood from the general truth that it is much harder to change language than religion, and language has the power to overcome the divisions of religion and class in a population. The immense linguistic diversity of Europe prevented it from having a collective identity until the invention of print media. The issue of linguistic diversity has been resolved through the union of capitalism and print technology, which created a monolingual mass-reading public and made it possible to imagine new kinds of communities, ultimately setting up the stage for modern nations (McLuhan 1962; Innis, 1964; Gellner, 1983; Anderson, 2006).

The crucial role of language in identity formation was evident in national struggles such as in the case of Bangladesh. It is a testament to how language is instrumental in the imagination of the nation-state, a fraternity rooted in a ‘deep, horizontal comradeship’ for which millions of people made supreme sacrifices: “Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings” (Anderson, 2006, p. 7). The popular claim of three million deaths in the liberation war of Bangladesh is controversial. Murshid (2010, p.

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<sup>1</sup>Translated from Serajul Islam Choudhury (36): “How should I define nationalism? Nationalism is a kind of feeling where dreams and desires work through memories. However, it has a material base, which is made from multiple elements that contain language, space, religion, and unity of economic life. But, which one of these four elements are the most important? The major element is language. The centrality of language can be understood from the general truth that it is much harder to change language than religion. Besides, language has the power to overcome the divisions of religion and a class of a population.”

168) argues that the number would be at least between three and four hundred thousand.<sup>2</sup>

Linguistic diversity was not a huge issue for Bangladesh, as it has a monolingual population with most of its people (98.74%) speaking Bengali (Faquire, 2010, p. 66). Certainly, this has not been the case for Canada, as there have been two distinct settler colonial languages and many Indigenous languages. The Canadian state had to come up with something different to instill a sense of unity among its citizens.

Lefebvre (1991) has been critical of the role of discourse in the revelation of truth, as it presumes that an encrypted reality can be decipherable by speech and writing. Instead, he argues that it is a double illusion that conceals the truth that (social) space is a (social) product:

The act of writing is supposed, beyond its immediate effects, to imply a discipline that facilitates the grasping of the 'object' by the writing and speaking 'subject'. In any event, the spoken and written word are taken for (social) practice; it is assumed that absurdity and obscurity, treated as aspects of the same thing, may be dissipated without any corresponding disappearance of the 'object'. Thus communication brings the non-communicated into the realm of the communicated—the incommunicable having no existence beyond that of an ever-pursued residue (p. 28-29).

Consequently, the presumption that language brings the incommunicable to light, such as the experience of the margin, is deceptive. Articulating a social practice of the margin through a writing and speaking authority assumes grasping the meaning intended by the 'object' of writing through the discursive act of writing. This can never be fully realized, and the

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<sup>2</sup> Translated from Ghulam Murshid (168): Even if the estimation of three million deaths seemed to be a bit of an exaggeration, there is no doubt that at least three to four hundred thousand people died.

experience of the margin is lost in written communication. Rather than revealing an experiential truth, linguistic practice hides the power dynamics inherent in discursive formations and reinforces authority and control (Foucault, 1972).

This process also obtains for other means of communication, such as signs and symbols that transport imaginaries of social structures and value systems. The Canadian school system encourages students, irrespective of gender, race, colour, or religion, to participate in celebrating specific religious festivals through performances, and the way media reproduce the signs and symbols of the dominant ideologies confirms a specific cultural inclination. The bias is concealed through a trap that produces “the illusion of transparency” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 29), but it is a system that teaches conformity to cultural norms and symbols through Ideological State Apparatuses (Althusser, 2001). In this instance, conformity to *religious norms, specifically Christian values* is embedded in repetitive engagements and discursive practices that disseminate the ideologies of dominant groups. Similarly, traditional canons of written history communicate the will and desire of the dominant class and needs to be re-written as a social history that represents the history of the masses (Roy, 1993, p. 50).<sup>3</sup> Innis (1964) insists that social change needs to come from the margin, invariably developing their own media. Engaging in the discursive acts of interviews, photographs from a marginal perspective, and their subsequent analysis can thus more accurately depict the nation’s margin, helping to understand how meaning is produced in the confines of Canadian culture.

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<sup>3</sup> Translated from Niharranjan Roy (50): In fact, social history is the accurate history of the mass.

Although language is believed to be a key factor in the production of national identity for a homogenized culture with linguistic standardization, it is not the only signifier of identity (Gellner, 1983), especially in the complex framework of a nation states' multiple and diverse cultures. People do not live in monocultural, mono-religious, monolingual nation-states, and countries such as India, China, Nigeria, etc. have hundreds of languages and ethnic groups (Appiah, 2007, p. 2385). Language is crucial for identity, but at the same time, it is crucial in oppression and resistance. Language not only expresses desire but is at the same time a very object of desire and conflict (Foucault, 1972, p. 216). Identities are shaped in response to discursive practices negotiated through systems of domination, exclusions, divisions, and rejections. Therefore, the question needs to be asked: How does the margin view Canadian identity in the discourse of language and representation?

## **2.5 The Canadian discourse**

There is a vast ethnolinguistic diversity in Canada, with more than 60 different Indigenous languages and over 200 other languages spoken at home (Statistics Canada, 2011).

Nevertheless, the Canadian state endorsed English and French as the two official languages through the federal statute Official Languages Act of 1969 (Laurendeau, 2006a), which was later consolidated into the Official Languages Act of 1988 (Laurendeau, 2006b), ignoring the recommendation of *multilingualism* proposed by the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in its final report (Berry, 2020). Adopting bilingualism was based on two distinct socio-cultural and political dynamics of English and French Canada.

The key difference between English and French Canada, among other things, is language, which is not only crucial in identity construction and self-expression but also in the dissemination of ideologies. The Canadian state ignored other ethnolinguistic groups,

including the First Nations, and the hegemony of the two official languages has since been naturalized in Canadian discourse.

Language has a complex relationship with dominant ideologies. Ideologies are socially shared belief systems crucial for the formation of ideological discourses that are shared only by specific (ideological) groups of people and not necessarily shared by the entire population (Van Dijk, 2006, p. 116; 2013, p. 177). They strengthen the ideological discourses of a single group. For instance, the Quebec legislature adopted the controversial Bill 96 language law and imposed rules to reinforce the use of French in public service, education, and business (Andrew-Gee, 2022), which alienates the majority of other linguistic groups. French and English enjoy special privileges in the framework of bipartisan bilingualism, even though the initial recommendation of the *Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism* proposed otherwise.

Historically, these two ethnolinguistic groups were responsible for the emergence and spread of the dominant ideologies in Canada, which are largely “acquired, expressed, and reproduced” by discourse (Van Dijk, 2013, p. 176). Perceiving the representations of these ideologies as the representations of the entire population is thus problematic. These discursive practices, along with the culture of non-representation, underrepresentation, and misrepresentation of the marginalized groups produce a narrative that is not conducive to the development of marginal identities.

Inspired by some features of Indigenous methodology such as oral storytelling and visual techniques, this research renders opportunities for marginalized groups to speak in their preferred language and produces an alternative narrative, outside dominant knowledge production. Canada has unresolved issues with Indigenous peoples and their claim to land

and water. Arguing that language unites Canada is inaccurate, and Canadian identities are fragmented and fractured. So, what holds Canada together?

## **2.6 Discourse on diversity**

Multiculturalism has been the government's policy since 1971 and became a federal statute in the Canadian Multiculturalism Act in 1988, the first act of its kind in the world (Berry, 2020). Multiculturalism and bilingualism have been the centrepieces of Canadian cultural policy since then. Multiculturalism is a compelling theory for the management of diversity (Armstrong, 2020) but has been criticized as being carefully crafted to formulate a discourse on diversity that takes skin colour as a defining category (Bannerji, 2000). It has been translated into the language of visibility to create a new social and political subject, "visible minority", that stresses "both the features of being non-white and therefore visible in a way whites are not, and of being politically minor players" (p. 545)—diversity cannot be read as innocent pluralism.

The existence of such discursive practices can be traced back to the writings of early twentieth-century White immigrant fiction writers, who were adequately supported by mainstream Anglophone Canadian magazines such as *Chatelaine* and the *Canadian Home Journal*. These magazines excluded writers of non-European origins to produce a specific brand of Canadian identity: "eliding the diversity of the Canadian population in favor of generating an identity that was inherently white" (Smith, 2014, p. 39). Now that we have seen how the discourse of language and ideologies of the two dominant groups, namely English and French, are deeply rooted in the formation of Canadian national identity and culture, we can investigate how the production of these ideas has been translated inside power structures.

## **2.7 The production of meaning and discursive practices of power**

Representation is the process of production of meaning in the shared concepts of language (Hall, 1997). As explained above, meaning is also produced in discursive formations that reach beyond language, including signs and symbols (Foucault, 1972, Van Dijk, 2006 & 2013). Margin, on the other hand, is defined as a space of struggle, fundamentally different from the dominant (Hall, 1981 & 1996). Dominant ideology operates through discursive practices and draws meaning from difference and exclusion. The social hierarchy of power is mediated through both Repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs) and Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) (Althusser, 2001). Identity is thus formed in relation to structures of dominance, based on exclusionary practices of Western knowledge production through binary oppositions, such as men versus women, White versus Black, us versus them, etc. These practices have standardized White as the norm (Hall, 1996). Identities are thus affected by their relative positions in the hierarchy of identification.

Rather than defining what marginality is, it is defined through its shortcomings, i.e. what it is not. The margin being defined as non-White implies it is neither dominant nor important. The cultural construction of the margin in the media and elsewhere in discourse is discriminatory and not how the margin visualizes its space. A foreign-accented speech, like skin colour, dress, or mannerisms, can lead to discrimination against second language users in Canada (Munro, 2003). Experiencing exclusionary practices like this has a detrimental effect on first-generation immigrants' self-esteem, who live in an in-between space that can be identified as a "third space" (Bhabha, 1994). They are only exposed to other cultures in a limited capacity in the contact zones (Pratt, 1992) of relations of production, such as at workplaces, hospitals, government services, malls, etc.

Marginality also needs to be conceptualized in relation to temporality. Every time the margin chooses to do something in *space*, it is a conscious choice to spend their free *time* in a specific way, such as for congregation (Sharma, 2014). At the same time, power exercises control over citizens' time and space through its authority to allocate resources, by deciding what *time* and which *space* to allocate for congregation. Thus, space and time collapse into a dimension of power and struggle. My project is indebted to time geography along with spatial distribution, revealing "how bodies are orchestrated in space in order to delve further into distinctive temporal forms of power" (Sharma, 2014, p. 11). For example, this research is conducted in a historical time and space during a global pandemic different in many ways from other spatio-temporalities.

Meaning is arbitrary and never finally fixed. It changes with context, usage, and historical circumstances (Hall, 1997, p. 32). It regulates and organizes our behaviour by producing a hierarchy of identities through identification (p. 4). The desire of the dominant group becomes the symbolic representation of national identity through power and does not necessarily reflect its 'others'. Power relations establish the control of authority in discourse, but often conceal the will to truth in a historically constituted division. Foucault (1972) argues that "the highest truth no longer resided in what discourse *was*, nor in what it *did*: it lay in what was *said*." (p. 218). What is said in discourse can never be quite grasped in itself, it always precedes references to an incorporeal discourse that is 'never-said' but involves a secret origin beyond any apparent beginning, according to Foucault "a voice as silent as a breath, a writing that is merely the hollow of its own mark" (1972, p. 25). The act of disclosure, or the will to truth, depends on enunciation, which misses the voices of the margin just like other systems of exclusion, relying on institutional support including the entire

pedagogical practices of book publishing, libraries, etc. (p. 219), all heavily influenced by the dominated ideologies.

Pedagogical knowledge production and subsequent representation of the margin in educational textbooks are highly skewed. For example, in Canadian political science textbooks, marginal representation is somewhat siloed and often generic (Tolley, 2020). These textbooks typically emphasize Canada's record of inclusion, and discussions of inequality are presented as something in the past. Even with an emphasis on inclusion, most of the individuals appearing in the textbooks are White. "When racialized individuals do appear in the pages of Canadian politics textbooks, they are often associated with crime or controversy (p. 49)," confirming a systematic bias in the pedagogy that excludes minorities, producing misrepresentation and underrepresentation (Cottle 2000; Mahtani 2001; Cukier et al. 2010; Nangia 2013; Tolley, 2020). Similarly, there is a flattened conception of diversity as well as constant resistance against re-imagining Canadian politics and Canadian political science (Tolley, 2020, p. 51). Freezing minorities' struggle in moments of time such as the Japanese internment or the Chinese Exclusion Act (Takeda, 2015; Chan, 2017) and depicting them as random events, rather than an ongoing struggle, suggests that exclusion is a historical aberration without ongoing political relevance (Tolley, 2020, p. 53). The margin is presented as problematic, viewed as a security risk, or caught up within legal and political controversies:

When people of colour are present in Canadian political science textbooks, their inclusion follows a particular narrative. Individuals' notable achievements are ignored or barely mentioned, and Canadians of colour rarely appear as celebrated political actors or even just "average Canadians." The tendency to connect racialized Canadians to controversy may feed students' biases about minorities (for example, that they are swindlers, terrorists, or unwilling to integrate into Canadian

life). Racialized Canadians are portrayed as people to fear rather than individuals who can and do make contributions to Canadian society and politics. (Tolley, 2020, p. 61)

This has been the prevalent trend in the two newspapers analyzed, which showed that marginal identities such as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) seldom appear as celebrated Canadians but are represented when associated with tragedy or negative stories. Marginal issues are often discussed from linguistic and/or religious perspectives: either from a secular or a post-secular turn that addresses religious diversity through a new language and forms of discourse capable of accommodating “religious, nonreligious, and antireligious views to be expressed without privilege or prejudice” (Juric, 2017, p. 2). However, as we have seen in the case of Quebec’s controversial Bill 21 (See section 1.4 Conceptual framework), the so-called secular (or the post-secular) way of addressing diversity does not guarantee equal privileges and accommodations for religious minorities. Neither Canada nor any of its provinces had formally proclaimed secularism in a constitutional text:

In the end, this artificial construction has the effect of shrinking the notion of secularism itself: it obscures the plurality and diversity of legal mechanisms whereby it takes form in state governance and, consequently, forges a general standard of secularism (or invisibility) out of a single case of its application, and it will be society’s minorities bearing the resulting burden. (Koussens, 2020, p. 18, 29)

It is important to acknowledge that within the general standard of secularism, it is always the marginal identities that bear the burden. The controversies surrounding the secularization of Quebec are driven by a combination of two realities: juridical and sociological. However, they have all dealt with the visibility of religious symbols in the public sphere that “fostered the emergence of a new nationalist secularism that found steadily increasing resonance in Quebec law” (p. 18) (See also section 1.4 Conceptual framework). The debate mostly

surrounds the logic of ‘reasonable accommodation’ within the discourse of diversity, nationalists often arguing that the multicultural narrative approves multiculturalism “over majority rights for the sake of a version of multiculturalism that favors communitarian isolation by minorities, to the detriment of a strong, unified citizenry” (Koussens, 2020, p. 24), but at the same time, it limits minorities’ participation and dialogue by reinforcing racialized hierarchies and exclusions (Mahrouse, 2010). This opposition to multiculturalism has given rise to a special Quebec nationalist perspective, different from the rest of English Canada and certainly controversial if Canada is to be considered a state, as it not only alienates the margin in Quebec but also exposes the difference between French and English Canada. The question is whether Canada could be considered to possess a unified identity or Quebec should be treated as a special case in any discussion of nation, nationalism, identity, and margin. And if that is the case, can Canada be considered a nation or even a state? The central authority (federal government) seems to have very little control over the provinces regarding these issues.

Similarly, the popular usage of terms such as ‘ethnic’ has come to be associated with Black or Third World countries. For instance, an international chain store in their so-called “ethnic jewelry” section only includes items derived from what many consider “underdeveloped countries” although all people have their ethnicity, be it English, French, or Bengalis (Williams et al., 2000). It is not clear how “ethnic jewelry” becomes synonymous with the jewelry from “underdeveloped countries.”

The popular narratives of Canadian origin stories glorify the unification of different groups such as the English, French, First Nations, Métis, and Black soldiers for a common cause, which not only obscures colonization in its emphasis on collaboration but also erases settler-colonial violence and racism (Raphael, 2021). Canadian identity has been historically

and predominantly a discourse that attaches values to specific bodies and reiterates those discursive practices whenever it feels vulnerable or threatened by deviations. However, as the study reveals, marginality is a more complex and nuanced idea, as experience (of the margin) disappears quickly. What remains is a residue of experience in memory (Lefebvre, 1991). As memory describes a lived experience, analysis of memory as a social space can reveal the cultural mediation of those identities. It is through these experiences and cultural mediation that the margin also becomes aware of the subject position within ideology through interpellation or 'hailing' (Althusser, 2001), the systematic reproduction of the conditions of production and productive forces that ensure an individual accepts the act of hailing as natural and responds to it every time they are hailed.

## **2.8 Contribution to scholarship**

There are two major ways this study relates to the existing literature. The first one is technological: the visual representations of the margin are compared to the dominant media practices through research creation; and research conceptualizes representational spaces of the margin that not only deviate from the dominant narrative but also produce knowledge through a counter-narrative that is participatory, working toward change. In this, I was inspired by Indigenous methodology that interprets and contextualizes, but at the same time acknowledges the coexistence of different realities rather than seeking a singular, static, objective truth targeted by a positivist, quantitative approach (Kovach, 2009, p. 26). My methodology is not a rigid process but combines different elements of various methodologies that often overlap and work as points of reference. I am inspired by the works of Indigenous artists such as Shelley Niro and Jim Denomie. Shelley Niro challenges the dominant cultural expressions by depicting the spaces that her people occupied (Shelley Niro Wins the 2017 Scotiabank Photography Award, 2017). Niro reclaims a space belonging to her people that

was stolen (Whyte, 2017) and the candid representation of their lived reality deviates from the dominant representations of Indigenous peoples. Similarly, my contribution creates knowledge through the lived experience of marginalized groups.

My research also represents both ‘art’ and ‘science’, like Muybridge’s work, such as *The Horse in Motion* or *Woman Turning in Surprise and then Running Away*, which not only aided artists in their depiction of motion but also shared the domains of ‘art’ and ‘science’ (Premeaux, 2003; Muybridge, 1887). For Muybridge, this approach resulted in a radical reconceptualization of time as a spatial image (Premeaux, 2003, p. 387). Likewise, the images used in this research have revealed the actions of the marginalized bodies frozen in time and space.

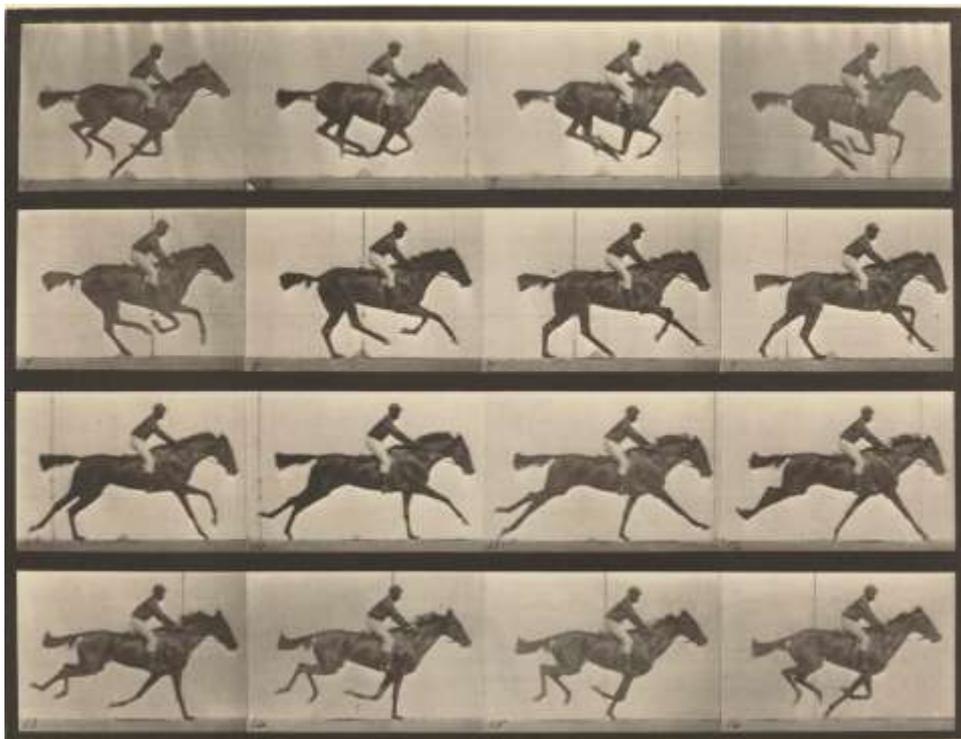


Fig. 1 ‘Nope,’ Eadweard Muybridge and the Story of ‘The Horse in Motion.’ The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/22/movies/nope-horse-in-motion-eadweard-muybridge.html>

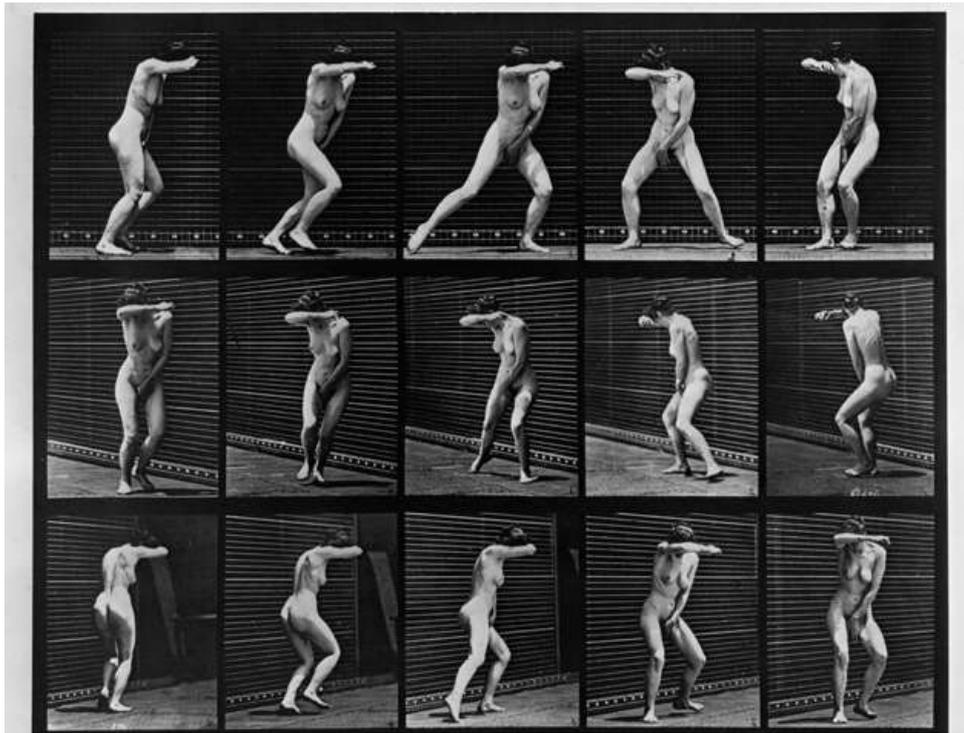


Fig. 2 Plate Number 73. Turning around in surprise and running away

Time and space are interconnected, a duo, as it were. A simple example can illustrate this point. It would be impossible for a group of scholars if they were told to meet at noon tomorrow, as they do not have a spatial reference of where to meet. Similarly, they could not meet if given the place data only, as they would not have the temporal reference (when to meet). Both spatial and temporal references are required, time and space are inseparable.

Canada did not exist before 1867 as a political entity. When we talk about the space called Canada; it is always in reference to a particular time. The name 'Canada' likely came from the Huron-Iroquois word "Kanata" meaning 'village' or 'settlement' (Government of Canada, 2017), which suggests its Indigenous roots. The subsequent colonization of this space is a classic example of how, through the production of space, it became known as Canada. However, the production of space is not only ambiguous and heterogeneous but is also based on a set of relations that can neither be simplified nor substituted:

The space in which we live, which draws us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of our lives, our time and our history occurs, the space that claws and knaws at us, is also, in itself, a heterogeneous space. In other words, we do not live in a kind of void, inside of which we could place individuals and things. We do not live inside a void that could be colored with diverse shades of light, we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not super imposable on one another (Foucault, 1986, p. 23).

The scope of this research is concerned with contemporary Canada, more precisely, 21st-century Canada. My research attempts to reveal the social relations within space-time: the visual narrative that depicts the intricate social relations of the margin to the dominant discourse and the mode of production. These contesting sites also represent ambiguous, in-between spaces that Foucault (1986) identified as ‘other spaces’ between utopias and heterotopias—spaces that provide a mixed experience, like mirrors.

Utopias are imaginary sites, not real places, but society cannot function with utopias. In contrast, heterotopias are places where utopias are acted upon, such as cemeteries, hospitals, theatres, gardens, etc. However, they take quite varied forms, there are no universal forms of heterotopias. Some spaces represent both utopias (the imaginary) and heterotopias (the real)—Foucault’s other spaces (Foucault, 1986).

I argue that the margin, especially the diaspora community, belongs to these other spaces. Margins also portray joint experiences. The margin constantly negotiates between two spaces: the hegemonic social space, which constantly reproduces dominant ideologies through social practices, and the space that the margin often views as a dystopian space. At the same time, margins are attached to an imaginary mental space, where the idea of home is constantly reproduced, often through strong transnational ties. Both the representations of space and representational spaces continuously influence each other and present themselves

in various degrees through changing patterns: changes in food habits, customs, and dresses, continuously adjusting cultural practices through negotiations between the home culture and the alien. The constant interactions between these realities make the marginal space a blend between the imaginary and the real, divergent form of living that is hybrid and, at the same time, work-in-progress, always a process of becoming.

### 3. METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

#### 3.1 Prelude

I was influenced and inspired by Indigenous methodology and incorporated some attributes typically attached to Indigenous methodology in my research, such as oral storytelling, as participants were engaged in describing their life stories and experiences in the semi-structured interviews. The methodology itself is not Indigenous rather it's a mixed methodology that includes elements from different methodologies including Indigenous methodology, abduction methodology, visual and textual analysis, ethnographic observation, etc.

Traditional research has a Eurocentric approach. Smith (2021) once famously stated that 'research' is considered one of the dirtiest words in the Indigenous vocabulary, as the Western researchers and intellectuals have traditionally assumed to know all that it is possible to know about Indigenous peoples and claim ownership of their ways of knowing. Indigenous methodology provides an alternative way of knowledge creation, which also minimizes the power relation between the researcher and the participants. An increasing awareness and acceptance of Indigenous methodology has worked as a stimulus for me to incorporate elements that are considered characteristics of Indigenous methodology —oral storytelling, film, and photography—, methods in which I also have experience. Although what exactly constitutes an Indigenous research methodology is not clearly defined, central tenets involve community members driving the research throughout with storytelling, talking circles, community-based participatory research, or blended approaches, facilitating research that is respectful, collaborative, and relational (Drawson et al., 2017; Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2001).

By being collaborative and participatory, my research has made it possible to reimagine the space of the margin based on perception and lived realities. The study negotiates power dynamics through participants' active involvement in the research creation and hence reduces the power balance between the researcher and the participants. Belonging a marginal identity myself, I was also immersed in the setting (hearing, seeing) along with the participants, who had been invited to the table as equals.

This research also uses the abduction process that starts with a hypothesis-based theory and tests the hypothesis with empirical data. But it does not end there. Rather, it goes on to improve the theory with interpretation, analysis, and remains open to more observations for confirmation; and finally expands on the theory. "This means a hermeneutic process during which the researcher, as it were, eats into the empirical matter with the help of theoretical preconceptions, and also keeps developing and elaborating the theory" (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009, p. 5-6).

For example, the premise that belonging to a member of a visible minority group makes one susceptible to the reproduction of the conditions of marginalization can be validated through observations. Empirical data have been analyzed and interpreted further to develop and elaborate the theoretical assumptions. The triangulation of different methodologies (Indigenous, abduction, participatory action research, visual and textual analysis, ethnographic observation) has politically radical potential. It not only challenges the dominant discourse and knowledge production through binary oppositions but also voices resistance by producing knowledge from the margin. The radical politics involve participants' resistance to the process of marginalization by identifying and simultaneously rejecting popular discourse and creating their own narrative through active participation in visual storytelling.

### 3.2 Research design

The use of photography can produce a counter-narrative, as the focus is reversed from a normative view of space to the space imagined by the margin. It shifts the focus of our attention from representations of space, which reproduce knowledge of and about dominant discourse grounded on a Western conception of space, towards representational spaces, which is political.

Visuals carry powerful messages that leave lasting effects on viewers and can be processed faster than verbal or textual cues. Especially when they communicate negative or violent behavior, they can compound the marginalizing effects of paradigmatic coverage (Brown & Mourão, 2021, p. 581). Methods such as photography capture subjective data and are destined to be a part of Indigenous research methodology since they reflect the photographer's perspective (camera position, camera angle, distance, focal length, framing, etc.). The method brings in perspectives of both the researcher (absorbed in the research process through qualitative reflection and analysis) and the research participants (through their experience and actions in space-time) who took part in the knowledge creation, also traits of Indigenous methodology (Kovach, 2005).

A positivist research approach often excludes context and does not provide the perspective of the subject being studied, as it relies mostly on numbers and quantifiable data. Quantitative research seeks 'objective' truth and can be biased (not necessarily intentionally), as it excludes participants' views. It blocks creativity, participants' skills, and rigour because it aims for standardized knowledge. There is nothing wrong with quantifying, as it is possible to come up with an exact number, such as the height of a tower or the speed of a car, which is often necessary. A quantitative research approach tries to conclude by showing the difference

or looking at patterns and causal relationships between two or more variables. But how would someone quantify concepts like experience, or human feelings and emotions? Respondents of a beauty contest could be asked to mark the contestants based on their perception of beauty on a scale of 1 to 10, and their responses would be different, depending on a preconception of beauty that is not only culture-specific but also space and time-specific. Changes in the respondents may yield different results. Therefore, there could be no consensus about the idea of beauty, even though we may reach a point where most people agree on some preconceived idea of beauty.

Furthermore, I am inspired by the component of Indigenous methodology that views research as a whole, with all parts being interdependent and relational, as opposed to the positivist approach, which breaks the process down into different parts and considers them independent from each other (Kovach, 2005, p. 122). Numbers may speak of the volume by quantifying, but a visual image can reveal the condition of a person and visual methods can:

provide an alternative to the hegemony of a word-and-number based academy; slow down observation and encourage deeper and more effective reflection on all things visual and visualisable; and with it enhance our understanding of sensory embodiment and communication, and hence reflect more fully the diversity of human experiences (Prosser & Loxley, 2008, p. 4).

For example, a person can share their life trauma and lived experience through visuals, still or moving images, as was the case with the third-generation residential school survivor Phyllis Webstad (National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, 2020). Images can contextualize and expose the reality to understand the very nature of the trauma, instead of the person just being a number in the study.

It is crucial to understand how the concept of culture has been viewed and its various contradictions have been resolved. Culture is a fluid notion, conceptualized differently by various fields of inquiry. It is often used by sociologists and anthropologists as a process referring to a people's way of life, including language, rituals, customs, and preferences of a particular social group (Elliott, 1995, p. 185). Culture is not quantifiable by numbers, data, or graphs. Culture is seen as having different layers (Bolinger & Burch, 2020, Douskalis, 2012, Schein, 1990), with the first layer consisting of the most expressive, visible icons, such as traditional dresses, cultural artifacts, or symbols such as flags or landmark architecture. The next layer includes beliefs, norms, and attitudes, followed by the layer that includes common rituals or traditions, such as how people greet each other, eat, etc. A culture can exist within a culture. For instance, the Canadian-Bangladeshi culture, which is a hyphen of two different cultures, is different from the Bangladeshi culture. Though these two cultures (Canadian-Bangladeshi and Bangladeshi) are similar, the existence of the host culture (Canada) in Canadian-Bangladeshi culture contributes to the development of cultural differences within the base culture, which over time in subsequent generations shifts towards the host culture rather than the base (Douskalis, 2012).

The expressions of the deepest layer of culture are the most difficult to recognize, but these deeply rooted values and cultural forms heavily influence all the other layers (Bolinger & Burch, 2020, Schein, 1990). This final layer of culture needs deeper understanding, as it cannot be seen or recognized easily. For example, it was customary for some First Nations to acknowledge one's presence on a territory as a way of acknowledging the other Nation's responsibility for the territory and indicating that one came in peace. Similarly, in Bangladeshi culture, there is no greeting word like Hello in English. Instead, various expressions such as '*kemon acho*' or '*ki khobor*' or '*kemon cholche*' are used. The literal

translation of these expressions would be ‘*How are you?*’ or ‘*How is it going?*’, which are not greetings per se. Also, Bangladeshis often ask the question ‘*Vat kheyecho?*’ A literal translation of this expression would be ‘*Did you eat rice?*’ but what they mean is ‘*Did you have your lunch?*’ It is difficult for someone outside that culture to understand the nuances of these expressions. But people from that culture would know that lunch is often synonymous with eating rice, as rice traditionally has been a staple food for the Bangladeshis. However, the nuances in the base culture and various cultural expressions start to wither away in subsequent generations and can only be recognized as ingrained in subtle forms. Customs, beliefs, rituals, and cultural expressions that are difficult to recognize among many different cultural groups are frequent in Canada. This calls for a deeper understanding of the various nuances of cultures, but often, customs and practices are labelled and stereotyped, viewed as inferior, or become the subject of cultural appropriation.

The effect of such stereotypical cultural appropriation and practices was evident in the photography exhibition of Indigenous multimedia artist Shelley Niro (2017), who effectively uses photography to draw attention to the history of invasion and violence against Indigenous peoples in North America, suggesting that the consequences of colonialism are still active. Her exhibition reveals the representational space of the Indigenous community. Her methodology incorporates a marginal view that aims to rewrite history by questioning the extermination and erasure of Indigenous bodies, especially of Indigenous women. The recent attention to the number of incarcerated bodies of Indigenous women in federal prison exposes the systematic violence and erasure: the number of federally sentenced Indigenous women increased by 60% over the last ten years, growing from 168 in March 2009 to 270 in March 2018 (Government of Canada, 2020).

Similarly, an attempt to reimagine American history was evident in the Ojibwe artist Jim Denomie's exhibition at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. Denomie's works provide a social criticism of the discursive practices of American pop culture from a marginal perspective, with obvious historical and cultural references: "Denomie used his art to bring marginalized and erased stories to light while looking toward a future in which Indigenous people thrive. In doing so, Denomie embodied Indigenous Futurism" (Soukup, 2023, p. 22). The exhibition, featuring 15 years of creative production, does not hold back. It depicts the murders of Indigenous peoples in California by Gold Rush miners, lynchings from Mississippi to Minnesota, the massacre of Lakota men, women, and children at Wounded Knee, and other atrocities against the artist's people, presenting a "personal perspective from a contemporary American Indian male" (p. 24). Denomie's looking at these issues from a personal view encouraged me to include elements of his method, especially when it comes to interpreting data produced by the images and interviews, always a challenging work in progress. It necessitates a relationship-based approach as building trust is necessary, which could be time-consuming, but the journey is amazing as echoed by Eber Hampton's statement that "...cut-and-dried, rigid, cold, hard, precise facts are dead. What is alive is messy, and growing, and flexible, and soft, and warm, and often fuzzy" (cited in Kovach, 2005, p. 30). Kovach also aligns with Lefebvre and Massey on the assumption that social space is related to the mode of production in capitalist societies. She compares research with life, which is about social relationships. My research also follows a flexible methodology that relies on building trust and relationships.

### **3.3 Self-Positioning**

I migrated to Canada with my family in the summer of 2012. The weather was beautiful and mild in mid-May, with the temperature fluctuating between 12-25 degrees Celsius during the

day and dropping down to as low as 3 degrees Celsius at night. The sudden drop in temperatures was something very new, as we had never experienced such a drastic fall in temperatures in Bangladesh. So, by Bangladeshi standards, it felt like Winter. This was just one of the significant differences between the two cultures we experienced after arrival, others including language, architecture, signs, buildings, and other cultural practices. For example, people drive on the right side of the road in Canada, there are more churches and Christian religious symbols, and the society is diverse with people from all over the world living here, but the dominant group is White. Also, it is a much quieter place compared to Dhaka, as the population density is noticeably low. So, it felt very strange to us, nobody seemed to live here, and the city is also very clean. When my wife and I used to walk to the nearest coffee shop, usually Tim Hortons, for a cup of coffee, we would hardly meet anyone on our way. If, occasionally, we came across someone, they would usually smile and nod at us, or exchange pleasantries. So, it appears to be a welcoming place. As the days passed, we got our place and started to settle down.

I started applying for professional jobs, expecting to get something similar to what I used to do in Bangladesh. I applied to a few newspapers, as I worked as a journalist for five years in Dhaka. I also worked as an Associate Customer Service Manager in a bank and attended a few mentoring sessions for a similar position but never got a job interview. I applied to an online Bank called “Ally Bank” through an agency and got a job as a Customer Service Representative after a while. It was an entry-level position that paid the minimum salary. I accepted the job offer as I had to survive. I found out that people who worked there as Team Leaders and Managers did not have the level of experience, qualifications, or education I have. I found out that a lot of them did not even have an undergraduate degree, let alone a Master’s degree. I held two Master’s degrees, including an MBA. There is no

fundamental difference in how the banks operate here in Canada versus how banks operate in Bangladesh. I know that I have been undervalued. But no matter how hard I tried; I could not get any other job interviews.

I also started to encounter small things, and their nuances that kept adding on. I used to rideshare with two other people, and one of them happened to be a heterosexual White male who was also a recent immigrant from Europe and could not speak English well. He got a job in his area of expertise within days. Even though at that time it didn't appear odd to me, my experience along the way proved otherwise. It took me months to get my first job, which was a minimum-paid job. However, as I needed something to keep my family afloat, I had no other choice but to continue working at the same job for years. Slowly I started noticing small things in the dominant social practices that made me feel ignored, left out, and even invisible. The obvious things that are found in tiny details: not getting a job interview even after meeting all the necessary criteria, being ignored by the cashier at the checkout, avoiding eye contact by the grocery store clerk at the mall, a reluctance to even acknowledge my bodily existence in public spaces, and other nuances of refusals. The absence of that candid smile and avoidance when interacting with me versus the next person in line, those small differences kept adding up to produce the marginalization in me, slowly but surely. It is not, as all the other participants in the study pointed out, overt or loud, but I started to feel the awkward gaze, the denial, the disregard, the hesitant disdain.

For example, I was waiting in line at the Regina Airport on my way home after attending Congress 2018. We were having a good time at the airport until I was the one in the group who was screened out for a 'random' body search. Meanwhile, all my other colleagues just walked past the gate. When I asked for the reason, as I was curious about what triggered it, I was told that it was the 'system' that picked me up. I pointed out the odds of this

randomness: was it my skin color, or was it my name? They couldn't answer. Later, I took a half-hour-long video at the airport, and not to my surprise, another such 'random systematic selection' screened out yet another person who happened to be a non-White, non-dominant male. The obvious conclusion was that there must be a bias in the system, in its algorithms, and in its coding, which was making this random selection quite consistently.

Likewise, I was waiting at the lab for my blood work recently, and I was supposed to be called by the front desk. However, after waiting for quite a while, I observed people going in and coming out of the lab after their blood work, even those who had come after me. It obviously could have been a mistake, maybe they had called my name, or maybe they didn't, but I never heard them calling my name. So, I approached the counter and asked them. Only then the girl at the desk, with an indifferent face, told me to go to room number 5 for the blood work, but she was laughing at the person she served right before me. Now, I cannot tell whether this exclusion was intentional or an honest mistake, or whether someone did announce my name but didn't bother to check back on me. But I can tell that too many of these kinds of exclusions make one skeptical to accept these as random events like many others who experienced the so-called randomness of the system, which makes the margin suspicious of the so-called system after all.

These were affecting my morale, and I started to become frustrated. I started questioning my own position in this complex process of becoming, of being marginalized. I wanted to understand it more from an academic perspective, what debates go into the making of Canadian identity, who has the right to claim space, and who is excluded and why. I wanted to know more about the process, beyond my feelings and experience. I wanted to participate and contribute to this debate, as I consider this to be a way of resistance. So, I

started applying to Canadian universities and got accepted at York with this research proposal.

### **3.4 Research method**

Social relations are crucial for this research—comparing the intricate social practices of the margin with the representations of space in the media and its reproduction in dominant discourse. Consequently, my methodology incorporates ethnographic observations (not only participant observation but also narrative interviews and image/artifact analysis) of those spaces alongside interviews with marginal identities. Elements of Indigenous methodology are used to collect, explore, and analyze the lived experience of the margin, whereas the abduction methodology is used to interview and analyze images in the latter part of the research. The research creation part of my project presents a photo collage based on images, newspapers, and other elements of artistic and visual expression.

The research has two parts: the first part consists of interviews and images shared by both the participants and the researcher. These images are then juxtaposed with the representations of the margin in the popular media (newspapers). The findings are then analyzed, compared, and substantiated with theory to reach the conclusion. The interviews provide important details on the lived experience of the margin supplemented by the analysis of visual representations. For example, the claim that immigrants' skills are undervalued (P1) was well evidenced in the overrepresentation of the BIPOCs in precarious jobs (delivery driver, gas station worker, etc.), often with higher educational attainments, as revealed through interviews and observations. The claim that South Asians are underrepresented in the media (P4) was substantiated by their non-representations in the media (images of the two newspapers analyzed).

### *3.4 (a) Photography as method*

I have chosen photography as a method for two reasons: first, we live in an age where images have become so ubiquitous that we cannot think without them. Secondly, images can reveal the marginal perspective of space and their social relations. Berger (1972) argues that every image embodies a way of seeing. An image is not merely a mechanical record. Every time we see a photo, we need to remember the fact that the photographer has selected that specific frame from an infinite number of other possibilities. The photographer's way of seeing is reflected in their choice of frame and subject. Any representation is a product of ideology. Berger (1972) argues that an image is a record of how X sees Y, which resulted from an increasing consciousness of individuality as well as an awareness of history, especially in Europe since the beginning of the Renaissance (p.10). This process has been used to explore the representational spaces of the margin, i.e. marginal view of space. Charlotte Cotton argues that photography has certain characteristics similar to magic:

Photography is a form of magic—or to put it another way, the photographic provides cerebral experiences for the viewer that are equivalent to magic. Just as sleight of hand facilitates, but does not fully materialize, the magical experience that resides in the dynamic of our own imaginations, so too photography—when liberated from a pedestrian definition as the sum of its mechanics and materials, its chemistry and software—can spark the occurrence of magic in our minds. (Cotton, 2015, p. 3).

This magic depends on the viewer's imagination but only if viewed independently from its materials, machines, or processes, which proves that it is an interpretive process like fiction. Thus, the photographic experience depends on the viewer for its meaning as well. The work of the author (photographer in our case) is believed to be completed once written, and the

author is said to be dead as soon as the interpretation of the text (images in our case) depends on the reader (viewer in our case):

Thus is revealed the total existence of writing: a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not, as was hitherto said, the author. (Barthes, 1977, p. 148).

As Barthes argues, the meaning of the image depends on viewers' minds. The unity of the text does not reside in its origin but rather in its destination, not with the writer but with the reader, who has been typically ignored in classical literary criticism. The reader (viewer in our case) must be credited for the full exposure of the meanings they hold in one single text, which encompasses all previous references, metaphors, and historical allusions drawn from the many cultures and writings that came before.

To experience visuals, objects only need to be illuminated (Descartes, 2002); however, there is no purely visual, tactile, or auditory media (Mitchell, 2005). All media are mixed media, mixed in different ratios (p. 260). The medium's specificity depends on the social construction of the use of the material rather than the materiality or technique itself. Images in the popular media are thus socially constructed within the mode of production that has been used to analyze the marginal representation and depict the social space of the margin. Images have also been used to create a collage of the marginal space for public viewing, allowing the visual narrative to be participatory and interpretive. Viewers' responses provide further introspection and have been incorporated into the analysis. Just a quick glance at the media representations of images confirms predominantly a White representation, which is later analyzed in the visual analysis section.

### *3.4 (b) Interview as method*

As argued before, I use a mixed method, which is also the case for the interview process. Five participants took part in the semi-structured interviews. Three were women and two men. Among these five interviewees, three are first-generation and two are second-generation Bangladeshi diaspora. The semi-structured interview technique is used to explore their lived experience within their social space, the dominant traits of their identity that they align with most, how much of belonging they feel for Canada, what they think of media representations, whether they feel being discriminated against, and supplementary questions based on their responses. The participants were selected from the Toronto area due to the high concentration of Bangladeshi diaspora living there—according to the census data of 2021, 36,670 Bangladeshis are living in Toronto (Statistics Canada, 2022).

The mixed method of interview technique is mostly derived from the Interactive (also referred to as Participatory) mode because the anti-realist format allows the researcher to address the participants directly. This mixed method encourages participants to reveal their emotions and allows interventions by the filmmaker during the process, as well as interactions between the audience and the filmmaker, which facilitates the progress and the transformation of many sectors through convergence (Aston & Gaudenzi, 2012; Vázquez-Herrero & López-García, 2019). With the change in technology and current practices of spreadable, interactive, and converging media platforms, both the users and the producers add value in redefining digital media platforms (Jenkins et al., 2013). This mode can use voice-over commentary, photographs, videos, sound effects, and music, if required. I chose this method because as an immigrant, I want to communicate with the participants directly in their native language. I also want to move the visual story forward with my presence and voice-over to make a meaningful connection with the participants. I am also influenced by

cinema vérité, especially for the camera movement and editing that are used to develop chronological storytelling techniques to build the narrative. I admire the work of Michael Moore, Steven Fisher in this genre and Ken Burns in the observational style, but I consider myself an auteur filmmaker.

### *3.4 (c) Collage as method*

A part of the research involves research-creation, where images from the newspapers have been used to produce a collage for an exhibition. Through the creative process, the collage reveals the pattern and process used by the two newspapers in their image selection, producing a centre-periphery dichotomy or dominant-marginal rhetoric. The collage provides visual confirmation of media biases toward White representations, but more importantly, it produces a striking contrast between the representations of the margin and the dominant groups.

It was interesting to see viewers' responses, as it appears that there is a danger in artistic expression that can sometimes take away the severity of the issue by toning it down and producing a rather aesthetically pleasing representation that Cotton (2015) claims to be the magical elements distorting reality, especially when various intermediations of technology are involved. Even though viewers identified many layers of hidden meanings within the collage and recognized that the images and texts allow multiple interpretations, they made sense of the images based on their own experiences. Only a few viewers engaged critically, but they still resisted the dominant media representation. The collage revealed that the representations of the dominant groups are big and bold, occupying positions of importance. In contrast, when displayed side by side, the representations of space (dominant) and representational spaces (marginal) reveal the contrasting views of these two spaces.



Fig. 3 Representations of space and representational spaces side by side

### **3.5 Site and participant selection**

#### *3.5.1 Anticipated problems of access*

At the start of the project, one of the problems was how to select participants for the study, which was solved through a snowball sampling technique. The other problem was to have access to technology, as I did not have the proper equipment to photograph and film the interviews for the study. The problem with the equipment was resolved by my Ph.D. supervisor Dr. Markus Reisenleitner, as he loaned me his camera Canon Mark D, microphone, lights, tripods, etc. I have done a similar project before, so I was aware of the technical details. I used my own memory cards and external hard drives to store the data, which were password-protected and locked at all times.

The nationwide lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic could never have been anticipated, and it greatly impacted the data collection process and restricted the study to remote work only at one stage. The Ethics Committee recommended suspending all face-to-face interviews to limit the spread of the virus. As Zoom interviews greatly reduce the ability to capture spatial and social practices to their full extent, emphasis was put on using still images captured from a distance to avoid any physical contact. I started doing ethnographic observations on different locations that revealed marginalization in different ways, not only through visual representations of people but also through other kinds of manifestations such as writings on the walls, billboards, congregations at the malls, etc.

#### *3.5.2 Snowball Sampling*

I began selecting participants through snowball sampling by contacting two nonprofit and charitable Bangladeshi organizations named Bengali Information and Employment Services (BIES) and Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services (BCS). Once the first participant was

selected, I was directed to other participants. All immigrants were Bangladeshi diaspora vis-à-vis Bangladeshi-Canadian. The observation and interviews were conducted at their place and in their preferred language so that participants could express themselves comfortably and freely in their natural environment. All participants were from the Toronto area, where the Bangladeshi diaspora concentration is the highest.

### **3.6 Data collection**

The Ethics Committee approved my protocol on July 8, 2020. I started contacting potential participants and as soon as they agreed, I set up appointments for the interviews.

Unfortunately, data collection had to be postponed indefinitely due to a spike in Covid-19 cases across the province and the country. The Ethics Committee suspended all face-to-face interactions soon after (on October 23, 2020) and suggested online data collection. During that short window, between the ethics committee approving and postponing all face-to-face interviews, I managed to conduct five interviews. Arranging interviews with the community members using alternative means such as Zoom meetings became difficult. So, I started reviewing literature, transcribing interviews, editing, and analyzing the data already collected. After a discussion with my supervisor, I started putting more emphasis on images and ethnographic observation of marginal spaces by photographing them from a distance.

## 4. VISUAL DATA ANALYSIS

### 4.1 Visual analysis (Empirical observation)

There are special terms for marginal spaces in every society. They are known as ‘slums’ or ‘skid rows’ in the US, ‘favelas’ in Brazil. Such ghettoized places rest at the very bottom of a hierarchy of places, characterized as ‘lawless zones’ or ‘problem areas’, inhabited by the poor, disenfranchised immigrants, and disrespected minorities, viewed from afar to be labelled as chaotic and brutish, etc. (Wacquant, 2008). These spaces are produced by social, political, and economic forces. Marginal identities are forced to cluster around spaces based on familiar associations and shaped by their socioeconomic conditions, identified as a form of ‘constrained’ choice (Murdie, 1994). The images below depict such an impoverished neighbourhood in government-assisted housing for low-income families, where the occupants fall below the poverty line, belonging to the poorest 8.8% (low-income cut-offs method), or the lowest 13.0% (4.5 million) when calculated by the low-income measure (Government of Canada, 2016). The obvious correlation between the spatial concentration of marginalized groups and poverty is revealed in the following images (Fig 4). The images show marginal identities working as garbage collectors, taxi drivers, etc., but more importantly, they live close to each other in dilapidated houses.

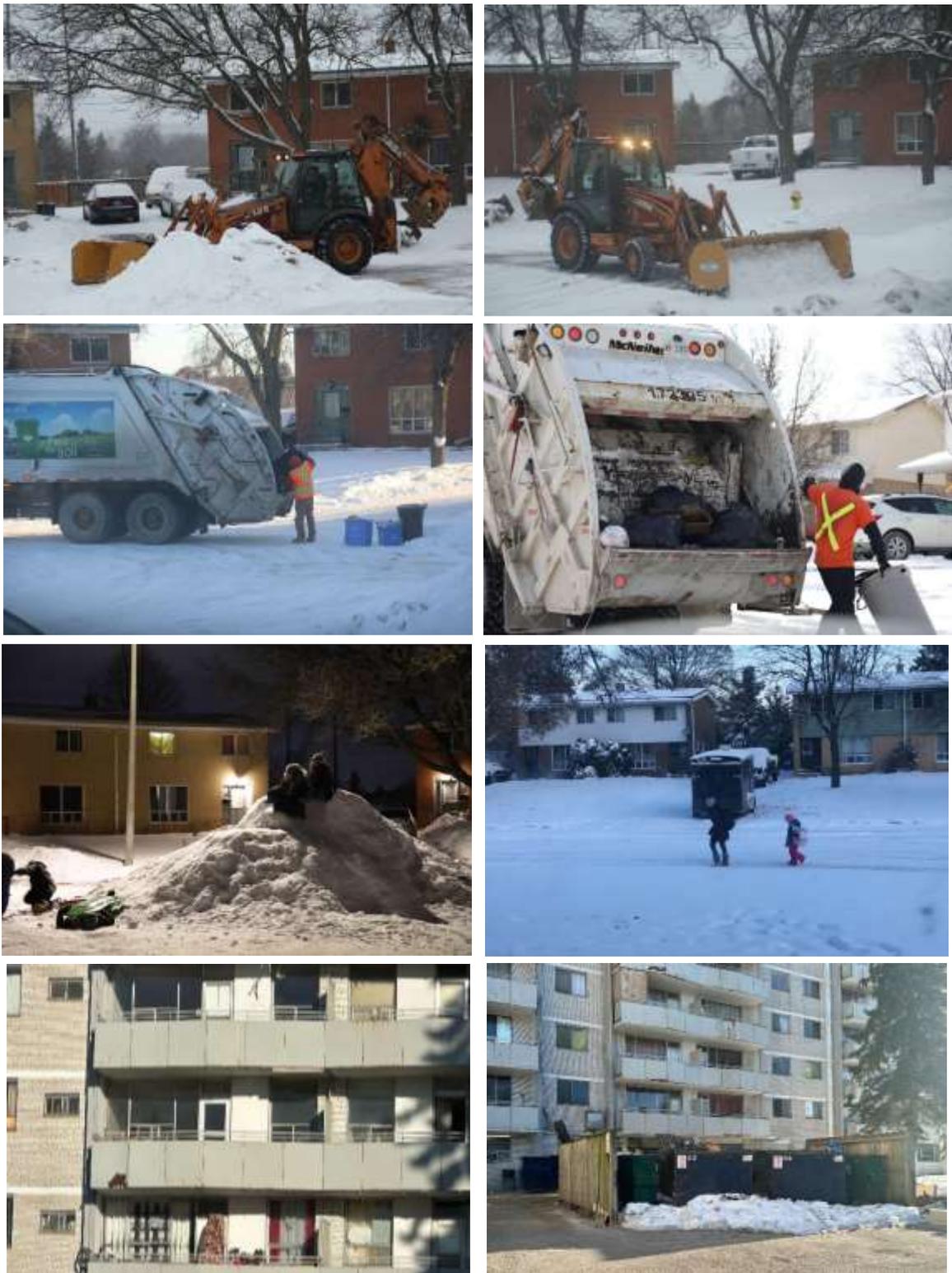


Fig 4: Production of space in a relatively poor neighborhood (view from left to right).

Recent immigrants from diverse national backgrounds and economic conditions view these neighborhoods, often high-rise apartment buildings in inner suburbs such as Etobicoke, York,

North York, East York, and Scarborough, as preferable because of relatively larger family-friendly apartments, proximity to ethnic institutions, and low-price units due to the cheap management costs of these aging properties (Ghosh, 2014; Murdie & Ghosh, 2010). They move outwards through increasingly higher-status residential zones when they have managed to improve their economic status, ultimately settling down at the urban periphery (Murdie & Ghosh, 2010). However, this does not happen for many others whose economic status does not improve over time. Gentrification remains a continuous challenge for these communities as well, pushing the margin further towards the fringe of society.

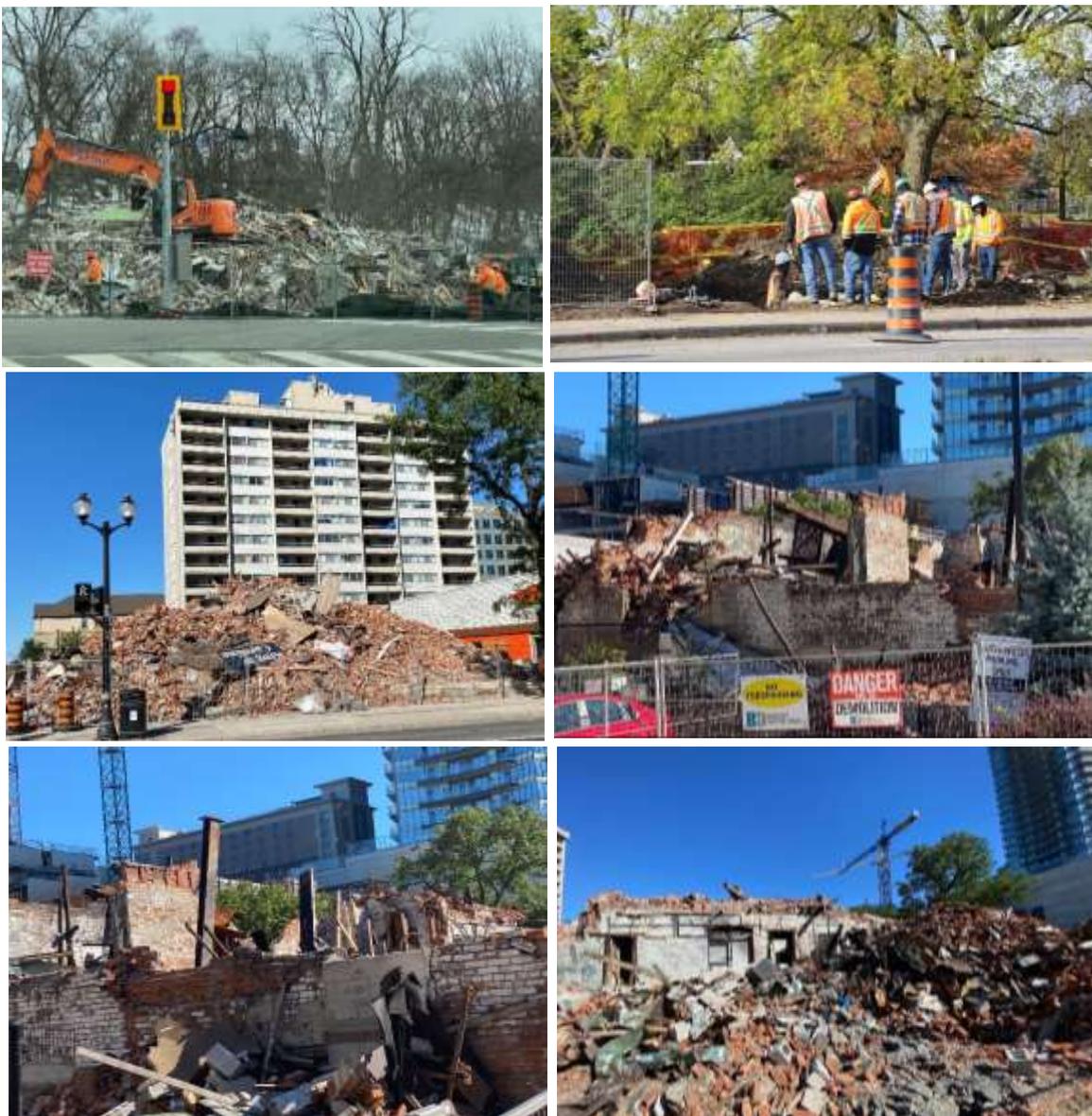


Fig 5: Production of space through gentrification (left to right).

The images in Fig. 5 show the ongoing gentrification of poor neighbourhoods that are usually home to mostly working-class, immigrant, and marginal communities in order to facilitate the middle- and upper-class residents in what is often touted as a form of ‘neighbourhood revitalization’ that supposedly increases levels of social mix and social interaction between different classes and ethnic groups. However, gentrification does not lead to greater levels of social mix, whether defined by income or race and ethnicity. Rather, the process has turned out to not only displace poorer residents to lower quality housing elsewhere, but also to increase social conflict and polarization (Walks & Maaranen, 2008). A more tenant-oriented strategy can be a solution to gentrification, as the case of Canada’s first and largest project in Regent Park suggests: “a more concerted campaign could reshape, transform, or even stop revitalization altogether, in favor of a tenant-oriented strategy for public housing renewal” (August, 2016, p. 32).

It is not surprising that being a wealthy country does not make Canada resistant to having a sizable, unhoused population. People still sleep outside in the cold, panhandle, or take refuge in bizarre places such as public toilets for a short nap.

I was not looking at the issue of the unhoused in particular, even though unhoused people are certainly marginalized. They just kept reappearing every day in many ways in front of my camera while I was conducting my ethnographic study, and being a photographer and journalist, I could not avoid this fact. I took an investigative angle to these reappearances of unhoused bodies, as they became too repetitive and predictive to call them random. Unhoused people kept reappearing at traffic lights, on the streets, outside fast food restaurants, outside shopping malls and grocery stores, at bus stations, downtown, and in other similar places. It registered for my investigative self, so I started documenting their cases on camera. They were occupying public spaces, and I never exposed their faces.

However, I observed that the technological mediation of people through the use of a camera or the internet can expose the crass marginalization of people who sleep in the streets, take shelter inside public washrooms, or ask for money at traffic lights (Fig 6).



Fig 6: Being unhoused (left to right)

The correlation between marginalization and poverty is also evident in the dominant spatial practices, as the marginal bodies are found to be overrepresented in precarious and low-paying jobs such as restaurant workers, food servers, delivery drivers, taxi drivers, gas station attendants, or assembly line workers (Fig 7). These spatial realities evidence the historical

aberration of marginal identities being consigned to the least desirable jobs including cleaners, maids, hair stylists, nannies, barbers, and other informal jobs because of the social practices in the professional sectors (Haque, 2023). But even when they are represented in more professional sectors, they are in a constant struggle to be seen because clients often ignore them and address their White colleagues instead, as argued by P4. Therefore, as a study of more than 2,200 Canadians surveyed reveals, despite being among the most qualified workers in the country, South Asian women are twice as likely to report unfair treatment due to the social practice of viewing them differently: “Thirty-four percent of South Asian women said they were treated unfairly at work, compared with 17 percent of all women surveyed” (Rana, 2022b, para. 3).



Fig 7: Production of marginal spaces, a spatiotemporal view (left to right)

These are regular phenomena, as the recent news in *The Globe and Mail* shows: half of all women inmates in Canada’s federal prisons are Indigenous women (White, 2022; Government of Canada, 2021). It is testimony to the discursive practices of a society that

produce the condition of marginalization. Other instances suggest that existing social practices create systematic racism, resulting in the further marginalization of disadvantaged groups. For example, two Thunder Bay police officers, Staff Sgt. Shawn Harrison and Sergeant Shawn Whippie, were charged over their handling of the death investigation of a First Nations man Stacy DeBungee in 2015. Their lawyers argued before a disciplinary hearing that the officers did not exhibit racial discrimination but were instead marred by *systemic problems within the service* (Fiddler, 2022), in other words, discursive social practices. But the fact that Staff Sgt. Harrison did not even review Mr. DeBungee's post-mortem report before deciding that there was no suspicion of foul play validates the 2018 Broken Trust Report's findings on the existence of systemic racism in sudden-death investigations of Indigenous people. The autopsy later revealed that alcohol intoxication, while a significant contributing condition, was "not causally related to the immediate cause" (para 13). Yet, due to the existing biases, the investigation concluded that death by drowning meant that the death was innocently caused, instead of investigating how the deceased came to be in the water. The Broken Trust Report concluded that the Thunder Bay investigators "placed extraordinary weight on the deceased's level of intoxication as if it virtually determined that the death was accidental" (para 15). These kinds of systematic discriminations exist partly because of the social practices and stereotypical representations of Indigenous people as 'drunken Indians,' which has given rise to many forms of daily humiliation toward Indigenous people, such as refusal of employment, landlords not willing to rent out their property to Indigenous people, bars refusing entrance to let Indigenous people, taxi drivers driving past Indigenous people on the street, etc. (CBC News, 2008).

These examples are provided here not in order to conflate marginalization with injustice or inequality, but to show the interconnectedness of these social practices. The

relationship between structural and racial discrimination is one of the root causes of marginalization (Malawa et al., 2021; Crenshaw, 1991). It not only curtails their (margin) life chances but also “marginalization is evidenced in their high rates of infant mortality, poverty, youth unemployment, educational alienation, and potential life lost” (Malawa et al., 2021, p. 3).

Marginalization can be understood in other ways as well. A person walking in the rain with an umbrella would be considered marginal compared to a person driving along the road, as it comes down to the question of affordability. Compared to a person comfortably seated inside the warmth of an office, a delivery driver waiting outside in the snow to pick up an order (Fig 8) would be considered marginalized, which is often directly related to access to opportunities. Marginal bodies are overrepresented in odd jobs such as meat processing jobs, construction and paving jobs, school crossing patrols, etc.





Fig 8: Representational spaces of the margin (from left to right)

The following image (Fig 9) of the billboard announcing ‘Black Lives Matter’ reflects the fear and vulnerability of the margin. The need for the Black community to erect a billboard in public announcing, or rather forced to enunciate, the obvious, that ‘their lives matter too’ reveals the dismal reality of a polarized society in need to be reminded that (marginalized) lives are still worth living.





Fig 9: Visual representation of the margin in space-time (from left to right)

Fear is not just in the imagination of the marginalized groups. In 2018, police reported 283 criminal incidents motivated by hatred against the Black population—the second most commonly targeted group overall behind the Jewish population, which accounts for 36% of all hate crimes targeting race or ethnicity, and 16% of all hate crimes (Statistics Canada, n.d.). The cultural, political, and/or economic mediation of the margin at various junctures of the past shows that dominant ideas and social hierarchies have a long history of being reproduced by racist practices such as slavery, or by state violence sanctioned by designations such as the *War on Drugs* (Lawrence & Thompson, 2006), the *War on Terror* and others. These repeated patterns of cultural mediation and appropriation of marginalized bodies are processes of marginalization.

It needs to be understood that discrimination, racism, biases, inequality, etc. do not just contribute to marginalization. Rather, these are processes that determine how marginalization comes into being and social hierarchies are being reproduced. Therefore, it was not surprising that the number of police-reported hate crimes (+80%) targeting race or ethnicity almost doubled (total of 1,594) during COVID-19 in 2020 compared to the year-earlier (Statistics Canada, 2022). The highest number of those crimes targeted the East or Southeast Asian population (+202 incidents or +301%).

Marginalization not only results in the high rate of incarceration of BIPOC communities but also has a spillover effect on other areas such as the education system. BIPOC students receive disciplinary punishment at a higher rate compared to White students, which very well could be one of the primary reasons for disparity in education:

Although Black students made up only 15% of the student population, they received as many as 39.3% of all out-of-school suspensions. The situation was particularly extreme for Black males; 17.6% of Black males received out-of-school suspensions compared to 9.1% of Native American/Alaskan Native males, 6.4% of Hispanic males, and 5.0% of white males (Henry et al., 2022, p. 1255).

The trend continued during the Covid-19 pandemic as well, despite the pandemic touted as a great leveller by politicians such as New York's Governor Andre Cuomo (Stavropoulos, 2020). In reality, it was particularly severe for the marginalized (Corak, 2020; Jain, 2020; Milne, 2020). The pandemic exposed systematic biases that exacerbate marginalization in the form of racism, xenophobia, etc., as the disease affected marginalized groups the most (Kantamneni, 2020; Marchildon, 2020; Seucharan & Bascaramurty, 2020).

Historically, marginalized groups have always been the first to be blamed and avoided during any global health-related crisis. For instance, people of Asian descent and other marginalized groups, including religious minorities, racialized groups, ethnic minorities, immigrants, have been stigmatized and targeted through the process of 'othering' and xenophobia (Gover et al., 2020, p. 648-653, Dionne & Turkmen, 2020, p. E213). Marginalized identities have been at a higher risk of contracting and dying from the disease in the urban regions of Canada and elsewhere. Black residents have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 (Choi et al., 2021, p. 159), which underlines the existing racial

discrimination that increases in the events of global disasters and continues to reproduce the conditions of marginalization.

Nonetheless, the Covid-19 pandemic has redefined the notion of marginal space. Not only have a lot of jobs been lost, but also many places have been rendered marginal. For example, the physical spaces of restaurants have become marginalized while food delivery services have increased significantly. Restaurants were forced to adopt new means to reach out to their customer base, and space management has been reimagined and changed considerably. Gig economies such as DoorDash and UberEats enjoyed a net positive change in their earnings, with DoorDash showing a growth rate of approximately 12.60%, followed by UberEats with 9.18% (Coleman & Carrillo, 2021).

Meanwhile, tech companies such as Amazon made more profit during the pandemic than in the previous three years (Dastin & Rana, 2021). Internet-based service providers and other kinds of auxiliary and supporting technologies associated with communication technologies that were not tied to a physical location flourished. This change in space management has turned many physical spaces marginal or even redundant. Office spaces have been deemed unnecessary and have either been closed or moved inside private spaces. Bedrooms, dining, and living spaces have been transformed into workplaces. Many previously essentialized spaces have now become marginalized and gone into oblivion, waiting to make a comeback.

This reimagining of space has not been a blessing for the margin. Marginal identities were particularly vulnerable and were one of the most affected due to their limited knowledge of, and access to, technologies such as high-speed Internet, smartphones, or computers

(Solheim et al., 2022) that were often crucial to accessing opportunities such as Canada Emergency Response Benefits (CERB), small business relief funds, etc.

Some of these spaces have been reimagined now. For instance, the Internet and laptops have to some extent replaced in-person learning in schools or doctor's visits. Some previous office jobs, including many government and private sector jobs, have become remote or adopted a predominantly offsite model or a hybrid model where employees need to go to the office only on a certain number of days per week. This has pushed society to reimagine spatial practices and work culture, ultimately changing commute patterns, traffic movement, space management, and relationships to production.

Even when spaces reopen, pandemic experiences impact how we visualize space. For instance, the space of the orthodontist below shows that even after opening up in a limited capacity (Fig 10), it has been highly regulated and considered nonessential, marginalized. Spatial practices prioritize health, social interactions have become awkward, and customs have changed (no shaking of hands etc.).



Fig 10: Reconfiguration of space: Essential space becomes obscure and marginal.

Not only did the global pandemic transform our idea of space, it also impacted accepted notions of public, private, abstract, and concrete (Valizadeh & Iranmanesh, 2022). Public spaces have transformed into hybrid spaces to accommodate private needs, while private spaces such as residences have been remodeled to be used for work and leisure. New spaces have emerged in places that have been rendered redundant by the pandemic. For instance, a former business outlet of The Home & Garden RONA at Pinebush Road in Cambridge was turned into a centre for management of public health and disease control (Fig 11). These spaces have turned into both privileged and sacred and forbidden places, reserved for individuals who are in a state of crisis. In a Foucauldian (1986) sense, these are crisis heterotopias, which are rare these days, as they have been consistently replaced by heterotopias of deviation, such as rest homes and psychiatric hospitals, prisons, and retirement homes (Foucault, 1986, p. 25). The changes brought about by the pandemic confirm that the socio-cultural production of the margin is a spatiotemporal condition that can

also change over time. However, those changes are attached to existing social practices and biases that often exclude and discriminate against some and disproportionately privilege others to ensure that a specific body remains at the top of the social hierarchy.



Fig 11: Reconfiguration of space: Emerging new spaces during covid

#### 4.2 Analysis of images in the newspaper (Representations of space)

Images from a national and a local newspaper were analyzed and compared with the representational spaces visualized by the participants to provide a comparative analysis between the two and show how they deviate from each other. Six months of visual data from the weekly newspaper *The Cambridge Times* (January 21, 2021 to July 15, 2021) and one month's data of photos from *The Globe and Mail* (April 29, 2021 to May 29, 2021) were analyzed to articulate the existing practices of popular media representations of the margin. The selection of the dates was not random. It coincided with the timing of the Ethics Committee suspending all face-to-face interviews on October 23, 2020. As there were no

more outside activities due to increasing Covid 19 cases, it was the perfect time to complete the analysis of the two newspapers. I started to collect six months' data from one local weekly newspaper, which was equivalent to approximately the same number of days of data to be collected from the national daily.

For the purpose of the analysis, a body is considered White as defined in the Employment Equity Act (EEA). There is no clear definition of the category White—it is implied based on the rest of the population, which aligns with the argument that it works through exclusionary practices (Hall,1996). Table 1 shows the assigned value for each category. For example, any White or White Passing body (W/WP) is assigned the value of 1. In subsequent analysis, W/WP has been replaced by 1 to simplify the counting.

Table 1: Assigned values for different legends.

Legends	Assigned Value
White/White Passing (W/WP)	1
Margin (M)	2
White Dominated/White Focus (WD/WF)	3
Margin Dominated (MD)	4
Mixed (Mix)	5
Neutral (N)	6
Non-Representation (No images) (NR)	7
Cartoon White (CW)	8
Cartoon White Dominated (CWD)	9
Cartoon Mixed (CM)	10
Unsure	11

The Employment Equity Act designates four groups for employment equity. White is not one of them. It can be inferred from the definition of members of visible minorities as “persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour” (Statistics Canada, 2021) that people of Caucasian race or White in skin colour are considered White (W). Therefore, the margin is always something that lacks, something that

in itself is not known. Rather, it is in relation to something else, something ‘not,’ a deviation, an ‘other than.’ For our purpose, the White category also includes bodies that can pass as White or recognized as White Passing (WP). On the other hand, margin (M) constitutes Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC), visible minorities, women (of colour), religious minorities, ethnic minorities, and others: any bodies that are non-Caucasian in race or non-White in colour. A Neutral (N) image is considered the one that either represents no bodies or if it does is unidentifiable. In the mixed categories, there are White-dominated (WD) or White-Focus (WF), Margin-dominated (MD) or Margin-Focus (MF), and Mixed (No biases in representation). Non-representation (NR) denotes no visual images. Other categories include Cartoon White (CW), Cartoon White Dominated (CWD), and Cartoon Mixed (CM).

Table 2: Visual representations of various groups (The Cambridge Times)

Date	Front Page	Page 2	Page 3	Page 4	Page 5	Page 6	Page 7	Page 8	Page 9	Page 10
Jan 21, 2021	W	N	N	N	N	N	M	M	NR	NR
Jan 28, 2021	M	W	N	N	Mix	W	M	N	NR	NR
Feb 04, 2021	W	N	NR	NR	N	W (Ad)	N	CW	M, Ad	N
Feb 11, 2021	W	N	Mix	WF	W	N	W	W, Ad	N	CWD
Feb 18, 2021	W	N	N	W (Ads)	N	CWD	W	W, Ad	N	M
Mar 4, 2021	WP	N	WP	WD	N	CWD	W	N	N	WD
Mar 18, 2021	W	N	W	W	N	CWD	W	W, Ad	N	WD
Mar 25, 2021	W	N	N	N	W	CWD	W	N	W	W
Apr 1, 2021	W	WD 3W1 M	W	Mix	W	CM	N	NR	N	NR
Apr 8, 2021	W	Mix	N	MD	W	CM	N	NR	WD 7W2M	N
Apr 15, 2021	W	N	W	MD	W	CM	N	WD	N	WD
Apr 22, 2021	W	Mix Ads	W	N	W	NR	W	NR	N	W
Apr 29, 2021	W	MD	W	N	WD	W	N	N	N	W
May 6, 2021	N	WD	W	N	Mix	W	W	Mix	Mx	W
May 13, 2021	N	W	N	N	M	W	W	N	NR	NR
May 20, 2021	N	N	W	N	M (Ads)	W	W	N	N	WD

May 27, 2021	N	N	W	N	N	W	W	N	Mix	M
Jun 03, 2021	W	W (Ads)	W	WD	N	CWD	W	W	N	Unsure
Jun 10, 2021	W	W (Ads)	W	N	M	W	W	WD	W, Ad	W
June 17, 2021	M, Negative	N	N	N	WF	CW	W	N	N	W
Jun 24, 2021	NR	N	W	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
July 01, 2021	W	N	W	W	N	CW	N	N	N	W
July 15, 2021	W	N	N	M	N	W	N	WP	N	N

TABLE 3: Various groups with legends corresponding to numbers (Cambridge Times)

Date	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10
Jan 21, 2021	1	6	6	6	6	6	2	2	7	7
Jan 28, 2021	2	1	6	6	5	1	2	6	7	7
Feb 04, 2021	1	6	7	7	6	1	6	8	2	6
Feb 11, 2021	1	6	5	1	1	6	1	1	6	9
Feb 18, 2021	1	6	6	1	6	9	1	1	6	2
Mar 4, 2021	1	6	1	3	6	9	1	6	6	3
Mar 18, 2021	1	6	1	1	6	9	1	1	6	3
Mar 25, 2021	1	6	6	6	1	9	1	6	1	1
Apr 1, 2021	1	3	1	5	1	10	6	7	6	7
Apr 8, 2021	1	5	6	4	1	10	6	7	3	6
Apr 15, 2021	1	6	1	4	1	10	6	3	6	3
Apr 22, 2021	1	5	1	6	1	7	1	7	6	1
Apr 29, 2021	1	4	1	6	3	1	6	6	6	1
May 6, 2021	6	3	1	6	5	1	1	5	5	1
May 13, 2021	6	1	6	6	2	1	1	6	7	7
May 20, 2021	6	6	1	6	2	1	1	6	6	3
May 27, 2021	6	6	1	6	6	1	1	6	5	2
Jun 03, 2021	1	1	1	3	6	9	1	1	6	--
Jun 10, 2021	1	1	1	6	2	1	1	3	1	1
June 17, 2021	2	6	6	6	3	8	1	6	6	1
Jun 24, 2021	7	6	1	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
July 01, 2021	1	6	1	1	6	8	6	6	6	1
July 15, 2021	1	6	6	2	6	1	6	1	6	6

#### 4.2.1 Analysis of The Cambridge Times

Representations of images on the front page of The Cambridge Times show an overrepresentation of White bodies with a total of sixteen (16) representations as opposed to two (2) marginal bodies (Table 4). Out of these two representations, one shows people mourning the tragic death of a Muslim family killed in London, Ontario. The other image is celebratory news of Zaeem Ajwad, who is working toward eradicating poverty and hunger locally and passes as White.

TABLE 4: Total representations of various categories on different pages

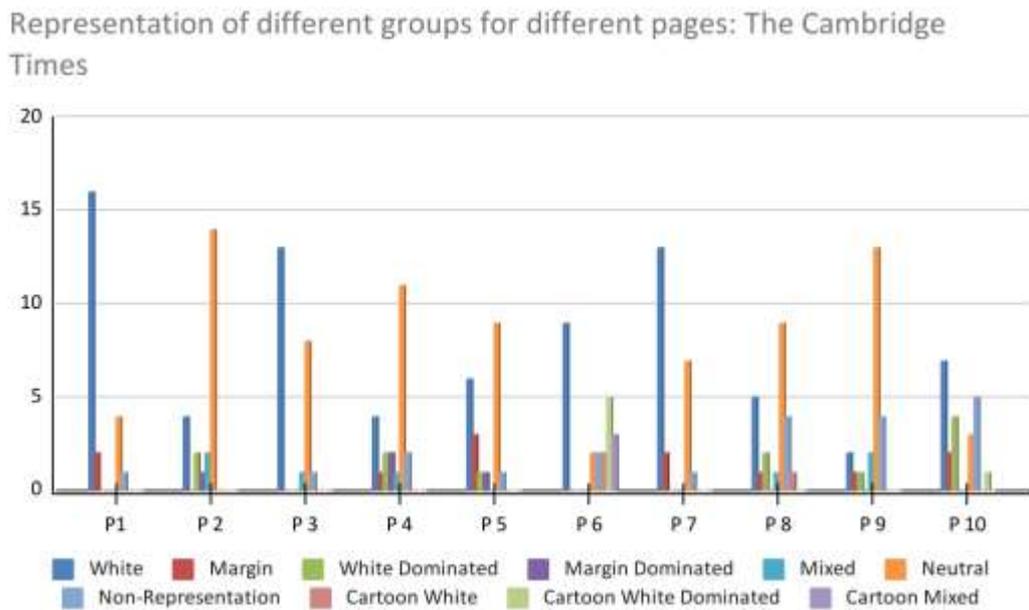
Categories	P1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 5	P 6	P 7	P 8	P 9	P 10	Total
White	16	4	13	4	6	9	13	5	2	7	79
Margin	2	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	1	2	12
White Dominated	0	2	0	2	1	0	0	2	1	4	12
Margin Dominated	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	4
Mixed	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	7
Neutral	4	14	8	11	9	2	7	9	13	3	80
Non-Representation	1	0	1	2	1	2	1	4	4	5	21
Cartoon White	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	3
Cartoon White Dominated	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	1	6
Cartoon Mixed	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3

On page 2, the neutral category appears most often (14), while the number of White representations is second (4). There is not a single marginal representation on page 2. The trend remains the same on page 3: White bodies are represented thirteen (13) times, with no marginal representation during the six months' period. The neutral category is second with eight (8) appearances, and only one (1) non-representation.

Chart 1 shows a comparison between various groups. As we can see, White is the dominant body type, represented on five out of the ten pages, including the front page (16) and pages 3, 6, 7, and 10. The category came in second position on four other pages (2, 4, 5, and 8) and in third position on page 9, but only because the non-representation secured the

second position. On page 2, the neutral category was the highest represented, while White came in second (4), with no marginal representation. White-dominated and margin-dominated images appeared twice (2), with two non-representations. Page 5 shows a similar trend, with the neutral category being the highest (9), and White bodies coming in second position (6). However, marginal representations increased a little (3). Pages 6 and 7 again demonstrated the highest number of White representations with nine (9) and thirteen (13) images respectively. There were no marginal representations on page 6, while only two (2) marginal images on page 7.

CHART 1: Comparison of various groups in visual representations

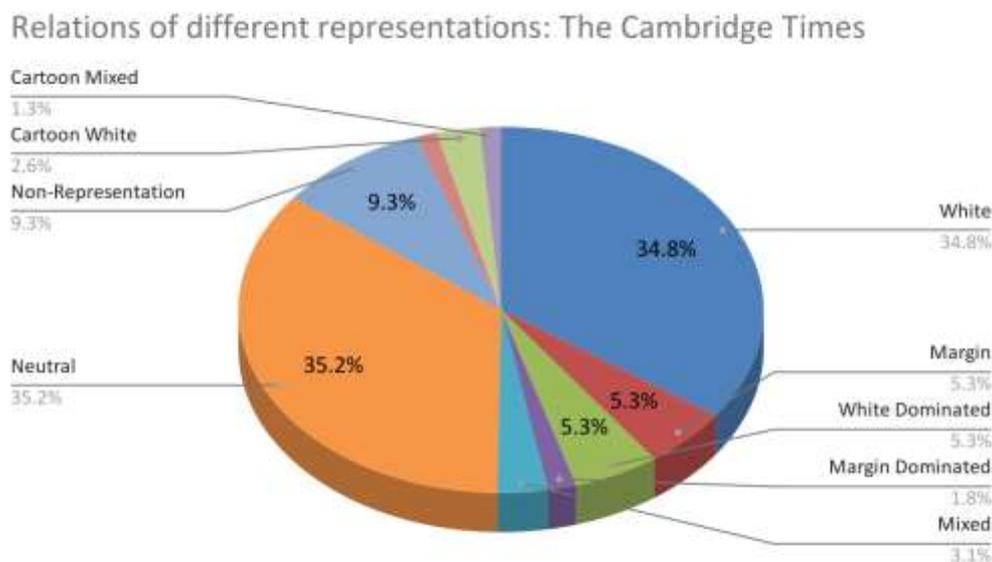


The tall columns of White representations in Chart 1 during those six months demonstrate the specific racial bias in the dominant media narrative. The only time White representation ever comes second is when the other category is either Neutral (N) or a non-representation of bodies. For instance, on page 2, neutral is the dominant category, which is also the case on pages 4, 5, 8, and 9. The only time White representations come in third is on page 9, where

the first two categories are N and NR, meaning they do not involve any human bodies, and the page is only published occasionally. Even though the Neutral (N) category appears most often (80), the number of White representations (79) is, in fact, at the top of the list for all 10 pages where images of human bodies were portrayed.

A pie chart and a bar chart show the stark visual contrast between these categories, with the neutral category (35.2%) on top, closely followed by White representation (34.8%). Non-representation stands at 9.3%, White-dominated and marginal representations at 5.3% each, and mixed representation at 3.1%. Other categories are insignificant, ranging anything between 1.3%-2.6% [Chart 2(a)].

CHART 2 (a): Visual representations of various categories: The Cambridge Times

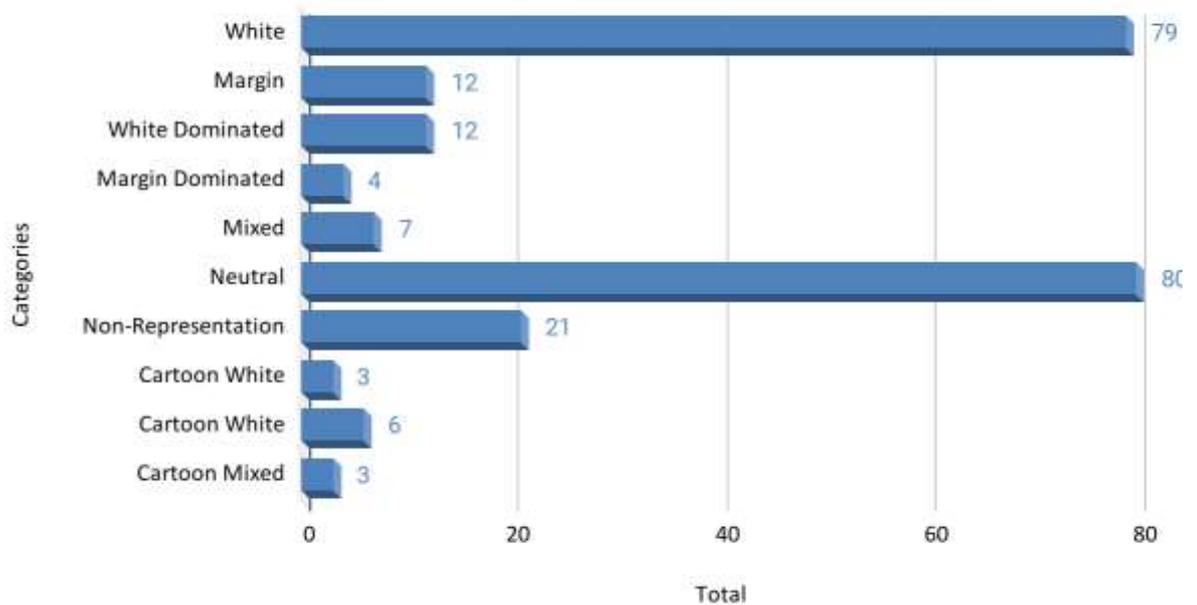


The visual representations in the bar chart [Chart 2 (b)] show exact numbers, and glancing at them reveals that there is an overwhelming domination of White representations (79), as opposed to the number of marginal representations (12). However, these numbers do not portray the actual picture, as the representations in the mixed category are very skewed

towards White-dominated representations (12) and are at the same percentile (5.3%) as bodies with only marginal identities. The highest category is neutral, appearing 80 times (35.2%), but this category does not represent any bodily images and hence has no significance on image politics. Pages with no images, i.e. non-representation, come in third position, with a total of 21 (9.3%). This confirms that whenever bodies are represented, the ‘natural’ choice is White.

CHART 2 (b): Visual representations of different categories: The Cambridge Times

Visual representation of various categories: The Cambridge Times



If we further analyze the images and break them down, it shows that the percentage of White representations on the front page is 69.56% (16 out of 23), in contrast to only 8.69% (2 out of 23) images of marginal representation. Marginal representations make the front page when associated with tragic or negative stories, for instance when mourning the death of family members who were killed in a terrorist attack by an Islamophobic White male driving his truck over their bodies in London, Ontario, on June 17, 2021 (Fig 12).



Fig 12: Marginal identities make it to the front only on tragedies or negative stories (June 17, 2021)

The neutral category is the highest on page 2, with about 60.86% of the images, about 17.39% White, about 8.69% White dominated, and 4.35% images being Margin-dominated. There is no representation of only marginal bodies on page 2. Page 3 has a similar bias, with most of the representations being White (56.52%), and 34.78% of images being Neutral. However, there have been no representations of only Marginal bodies. The Neutral category dominates (47.82%) on page 4, but White remains the dominant group, with images representing bodies in them constituting 17.39% of images being White, whereas Margin appears only 4.34% of the time.

Overall representations for all pages demonstrate a dominant White representation (34.8% of all of those with only White representations, 5.3% White dominated, and 2.6% of images with White Cartoons). Whereas the representations of only marginal bodies are 5.3%, even if we consider all the images that have any marginal bodies in them, such as mixed representations with at least one marginal body, the number still stands at only 11.5%.

Meanwhile, White bodies also dominate mixed representations. For instance, when images represent a mixture of different body types, most often, either the most numbers of bodies would be White, or the focus would be on White bodies. Bodies other than White (BIPOC) would be less frequent (Fig 13). Typical representations of diversity are among predominantly White bodies. In most cases, marginal bodies are not the main focus of the image.



Fig 13: Example of diversity as represented in Cambridge Times (Feb 18, 2021, p. 25).

Even when representations are balanced, most often the White body remains the center of focus, whether they are people in the position of power or not. For example, the first photo in Fig 14 shows a White activist as the focus, while the second picture shows a White person in a position of power being the focus. The third photo of the series shows five bodies. Again, the White body is in the centre. The next image shows the focus on a little child and a mother, who are either White or could easily pass as White. The last image of the series shows an ad with a mixed representation, yet the centre (or focus) is occupied by a White figure, while the other bodies revolve around the normative White. Moreover, the number of White bodies is higher than the marginal ones. The marginalized body provides the supporting cast: on the edge, as if to balance out the act of underrepresentation or non-representation (Fig 13 and Fig 14).



Fig 14: White (or white-passing) focused images

Even when no actual human bodies are involved, such as in cartoons, the discursive practice of the visual narrative is to characterize the bodies as White or White-dominated, and the marginal bodies appear only as exceptions (See Fig 15). This is not to say that there have not been any marginal representations in cartoons, but those are rare and often an endorsement of marginality itself. A marginal body is hardly ever portrayed as representative of a Canadian identity, or to highlight ‘Canadianness.’ Only when it becomes necessary to portray the so-called diversity of Canada, bodies are represented as marginal. The psyche of the Canadian mind and body is assumed to be White. Clearly, there is an overall underrepresentation, non-representation, and misrepresentation of marginalized bodies in the local newspaper I studied.



Fig 15: Representations of cartoon characters: usually characterized as White.

For my analysis, measures have been put in place to negotiate the possible biases of observation, i.e. the way the researcher has determined an image to be considered what it is. Sometimes it gets tricky to determine the ethnicity/race/color of the bodily image. When there is ambiguity as to whether a representation could be considered White, White-dominated, or Mixed, the benefit of the doubt is given to Mixed or Neutral, unless there is conclusive evidence that suggests the representation is, in fact, White. Also, when possible, the researcher searched the name of the person being photographed on the Internet and social media to determine their identity (race is hardly ever mentioned on websites and social media

platforms). In all cases, the researcher relies on visual representation to determine the body type to keep the margin of error low.

#### 4.2.2 Analysis of *The Globe and Mail*

A recent article published in *The Globe and Mail* claims that progress has been made regarding coverage of diversity last year, especially for images. The report claims that almost a quarter of the images of males published in *The Globe and Mail* are of racialized bodies and the number is almost one in every five (20%) for women (Stead, 2022). However, that claim could not be validated by the research conducted between April 29, 2022, and May 28, 2022, for the first 10 pages of the newspaper, as overall marginal representation falls far below the claim at only about 14.3%. Whereas images of only White bodies appear at least 99 times (42.9%).

TABLE 5: Visual representations of various groups (*The Globe and Mail*)

Date	Front	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	A10
Apr 29, 2022	Mix	W	W	W Ukraine	NR	W	NR	W	NR	M
Apr 30, 2022	Mix	W	W	WD	M (Ad)	W	N	Mix	NR	NR
May 02, 2022	Mix	W	W, GP	W	M (Ad)	W	WD	W	N	N
May 03, 2022	WD	W	Mix	MD	N	N	NR	WD	NR	NR
May 04, 2022	W (US)	Mix	W Protest	Mix	W	W	Mix Ad	N	Mix	W
May 05, 2022	WP/WF	MF	WD	W	WD	W	Mix	W	NR	W
May 06, 2022	M	N	M	WF	N	WD	N	Mix	WD	NR
May 07, 2022	WD	WD	M Indig	W	W (Ad)	WF	Mix	Mix	WF	WF
May 09, 2022	W, Women	W	W	N	W	W Politics	M	Mix	Mix	W
May 10, 2022	NR	M	M- Foreign	M Taliban	WD 7:1	W	W	WD	NR	NR
May 11, 2022	W, Charles	MD	W (War)	W	W	W	Mix Gun Violence	WP	NR	NR
May 12, 2022	W, Women	M	M Indig	W	MD	W	W	Mix	M	M
May 13, 2022	WP	W	N	WP	N	N	M, Foreign	W	NR	W
May 14, 2022	N	W	W	W	N	W	NR	W	Mix	M
May 16, 2022	Mix	WP	M shoot	M Forgn	M	WF	W	M	NR	NR
May 17, 2022	WD	W	N	WD	N	Mix	M	W	NR	NR
May 18, 2022	WD	W	M	WD	WF	MF	NR	NR	W	W

May 19, 2022	W	W	Mix	W	Mix	N	Mix	W	NR	NR
May 20, 2022	WD	WF	Mix	MD	N	N	W	W	NR	WD
May 21, 2022	W	W	W	WD	W	W	Mix	W	W	W
May 23, 2022	W	W	W	N	W	W	W	NR	NR	NR
May 24, 2022	W & Mob	W	W	W	W	WF	M	W	NR	NR
May 25, 2022	M Texas	Mix Floyd	Mix Mob	W	Mix	M	NR	N	Mix	N
May 26, 2022	WD	W	WD	M	W	M	Mix	M	NR	NR
May 27, 2022	Mix	W	Mix	W	W	W	Mix	Mix	WD	W
May 28, 2022	M	WD	W	Mix Tex	M	WF	Mix	WD	W	W

TABLE 6: Various groups with legends corresponding to numbers (The Globe and Mail)

Date	Front	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	A10
29-Apr-22	5	1	1	1	7	1	7	1	7	2
30-Apr-22	5	1	1	3	2	1	6	5	7	7
2-May-22	5	1	1	1	2	1	3	1	6	6
3-May-22	3	1	5	4	6	6	7	1	7	7
4-May-22	1	3	1	5	1	1	2	6	5	1
5-May-22	1	2	3	1	3	1	5	1	7	1
6-May-22	2	6	2	3	6	3	6	3	3	7
7-May-22	3	3	2	1	1	3	5	5	3	3
9-May-22	1	1	1	6	1	1	2	5	5	1
10-May-22	7	2	2	2	3	1	1	3	7	7
11-May-22	1	4	1	1	1	1	5	2	7	7
12-May-22	1	2	2	1	4	1	1	2	2	2
13-May-22	1	1	6	1	6	6	2	1	7	1
14-May-22	6	1	1	1	6	1	7	1	5	2
16-May-22	5	1	2	5	2	3	1	2	7	7
17-May-22	3	1	6	3	6	5	2	1	7	7
18-May-22	3	1	2	3	1	4	7	7	1	1
19-May-22	1	1	5	1	5	6	5	1	7	7
20-May-22	3	3	2	4	6	6	1	1	7	3
21-May-22	1	1	1	3	1	1	5	1	1	1
23-May-22	1	1	1	6	1	1	1	6	7	7
24-May-22	1	1	1	1	1	3	2	1	7	7
25-May-22	2	5	5	1	5	2	7	6	5	6
26-May-22	3	1	3	2	1	2	5	2	7	7
27-May-22	5	1	5	1	1	1	5	5	3	1
28-May-22	2	3	1	5	2	3	5	3	1	1

An analysis of different pages of The Globe and Mail reveals a similar trend when each page is analyzed separately. The number of White representations on the front page of The Globe and Mail is 10 (41.66%), while the local newspaper has it at about 69.56%. There are five (5) mixed representations, which were something completely missing from the front page of the local newspaper. On page A2, White bodies again top the list, appearing 16 times (about 61.54%), while the marginal bodies are represented three times (about 11.54%).

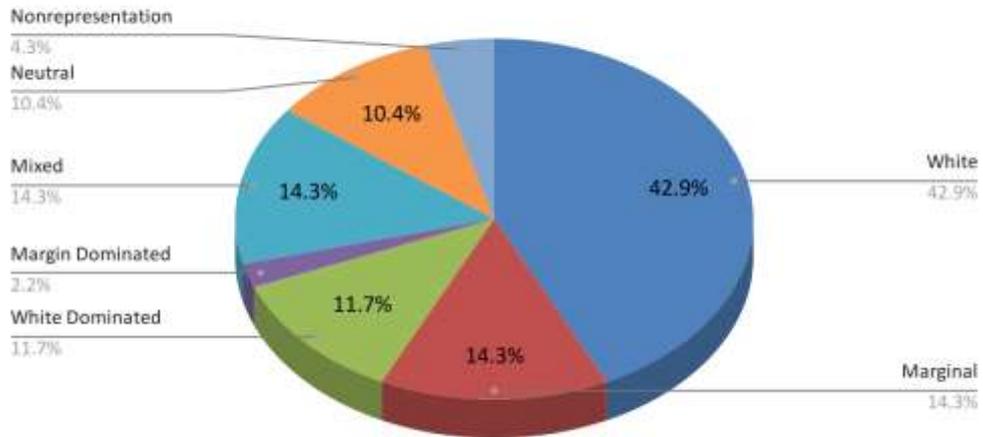
TABLE 7: Representations of various groups on different pages (The Globe and Mail)

Pages	Front	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	A10	Total
White	10	16	11	12	10	13	5	11	3	8	99
Marginal	3	3	7	2	4	2	5	3	1	3	33
White Dominated	4	4	2	1	2	5	1	3	3	2	27
Margin Dominated	0	1	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	5
Mixed	5	1	4	5	2	1	7	4	4	0	33
Neutral	1	1	2	2	6	4	2	3	1	2	24
Nonrepresentation	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	4	1	10
Cartoon White	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cartoon White Dominated	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cartoon Mixed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

On page A3, White bodies again dominated with eleven (11) images (40.74%), and the number of marginal identities is seven (25.92%). On page A4, there are twelve (12) White representations, and only two (2) marginal bodies. It is similar across all pages representing bodies, and the only time another category other than White that dominates is the Mixed category on page A7, with a total of seven (7) images. Page A9 shows non-representation as the highest, but this does not have an impact as the images do not involve any bodies. The overall visual representations clearly demonstrate White dominance.

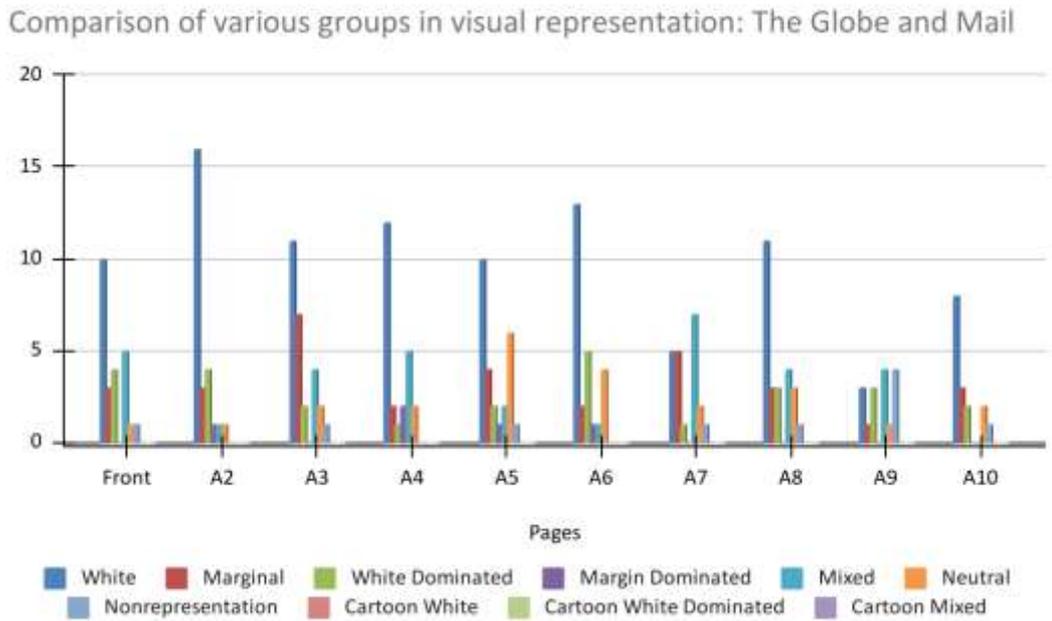
CHART 3: Visual representations of various categories in The Globe and Mail

### Relations of different representation: The Globe and Mail



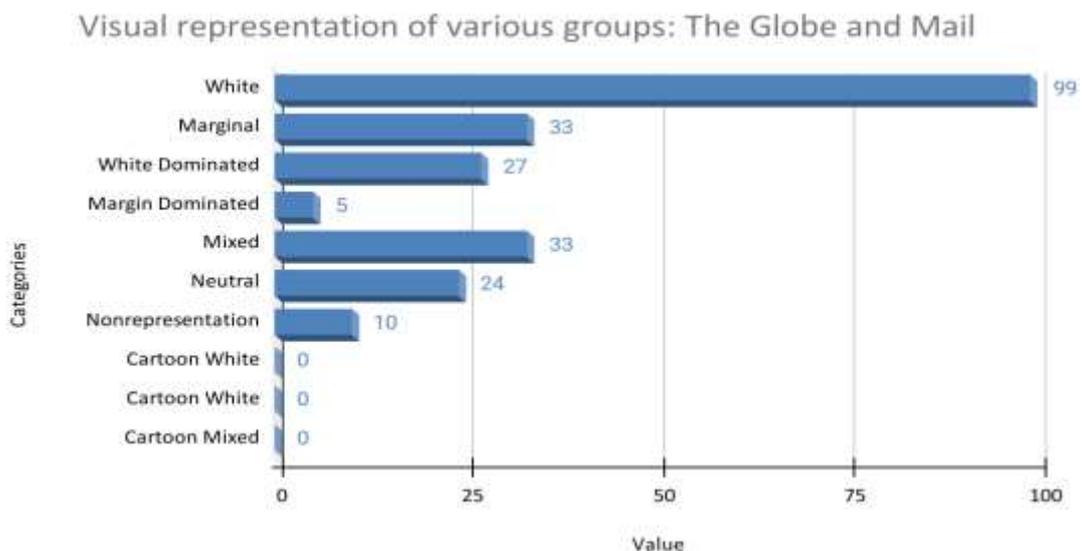
The visual representation of different groups in the bar chart also shows a dominant representation of White bodies (42.9%). Even when there are Mixed representations, in most cases, they are either White-dominated or White-focused: either the White bodies outnumber the marginal bodies, or the arrangement of the image is such that the central focus remains on the White body, surrounded by marginal bodies. It is rare that a BIPOC body is the focus of an image surrounded by White bodies (unless it is a story about them).

CHART 4: Visual representations of various categories (The Globe and Mail)



The representation of a Canadian identity presumes a White body. The marginal body hardly ever becomes representative, unless related to a specific issue about the margin, such as portraying diversity and multiculturalism. Even though the Canadian state promotes multiculturalism, the assumption of a Canadian identity is often associated with a certain body type.

CHART 5: Visual representations of different categories: The Globe and Mail



Even when represented, the marginal often receives negative coverage. For example, news of Indigenous women occupying half of all female inmates in federal prisons gets the front-page treatment (White, 2022). In contrast, there are instances where the newspaper grants anonymity to men so they can share their thoughts freely on coverage of violence against women (Renzetti et al., 2022), while the same text exposes the victims, all of whom Indigenous women, facing the double danger of being at the intersection of being Indigenous and women (Fig 16).



Fig 16: Kimlee Wong of the Sagkeeng First Nation in Manitoba and Debije Jules of Toronto, two survivors who say education for men can help prevent abuse or rehabilitate those who commit it (photography by Shannon Vanraes and Melissa Tait/The Globe and Mail), The Globe and Mail, May 13, 2022.

Marginalization here resides in the worst possible intersections of Indigeneity, gender, and poverty. In contrast, the only representation of male partners participating in the campaign is an illustration by Dorothy Leung, masking their identity as anonymous (Fig 17).



Fig 17: Illustration by Dorothy Leung, Globe and Mail, published on May 13, 2022.

TABLE 8: Comparison between local and national newspaper

Local	National
34.80%	42.90%
5.30%	14.30%
5.30%	11.70%
1.80%	2.20%
3.10%	14.30%
35.20%	10.40%
9.30%	4.30%
1.30%	0
2.60%	0
1.30%	0

Both the local and the national newspaper shows a bias in favour of White representations (34.8% and 42.9% respectively). The national newspaper has done a better job of representing the marginal groups (14.3% as opposed to only 5.3% in a local newspaper), but

at the same time, there is also a higher percentage of White representations. The neutral category dominates the local newspaper (35.2%). Although the National Daily has displayed a comparatively better mix of different groups, it too has a predominant bias toward White bodies.

#### *4.3 Analysis of images shared by participants (representational spaces)*

Representational spaces of the margin imagined by the first and second-generation diaspora depict their social spaces and everyday lives. These are depicted through interviews and the images they share. They reveal their social space and spatial practices. For instance, the images shared by P1 reveal his religious beliefs that he asserts to be his core identity marker (Fig 18). The images of him enjoying *iftar* (the religious practice of Muslims' breaking fast during Ramadan), or simply exchanging social pleasantries inside the mosque, reveal the spatial practices of the community. The images also reveal a strong sense of community bonding based on beliefs, which is expressed through identifiable religious symbols in their style of clothing, type of head coverings, and physical attributes such as long beards. Community bonding is based on a religious fraternity that P1 describes as 'Muslim brotherhood.' This fraternity is extended beyond the place of worship and includes outside activities such as fishing, community picnics, etc. The desire to bond with the community provides a glimpse of the idea of recreating a home in a foreign land. P1 changes his profession out of necessity, not by choice. He was frustrated by not being able to find a job as a researcher. He concludes that his identity expands and transforms when faced with obstacles.

The alternative that I found, which at the same time would help me to preserve my religious faith, was self-employment. I am now self-employed, and I have an established cell phone and computer business now. So, yes I have changed my track, but Alhamdulillah, I am now okay (P1).



Fig 18: Representational spaces: Celebration of life in marginal imagination (P1)

These images further confirm a social practice of first-generation immigrants: they often display their alienation, as they prefer living within the comfort of their community, which, P1 argued, often depend on language and/or religion. The images above (Fig 18) show that P1 is usually surrounded by similar associations, even when attending public events such as watching a game at the stadium. None of the images shows any real connection to other identities, especially the dominant ones, or even an attempt made from either side. On the contrary, there is a lack of diversity in his social space. Only in public spaces can we see a

glimpse of other identities, but P1 is still seen within his personal space. He is neither comfortable nor making a conscious effort to communicate in those spaces known as the contact zones. The reasons, as P1 says, are often due to the difference of language or religion. Also, the fact that the host culture does not often endorse these differences makes it harder for the marginalized bodies to overcome barriers.

The issue is associated with two opposing emotions. The needle swings wildly between welcoming strangers and fearing them. A diaspora community is always stuck in transit, a third space (Bhabha, 1994). The third space can also be a non-space, for example, a highway or an airport, because even though these spaces physically exist, they are never the final destination. People use them to get to other places, to get to somewhere else. For example, a highway works to transport people (and goods) from one place to another. It is a means of transit between two or more different points, but in itself, it is not the final destination, it is always a place of transit. The same is true for the diaspora community. While occupying the physical space they live in, they also remain mentally connected to the space they left behind through transnational ties. They recreate a replica of home away from home, a space inhabited by the memories of a socio-cultural residue from the past, to provide relief and maneuver in an alien world. However, the ambiguity of the spatial reality is that it is their home, but at the same time, it does not correspond to the image of home that they left behind. Consequently, there is a sense of alienation from the physical world, the connection gets severed, often exacerbated by microaggressions from the dominant culture.

The images of the workplace of P2, another first-generation immigrant, reveal the industrial complex representations of the inanimate, crude, and lifeless machines, directly linked to the mode of production. In contrast to the images of second-generation immigrants, these images show a more inward focus on the self. Likewise, self-portraits (selfies) around

the workspace reveal a rather somber and alienated P2, frustrated and disgruntled (as he later reveals in his interview) with his current job, with the physical work that he performs every day, as opposed to what he used to do back home as a highly educated individual with a Master's degree. It is not so much the images of the barren industrial complex or the gloves lying on the table in themselves that are intimidating or depressing, even though they do play a crucial part. It is more the change in the work culture and nature of the job that is hurting him. Circumstances forced him to accept manual labour, which not only threatens his career but also hurts his pride and self-esteem. This substantiates the research findings that highly educated skilled immigrants suffer substantial wage disadvantages in both employment and earnings compared to native-born workers with similar skill sets, which continue throughout their working career (Aydemir & Skuterud, 2005; Dean, 2018; Lamb et al., 2021).

In contrast, P2 demonstrates a sense of peace and happiness in the company of his family and friends, or at the place of worship. His conflicting state of mind at the workplace, as opposed to home, validates the argument that spatial practices under neo-capitalism create an extreme separation between the places it links together, such as work and leisure through urban networks of roads and highways (Lefebvre, 1991). P2 lives in a constant state of negotiations between his two identities and engages in a discursive practice of becoming, always trying to find a balance between two opposite positionalities: his workplace and home.

Discursive and exclusionary social practices often alienate the first generation of immigrants and push them further deep inside themselves, where they find solace living in that imagined utopia called home and a state of mind that is constantly reminiscing a space (home) and time (past) they had left behind.

This imagined utopia and belonging of community in another space can be seen in the photos shared by P2 (Fig 19), where there is no representation of other cultures in his physical reality. The images also depict a glimpse of the cultural differences of the diaspora community through their dresses, social gatherings, food habits, etc. This non-representation of other cultures, especially dominant ones, is in stark contrast with the media representations where the White is the dominant and often the only ones represented in movies and television with all-White casts. However, in the marginal imagination, it is the marginal bodies that occupy this space and narrate the stories.





Fig 19: Separation between workplace and home/leisure (P2)

These images depict spatial practices of marginalized groups in socio-cultural engagements when they encounter people, events, and modes of production in the 'contact zones' (Pratt, 1992). More importantly, they visualize the social practices of marginal identities and their celebrations of life.

Any analysis of social space is a discussion of spatial reality (Lefebvre, 1991). Not only do these representational spaces articulate marginal perceptions of space, but at the same time, they also deviate from the representations of space in the media. The images here depict human traits and emotions that are universal, like moments of joy, celebrations of life, longings for good food and drink, and love for nature and beauty, which shows that the margin is not so different after all. The systematic biases and the exclusionary practices that visualize the margin as different and produce a narrative of binary oppositions, such as '*us vs them*', do not do justice to the diversity discourse and multicultural narrative, as it puts the burden of proof on the margin to prove their innocence, especially at vulnerable times. Most of these images also show a lack of connection to the dominant social groups and depict the isolation of the margin, as if the margin lives inside a bubble. The fact that there is not much of a representation of a multicultural Canada in the media exacerbates the situation. Even though alienation is profound among the new and first-generation immigrants, it is also found in the subsequent generations. In his interview, P2 mentions that he does not see his representation in the media, in fact, he does not get a chance to enjoy media as he does not own a television.

On the other hand, some of the very first images shared by Participant P3 depict hope in a new beginning. The images show her enjoying nature, deshi food and drink, and Bengali culture with family and friends. Particularly the joy and celebration of the community reveals their spatial practices and how the diaspora finds comfort in their everyday life.

Photography is not merely a mechanical record, it is a process through which people are given back the trait understood as the essence of a person (Amer & Mullick, 2022). Images help them to be viewed as people rather than just being a number in the system of representations. Photos reveal their stories, marginal identities become real human beings and not just a footnote in the grand narrative.

The story of P3 transcends the dream and aspiration of a family that moves across spaces in the hope for a better future, which also reveals, on a positive note, the subsequent process of settling down in the new country. The initial images of leaving the country of birth along with her family show a ray of hope, dream, and aspiration in the expressions of their smiling faces. The later images confirm the reminiscence of the tradition and culture. However, change and transformation are also visible. The images bring out positives, including enjoyment of deshi food and culture, wearing traditional dresses, and participating in Bengali festivals, as well as the nature and beauty of the newly found home, not just the struggle of the person in an alien land (Fig 20).





Fig 20: Representation from the margin, hopes, and dreams (P3)

Adapting to local cultural norms and practices among second-generation Canadians born to immigrant parents comes easy. As P4 reveals in the depiction of her surroundings through images that provide a peek into her social space, the places she travels to, the foods she eats, the drinks she likes, the arts she enjoys, the celebrations she loves—her lifestyle as a whole—are spaces of an average Canadian that does not give away any apparent hint that could be linked to a specific identity. A much closer look at these outward-looking images reveals a young woman of a hyphenated identity enjoying life who has more cultural capital than her first-generation parents, as the images lean more toward the Canadian part of the hyphenated identity tag by switching the places between two identities—recognizably more as a *Canadian-Bangladeshi* rather than a *Bangladeshi-Canadian*. These images reveal a certain

pride and belonging to Canadian cultural traditions through signs, symbols, and cultural icons. They represent P4's attachments to these cultural icons, such as the closeup shot of The Alley logo, or Canada's Wonderland (Fig 21).

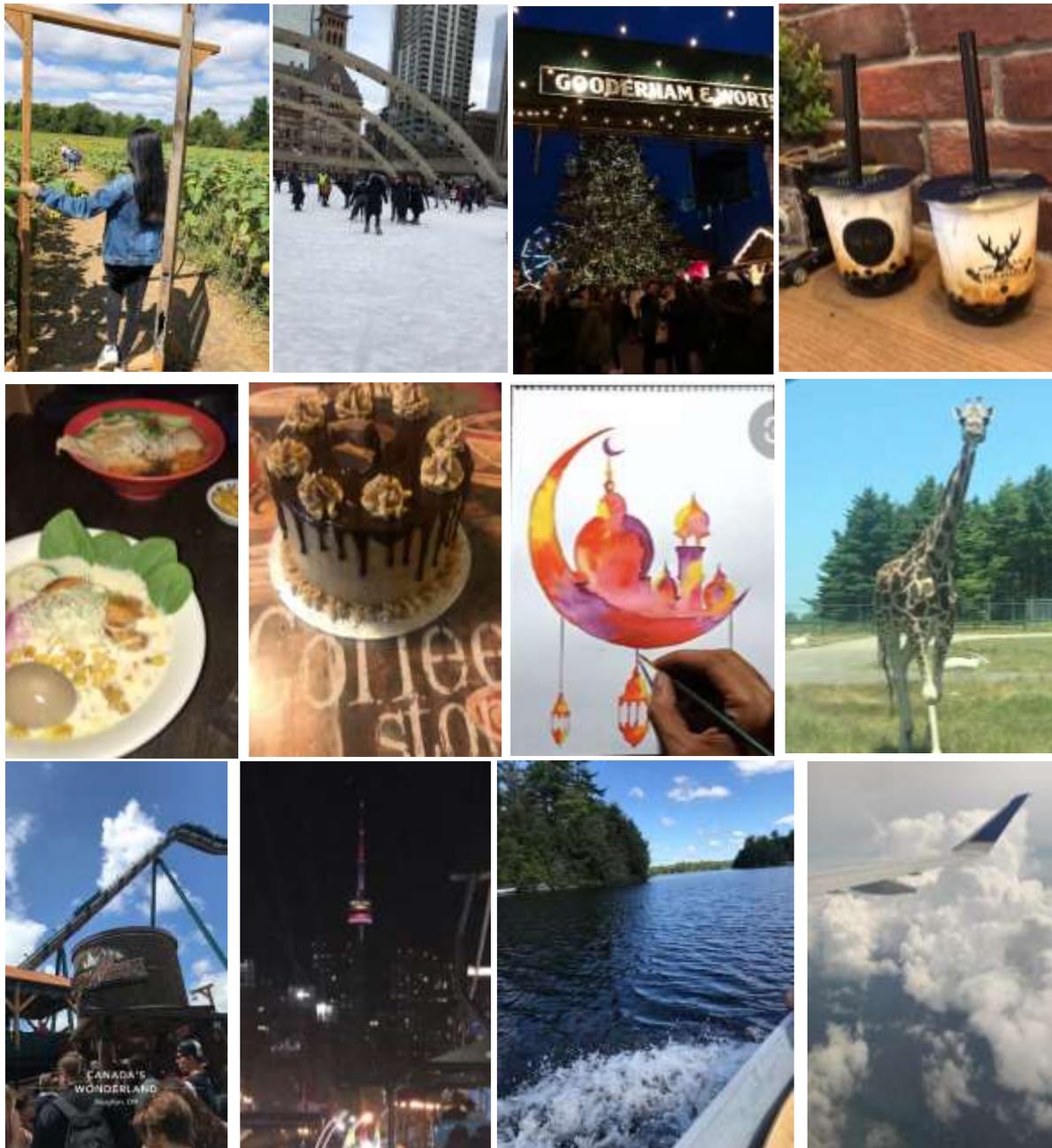


Fig 21: Representational spaces: Celebration of life in marginal imagination (P4)

Food habits, more generic than ethnic, also show this transformation. However, images of the painting of P4 show also cultural and religious motifs (a mosque, a moon, a festival), which can be identified by people from the same cultural tradition celebrating Eid. Signs and

symbols are important spatial practices manifesting identity through social engagements and cultural expressions (Lefebvre,1991).

P5, another second-generation Bangladeshi diaspora person, shares her imagination and shows similar aspirations and dreams, revealing a strong sense of belonging to Canada. For example, the images of the new MacBook and the TD Bank, her workplace, symbolize prosperity and success (Fig 22). The huge Canadian flag in the foreground reveals ownership and belonging through symbolic representation, through the image of the Starbucks logo of the two-tailed siren, and her participation in the celebration of Canadian festivals. The depth of the images also reveals a sensuous, thoughtful, educated (image of a mathematical problem on the blackboard), and aspiring to become successful individual, deviating from the popular narrative in the media that often stereotypically portrays the margin through disasters, either when they are in trouble, or they are the trouble.

The spatial experience of P5 depicts everyday practice and reveals her social space. What do they reveal though? For example, the first photo, with a new MacBook placed on the bed, reveals the satisfaction (or even pride) of owning an expensive Apple product, a shiny, high-end brand and symbol of material success. The second image shows the desire to enjoy nature and tranquility. The next two images show her workplace, TD Bank, where she interacts with the mode of production, the technologies, and the people. This is where she engages in social interactions and encounters workplace discrimination and covert biases.

Social practices produce an illusion of apparent transparency that conceals those biases, which P5 often ignores and only sometimes confronts. The next image of the blackboard with the mathematical problems on it shows that she is interacting with a different kind of social space—school. It is where she learns the rules of conformity to dominant

ideologies (maybe not in this particular place, but in similar places while growing up). This would be, according to Gellner (1983), the central location to produce the nation based on a standardized, homogeneous, and centrally sustained high culture through a well-defined education system. If Gellner's thesis is correct, all marginalized cultures are expected to assimilate to a 'standardized culture', a contradiction to the diversity and multicultural narrative.

The next few images depict her interactions with other social spaces, such as restaurants and leisure activities. These images are fundamentally different from the view shared by the first-generation immigrants, they take a much closer look at Canada and expose subtlety and nuances.

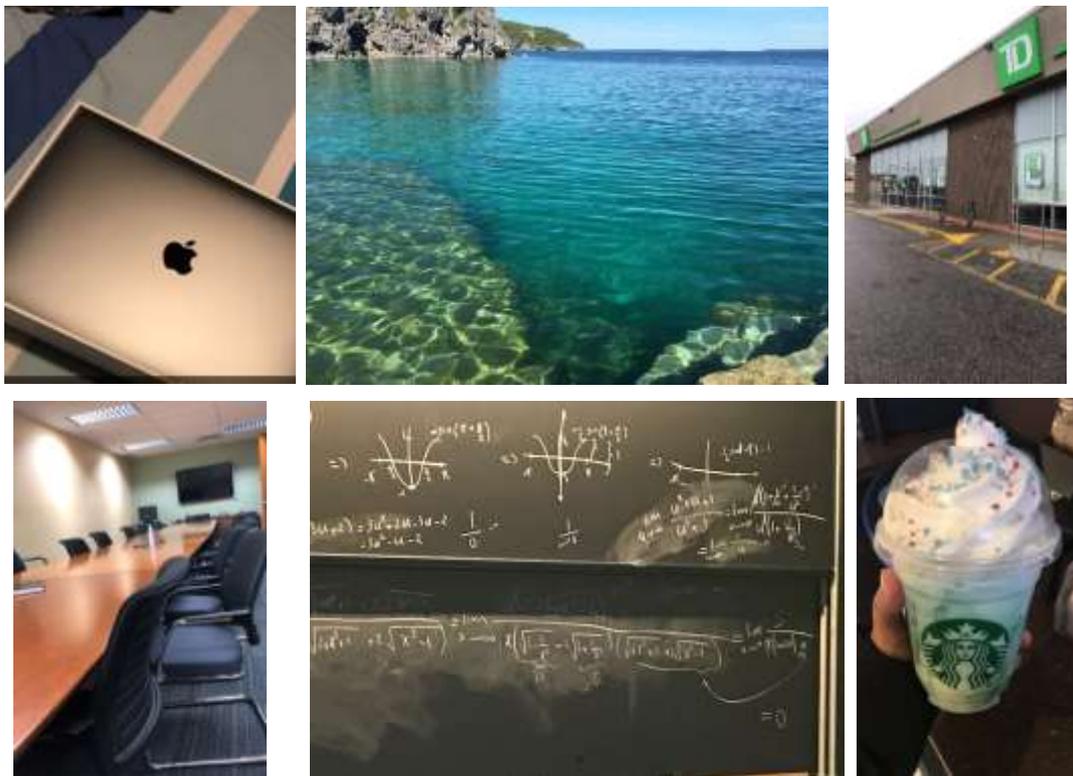




Fig 22: Everyday life in the eyes of the margin (P5)

#### 4.4 Interview analysis (along with images shared by participants)

##### 4.4.1 Interview analysis (P1)

P1 identifies religion as the most important element of identity construction followed by language. He argues:

Religion is another major factor of identity, Muslims are mostly mixing up with Muslims; the same is true for other religions as well. This is another factor in how society is being diversified, one is through language and another is through religion. However, when it is on a religious basis, then the geographical and language backgrounds are dissolved, as people of the same faith share, mix, and invite even if they belong to different language groups...From my perspective, religion affects identity construction more (See Appendix C).

P1 claims he has neither been discomforted nor discriminated against. He thinks Canada treats everyone equally. He worked as a scientist and researcher in Bangladesh. For obvious

reasons, he wanted to continue working as an expert in agricultural and livestock research when he moved to Canada. But that dream quickly evaporated, as he found it to be too difficult to get a professional job (also the case for P3). The change in spatiotemporal reality, i.e. moving from Bangladesh to Canada, compounded by the existing social practices of the host country, created a condition that turned out to be unfavourable for P1. He managed to get only one interview and initially thought of getting some education, but his perseverance fell short because of the initial struggle for survival under harsh weather conditions and a new culture.

As I am going to live in Canada, my aim was to utilize the learning experience. If I cannot stick to my research after my degree, this is worthless to me. So, later I didn't run after the degree, I thought it to be difficult and therefore I changed my track and looked for some alternatives. The alternative that I found, which at the same time would help me to preserve my religious faith, was self-employment. I am now self-employed, and I have an established cell phone and computer business now. So, yes I have changed my track, but Alhamdulillah, I am now okay. Still, ah...maybe...I can think I could not fulfill the dream that I had before, but still, Alhamdulillah, whatever the situation, in my business financially and all the other aspects, I am okay.

P1 has interacted mostly with the Bangladeshi community since they moved to Canada, except on occasions where communication with other cultures of Muslim origin were necessary. He thinks religion is the most powerful marker of identity. P1 also found out that research facilities in Canada are different. Students get the chance to research during the entire period of study, but this ends with the completion of the program. He thought pursuing a degree would not add much value, as there is limited scope to utilize the learning experience or continue research. Instead, he opted for alternatives and rerouted his passion towards self-employment, but he admits that it was a waste of his talent.

This argument resonates with the visual narrative where marginal identities are found to be overrepresented in precarious and low-paying jobs, such as Uber drivers, restaurant workers, or gas station attendances. P1 questions the justification of selecting immigrants on the basis of higher education and skill sets if the social practices and work culture do not recognize their skills. These spatial realities and social practices suggest that over-educated and highly skilled immigrants suffer substantial wage disadvantages upon arrival that continue throughout their working careers. This not only raises concerns over the effectiveness of the immigrant selection system and the labor market suitability, but, most importantly, it reveals that the Canadian labour market discounts foreign human capital, especially foreign work experience (Aydemir & Skuterud, 2005; Dean, 2018; Esses et al., 2014). The story of P1 is no different. He has to go through a life-changing decision and start afresh. His skills have been undervalued and finally, he has given up on his dream of working as a researcher, and became an entrepreneur, not by choice, but by necessity. P1 contradicts himself by arguing that Canada treats everyone equally, but at the same time, stating that his skills were undervalued and did not allow him to realize his dreams.

P1 displays noticeable religious symbols in his appearance and choice of dress, despite being in a difficult situation with a changing profession. For him, self-employment allows him to express his faith, an element of identity he associates with and cherishes the most. Overtly visible religious symbols are often unacceptable in the discursive social practices, and it becomes difficult for a marginalized body exhibiting religious markers to get a job, as they are considered too exotic. Even though in theory, Canada promotes multiculturalism, and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees several rights and freedoms including freedom of expression and religious belief, discursive practices demand conformity, and these systematic biases are too covert to expose. In Quebec, the

introduction of Bill 21 further limits minorities' job opportunities with distinct visible religious markers, reinforcing racialized hierarchies and exclusions that the Bouchard-Taylor Commission wanted to redress (Mahrouse, 2010). Consequently, social practices compel the margin to adopt non-conventional, precarious, and self-employment routes.

P1's claim deflects the argument of a not-too-overt religious identity conceptualized by P4 and P5—two second-generation marginalized women of immigrant parents. His claim about Canada being a tolerant society that allows him to practice and express his distinctive religious belief is not without its challenges, as we have seen in the recent past. Intolerance against marginalized people on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, colour, or gender has not been rare, and it obtains more for those who reside at the intersections of identities. It is even systematic, as was reflected in the controversial decision of the Harper Government banning Zunera Ishaq from the oath-taking ceremony while wearing a niqab (Haque, 2016; Hopper, 2015), or in the gradual and consistent increase of reported hate crimes each year since 2015 (a total of 3,360 reported cases: 1,723 cases related to race or ethnicity, and 884 cases related to religion), with the highest reported cases in 2021 (Statistics Canada, 2022; CBC News, 2020). Other instances of religious hate crimes would include the Quebec Mosque shooting by Alexandre Bissonnette (Montpetit, 2019), or the most recent terrorist attack by the 20-year-old White male Nathaniel Veltman on a Muslim family due to their faith, which took four innocent lives and seriously injured the only survivor, a teenage boy, on June 6, 2021 (Bell et al., 2021, Coletta, 2021).

Now, in response to any attempts to discard these examples of hate crimes against racialized identities as isolated incidents and that these should not be conflated with the concept of the margin, it is important to state that these incidents *reproduce the conditions of marginalization* by instilling a sense of fear in the margin and constantly making them aware

of their differences. These incidents expose the hidden intolerance against difference and the biases of the dominant desire. They also expose perceptions and social practices layered under ideologies of the dominant discourse, which come to the surface in violent jolts against the margin at crucial junctures of history. This is reflected in the political decisions of the government and its functionaries, often taking a firm stand against the margin, such as the Harper government against Zunera Ishaq, which confirms marginalization as a process perpetuated by the political powers and other forms of state instrumentalities. It is not a question of one political party agreeing or disagreeing with the narrative. Rather, it concerns dominant ideologies remaining dormant in the public imagination, resurfacing every once in a while, to keep the conditions of marginalization alive.

P1 identifies various extensions of identities in cultural, ethnic, and spatial terms, as over time and space a body (person) keeps adding nuances of experiences, cultural capitals, and understanding of social spaces in hybrid, globalized living conditions. P1 claims that he has never been discriminated against but emphasizes that every place has its own biases based on race, colour, language, or religion, which leads him and his kids to cluster around people with a similar faith and language. Also, according to P1, language is the reason people are separated and live in clusters. He argues:

English is not our first language, we are still using our language more, from that aspect, and people interact and feel closer to people with the same language. I think, because of the language, people put their identities separate (P1).

He himself shows biases towards Bengali-speaking people, as he favours them as opposed to other identities. Language, according to P1, therefore, separates people and creates favouritism. For him, religious markers are stronger than language. *Muslim brotherhood*, according to him, dissolves the differences of language and geography due to faith: Muslims

share, socialize, and invite others even if they speak different languages. P1 believes sharing his space with others has expanded his identity, which supports Hall's thesis that identities are never fixed and are always a process of becoming.

#### 4.4.2 Interview Analysis (P2)

P2, along with his family, moved to Saskatoon in 2017 but was not able to settle there because of the extreme cold weather (compared to Bangladesh which is a tropical country), and because of job insecurity. Even though P2 managed to get a permanent job at Maple Leaf, his wife was unemployed, which influenced their decision to move to Toronto. His wife was a first-class government employee in Bangladesh, and she wanted a similar job in Canada. But, like P1, they could not find the jobs they were expecting since they moved to Toronto. Instead, P2 has been working in various temporary and precarious jobs that demand physical work rather than mental or intellectual engagement. Their expectation of Toronto being a big city with more opportunities has not yielded anything better for them yet. He has an MA degree and has worked as a manager in Bangladesh.

The dominant social practice of devaluing international credentials and life experiences is a reality. Although the Educational Credential Assessment (ECA) endorses foreign degrees as equivalent to the Canadian standard, they do not make a difference in real life. Social practices deny most newcomers, especially racialized identities, access to opportunities and perpetuate the conditions of marginalization. P2 lost his job at the beginning of the pandemic, which invalidates the popular discourse about the coronavirus being a great equalizer, claimed by people such as New York's Governor Andre Cuomo (Stavropoulos, 2020). Covid 19 obviously does not affect everyone equally (Jain, 2020; Milne, 2020). Immigrants and marginalized groups were the most affected by this pandemic.

The other reason for his move to Toronto was to get Canadian education credentials, which also could not be realized due to the COVID uncertainty. The case of P2 shows that marginalization is a process that keeps reproducing the conditions of marginalization in many different ways through social practices.

P2 also finds it odd that one has to go through agencies to get a job in Toronto, which deprives them of few privileges. Also, jobs in Toronto are more precarious in nature than in Saskatoon. Therefore, P2 identifies a gap between reality and expectation. They are still looking for jobs, and recently his wife got a job at a law firm. He too got a job close to home but was laid off after a while as the company did not want to continue with him. Since then, he has been looking for a job and hoping to start something very soon. P2 has yet to develop a bond with Toronto, as he thinks he has not started believing that he belongs here because of the overall pandemic situation, and because of the lack of job opportunities leading to financial insecurity. He feels isolated and excluded, and language appears to be a huge barrier:

My perception is that language is a huge barrier. I don't know whether to call it discrimination or not, but because of the language barrier, I cannot express my position. So, to me, language is a huge barrier. I hadn't faced any discrimination per se, but there are inconsistencies, and like any other place, Toronto is not without it.

His language barrier does not allow him to express himself freely and clearly, and he feels ignored. It is the unpredictability of attitude and behaviour that bother him. The issue of the dominant culture appears as a crisis of language for P2. If he could overcome the language problem, maybe he could overcome his current situation. P2 argues that because the Europeans came and settled in Canada first, they tend to show more ownership and a sense of

belonging to Canada. His perception is based on experience, and he argues that the presence of a dominant narrative can be felt when interacting with people:

... people do not have to say everything out loud. But you get this feeling often while maneuvering into places, interacting with people, and moving through places, often it feels like it. It's not like you feel it all the time, but often you will get that feeling. For example, when I ask somebody about something that they could have answered easily, but they don't; rather they become annoyed.

Overall, P2 argues that Canada is a peaceful country and that most people are gentle and cooperative. It takes a certain amount of time to know a place, and P2 has not been in Toronto for long. Also, P2 argues, that the time needed for adjustment is very difficult to predict, especially for his generation. The reason is the different nature of jobs between the two countries. He used to work as a professional in Bangladesh, whereas the jobs he can get are physical. He is over fifty now, so it is really difficult for him. Also, it is not a guarantee that he will get a job if he gets a diploma or a certification, so it is impossible for him to be too specific or comment on it right now.

P2 also argues that because he does not watch TV or listen to the radio, as he does not own a TV or a car, he cannot compare whether there is a proportionate representation of his culture on television or radio. Even after 4 years, his status has not changed. Also, he argues that as he has not received his passport yet, he cannot say that he is a Canadian, so he does not have a sense of belonging. In his opinion, it is obvious that this space is naturally different from the place where he grew up, received his education, and spent most of his life. For him, acquiring a Canadian identity will take time, as he is an introvert and a slow receiver. But because he has access to facilities offered by the Canadian government, he also admits that he thinks of himself as a Canadian. P2 thinks first-generation immigrants

anywhere would have this identity dilemma, but the second generation, his daughter belongs to this space. When they first came to Saskatoon, he was convinced that he would do much better at home and should go back there after seeing the lack of job opportunities, cultural differences, and other difficult situations, but his daughter thought otherwise and did not want to go back. For her, the school and the overall conditions are better than in Bangladesh. Because of her, they ultimately decided to stay.

P2 also emphasizes the fact that the differences between the cultures, the one that he grew up with and the one that he now lives in, will always be there. The dreams and aspirations that he and his family had before they moved into this space slowly faded away since they moved. However, as Canada is a developed country, there are many positives, such as social security, education, healthcare, etc. Another crucial aspect is that even though he had never lived in another country, the idea he gets from others who lived in other places is that Canada is a peaceful country. P2 argues that he has never faced any issues in the last three years since he moved. Even though he worked at night, sometimes until 3 or 4 in the morning or even overnights he never faced any danger other than a few minor incidents not worth mentioning.

Obviously, there is a difference between thought and reality. P2 thought that because he had a higher level of education, but a professional job is impossible to get without a Canadian degree or connection:

I thought that because I have the highest level of education, I would be working as an analyst or researcher, and not physical labor; however, which is impossible to get without a Canadian degree.

The arguments made by P2 are certainly characteristic of the struggles and frustrations of first-generation immigrants, especially those with the Bangladeshi diaspora or similar ethnic origins. The devaluation of their education and skills is of grave concern, even though they have been initially selected based on those criteria. Stereotypes, systematic biases, and social practices do not allow them to fully contribute to Canadian society. The vagueness of whether their experience could be considered positively or negatively proves these practices are ambiguous. Even though most things have not gone in their favour, a few things have worked out well. The same system that allows greater accessibility to healthcare, primary and secondary education, has also been viewed as discriminatory in other aspects such as job security, devaluing international credentials and life experiences of the immigrants, failing to ensure a certain living standard, lifestyle, etc. Not only language but also ethnicity plays a crucial role in shaping the identity of the diaspora communities, and the struggles are harder for some groups than others. Even with higher educational qualifications and high rates of participation in paid employment, striking differences exist between the median family incomes of different groups, where Bangladeshis are one of the most impoverished and segregated communities (Akbar, 2019; Ghosh, 2014). A comparison among three groups: Bangladeshi immigrants, non-visible immigrants, and other visible minority immigrants, shows that the median family income of Bangladeshi immigrants compared to the other two groups is substantially lower:

Although Bangladeshi immigrants' educational attainments and labour force participation exceeded those of white immigrants, their median family income (\$38,257) was almost half that of white immigrants (\$73,392). The median family income (\$56,601) for other visible minority immigrants' was also higher than that of Bangladeshi immigrants but lower than that of white immigrants. (Akbar, 2019, p. 79)

Bangladeshi immigrant families' poverty rate is 34.8%, which is five times higher than white immigrants (7.7%) and over two times higher than other visible minority groups 16.8% (p. 79). These are significant numbers, which have been echoed in the real-life experience of P2 and other participants, suggesting systematic biases in the labor market that produce marginalization.

#### 4.4.3 Interview Analysis (P3)

P3 has been in Canada for three years. The first two years were a struggle in terms of job searches, but in the last year she got a few jobs; however, none of them were good enough. She finally managed to get a permanent position three months ago. Initially, it was quite difficult, as she did not know many people. Also, she faced all kinds of problems, starting with language, and even though she had a vague idea about the language barrier, it proved to be quite a challenge. But now she knows that even though she has an accent, it does not matter as long as she can make herself understood.

Like others, she migrated here as a professional but did not get a professional job because immigrants' skills and foreign education are valued lower than Canadian ones, which is a major cause of disadvantage, especially for people of non-European origin (Damelang et al., 2020). Recalling her struggle, P3 remembers that when she applied for a lower-level position at the same organization she was volunteering for, she never even got an interview.

I came here in the professional category, but I didn't get a job even after applying for a lower position. I volunteered and I applied once there was a job circular, but didn't even get the interview. It also came as a shock, as I was already working in a higher position even though it was a volunteer job, and it lowered my confidence. To get to that kind of professional position, I have to work a lot, and I may not have the energy to reach that position. So, I began to adapt, and in my current job it is somehow better, but I could not reach where I wanted to.

It came as a shock, which impacted her self-confidence. She lacked the energy and effort needed to get a professional job at her age, as she knew that she had to work hard. So she began to adapt, as she could not get where she wanted to go but needed to settle in.

Lifestyle and living are directly related to earnings. Her experience aligns with the findings that immigrants, especially women, upon arrival are not only more likely to be mismatched and endure substantial wage disadvantages than the natives, but it also continues throughout their entire working career (Dean, 2018). In areas like health care, education, etc. P3 finds it better in Canada than in Bangladesh because of the infrastructure, However, she does not think her community is adequately represented:

I don't think we are represented, I cannot say things the way I want to say them. Sometimes, if I want to express my culture, it might appear odd to others but normal to me, and I can tell that they are not comfortable so I compromise and get out of my culture a bit. So, I blend in and adjust. Always, I have to adjust to my environment, and I cannot show the life experience that I left behind. Some of the things that I have adjusted so much that I don't even notice them anymore. In those cases, I have adjusted, and in some of the things I am still struggling.

She cannot say things the way she wants to express them, as her cultural expressions seem odd to others, and she can tell that others are not comfortable. So, she compromises and gets out of her culture a bit, blends in, and adjusts, always. Therefore she cannot demonstrate her life experience. Some of the things she has adjusted to so much that she does not even notice the adjustments anymore, while she still struggles with some other things.

P3 claims that she has been discriminated against. She was working on a scientific project, and she did not even get a call for a position two levels lower than her previous work. The reason for this discrimination, she thinks, is that when people talk to her, they know that she is from a different culture and a minority.

When people talk to me, they understand that I am from a different culture and a minority. It is not the same even though in terms of experience or thinking I may be similar. I would say that they ignore us with a smiling face and never reveal this in words. So, even though they do not utter these words, their attitude and disregard are proof of this discrimination, which we can feel.

Even though her life experience is like Canadians in similar positions, she is not viewed as an equal. Although words are not uttered, attitude and disregard of the dominant narrative remain as proof of the discriminatory practices that the margin can only feel. It is never overtly expressed, rather always handed down with a smile. P3 argues that the immigrants make sacrifices because of their children, but when she thinks of herself, she feels she is not flourishing and contributing to her full potential. She is unhappy. Regarding representation, she thinks it is a long process, and her daughter may not face the same issues. But she does not see her representation at all—for her, minorities are far behind in terms of representation and contribution.

#### 4.4.4 Interview Analysis (P4)

P4 identifies as a student studying at the University of Toronto. She argues that there is a difference between the space she imagines and the one she lives in, influenced by culture, identity, and work, as negotiations and mergers of cultures both take place at the same time. When immigrants come here, initially they have an idea of the American dream, and it comes with luxuries, a house, and all these things that they would not have the opportunity to have in Bangladesh. Even though they have these dreams, they do not realize the hard work and perseverance that goes into achieving these things before they arrive here. Besides, one of the things that have to do a lot is to merge both these cultures to strike a balance between their ethnicity and the host culture in regard to food, clothing, the normal kind of behaviour they are used to—maybe there is a certain way that they greet people in their culture, and it might

not be the same here, even personal space-wise, she might have a certain way that she is comfortable in Canada but not in Bangladesh. There are a lot of things that are just different, and people do not understand until they are put in a particular situation.

P4 argues that she has a sense of belonging in the sense that she grew up here. Her generation understands some of the cultural norms, and because they understand, they can fit in better and blend in with their peers. But this is not the case for first-generation immigrants. Their parents would not have the same level of English and be able to pronounce and communicate. This hinders their ability to move forward, like work, making friends, and socializing, whereas the second generation can accomplish all that more easily.

P4 believes that the issue of culture matters beyond language. She argues that people do not look different from each other in Bangladesh. They are more homogeneous, everyone looks the same, so they fit in better. In multicultural Toronto, there are Asian, White, Black, Brown—second-generation diaspora are accustomed to this situation and adopt the mix. But it seems much harder for their first-generation immigrant parents.

On the other hand, the culture in Bangladesh is obviously influenced by local customs, easy to hide in Toronto, which shapes identity. For example, the way P4 and her generation dress in Toronto is not as expressive as it might be at home, more subtle. She argues that they have so many different struggles, whereas her parents only struggle to adjust and communicate. Her generation has struggled to strike a balance between trying to be within their cultural limit and participating in the activities that other Canadian kids would do, such as having sleepovers or going out on overnight trips, things that are so different from what her parents had done in Bangladesh. P4 argues that even though they want to participate in these activities, they cannot do so because of religious or cultural restrictions. She argues

that these expectations in a way hinder how they act and behave. They always think about what their parents would think, and how they would want them to behave. For her, the main thing is communication, to let their parents know that they can maintain both Canadian and Bangladeshi culture.

P4 also claims that she has gone through situations where she has been discriminated against because of her skin color while working a part-time job where White customers did not like to be served by a Brown person:

I feel like I have gone through certain circumstances where like working in a part-time job I've been discriminated against for my skin color. I've had white customers that would be like oh I don't like to be served by a brown individual, like yeah in a way, I do feel like that it does make him more upset but you can also overcome these by not thinking about these just ignore people like that so yeah.

She feels it upsets her, but emphasizes that one can also overcome these feelings by not thinking about them and just ignoring people like that. She concludes that there is definitely a dominant narrative in Canadian society. But being a Canadian is also being multicultural, it is a mosaic of cultures, and having so many people that are different, it is a blend. P4 further says that Toronto may be more multicultural than other parts of Canada, especially if one goes to northern Ontario, where they would feel the discrimination more strongly as there are more White people. However, she argues that these stereotypes are challenged by those who live with them every day, for example when immigrants are told to work harder in their attempts to overcome prejudice and prove fit and equality in society:

I think we definitely challenge them every day when we are living like the fact that we as immigrants were always told to work harder to be three times better than our other white counterparts right we're trying to overcome the struggle and prove that we fit into society and we

match with them we're not lesser or we're not inferior, we are more and we're just as equal as them, right.

When asked about why this burden of proof is on immigrants, P4 argues that to a certain extent they (pointing towards White privilege) do have this privilege of belonging that the immigrants lack, based on a history of Europeans' earlier arrival. In response to what happened to the Indigenous community, who were living in Canada long before settlers arrived, P4 believes that their sense of belonging is in their pride and their heritage. Nonetheless, she argues that the Indigenous communities face more discrimination compared to other groups because of colonization.

In answering the question on identifying herself within the space of different cultures, P4 argues that it is a matter of maintaining everything she is, like her ethnicity, being part of her heritage. She is not only claiming her culture but also adapting to her current circumstances and adjusting to them, trying to fit in a little bit better. She says she would not want to be unseen and that she is so proud of her culture and all these aspects. However, she is also able to blend in and be part of mainstream society.

On the question of representation, P4 does not think there are proportionate representations, not only because of media representation but also because not enough people of colour take up this line of work. When people of colour are seen in the cultural industry, they are usually used as token characters in the media, defined by stereotypes such as the Asian guy being smart at math or a Black man being part of a sports team, substantiating perceived differences between social groups (Hamilton & Sherman, 2014; Sherman et al., 2013). There are rarely all-Brown or all-Black casts, and although the media are increasingly trying to improve the situation, representations are no match for the amount of White hegemony we see.

#### 4.4.5 Interview Analysis (P5)

P5 identifies as a 23-year-old woman working in a bank. She thought she would be working in the accounting sector straight after graduation, but she is working in a bank instead. She is okay with that, even though she thought she would be at a different point at this stage of her life. However, she is also open to different opportunities and is looking for different types of jobs, so she feels like she is negotiating quite a bit now. She now sees where her life is heading. She thought she had her whole life planned out but now she is more prepared for obstacles, which means things like a new job might take longer but it is better than having no job.

P5 is reshaping her goals according to the way her life is going, as there are a lot of external factors that she cannot control. When asked if she has a sense of belonging, or if there is any feeling of exclusion, she responds that in a certain way, she feels it depends on the space she is in. At home, she has had that sense of belonging since she grew up there, but at her workplace, often there is less of a sense of loss of belonging compared to others who have worked longer than she has. Also, this feeling depends on the hierarchy of power, what position they are in: whoever is at a higher level of power displays a far higher sense of belonging, they feel comfortable and can express whatever they want. People at lower ranks, such as those in customer service or similar positions, are less likely to have that comfort zone while working.

Therefore, at home, she is more comfortable and can act the way she wants, but at the workplace, she tries to get closer to people who are in positions of power like managers or supervisors, so they have an understanding of why she is doing what she is doing even if something goes wrong. There are more White people but there is also a fair representation of

multiculturalism at her workplace, so she does not feel there is much of a power play because of race or culture, and she feels like it is pretty even. But if she looks at other places, in higher management positions or CEOs, there are more White people. Thus for sure, she emphasizes, there is a bias towards a specific kind of race and culture. Besides, women are usually in positions where they interact with people, while men are in higher positions, where they do more administrative and higher-level jobs such as managing larger companies. Therefore, there is an obvious gender bias, and because she is a minority woman, her work is even less recognized. A White person doing the same job gets promoted faster. Her experience relates to the social practice and spatial reality that Lefebvre (1991) analyzes, subject to social control and power (Foucault, 1972, Franklin, 2004) experienced by the margin. In the same way, P5 argues that there is a language bias. Her parents are treated differently because they do not have the ability to speak English properly. Her generation can achieve whatever they want because they know the language and understand cultural differences better.

P5 does not see any representation of South Asian characters in the media. Even when shown, especially Muslims are represented in a bad light and not the way she would represent herself. Representations of Muslims in the media depict them as very strict: girls wear hijabs, and that doesn't exactly represent herself. Media do not normally depict the care and understanding, as well as the reasoning as to why some parents are strict. She feels that as a South Asian and as a Muslim, she has an understanding as to why her parents treat children in a certain way and restrict them from doing certain things:

I see a very stereotypical representation and maybe per se, they saw in many years ago like historically maybe they thought that Muslims were like that, so I guess I would agree in the sense that historically, yes before there were Muslims were portrayed like that and they were like that

but right now it's changing and they don't work it doesn't reflect them accurately how Muslims are now.

Representation of Muslims or South Asian characters are very stereotypical, she argues, which aligns with the research findings that show Muslim women are viewed as the foreign and distant “other”, bringing “backward” third-world values and practices associated with Islam (especially those who are visible by wearing a headscarf), portrayed as “alien and scary” in Canadian media (Bullock & Jafri, 2000). It is also quite common for newspapers to show photos of veiled women, which reflects the editorial practices of assigning news values to certain types of representations of Muslim women, a body politic of assigning ideological values to photographic representations. This practice of politicizing specific portrayal of immigrant Muslim women ties into the larger racialized discourse:

Emphasizing the "immigrant" status of Muslim women ties into the larger racialized discourse in Canada about who is/is not a “real” Canadian, with the white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant identity posited as the norm (except in Québec, which puts forward the white, French, Catholic persona as the “real” Québécois), and all others as deviations (Bullock & Jafri, 2000, p. 36).

The popular representation of Muslim women in the West is an orientalist trope (Said, 1978), in which the Hijab is viewed as a tool of oppression (Bullock, 2002; Bullock & Jafri, 2000; Navarro, 2010). Such orientalism can be seen as Islamophobic gendered violence against Muslim women—sexualized, eroticized, fantasized (Perry, 2014).

The same idea echoed in the response of P4 when she says that she sees stereotypical media representations as inaccurate. She responds affirmatively to the question whether she has been discriminated against or has faced any kind of biases in relation to her job, education, or culture, even in subtle ways. P5 felt like she had been discriminated against at university by one of her professors once, who would be more inclined to give higher marks to

students who are White and would not be favourable to people of different cultures. She feels like people who are White get promoted faster, and their work is seen more quickly at the workplace, while she does not get the same recognition if she does the same job and does it well. Women and people of colour are consigned to so-called behind-the-scenes ‘office housework’ (Henry, 2019; Tulshyan, 2018), as opposed to glamour work usually hogged by the White employees, which makes them highly visible and helps them make a name for themselves, leading to promotions and other career success (Henry, 2019, para 11). P5 says that there was not much she could do about the professor who was biased favourably towards White students, as nobody would believe her anyway and it was not that big of an issue. She just ignored it. However, as far as her work is concerned, sometimes she would ignore it, and at other times she would challenge it in the sense that she would bring it up subtly, maybe by saying something like, “Oh this person did this but I also did this.” Also, she would be more inclined to leave her job if she experienced discrimination rather than challenging it. This could be viewed as escape, but she feels that there is only so much she can do to foster change. She evaluates whether she can change an environment and then decides whether she is staying or leaving.

P5 identifies as Canadian Bangladeshi since she grew up in Canada. She has visited Bangladesh only twice. Her parents have more cultural ties to Bangladesh. P5 does not like eating the same food as her parents because she has never been fond of it growing up in Canada. She eats different types of foods and different types of fish, shaped by what she sees around her, and what her friends and people at work eat. She does not take rice to work because other people are having sandwiches or pasta. She does not want to appear different, as she thinks if she does not adapt to her environment people would find it weird. She also does not want to be identified by her culture and religion wherever she goes, as she thinks

those are separate issues. Also, she does not need to show difference, as people can already see it in the sense that she is brown, and she thinks religious expression does not have to be too obvious.

TABLE 9: Major findings of the interview

Participants	Summary of arguments
P1	<p>Religion and language are the most important keys for identity.</p> <p>Identity forms out of necessity, and not always by choice, often by obstacles.</p> <p>New immigrants' skills are undervalued; thus, their talents are wasted.</p>
P2	<p>Huge gap between expectation and reality.</p> <p>Language is a serious barrier.</p> <p>BIPOC are susceptible to temporary and precarious jobs.</p> <p>Crises like the COVID-19 pandemic impact racialized communities the most.</p> <p>Dominant culture expresses annoyance and denies minorities access.</p> <p>Systematic discrimination is intergenerational.</p> <p>Difficult for first-generation, impacts second and subsequent generations too.</p> <p>International education is not recognized.</p> <p>No sense of belonging.</p>
P3	<p>The gap between expectation and reality.</p> <p>Language is a barrier.</p> <p>Immigrants' skill sets, especially non-Europeans, are not recognized.</p> <p>Age is a factor, declining desire and energy make it harder to find a professional job.</p> <p>Could not get where she wanted but needed to settle in, so began to adapt.</p> <p>Lifestyle is correlated to earnings.</p> <p>Minorities are unrepresented or underrepresented.</p> <p>Her cultural expressions appear odd to others, as they show discomfort.</p>

She compromises, and steps outside of her culture.

She blends in and always adjusts but cannot show her life experience. She doesn't even notice some adjustments anymore and struggles with many others.

People discriminate because she is a minority and belongs to a different culture. Life experience-wise she is similar, but she is not treated as equal.

The attitude and disregard remain as proof of discrimination, which minorities only can feel.

The disregard is not overly expressive but handed over with a smile.

Doesn't see herself flourishing and contributing to society to her full potential. She is sacrificing for their children, but she is unhappy.

P4 Gap between the imagined and the lived space.

The second generation has more sense of belonging and fits in better.

Unlike first-generation immigrants, language is not a barrier for them.

Beyond language, the issue of culture is also important.

Cultural identity is easier to hide here; for her generation, cultural expressions like dresses are not too expressive.

Different generational struggles.

Their (her generation's) struggle is to strike a balance between their cultural limits and participating in activities that other Canadian kids do.

Often, they cannot participate in those activities due to religious or cultural restrictions, which hinder how they act and behave.

There is definitely a dominant narrative within Canadian society, and she has been discriminated against for her skin color.

BIPOC are not represented in the media, as they do not appear as much.

BIPOC are usually used as token characters, and defined by stereotypes.

There are no all-Brown casts or all-Black casts.

The media portrayal is not matched to the amount of White representation.

White privilege is real.

P5 Sense of belonging depends on hierarchy: people in higher positions hold a much higher sense of belonging.

Power is crucial, moving closer to power increases the chance of fulfillment.

Cultural and racial differences are skewed toward a specific kind of race and culture, especially in higher positions.

There are *gender biases* too that only women can sense.

Men generally work in higher positions.

Invisible biases are often difficult to find.

Color of skin comes into play, White people get more recognition for their work and get promoted faster, and minorities do not get the same recognition.

There is no representation of South Asian characters in the media, when represented, they are often misrepresented.

Muslims are portrayed in a bad light. Girls are shown wearing hijabs, which doesn't exactly represent her. Belief does not have to be too expressive.

A very stereotypical representation of Muslim or South Asian characters.

Biases in the pedagogy, for example, professors give higher marks to students who are White and are not very favourable to people of different cultures.

Recognized as Canadian-Bangladeshi, Canadian comes first since she grew up here and has only been to Bangladesh twice.

She eats different types of foods, and she doesn't want to appear different.

TABLE 10: Reappearing themes

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S/N	Themes	Endorsed by
1	Language is a barrier (especially for the first generation of immigrants)	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5
2	BIPOC and immigrants' skills are either undervalued or not recognized	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5
3	Systematic biases based on a dominant culture discriminate against race, culture, religion, gender, etc.	P2, P3, P4, P5
4	White privilege is real	P4, P5 (implied by P2 & P3)
5	The gap between expectation and reality	P2, P3, P4
6	Stereotypical media representation of minorities, they are underrepresented and misrepresented	P2, P3, P4, P5
7	BIPOC has a lower sense of belonging, especially among first-generation immigrants, as it is related to power	P2, P3, P5

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## 5. CONCLUSION

Existing spatial practices and the media representations of the margin supplement each other and continue to reproduce the conditions of marginalization. These conditions are spatial realities ingrained within the social practices against the margin; for example, denying them access to opportunities (P2), devaluing their skill sets including foreign credentials (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5), or not recognizing their life experiences, etc. This claim is amply supported by existing research findings (Aydemir & Skuterud, 2005; Dean, 2018; Esses et al., 2014, Ghosh, 2013), and confirm that “Despite their educational qualifications and extensive work experience, many skilled immigrants who have migrated to advanced economies are unemployed or underemployed—working in jobs that underutilize their education, skills, and previous work experience” (Esses et al., 2014, p. 56). The work done by the margin receives little to no recognition, whereas the same work completed by a White employee is quickly noticed and gets rewarded faster (P5). This process of undervaluing the skills and education of marginal identities within the so-called multiculturalism discourse benefits the state, as the surplus value produced by these educated immigrants profits the nation at the expense of their dream and aspiration. The cultural mediation of the margin through various Ideological and State Apparatuses kept the White bodies at the top of the hierarchy intact where the margin is expendable. Marginality, therefore, is a social construct experienced by the people at the receiving end of the systematic biases and discriminations based on skin color, ethnicity, language, gender, religion, etc. that affect underprivileged social groups deeply.

The hierarchy of power among different marginalized groups depends on their socioeconomic conditions, access to life opportunities, proximity to power, etc. The Bangladeshi diaspora is one of the most disadvantaged groups in terms of job opportunities, wage discrimination, and poverty (Akbar, 2019; Ghosh, 2014; Statistics Canada, 2021). For

example, Bangladeshi immigrants admitted to Canada in 2011 reported a \$24,200 total median income in 2017 that has increased in subsequent years until 2020. The median income was reported at \$34,700 in 2020 but decreased in 2021, with a reported total median income of \$33,300 (Statistics Canada, 2021), just slightly ahead of Afghanistan, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Iraq, South Korea, Syria, Iran, Pakistan, China, Ethiopia, and Egypt. It is also less than the average median income of \$34,400 for all who were admitted in 2011, and \$37,900 for all who became citizens.

On the other hand, immigrants from Cameroon had a median income of \$65,200 in 2021, immigrants from France reported a median income of \$61,800, immigrants from the United Kingdom reported \$50,400 in 2021, immigrants from India reported \$40,100, and many immigrants from other country of origin have reported higher median income for the year 2021 (Statistics Canada, 2021). However, median income does not reveal the actual picture, as research shows (Akbar, 2019; Ghosh, 2014) that Bangladeshi immigrants' poverty rate (34.8%) is five times higher than that of White immigrants (7.7%) and twice as much than other visible minority groups (16.8%).

Even with higher levels of education, Bangladeshi immigrants are one of the most marginalized groups, compelled to work in precarious and low-paying jobs, which continues to affect generations to come. The discursive practices that reproduce these social conditions are visible in the over-representations of these identities at the lower level of employment and social hierarchy as well as in the under-representations of marginalized groups in the upper tier of social scale. For instance, identities such as women and BIPOC are less likely to occupy top management positions (McDonald et al., 2018; Powell & Butterfield, 2002). The systematic biases are covert, as they are not expressed openly but are concealed behind a guarded smile, obscured under the pretense of kindness and the illusion of transparency,

claiming that there is no bias. The marginal experiences of this study's participants (P2, P3, P4, P5) and popular representations in the media do not support such a claim.

This research used a triangulation of methodologies: a project based on visual narratives in the media and images shared by participants, analysis of images in two newspapers, and participant interviews reveal the cultural mediation of the margin. The visual narrative analyzed the images shared by the participants and photos taken by the researcher as well as the images used in the two newspapers. The images shared by the participants reveal their home, workplace, and social spaces exploring their culture, festivals, leisure activities, etc. The analysis of the images supplements the interviews, while the visual narrative provides insight into marginal space and struggles in this space. The following discussion would show how this research contributes to new knowledge:

First, Images of workspaces reveal that the marginalized, especially first-generation immigrants, mostly work in precarious and low-paying jobs (Uber Eats, factory worker, taxi driver, gas station attendant, garbage collector, cleaner, etc.) although most of them have higher education. Second, the images of their dwellings show that they live in relatively poor neighbourhoods, including government-assisted housing complexes. These neighborhoods are often subject to gentrification that facilitates the middle- and upper-class residents in so-called 'neighbourhood revitalization' programs, which, in reality, not only displace the poorer residents into lower quality housing elsewhere but also increases social conflict and polarization (Walks & Maaranen, 2008). Third, visual analysis of the two newspapers reveals the under-representation, misrepresentation, and stereotypical representation of the margin suggesting that media, as Ideological State Apparatuses, contribute to reproducing the conditions of marginalization. Although "media" is not a monolithic, undifferentiated entity, these are dominant and recurrent themes (Bullock & Zafri, 2000). These conditions do not

allow the margin to demonstrate their life experiences and make meaningful contributions to society as much as they would like to, as has been confirmed by participants (P1, P2, P3).

Fourth, interviews (P2, P3) and other research findings demonstrate that a global crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic further complicates the issue, as marginal identities were the most affected during the pandemic. The pandemic has forced society to reimagine the idea of space, as technological mediation increases the gap between the ‘haves,’ the ‘have-nots,’ and the ‘have-less.’ The vulnerability of the margin has been further exposed, as they lag in accessing various opportunities and services such as remote learning, work from home, Canada Emergency Response Benefits (CERB), or small business relief funds, etc. due to their limited access to technologies such as high-speed Internet, computers, smartphones, etc.

Fifth, the exclusionary practices responsible for the process of marginalization are covert. They hide dominant social practices through a pretentious so-called multiculturalism that impedes the growth of marginalized groups to their full potential. It is the perception of the margin that often makes it difficult for them to enter social spaces, including job market opportunities, and cultural and political spaces, as there are often barriers of language, skin colour, etc. The categorization of the margin and its associated connotations, a process of ‘othering’ often achieved by attributing a name-place like ‘South Asian’, arguably constitutes “a form of institutionalised racism –deliberately perpetrated to further enable the various post-colonial political projects of these powers. The process of establishing that, ‘race’ is synonymous with ‘culture’ and ‘place’/‘region’ is racist” (Ghosh, 2013, p. 48).

Sixth, the cultural mediation of the margin affects various intersections of identity differently. Some are prone to more suffering than others such as women of colour with overt religious identity markers (P5), oppressed more due to their memberships in minority gender,

race, religion, and ethnicity (Bullock, 2002; Bullock & Jafri, 2000; Hopper, 2015; Navarro, 2010). Lastly, the research showed that the White privilege must be considered real (P2, P3, P4, P5).

Although interviews substantiate and supplement marginal claims, they do not always correspond to visual narratives, as no matter how well interviews describe experiences, concepts, and ideas of spatial realities, they are not visual representations. Interviews are descriptions of lived experiences, memories of events that took place in the past. On the other hand, visuals belong to the domain of art and (underground) social life. The representational spaces that the images describe tend to lean towards non-verbal signs and symbols: they point to material and represent physical space, belonging to the “practico-sensory realm of social space” (See Intro 1.1 Brief description of the project). The images have been used to make a connection to the mental space conceptualized by the participants in the interviews.

Often, it might appear difficult to grasp the idea of how these images are related to concepts. Life experiences cannot always be translated into visuals, as social space withers away quickly once an action is performed, and what remains is the object of the action (See section 2.6: Production of meaning and discursive practices of power). There are exceptions to this, but they are rare and depict extreme circumstances, for example, when the images of the racist White police officer Derek Chauvin kneeling on George Floyd exploded on the social media exposes police brutality against Black people (Barrie, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2021). Nevertheless, the microaggressions and discriminations the margin encounters in their day-to-day life usually go unnoticed. Nobody is shooting or films these incidents. Besides, although actions are incommunicable, the effect of these actions remains as memory. Hence, interviews are crucial, as the moments might be gone, the experience shaping their perception of spatial reality remains ingrained in marginal memory that has been communicated through

the interviews. All participants were able to recall some form of systematic bias, exclusions, or discrimination at their workplace, at school, or other places that made them feel being marginalized. Therefore, life experiences communicated through the interviews and their analysis combined with the visual narrative have been central in exposing the contrast of the marginal spaces and the dominant social practices.

The research not only explores the spatial practices of the margin but also reveals the misrepresentations, under-representations, and stereotypical representations of the margin in the dominant media through the visual narrative. The visual analysis of the two newspapers confirms existing biases in the media. Spatial practices, on the other hand, have been substantiated by existing research findings whenever possible. Nevertheless, the research has adequately demonstrated the biases of social practices and representations that create the conditions of marginalization. These practices recreate certain conditions that are not conducive to specific identities, such as new immigrants of non-European origin, visible minorities, language minorities, religious minorities, etc. Cultural practices and expressions of marginalized groups are often seen as 'odd' or 'strange' in a hierarchical system that discriminates against skin colour, language, or religion. The space of the margin is ambiguous and fluid, and intersections of race, ethnicity, language, transnationality, etc. complicate the concept of marginality. However, unions of any multi-level intersections create inequalities and marginalizations (Muirhead et al., 2020). The lived experiences of the margin through the introspection of two generations of Bangladeshi diaspora testify against those prevalent biases, which are manifested in the consistent under-representations, misrepresentations, and stereotypical representations of the margin in the media, in this case the two newspapers analyzed. Also, margin seldom appears as celebrated Canadians, but is represented when associated with tragedy or negative stories.

The research also shows that the discursive practices of undermining marginalized groups and devaluing their skills have real effects, resulting in a subsequent overrepresentation of the margin in precarious jobs, especially for non-White new immigrants. The rate of poverty of these groups is substantial, often more than two times that of other marginalized groups, and when compared to the heteronormative White identities, it could be as high as five times (Akbar, 2019). As a result, these marginal identities do not see themselves flourishing and contributing to society as much as they would like to, as they fail to display their life and work experiences and thus fail to take advantage of those in the workplace.

Marginalization, for the first generation, is mostly perceived in connection with language and religion. Initially, body politics manifests through a complex triad: skin color, language, and religion. However, it becomes more cultural and racial for the subsequent generations of diaspora communities. As later generations gain more linguistic and cultural capital, they experience different generational struggles. However, the spatial and discursive practices through nuances of covert discrimination ensure that White privilege remains at the top of the social hierarchy. The cultural domination over the margin is one aspect of the discursive social practices that are confirmed through the endorsement of the lived experiences and social practices of the margin. The social hierarchy that continues to reproduce through exclusions is supplemented by the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs), such as media and education (Althusser, 2001). The sense of belonging and loyalty is related to the fulfillment of desire and is associated directly with economic well being that increases with chances of being closer to power. Although within the popular narratives of multiculturalism, the Canadian state seemingly preaches an unbiased form of national identity (Gellner, 1983) socio-cultural practices reproduce the conditions of marginality through

various misrepresentation, under-representations, and stereotypical representations that the margin often experience, especially the first generation of immigrants.

Representations of space, as the study of two newspapers reveals, show consistent systematic biases of marginal representations. Representational spaces, on the other hand, demonstrate that the space of the margin is ambiguous and a space of struggle (Hall, 1981 & 1996), which is also a space of resistance expressed through a myriad of ways (Foucault, 1978, p. 95). The margin, always wary of the dominant practices, negotiates power dynamics through various generational struggles. Although there are different generational struggles between the first and the second generation of immigrants, the research suggests it is intergenerational. The later generations make a better claim to the space and show more defiance against any cultural hegemony, as they acquire substantial cultural capital and understanding of Canadian society. The sense of belonging is also much stronger in the subsequent generations; however, that neither makes them immune to discrimination nor eliminates the privileges that the dominant groups enjoy making it equal.

Finally, this research is a response to the process of marginalization, as it acts as a defiance to the dominant mode of knowledge production. It provides an opportunity for the marginalized groups to produce the knowledge of and about their space and spatial practices. Therefore, it contributes to fill the knowledge gap in literature, i.e. articulating and exploring the marginal experiences by a counter-narrative of space in a holistic, robust and multi-modal way. This way, the research has provided a nuanced and well-rounded understanding of marginality from the community perspective. The research is political too, as it hints toward reimagining the margin through acknowledgement and resistance and work toward change rather than just being an anecdotal reference within the popular discourse and social practices: a true potential of 'becoming' a force toward fulfillment and promise.

## 6. REFERENCES

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix A: Ethical considerations**

Based on the guideline provided on the Tri-Council policy on ethical conduct for research involving humans (TCPS 2), and completion of forms such as TD2: Research Ethics Protocol Form for Graduate Student Thesis, Dissertation, or Pilot Project, and all other necessary protocols Ethics Review Committee approved the following:



OFFICE OF  
RESEARCH  
ETHICS (ORE)  
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[www.research.yorku.ca](http://www.research.yorku.ca)

Certificate #: STU 2020-070  
Approval Period: 07/08/20-07/08/21

## ETHICS APPROVAL

**To:** **Abu Faiz Md Aminul Haque**  
Graduate Student of Communication & Culture  
[abuhaque@yorku.ca](mailto:abuhaque@yorku.ca)

**From:** Alison M. Collins-Mrakas, Sr. Manager and Policy Advisor, Research Ethics  
(on behalf of Veronika Jamnik, Chair, Human Participants Review Committee)

**Date:** Wednesday, July 8, 2020

**Title:** **The Cultural Mediation of the Margin**

**Risk Level:**  Minimal Risk  More than Minimal Risk

**Level of Review:**  Delegated Review  Full Committee Review

I am writing to inform you that this research project, "**The Cultural Mediation of the Margin**" has received ethics review and approval by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines.

Note that approval is granted for one year. Ongoing research – research that extends beyond one year – must be renewed prior to the expiry date.

Any changes to the approved protocol must be reviewed and approved through the amendment process by submission of an amendment application to the HPRC prior to its implementation.

Any adverse or unanticipated events in the research should be reported to the Office of Research ethics ([ore@yorku.ca](mailto:ore@yorku.ca)) as soon as possible.

For further information on researcher responsibilities as it pertains to this approved research ethics protocol, please refer to the attached document, "**RESEARCH ETHICS: PROCEDURES to ENSURE ONGOING COMPLIANCE**".

**Please note** that prior to commencing any research activities, researchers are advised to review the latest updates on research involving human participants at: <https://research.info.yorku.ca/frequently-asked-questions-faq/>

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at: 416-736-5914 or via email at: [acollins@yorku.ca](mailto:acollins@yorku.ca).

Yours sincerely,

Alison M. Collins-Mrakas M.Sc., LL.M.  
Sr. Manager and Policy Advisor,  
Office of Research Ethics

## RESEARCH ETHICS: PROCEDURES to ENSURE ONGOING COMPLIANCE

Upon receipt of an ethics approval certificate, researchers are reminded that they are required to ensure that the following measures are undertaken so as to ensure on-going compliance with Senate and TCPS ethics guidelines:

1. **RENEWALS:** Research Ethics Approval certificates are subject to annual renewal. **Failure to renew an ethics approval certificate or (to notify ORE that no further research involving human participants will be undertaken) will result in the closure of the protocol.** No further research activities may be undertaken until such time as a new protocol has been reviewed and approved. **Further, it may result in suspension of research cost fund and access to research funds may be suspended/withheld.**
2. **AMENDMENTS:** Amendments must be reviewed and approved **PRIOR** to undertaking/making the proposed amendments to an approved ethics protocol.
3. **END OF PROJECT:** ORE must be notified when a project is complete;
4. **ADVERSE EVENTS:** Adverse events must be reported to ORE as soon as possible;
5. **POST APPROVAL MONITORING:**
  - a. More than minimal risk research may be subject to post approval monitoring as per TCPS guidelines;
  - b. A spot sample of minimal risk research may similarly be subject to Post Approval Monitoring as per TCPS guidelines.

**FORMS:** As per the above, the following forms relating to on-going research ethics compliance are available on the Research website:

- a. Renewal
- b. Amendment
- c. End of Project
- d. Adverse Event

However, due to the deteriorating Covid situation, I have to include a Health and Safety Plan for Covid-19 and develop the following guideline and submit it for ethics review again.

## Health and Safety Plan for Covid-19

The participants are selected through a snowball technique, and hence the place of the interviews will be conducted at the participants' homes or workplaces.

The following precautionary measures will be in place to ensure health & safety measures for both the investigator and the participants for COVID-19

The participants will be interviewed only if they are at low risk, and have not been either infected or developed symptoms of COVID-19

Furthermore, the following precautionary protocol will be followed

- Screening – both the participants and the investigator as per requirements.
- Take appropriate precautions (e.g. face covering/cloth mask) if taking public transportation and entering private/public indoor spaces.
- Wash hands upon arriving at your place/entrance to the building. Hand sanitizer will be carried out by the investigator and will also be made available to you.
- Physical distancing will be maintained, at all times, and if not possible you and the investigator will wear a face covering / cloth mask. Otherwise, we will provide you with PPE.
- We will be collecting personal contact information that we must retain in order to follow up with you and/or conduct contact tracing if you may have been exposed to COVID-19 in contacting the principal investigator.

Based on this, the ethics committee granted an amendment approval as follows:



OFFICE OF  
RESEARCH  
ETHICS (ORE)  
309 York Lanes  
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Tel 416 736 5914  
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[www.research.yorku.ca](http://www.research.yorku.ca)

Certificate #:	STU 2020-070
Initial Approval:	07/08/20-07/08/21
Amendments:	Amendment approved: 10/14/20
Renewals:	
Current Approval Period:	07/08/20-07/08/21

## ETHICS AMENDMENT APPROVAL

**To:** Abu Faiz Md Aminul Haque - Graduate Student  
Communication & Culture  
[abuhaque@yorku.ca](mailto:abuhaque@yorku.ca)

**From:** Alison M. Collins-Mrakas, Sr. Manager and Policy Advisor, Research Ethics  
(on behalf of Veronica Jamnik, Chair, Human Participants Review Committee)

**Date:** Wednesday, October 14, 2020

**Title:** The Cultural Mediation of the Margin

**Risk Level:**  Minimal Risk  More than Minimal Risk

**Level of Review:**  Delegated Review  Full Committee Review

With respect to your research project entitled, "The Cultural Mediation of the Margin", the committee notes that, as there are no substantive changes to either the methodology employed or the risks to participants in and/or any other aspect of the research project, a renewal of approval re the proposed amendment(s) to the above project is granted.

We note that you will be adhering to Covid-19 specific procedures as approved by the committee.

Any further changes to the approved protocol must be reviewed and approved through the amendment process by submission of an amendment application to the HPRC prior to its implementation.

Ongoing research – research that extends beyond one year – must be renewed prior to the expiry date.

Any adverse or unanticipated events in the research should be reported to the Office of Research ethics ([ore@yorku.ca](mailto:ore@yorku.ca)) as soon as possible.

For further information on researcher responsibilities as it pertains to this approved research ethics protocol, please refer to the attached document, "RESEARCH ETHICS: PROCEDURES to ENSURE ONGOING COMPLIANCE".

Please note that prior to commencing any research activities, researchers are advised to review the latest updates on research involving human participants at: <https://www.yorku.ca/research/researchers-faq/>

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at: 416-736-5914 or via email at: [acollina@yorku.ca](mailto:acollina@yorku.ca).

Yours sincerely,

Alison M. Collins-Mrakas M.Sc., LLM  
Sr. Manager and Policy Advisor,  
Office of Research Ethics

## RESEARCH ETHICS: PROCEDURES to ENSURE ONGOING COMPLIANCE

Upon receipt of an ethics approval certificate, researchers are reminded that they are required to ensure that the following measures are undertaken so as to ensure on-going compliance with Senate and TCPS ethics guidelines:

1. **RENEWALS:** Research Ethics Approval certificates are subject to annual renewal. Failure to renew an ethics approval certificate or (to notify ORE that no further research involving human participants will be undertaken) will result in the closure of the protocol. No further research activities may be undertaken until such time as a new protocol has been reviewed and approved. Further, it may result in suspension of research cost fund and access to research funds may be suspended/withheld.
2. **AMENDMENTS:** Amendments must be reviewed and approved **PRIOR** to undertaking/making the proposed amendments to an approved ethics protocol;
3. **END OF PROJECT:** ORE must be notified when a project is complete;
4. **ADVERSE EVENTS:** Adverse events must be reported to ORE as soon as possible;
5. **POST APPROVAL MONITORING:**
  - a. More than minimal risk research may be subject to post approval monitoring as per TCPS guidelines;
  - b. A spot sample of minimal risk research may similarly be subject to Post Approval Monitoring as per TCPS guidelines.

**FORMS:** As per the above, the following forms relating to on-going research ethics compliance are available on the Research website:

- a. Renewal
- b. Amendment
- c. End of Project
- d. Adverse Event

Unfortunately, this also had to stop after a while as the rise of daily COVID cases reached 800-1000 per day, and GTA was considered as the hotspot. As per the public health status of the area and following provincial guidelines all face-to-face interviews were suspended until further notice on October 13th, 2020. By then, I had completed five (5) interviews. With discussion with the supervisory committee, emphasis has been shifted toward photographing from a distance without any physical contact.

## **Appendix B: Journal**

July 8, 2020: Received ethics approval

July 15, 2020: Started communicating with participants

Aug 26, 2020: Received equipment from Dr. Markus and checked everything was in perfect condition.

Aug 27, 2020: Confirmed appointment with one participant.

August 30-31, 2020: Checked equipment outdoors and took some random footage at random sites.

September 20, 2020: Conducted five interviews already.

October 6, 2020: The Ethics committee sent an email saying that I need to immediately suspend my research as face-to-face research with human participants is not advised as follows:

Our records indicate that you have an approved ethics protocol on file. Please note that, as of March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, due to health and safety precautions implemented as a result of COVID-19, there have been significant changes to ethics compliance requirements.

We, therefore, draw your attention to the FAQs section of the Research Ethics website for up-to-date information on research involving human participants.

As of March 23<sup>rd</sup>, face-to-face research with human participants is not advised. If you have an approved protocol and your research involves face-to-face interaction with human participants, it must be suspended. The protocol must be amended to address the changes

required to move to remote research options. If your research cannot be conducted remotely – that is, there are no options other than in-person research - please contact Alison Collins-Markus (acollins@yorku.ca) for more information. Please note that the review of in-person research will only be granted on a case-by-case basis.

Interestingly, my proposal was approved four months after the health and safety protocols, and my proposal obviously includes that it was an experiential documentary and video and photo consent forms. So, it does not make any sense how they approved my ethics certificate but then said no face-to-face contact can be done. It has been very confusing.

October 7, 2020: I sent out the revised consent form for ethics review with the option for face-to-face interviews.

October 8, 2020: My revised consent form was approved.

October 14, 2020: The number of COVID cases started to go up and the ethics committee postponed all face-to-face interviews and asked to incorporate other means of data collection like Zoom interviews.

October 20, 2020: The data collection came to a halt, because of the difficulty of reaching out to people who would be interested in participating in a Zoom meeting due to the increase in Covid cases.

December 23, 2020: The progress of the study has almost stopped. I am becoming frustrated. I have been trying to write and analyze the interviews I already conducted during that small window when the province was without severe restrictions. I have been thinking of emphasizing images more as an alternative.

July 15, 2021: The pandemic lasted over a year now, and during this period I studied, wrote three papers, and participated in virtual conferences. However, I haven't been working toward my dissertation, at least, not as much as I would have liked to. I have written a little and analyzed three participants' responses in detail. I started planning for the photo collage, as I subscribed to the local weekly newspaper Cambridge Times for six months. I plan to use the images used in the local newspaper for six months as well as images used in a national daily for a month to depict the dominant media representations of photos and news stories during the entire period. Meanwhile, I took a summer tutoring job for the first time. Also, I have been taking photographs of the spaces occupied by the marginal identities so as to depict an alternative day-to-day life experience of those bodies. The research-creation part has become a challenge, but for the most part, the pandemic has changed the perception and motivation of the research just like it took a toll on everyone else. It has channelized all the energy toward more immediate issues and imminent dangers leaving a profound influence on issues like family, health, vitality, illness, and fear, which is impossible to avoid. It has also proven to be detrimental to marginal identities and seriously impacts their lives as well, as they were one of the most affected parties during the pandemic.

August 3, 2021: I have submitted two articles in two different journals, waiting for their response.

September 20, 2021: The University has started to reopen slowly, meanwhile, the federal election took place today. We stood in line for more than two hours to vote in the middle of a pandemic!

January 14, 2022: I haven't been updating my journal regularly, as we were, like most people, staying home for the last few months and struggling to keep up with the recent

lockdowns and isolations. Lots have happened since the last posting: my elder daughter tested COVID-19 positive, the younger one suffered a high fever, and my wife also got sick. I was going through a serious financial crisis, and I was depending on credit cards and loans. I have so many other responsibilities that it is taking a serious toll on my studies. Even though we all have been vaccinated, the omicron variant did not spare any of us, and we are awaiting the booster dose. My eight-year-old daughter is also going to get her first vaccine shot on the 18th.

A Ph.D. student without a job certainly is marginalized financially, and on top of that, I am marginalized through skin color and language, it's what Bhaba would call a double jeopardy. It has become almost impossible to bear the burden of the situation. The only good thing is that both my articles went past the peer review selection, however, one of them (book chapter for Reading Sociology, 4th ed.) has been sent to Oxford University Press for their review.

March 8, 2022: I have been having a mental block. On top of it, the laptop I have been working on broke down. So, I had to buy a new laptop and I preferred a Macbook Air instead of a generic one, which I have been working on since last year. However, I need to transfer data from that computer to my new laptop as the two systems do not talk to each other, and I need those earlier photos and videos stored on that computer. This technical problem has slowed down my progress, as I have to visit Toronto to transfer this data (or better just take the hard drive and use it on another old laptop). I am working on my collage as well.

April 27, 2022: I fixed the laptop and it is now operational. I have been working on the dissertation, and I subscribed to The Globe and Mail. I am now planning to conduct the final part of my research.

July 16, 2022: I have been writing and going over the literature review. The most challenging of dissertation writing appears to be identifying the gaps in the literature and addressing those coherently and logically. Often it appears to be lacking chronology and therefore lacks smooth transfer of ideas. It is also most poignant to stitch the different sections together into a unified whole.

September 7, 2022: I have been writing and editing the dissertation since, but it is going at a snail's pace, as I have been working full time for the government besides having responsibilities of having a family with two kids. I am not finding time to write or think about the project, and that is why I requested three months off from my job without pay.

November 26, 2022: It has been almost a month, and because of the tutorials and working a full-time job, I could not quite concentrate on the dissertation. I have taken time off from my job on a leave of absence from December to March to defend the Ph.D., which I am eying for May-June 2023. I am left with completing the project and giving the final touch to my dissertation.

December 11, 2023: I flew to Dhaka, Bangladesh along with my family to go over the process of understanding what it is and how or why it is that we call home. The experience was phenomenal: first, it was the ease of communication with people due to the fact that we speak the same language and belong to a similar culture. I almost forgot how easy it is to communicate with people. In Canada, it is always that we hide inside a shell and cannot really speak our minds. But in that other space, we could move around and open ourselves with so much ease that it felt like we owned that space. Then again, certain practices, behaviors, and habits also changed living for a long outside as a diaspora. I became an insider-outsider. We attended several programs, including a poetry book launching of my

wife and a marriage ceremony of one of my relatives. The cultural expression, the weather, food habits, everything is different.

January 15, 2023: We came back to Canada, and were welcomed by the snowy, cold, wintry morning. The spatial differences are significant, and now that I am back I have to start working on my project.

February 9, 2023: I have been working day and night on the project, so far, I have finished doing four (4) photo collages using the images from The Globe and Mail. These are excruciatingly time-consuming and painstakingly detailed. Need to complete at least four more using images from The Cambridge Times to have a comparison of visual representations, as well as a few others using the images taken by me and the participants.

March 8, 2023: I had a tour along with my supervisor Dr. Markus Reisenleitner to choose the place for the exhibition of the collage that I have been working on. We also had a successful meeting about my dissertation. Markus pointed out several crucial issues like elaborating the rationale of the study, which needs to be more specific to the topic and more structured (which issues am I going to address, language, culture, racialization, and how they refer to the concept of the margin), a clearer definition of intersectionality, elaborating the concept of the nation, etc. The feedback was amazing and proved to be quite useful for me.

March 17, 2023: I went to York University to hang the project on the wall of the Communication and Culture (ComCult) lounge for the exhibition from Monday, March 27 to Thursday, March 30. To provide an introspection of how it goes I have attached the following images of me hanging in the photo collages on the wall.



While I left them for display, I was hoping people would communicate with the photo collage and leave some comments/feedback so the responses could be analyzed later and incorporated back into the re search. There are also images of the collage below:



March 23, 2023: I went back to York to take down the exhibition. There were a few comments that were encouraging as well as a few that were engaging. I also created a blog to have an online presence where people can also leave their feedback and comments. I have added a couple of those comments below. An interesting aspect that comes out from these comments is that the comments were not too critical, even sometimes the intended message has been missed. The praise and encouragement from the onlookers were no doubt admirable, but they also show that interpretation of the images often relies on the aesthetics rather than their contents, as images appear more aesthetically pleasant than the reality they ought to tell. Therefore, the argument that photography as a method only reveals the truth has its challenges, on the other hand, as Cotton (2015) argues, the magical elements of photography can distort reality. However, it is an experiential and complex process that depends on viewer's interpretation based on their personal experiences (Berger, 1972).

May 30, 2023: I have been busy writing and editing the dissertation, but I must put it into writing here. Even though I have heard about it, experiencing the final stage of writing a Ph.D. dissertation feels like a very lonesome journey, and in the end, it is difficult to analyze and reach a conclusion. The hardest part is to incorporate the result based on the literature review and reach a conclusion. It is better to understand the process of how I am concluding. Does the research prove something significant? What does it add to the existing knowledge about the spatial reality of the margin? Has the research about marginal experience, cultural mediation, and their representation in the popular media discourse proved to be worthy of research? These are the few questions that have been haunting me as a researcher, and I assume it is something that all Ph.D. candidates at the end of their dissertation ought to ask themselves. Because it is themselves than anybody else that they need to satisfy and provide the justification and rationale of the entire journey. Was it worth it? Did they get what they

were looking for? Was it a successful endeavor? These are the questions as a researcher that I was asking myself at the final stage of my research, as it is more of a self-exploration and part of my own existence as a researcher that I need to satisfy, and not only the defense committee. And if I want to be completely honest about it, I have yet to convince myself in that respect.

June 11, 2023: The responses I got from the viewers were very positive, however, only a few have engaged critically with the project. They appreciated the project, and a few advised to provide a context of the project and include an artist biography. It was good to know that the viewers identified many layers of meaning hidden inside the collage and they recognized that the images and texts allow multidimensional paths for them to follow and make sense of those depending on their own experience. A few who attended the exhibition in person told me that they were unaware of some of the facts and that media representations could be viewed as such.



March 24.

They are so well made. Each Collage has many layers of meanings. The playful juxtaposition of images and texts generates multi-directional paths for viewers to follow & make sense of these meanings.

I would love to know the context, in which these posters were made. Perhaps ~~an~~ an artist statement from the creators will be useful for viewers to understand ~~the intentions~~ their intentions.

Overall, well done!

Frang Zhang, comol.



03/27

Very nicely done and was also quite informative. Read most of the articles and it brought to light some news I was unaware about. Amazing use of images as well.

July 23, 2023: I have revised and edited the entire dissertation, it has been a painstaking and long process. I need to make the conclusion relevant by going back to the theories and finalizing the paper.

July 26, 2023: I sent the final draft to my supervisor for his comments but I am still working on it. Dr. Markus was out of the country, and he had two other dissertations to go through and had a family situation. So, he told me that it might take a while for him to get back to me.

August 15, 2023: I added a few more to my literature review and revised the dissertation.

September 7, 2023: I sent another email to Markus as a reminder.

September 10, 2023: Markus returned my email saying that he has gone through the revised draft and that it looks together now. He still has a few questions and suggestions, but they are all minor. After the meeting, I would be sending the final draft for the other two committee members to review and have their input.

November 20, 2023: Dr Basu returned the feedback on the initial draft of the dissertation. She also made quite a few helpful recommendations, and I started working on those immediately. Markus and I agreed to meet up with all the committee members in January, but Dr Basu said she wouldn't be available until February. So, it has to be postponed until then.

January 14, 2024: I have completed the revision and incorporated the suggestions according to Dr Basu's feedback.

### **Appendix C: Interview transcriptions**

*Masud Rana (P1)*

My background in Bangladesh was different; I was a scientist in Bangladesh. My dream was to become involved in research in this country, and I tried for that too. As I have an agriculture background, I went to Guelph University, and I was interviewed once. In fact, I tried to get into my track, but since we migrated, initially we had to go through a lot of struggles, and I couldn't really get into that track. The second thing is, whereas in Bangladesh there are organizations that research livestock or agriculture, the research facilities in Canada are different. Here the teachers in the universities conduct the research through their students for a short period of time, when their degrees are over so is their research life. As I am going to live in Canada, my aim was to utilize the learning experience. If I cannot stick to my research after my degree, this is worthless to me. So, later I didn't run after the degree, I thought it to be difficult and therefore I changed my track and looked for some alternatives. The alternative that I found, which at the same time would help me to preserve my religious faith, was self-employment. I am now self-employed, and I have an established cell phone and computer business now. So, yes I have changed my track, but Alhamdulillah, I am now okay. Still, ah...maybe...I can think I could not fulfill the dream that I had before, but still,

Alhamdulillah, whatever the situation, in my business financially and all the other aspects, I am okay.

How do you define your identity now?

The environment and situation in Bangladesh are different. I had a different identity as a researcher there, but here I am a businessman. My identity is a businessman here, maybe, a lot of people don't even know that I am a scientist, and I have international publications and this and that. Maybe a lot of people don't know that, as my identity has been changed. People may know me as a businessman in the society and my position in the society, as is the case in Canada, no matter what big or small job you do, everyone is equal, and I don't feel any discomfort. And because I do not face any difficulty entering any space in society, I am okay. I have changed my career from one background to another; still, I am okay with my situation and I did not feel any discomfort.

How much is the belonging here in this space?

It is not a deletion of my earlier identity, as my previous research will be quoted in reviews and references. My citation is still increasing, but now, I have an identity as a businessman in this society. Another thing is that I have a cultural background too. So, from the very first, our culture, we talk in Bangla, I am merged with the Bangladeshis. Recently, I have moved from one Bangladeshi community to another. Also, in this space, I have another identity as a Muslim, so I am sharing my space with other nationals too. Meaning, understanding, and mixing with them, so, I would say my identity has expanded. I am mixing with different communities, and different people and adopting different cultures.

How wide is the space for interaction?

Because of the expansion, I feel everyone as myself and not only Bangladeshis. It feels like everyone is my close and my relative. Even though there are differences in geography, in Canada, I think all of them as our own people, whether they are from Pakistan or Bangladesh, or India, or Africa. I think everyone is Canadian.

Have you been discriminated against?

I have never faced any discrimination, but I have always felt like it is present everywhere, where everyone is comfortable mixing with people of their own culture. I wouldn't call it discrimination but maybe because they are using the same language they feel comfortable. English is not our first language, we are still using our language more, from that aspect, and people interact and feel closer to people with the same language. I think, because of the language, people put their identities separate. Globally, people are not able to use the same language or dialect; because of that probably there are these clusters of identity.

Are there other major reasons for identity construction other than language?

Religion is another major factor of identity, Muslims are mostly mixing up with Muslims; the same is true for other religions as well. This is another factor in how society is being diversified, one is through language and another is through religion. However, when it is on a religious basis, then the geographical and language backgrounds are dissolved, as people of the same faith share, mix, and invite even if they belong to different language groups.

Is this then a selective mixing?

In my opinion, this mixing is happening on the basis of religion and language. When they congregate on the basis of religion, the language barrier disappears. Even though they

have different dialects, it seems like a complete brotherhood—the geographical differences disappear, it is not active anymore.

Does it happen in the case of language, same language but different religion?

It happens also within people of the same language, it also brings them to a brotherhood. As a businessman, I can tell that if a Bengali-speaking person comes to my shop, no matter whether they are Bangladeshi Christians or Bangladeshi Hindus, I want to favor them, and want to provide them with the maximum discount possible.

Do you then discriminate against others depending on language and religion? Is there a favoritism?

I don't know, it comes automatically. The customer also expects discounts, and I try to fulfill their expectations.

Is there a dominant culture or religion in Canada?

There is a big culture, but it does not affect us, at least, I did not experience any such that a big culture is affecting a small culture or ignoring it. I did not find any such differences.

Are there differences when it comes down to your kids?

It is natural, as the second generation's language is English from the very beginning when they attend school. They use English as their first language, even though we practice Bengali or our own language at home. But for them, Bengali is their second language. They mix with other cultures, different cultures, but because they use a common language, they all feel the same in that space, as all of them are using English. So, they have the same kind of friendship, so their culture is broadened, as they can mix and mix with everyone.

How is it different for them? How do these affect their expansion of identity?

Even if they might come from different backgrounds, the barrier of being Bangladeshi or Pakistani does not create a barrier, they are all Canadian. So, they mix with everyone; however, there is a restriction that works, and those who belong to the same faith such as Muslims bond together. If I ask my kids, they will say that my friend is Omar, Ibrahim, which means he has selected his friend groups on a religious basis. Even if they might be from different countries, he has selected friends who are Muslims; however, it does not mean that he does not have non-Muslim friends.

Question: Which one affects identity formation: religion or language?

Answer: From my perspective, religion affects identity construction more.

*Manju (P2)*

Question: What differences do you find between the lived space and the space that you have left behind?

Answer: We came to Saskatoon in September 2017 as provincial nominees. We were there for two years. Even though I managed to get a full-time permanent job at Maple Leaf, because of the severe cold weather and fewer job opportunities, especially for my wife who couldn't get any job, we decided to move to Toronto, as it is a big so we thought we would have more job opportunity, and as well, we were thinking of getting some education and we thought we would be able to do a certification or diploma sort of a program to help us settle down. So, we moved to Toronto in August 2019.

My wife got a part-time job at York University, and I also started looking for a job and began working at a place; however, soon after we both had to leave our jobs because of

the COVID-19 pandemic. So, there were two reasons for the move, one was the prospect of job opportunities and the second was education.

There are some differences in job culture between Saskatoon and Toronto. In Saskatoon, one does not have to seek the help of job agencies to find a job, whereas, in Toronto, agencies find it for you. If you get a job through the agency, you may lose some facilities. Also, the job security here is less than in Saskatoon. Secondly, because of COVID, we could not start our schooling. Therefore, the expectations behind our move had not been realized, there is a gap between expectation and reality. Still, we were looking for jobs, and my wife got a job at a law firm. I also started working before COVID when we were living in North York, but we had to move to Scarborough where the place of my job is too far. I got a new job close to home, but after a while, they did not want to continue so I lost the job. Since then I have been looking for a job and hopefully will start something from next week.

How is your identity shaped? Do you belong to this space? Depending on your answer please explain why or why not.

I had a sense of belonging when I was in Saskatoon. But since I haven't had a bond with Toronto yet, I don't think I started believing yet that I belong here, firstly, because of the overall pandemic situation, and secondly, because of the reduced job opportunities due to the same.

Question: Do you think yourself excluded or isolated? Do you feel alienated, or have been discriminated against in search of your job? What is your perception of discrimination?

Answer: My perception is that language is a huge barrier. I don't know whether to call it discrimination or not, but because of the language barrier, I cannot express my position. So,

to me, language is a huge barrier. I hadn't faced any discrimination per se, but there are inconsistencies, and like any other place, Toronto is not without it.

Question: Do you feel the presence of a dominant culture? Do you face any crisis of identity because of any cultural domination of any form?

Answer: Not really an identity crisis, the crisis for me is more of the language barrier. If I could overcome the language, maybe then I could overcome the crisis that I am in now. Also, because Canada is a country of immigrants, and because the Europeans were the ones who came first to this space, they feel that this is their country and only they are entitled to it, maybe not all of them, but some of them think likewise.

Do you have any experience that you think like the way you think of the Europeans? Did anyone say this to you? Why do you have this perception?

No, nobody told me anything like this, but in reality, people do not have to say everything out loud. But you get this feeling often while maneuvering into places, interacting with people, and moving through places, often it feels like it. It's not like you feel it all the time, but often you will get that feeling. For example, when I ask somebody about something that they could have answered easily, but they don't; rather they are annoyed.

What is the reason for your opinion?

Yes, this is the reason for my perception of the dominant culture, but overall, Canada is a peaceful country and most of the people are gentle, and cooperative except a few of them.

How do you respond to that sort of domination?

The first thing is, we have moved here as permanent residents. Now, I don't think anyone can comment about a job or place until one spends a certain period of time in their job or living space. It takes time to get adjusted to a new job or place, and I have not spent a year yet in Toronto. One has to give time to be habituated to a new place, new job, and new culture. Now, we come from Bangladesh and if I am to reverse and imagine people from other countries migrating to Bangladesh how people would react to the immigrants, if I view it from that perspective, I think Canada is better than others.

How long do you think it would take to become habituated? Like finding a good job that you will be satisfied with or other aspects of life?

This, in fact, is very hard to predict in our generation. First thing, I cannot do the type of job that I used to do back home. Secondly, there are more physical jobs here. I am fifty or over now, so it is really difficult for me to survive doing a physical job, but the reality is that I have to move forward through this difficulty. The other thing is if I can get an education like a diploma or a certificate course and then start looking for a job only then I can say whether I would face any kind of difficulty. I cannot really be too specific or comment on it right now.

Do you think there is a proportionate representation of your people in this culture, for example in television and radio and other spaces?

The first thing is, I don't have a TV, and I also do not listen to the radio as I don't have a car. I could have told you about that if I had access to those, so, I don't think it would be proper for me to comment on this.

Fair enough, but what about on the internet or when you go to places, on billboards, or in newspapers and magazines? If belonging comes from a media representation of your own, how do you see yourself from that perspective?

Unless I get the passport, I cannot say that I am a Canadian. So, I don't have that belonging to that identity. Also, in my opinion, it is obvious that this space is naturally different from the place where I grew up, got my education, and spent most of my life until I moved here to Canada. For me, to have that 'Canadian identity' would take time as I am an introvert and a slow receiver, so it will take time for me to grow that Canadian. And as I own all sorts of facilities of the Canadian government, so I must admit that I think of myself as Canadian. The other thing I think is that first-generation immigrants anywhere have this identity crisis, but the second generation, as I can speak of my daughter, belongs to the space. When I first came to Saskatoon, I was convinced that I was much better at home and should go back there after seeing the lack of job opportunities, different cultures, and other difficult situations, but my daughter thought otherwise and did not want to go back. For her though, the school and the overall environment were better than in Bangladesh. Moreover, at the time and age that we had decided to immigrate to Canada was more for our daughter; and as she was comfortable in this space, we decided to stay here as well.

So, are you happy to live here? What is your feeling?

As I already said, the cultural difference between the culture that I grew up with and the culture that I live in now will always be there. The dreams and aspirations that we had before we moved into this space were shaken up since we moved in, as Canada is a developed country; however, there are many positives such as social security, environment, medical, and education way better compared to Bangladesh. Another very important aspect is that even though I have never lived in a third country from the experience of others living in other places, the picture that I get is that Canada is a peaceful country. I myself have never faced any problem ever since I moved in the last three years, even though I worked at night, sometimes until 3 or 4 in the morning or even overnights, but without a few minor incidents

that are not worth mentioning, I never faced any danger. But obviously, there is a difference between thought and reality. I came here thinking of something but the reality did not match my expectation. Thought and reality often don't match, for me as well, I also couldn't find any correlation between my thought and reality.

What was your thought?

I thought that because I have the highest level of education, I would be working as an analyst or researcher, and not physical labor; however, which is impossible to get without a Canadian degree.

So even though you and your wife have migrated as skilled workers, you have not been properly evaluated.

Yes, we have not been evaluated, my wife was the principal applicant, she was a first-class gazetted officer in Bangladesh, and she also didn't find any suitable job in her field. So, I think this is a huge barrier. I think the government should address this seriously, it will help both the government and the immigrants as well.

*Nilu (P3)*

How long have you been here?

A: It has been exactly three years.

Q: Did you get any stable job so far?

A: First two years were a struggle in terms of the job, but last year I got a few jobs; however, none of them was good enough to settle in. I got a permanent job three months ago, and I think I could continue working for a few years.

Q: Did you find any gap between the expectation and reality of settling down here in Canada, how do you negotiate your identity within this culture?

A: Initially it was hard, as we didn't know many people with a very narrow network. It has increased slowly, but the first experience was not at all a comfortable experience for me. I had to face problems of every kind, the first being the language. Even though we knew about it, language was a huge shock. But now I know that it doesn't matter as long as I can make them understand, even though I have an accent (style). So, now I came out of that limitation. Secondly, I came here in the professional category, but I didn't get a job even after applying for a lower position. I volunteered and I applied once there was a job circular, but didn't even get the interview. It also came as a shock, as I was already working in a higher position even though it was a volunteer job, and it lowered my confidence. To get to that kind of professional position, I have to work a lot, and I may not have the energy to reach that position. So, I began to adapt, and in my current job it is somehow better, but I could not reach where I wanted to.

Q: So, is there a gap between what you thought it would be like and your reality?

A: Lifestyle and living are directly related to earnings, I couldn't adjust to my lifestyle and living unless I get the job I want. However, in terms of other things like health care, schools, hospitals, etc. are better than Bangladesh because of the infrastructure. But everything depends on the job.

Q: Do you have a sense of belonging to this place? Do you find yourself, your thoughts, or your culture is represented in this space?

A: I don't think we are represented; I cannot say things the way I want to say them. Sometimes, if I want to express my culture, it might appear odd to others but normal to me,

and I can tell that they are not comfortable so I compromise and get out of my culture a bit. So, I blend in and adjust. Always, I have to adjust to my environment, and I cannot show the life experience that I left behind. Some of the things that I have adjusted so much that I don't even notice them anymore. In those cases, I have adjusted, and in some of the things I am still struggling.

Q: Have you been discriminated against?

A: As I already said, I was working on a scientific project, and I did not even get a call for a two-level lower position.

Q: Why do you think this discrimination takes place?

A: When people talk to me, they understand that I am from a different culture and a minority. It is not the same even though in terms of experience or thinking I may be similar. I would say that they ignore us with a smiling face and never reveal this in words. So, even though they do not utter these words, their attitude and disregard is proof of this discrimination, which we can feel.

Q: Are you saying there is a dominant culture? How does your identity develop within this?

A: I think we sacrifice because of our children, but when I think about my own identity. When I think of my own identity, then I do not see myself flourishing and contributing to society as much as I could have done to my full potential. So, I am not happy in this regard.

Q: What do you think of the representation?

A: It's a long process, and my child may not face this. But I do not see my representation at all. We might sometimes be on the news, but in terms of contribution, we are far behind.

*Raia (P4)*

Q: I want you to first say your name and you do.

A: I am Samira Kabir and I'm 20. I'm currently a student attending the University of Toronto.

Q: I'm going to ask you a few questions. First, what is the difference between the space you have imagined and the one you negotiate within your everyday life?

A: I think there is a difference because when we come here as an immigrant we kind of have this...this immigrant dream of buying a house and having sort of luxury that you didn't have back home and I think to do with that it's like the reality is there is behind all that there's a lot of hard work there is a lot of studying you'll have to put in the time and effort I think we also have this idea of who we're going to become once we come here and if not that way. Because obviously, you can't ditch your identity from Bangladesh for us, as Bengalese, we can't just throw that away. We have both cultures, and we have to incorporate that and kind of merge them to find our balance and what we want to do.

Question: So the first question was, is there a difference between the space you have imagined and the one you live in your everyday life?

A: I do definitely think there is a difference between the space imagined and the one we actually have to negotiate with, with things like culture, identity, and work and merging our cultures together so when we come here as immigrants we kind of have an idea of the

American dream and it comes with like luxuries and a house all these things that we wouldn't have had the opportunity to have in Bangladesh but then when we come here we have these ideas but we don't realize the hard work and perseverance that goes into achieving these things. So, one of the things that we do have to do a lot is to merge both these cultures to kind of have a balance between being like ethnicity culture and the one we are living in.

Q: So, the difference between your ethnicity in the culture that you mentioned about what's is that culture that you mentioned other than that ethnicity?

A: Well, a lot of it is like stuff like food and clothing the normal kind of behaviors we have maybe there's a certain way that we greet others in our country and it might not be the same way even like personal space wise you might have a certain one that you're comfortable within like here versus Bangladesh it's a lot of things that it's just different and we don't understand these things until we were put in this circumstance.

Q: But you do have a sense of belonging in this space, right?

A: I do believe that we have a sense of belonging in the sense that we grew up here so we understand some of these cultural norms as we would say and because we understand these we were able to fit in better and like to adjust and we are able to blend in, in a way, with our peers.

Q: That's not the case with the first-generation immigrants, you mean?

A: No definitely not, there is a lot of stuff like language barriers. Our parents wouldn't have the same level of English and be able to I guess to be able to pronounce the same things and be able to communicate so it kind of does hinder their ability to move

forward and like work and making friends socializing it harder like those things like that we have it is the easy way is harder for them to do.

Q: Is this just about language then or what else is there?

A: I think it's also, you know, back home you don't see that many people that look different to you like you see you see people that look like you and you are kind of able to fit in better to do those things but in this country, we see like it's so Multicultural we have people that are Asian white on black obviously Brown so it's kind of like we're accustomed to knowing these people and kind of bear their cultures where so it's like integrated with all of us. So, yeah, it is definitely harder on that level for our parents to get along with these people unlike us.

Q: How does your identity shape this kind of multicultural space? Because it's not as homogenous as back home.

A: I think it shapes us in a way that it would be, it's definitely very easy for us to be influenced by our culture back home like and it's also easy to kind of hide that in a way too, you know. So, it's just (like) the thing, (like) cultural wise like how we dress or something like that maybe we're not that expressive here in Canada we might have to like, blend those in how to be more subtle with those aspects.

Q: So how extensively are you connected to this society and what is the idea of the society for yourself?

A: As I said, you go to places where you have different kinds of interactions with different people.

Q: So, the difference between your generation and the generation before you, how can you compare those two?

A: I think the differences; the main difference is that we have so many different struggles whereas our parents struggle with having to adjust and communicate. We have the struggle where we're trying to (like) also be within (like) our cultural limits but also be kind of like participating in activities that we would like Canadian kids to do right. So it's just a matter of sleepovers or going out on overnight trips all doing all these things that are so different from what our parents back home would feel like it's like, we want to participate in these but due to some, like, maybe religious or cultural restrictions we are not able to.

Question: So, you are still having to have this balance between, you know, the expectation from the generation before and then your own kind of, so how does this come up, I mean between these two different kinds of expectations?

A: I mean, definitely these expectations in a way do hinder how we act, how we behave, we're always kind of thinking about what our parents would think, how they would want us to behave right. But (like) the main thing is communication, it's just letting your parents know that you're able to maintain both of these cultures. It is not only Canadian culture but also Bangladeshi culture but also Canadian and Bengali culture.

Q: Have you been discriminated against because of your kind of identity or your kind of body like you know what I mean?

A: I definitely feel like I have gone through certain circumstances where like working in a part-time job I've been discriminated against for my skin color. I've had white customers that would be like oh I don't like to be served by a brown individual, like yeah in a way, I do

feel like that it does make him more upset but you can also overcome these by not thinking about these just ignore people like that so yeah.

Question: I kind of like the dominant narrative within Canadian Society is that what you're saying?

A: Yeah, there is, definitely is. Again, the whole dominant, it's not only just being a Canadian is also being Multicultural is being like a Mosaic of cultures and having to like some so many people are different from us and it's a blend of all of that.

Q: Yeah, so you repeatedly say about blending in because there are a lot of different cultures, but the idea of the mosaic is not to blend in, but rather to have your own culture, it is not like a melting pot as in the US, why do you have to blend in then?

A: We live in Toronto maybe it is more Multicultural than you would find in other parts of Canada like especially like if you go up North from Ontario it's more that whole like that discrimination that you feel in here it's to a wider extent when you go up north because it's more of like there are more whites individuals and you're just not feeling that as much here as you would be in like say north of the Ontario.

Q: So, in relation to that discrimination or in relation to that dominant narrative, how do you shape your identity? How do you negotiate with them? Do you just ignore them, or sometimes you kind of challenge them?

A: I think we definitely challenge them every day when we are living like the fact that we as immigrants were always told to work harder to be three times better than our other white counterparts right we're trying to overcome the struggle and prove that we fit into

society and we match with them we're not lesser or we're not inferior, we are more and we're just as equal as them, right.

Q: Why do we have to prove it then?

A: Well to a certain extent they do have this privilege that we didn't have when we came here, it's not only just through like maybe not only academically but this privilege when they go somewhere they feel like they belong we have that sense of belonging and everywhere we go and it's about history just their arrival of time before us and makes them have that belonging much more than we do.

Q: What about the Native Americans and Canadians who are living beyond the period when the settlers came in?

A: I believe their sense of belonging is it's their pride in their heritage, I mean, they definitely don't feel like they belong I won't say especially because they do like face a lot of discrimination even compared to us he thought a lot more and the thing is that they were kind at a disadvantage when they started with colonization it was a disadvantage from the start just like it is for us like from the start you are not knowing the language is a disadvantage.

Q: Yeah, so that's why I was asking repeatedly, keep on asking you about how I get any then you identify yourself with this within the space of different cultures?

A: I think it's a matter of maintaining everything you are like your ethnicity and being part of your heritage. Also claiming your culture but also, I guess, adapting to the circumstances, adjusting, and like not only it's not only about (like) ditching your culture, it also just a matter of thinking to fit in better a little bit. I think that's how I would say I don't

want to be unseen but I do want it. I'm so proud of my culture and all these aspects but I'm also able to (like) blend in and be part of society.

Q: Do you feel that there is a proportionate representation of your own ethnicity in the media especially?

A: I don't think so, but I wouldn't say it's only due to media representation is also just the aspects of people of color don't really go into this line of work in the entertainment industry but it's to a lesser extent, and due to that it just might be the number of people that are going in maybe it's that's why they're not appearing as much as we'd hoped for feel like it's usually used as token characters in this media where it's just like one signature like Asian guy and they're obviously defined by like the stereotypes that go along with it like the Asian guy being smart at math or a black man being part of a game it's only like stereotypes and they're usually used as this like token character in that TV show we don't have like any all brown casts are all black casts and I know that media is trying to get towards that but it's not equally matched to the amount of white representation you see.

*Raisa (P5)*

Q: Introduce yourself here, please.

A: I am 23 years old all right what you do so on the first question so we're going to ask you a question and if something else comes up and the first set of questions that

Q: I want to ask you do you find any difference between the space you live and the life you imagined that includes your life in the bank and social life you imagine.

A: I feel like I do I negotiate more with the space that I live now. I thought that after I graduated from university, like a straight out of graduating I would be doing something else.

But right now, I'm working in the bank I'm okay with that and that sounds good I feel like I negotiate with it. I'm okay in that sense but I would like to be doing a different job, for say, I thought I would be doing a different job is in the sense that I imagined I would be at a different point in life but I'm also open to opportunities. Now looking at different types of jobs so I feel like I do negotiate quite a bit now, negotiate with and where I see my life heading before I thought I was straight into accounting I thought I had my whole life planned but right now I'm more open to obstacles and in the sense of obstacles. I mean like looking for job, they might take longer than not having the job I want. I might still go into that job because it might be good for my career even if it's not exactly what I want to do for the rest of my life. You are kind of like molding your goal according to the way it's going.

Q: All right, what you're saying is that there is a difference between the space you imagined and the space you live?

A: For sure, because there's a lot in the environment you can't control like where you work what you were doing in your job what you studied where you study.

Q: So, do you have a sense of belonging to the space or is there feeling of exclusion even in a subtle way?

A: I feel like I do belong in my space depending on where I am. So, at home I feel like I belong since I have grown up with that space, but at work sometimes I feel like I belong sometimes I don't as there are people who have worked at my workplace for far longer than I have. I've only worked there one year some people have worked there for 2 years maybe longer so I feel like they have a better sense of belonging than I do. Also, depending on position, what position they do, whoever's at a higher level of position feel like to have a far higher sense of belonging since they do have more power, so they are able to tell what they

want to feel more comfortable while people who like customer service representative or other positions they're in a lower place of power. So, I feel like we have less comfort when we're working.

Q: Would you then negotiate with that kind of power?

A: So, at home, I guess I negotiate more since I'm already comfortable I can act how I want, but with workplace, I would say that I have to get more closer to the people who are in power like managers supervisor that way we have an understanding. So if I do something wrong or if I do something right they understand why I'm doing it so that way there's a more level ground.

Q: Right, but do you think that getting close to power your identity is shaped by not just in terms of more privileges but other ways too?

A: So, I would say there are more white people in the workplace but in terms of my workplace there's a good on multiculturalism, so I don't feel like I see that much of a dynamic power play because of race or culture. I feel like it's pretty even but if you do look at other places you get higher levels like CEOs like those kinds of things there are more white people. So, for sure I would say those are impacted by cultural and racial differences there is a bias towards the specific kind of race and culture and then usually the woman are in lower position but it's more on position where they're interacting with people, while men are more in higher positions where they're doing more administrative work and then higher-level work still managing larger companies. So, there is gender bias.

Q: So, do you feel that way because you are a woman but also you are a minority? Do you find it to be even that you said before?

A: It's kind of for your skin they get more recognized for their work they get promoted faster from what I've seen. In terms of cultural differences like colour or race I don't see it that much, why some people would get promoted faster, but this is more depending on circumstances. For example, our parents they might be treated differently because if they were unable to speak more English when they came here when they were younger. But I see my generation we are able to achieve whatever we want to because we know the language better and we have better understanding of the cultural differences and adapting to the culture.

Q: Do you see a proportional representation of your space?

A: So as far as the media goes, I don't see any representation of the South Asian character that I would say. As far as sometimes there's a presentation of Muslims but again even if they do show Muslims, it's always in a bad light I feel, so it is not how I would represent myself. As far as, like, the Muslims go they would show that they are very strict, the girls like a lot of them wear hijabs, I feel like that doesn't exactly represent me. They don't show that, care and understanding, and the reasoning as to why some parents are strict. I feel like as a South Asian and as a Muslim, we do have an understanding as to why our parents treat us a certain way and restrict us from doing a lot of things.

Q: So, you see rather a stereotypical representation of Muslim or South Asian characters.

A: I see a very stereotypical representation and maybe per se, they saw in many years ago like historically maybe they thought that Muslims were like that, so I guess I would agree in the sense that historically, yes before there were Muslims were portrayed like that and they

were like that but right now it's changing and they don't work it doesn't reflect them accurately how Muslims are now.

Q: Have you been discriminated against or have been the victim of any kind of form of discrimination or biases in relation to your job, education, culture, or anything else for that matter, even in a subtle way?

A: In terms of education, I would say I have felt discriminated against in the sense that I had a professor once who would be more inclined to give higher marks to students who are white, and because she was white herself, she wouldn't be very favorable to people of different cultures. And then as far as the workplace would go, I feel like people who are white do get promotions more quickly and any work that they do is more quickly seen, while if I do the same task and I do it well they don't give any recognition.

Q: So, how do you then negotiate with this existing kind of dominant discourse or the dominant kind of narrative? Is there even a dominant narrative, you obviously said that there is, and how do you then engage, do you ignore it or challenge that narrative, or what's the methodology?

A: Usually, for the narrative, I would say I ignore it. In terms of professors, there is not much I can do, as they are in a higher power dynamic, like in the power dynamics is high, they are in a higher level of power nobody would believe me anyway and it's not that big of an issue to create over. So, I was going to ignore it. As for work I would say I was trying to change it and ignore it, sometimes I would say I ignore it and then change it in the sense that I would bring it up but subtly. Maybe say something like oh this person did this, but I also did this. Also, I would think about changing in the sense that I would be more inclined to leave

my workplace if I see those kinds of things happening. I'm more inclined to change jobs. I feel like this kind of behavior happens.

Q: But isn't that kind of like you are escaping from; you know that space and how long can escape like, if you wanted to improve, like you know, develop yourself?

A: For sure, I think I am escaping but I also think that there's only so much I can do to change that. So, I feel like, I evaluate which environment I can change, and which environment I can't and then I decide whether I'm going to stay or go.

Q: Right, so, your identity is shaped in relation to that kind of; you know, that kind of a workspace or rather any kind of cultural domination.

A: I feel like, with any environment, I feel like I adapt, and I change my behavior based on what I see, like how I'm being treated, culturally or unprofessionally too.

Q: So, what would you do then call yourself? I was like I was trying to go back to that question of identity, how would you negotiate with that certain kind of stereotypical representation, narrative, or discourse in workplaces and cultural spaces, in any kind of space that you can imagine, how would you create your own identity? Like, what would you call yourself?

A: So, I would say I identify as Canadian Bangladeshi since I grew up here my whole life, I went back to Bangladesh only twice. My parents have more cultural ties to that place; they have I guess whenever they're eating something feel like eating mango, or fish I don't like eating the same things because I've never been fond of those things going up here I eat different types of foods different types of fish on those are I guess so those are shaped by what I see my friends eat, what I see people at work eat. I don't take like, I guess, rice to work

because other people are having sandwiches or other people are having pasta I don't want that because I've never been fond of those things going up here I eat different types of foods, different types of I guess some received by what I see my friends would eat and I see people at work I don't take like, I guess, take rice to work because other people are having sandwiches or other people I don't want to appear different. kind of rejects than the way your parents on a text message because we have to adapt to our environment and I feel like if I don't adapt and then people will find it weird if I am being to Bangladeshi food is better to be more another question what you think then the line is that you know what somebody's been a comedian identity play I wouldn't want to know how I identify my culture and my religion are separate and I don't need to get with me wherever I go I don't need to show it as people can already see it in the sense that I already left bro so they already know that I found expression of religion does not have to be expressive. Okay thank you very much.