INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND THE POLITICS OF GROWTH

by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

at

Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia
December 2012

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

INTERDISCIPLINARY PHD PROGRAM

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Departmental Representative: _____

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

DATE: December 10, 2012

AUTHOR: Abu Kamara

TITLE: International Students and the Politics of Growth

DEPARTMENT OR SCHOOL: Interdisciplinary PhD Program

DEGREE: PhD CONVOCATION: May YEAR: 2013

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Abstract

The international student population in Canada has increased significantly in the last decade. While we know a lot about the experiences of international students in general, we don't know a lot about the specific experiences of international students in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Given that universities in the region have identified international student recruitment as part of their internationalization strategies, expanding our knowledge about international students' experiences in Halifax not only has strong implications for universities, but also for provincial and local governments who see them as potential immigrants. Consequently, key research objectives for this study were to expand our understanding of the personal experiences of international students in Halifax, and to identify gatekeepers whose actions impact the experiences of international students.

Two studies were designed using qualitative methodology. Study I investigated the personal experiences of international students in Halifax, Nova Scotia, while the main objective for Study II was to identify gatekeepers in the city whose actions are shaping the contexts of international student experiences. Interviews were conducted with international students from Saint Mary's University, Mount Saint Vincent University, and Dalhousie University using a semi structured, open-ended interview method. The data was transcribed and coded using grounded theory method.

Results from Study I suggest that while international students regularly turn to formal support networks, such as the international student center for immigration and employment related assistance, the majority of students interviewed for this dissertation also expressed strong preference for informal support networks. Specific individuals identified by study participants as belonging to informal support networks included friends, family members, and members of on-and off-campus organizations. Results from Study II suggest that internationalization in Canada is providing new ways for universities to help address local economic and demographic concerns.

In sum, results from Study I suggest that international students rely on both formal and informal support networks to address the challenges they are facing in Canada, while findings from Study II suggest that demographic needs, and the expansion of the knowledge economy will continue to push universities to bigger and more central roles in the growth of cities.

List of Abbreviations Used

GHP	Greater Halifax partnership
NS	Nova Scotia
MPHEC	Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission
AUCC	Association of Universities and Community Colleges Canada
CIC	Citizenship and Immigration Canada
CEC	Canadian Experience Class
HIV/AIDs	Human Immunodeficiency Virus Infection/Acquire Immunodeficiency Syndrome
IIE	Institute of International Education

Chapter 1

Introduction

Over the past two decades there has been a great surge in the number of students studying outside their countries of origin. According to recent estimates, there are currently over 4 million students studying outside their countries of origin (Institute of International Education 2012). As the global international student population increases, researchers across the disciplines are trying to identify the key drivers behind its expansion. Although immigration scholars commonly vary in their research methodology of choice for studying the "push and pull" factors of student mobility, mostly on account of disciplinary research traditions, they nonetheless typically share a fundamental desire to identify the underlining causes of international student mobility. This commonality of interest among immigration scholars, which generally supplies the motivation for moving across paradigm boundaries, is what makes interdisciplinary study of international student mobility possible. As the globally mobile student population expands and the complexity of student's sociocultural, economic and political experiences highlighted, there is a need in the literature for comprehensive studies that further our understanding of the different experiences of international students. This dissertation was an attempt to fill this gap in the literature.

The fundamental premises of this dissertation were on one hand to identify the main drivers of international education in Halifax NS and on the other hand to investigate internationalization in the city. To accomplish these objectives, theoretical concepts from

Urban Studies and Social Anthropology were integrated to create an interdisciplinary research framework that can facilitate a comprehensive analysis of the contextual and personal factors of international education. The urban studies component of the research framework made it possible for the governance structure behind the internationalization movement in the city of Halifax to be highlighted, while the social anthropology theoretical concepts allowed for the cultural and social elements of international students' experiences in Halifax to be underscored. By integrating these epistemologies under one interdisciplinary research framework, the intention was to generate a post-modern research construct that can help us improve our understanding of the main drivers of international education in Halifax and the personal experiences of international students (Mansilla et al. 1998).

1.1 Background

One of the biggest drivers of international education is globalization. Defined primarily as the increasing circulation of knowledge, people, technology, and the proliferation of capital, goods, and services across borders, globalization is transforming the world by making it possible for frequent cross-cultural and economic interactions among people and nation states (Guruz 2008). According to Friedman (2000) globalization has its own demographic pattern and economic system which have led to market deregulation, expansion of free market principles, the digitization of knowledge, and the liberalization of immigration policies (Friedman 2000). As globalization continues to transform the world by integrating it, a major by-product of its expansion around the world has been the emergence of the "knowledge-economy".

The knowledge economy concept holds that the main drivers of economic activities have changed from mainly industrial, service, and manufacturing sectors to knowledge-intensive industries. Richard Florida (2002) in his seminal work *The Rise of the Creative Class* argues that the percentage of people who use some form of human creativity to do their work, such as engineers, architects, university professors, artists, and various other science and technology workers, has increased over the last century (p. xiii). According to Florida (2002), the growth of the creative class has directly led to major advances in technology, healthcare, and education. Florida (2002) concludes that the rise of the creative class reflects an increasing global trend toward investments in projects that harness and develop human capital (ibid). Seeing the social and economic benefits that can come from harnessing knowledge, most nation states have identified knowledge as a crucial resource for economic and social development, and are using narratives that centralize the benefits of knowledge to legitimatize projects aimed at developing sophisticated schemes to gain access to people who possess knowledge (Guruz 2008). Two examples of countries that have significantly increased the overseas training of their personnel are Saudi Arabia and China. For example, over 12% of Saudi Arabia's national budget has been set aside for higher education projects (Head 2012). This identification of knowledge as a key driver of growth has drastically increased the value of and demand for knowledge, and for countries that are facing an explosion in university aged students, like China and South Korea, the option to send some students overseas for training addresses fundamental demands for knowledge while simultaneously addressing "the demographic dividend" problem (Zha 2012). Not

surprisingly, the number of globally mobile students has increased at the same time the list of number of nation states that are aggressively pursuing skilled human capital has expanded. In essence, most nation states view access to skilled-human capital as a prerequisite for growth, development, and success in the global knowledge economy (Clarke & Gaile 1998).

In Canada as well as in other western countries, the search for skilled human capital is being fueled by economic and demographic concerns. Because of low fertility rates, Canada has lost the ability to replace its population. To address this problem, the Canadian government has initiated aggressive internationalization policies that target skilled immigrants and international students. However, because skilled-immigrants sometimes receive poor returns on their education in comparison to Canadian born workers and international students, the government appears to be shifting its focus from targeting skilled immigrants to attracting more international students (Ferrer & Riddell 2003, Belkhodja 2011). Consequently, the government's commitment to finding alternative sources for skilled human capital has resulted in increases in the international student population in Canada. For instance, the international student population in Canada has increased an estimated 374% since 1991 (IIE 2012). The Canadian government's decision to implement aggressive international student friendly policies has transformed Canada into a top-ten destination country for international students. Schneider (2002) notes:

> Several countries have created wide-ranging plans to increase registration from Overseas students. Australia, the U.K. and Canada have developed clear national priorities and comprehensive strategies to attract a larger number of international students. These strategies include centralized planning, cooperative efforts between governments and education, funding for outreach programs and

> marketing, centralized websites with higher education information, and simplified visa and university applications (Schneider 2000, in Andrade 2006, p. 132).

The changes noted by Schneider (2002) have not only been implemented at the national level in Canada but also at the provincial, municipal, and university levels. For example, provinces across Canada can now directly recommend immigrants and international graduates with Canadian degrees to the federal government for permanent residency through Provincial Nominee programs. While the federal government still holds the final say on immigration matters, provinces and municipalities are playing a larger role in the selection and integration of immigrants and international students. As a result, internationalization, as it pertains to the recruitment of international students, is defined as a cross-sector phenomenon in this dissertation (Knight 2007, 2008). Therefore, a key assumption in this dissertation is that an analysis of internationalization must fully account for both personal and contextual factors. This understanding is reflected throughout this dissertation.

I.2 Research Setting: Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia was chosen for this study because the region has low fertility rates, struggles with high out-migration rates, and has the oldest population in Canada (Statistics Canada 2012). Akbari (2008) notes:

> The population growth rate in Atlantic Canada has been in continuous decline for most of the post-World War II period, the most drastic taking place after the 1970s. Net out-migration from the region has been a permanent factor. This means that to maintain some population growth, the region relied solely on natural increases (births minus deaths). However, this component of the population growth has also declined continuously, falling below the out-migration rate in the new millennium, thereby causing population growth rate to become negative (p. 4).

Moreover, regional authorities, including provincial government, municipal government, business, and university leaders have all identified the recruitment and retention of international students as a crucial component of the region's economic development strategy. Although the demographic forecast for Nova Scotia has been rather grim, possible negative economic backlash is being kept in abeyance by the influx of rural migrants to Halifax, and by the recruitment and retention of immigrants and international students. According to a recent *Trends in Maritime Higher Education* article, "the number of international undergraduate students increased 138% over the last ten years and the number of international graduate students increased 101% over the same period" (Trends in Maritime Higher Education 2012, p. 1). The following diagram and table from the 2012 Trends in Maritime Higher Education magazine show increases in the international student population in the region

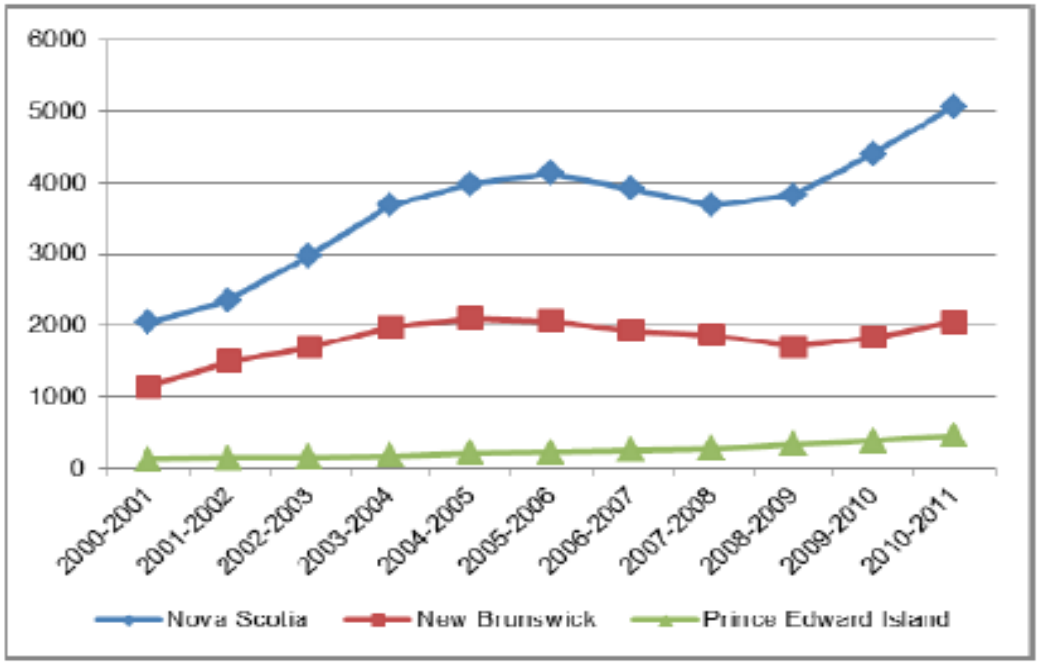


Figure 1. International Student Enrollment in Maritime Universities from 2000-01 to 2010-11 (MPHEC 2012).

	Enrolment			Share of Total Enrolment	
	2000-01	2010-11	10 year change	2000-01	2010-11
NS	2039	5066	+148%	5.4%	11.8%
NB	1144	2057	+80%	5.1%	9.2%
PE	120	452	+277%	3.6%	10.2%
Maritimes	3303	7575	+129%	5.2%	10.9%

Figure 1.2 International Student Enrollments in Maritime Universities (MPHEC 2012)

International student spending has become a reliable revenue stream for universities and cities as the international student population grows in the region. For example, a 2009 report published by the Nova Scotia Minister's Post-Secondary Education Research Advisory Panel declared that international students contribute over $234 million to the local economy (Siddiq et al. 2009). To encourage international students to settle in the region, the federal government with cooperation from the Nova Scotia provincial government has introduced the graduate stream of the Provincial Nominee program, a program that provides a pathway to Canadian citizenship to international graduates of Nova Scotia (NS) post-secondary institutions (NS immigration website accessed 2012). Similar programs have also been introduced in other provinces (Citizenship and Immigration Canada website accessed 2012). Even though the region continues to struggle demographically and economically, such international student friendly policies are likely to profoundly increase the region's chances of attracting more international students. This has been the case for Halifax, the largest city in Nova Scotia, where the international student population has increased tremendously over the last decade. Halifax was chosen as the research site precisely because of its rising international student population.

1.3 The City of Halifax

Halifax is the capital city of Nova Scotia. It is home to six degree granting universities in the region and to over "55% of Atlantic Canada immigrants". (Halifax Regional Municipality Immigration Action Plan p. 3). Like most cities in the region,

Halifax has identified the recruitment of skilled immigrants and international students as central features of the city's economic development strategy. With assistance from the federal and provincial governments, the city has demonstrated its commitment to internationalization by funding city level economic development organizations that embrace and encourage cross-sector partnerships as avenues to internationalization. The biggest example of this is the Greater Halifax Partnership (GHP). The Greater Halifax Partnership is an organization that is supported by three levels of government and the business community. It is unique in many ways because its primary goal is to bring about economic development by encouraging cross-sector partnerships. GHP's commitment to its cross-sector partnership mandate is reflected in the composition of its board, which is made up of provincial government representatives, municipal government representatives, business representatives, and university representatives. With funding from Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), the federal government's regional economic development agency, the GHP has been able to fund a student connector program. This program, which has an international student component, helps international students find employment in the region after graduation (GHP 2012). This development is resulting in more cross-sector partnerships between the local business leaders, local government leaders, and university leaders. In addition to the work being done by GHP, cross-sector partnerships among business, university, and government leaders in the city are being nurtured by local organizations like EduNova, the Halifax Strategic Partnership, Nova Knowledge, and the Halifax Chamber of Commerce. Additionally, the city maintains a library of resources on its website that provide valuable information to immigrants who want to settle in the region and to employers who are

looking to hire immigrants (Halifax Regional Municipality 2012). The city of Halifax is encouraging universities to do their part in attracting young talent to the region, given the city's high out-migration rates and dwindling domestic university student enrollments (Partner 2005, GHP Economic Strategy 2011).

Three universities in the city that have articulated clear internationalization objectives are Dalhousie University, Saint Mary's University, and Mount Saint Vincent University. With an enrollment of more than 17,000 students, Dalhousie University is the largest university in the province (Dalhousie University Registrar 2012). The biggest proportion of growth the university has experienced in the past couple of years has resulted from an overall increase in its international recruitment efforts. Since 2007 international student enrollment at Dalhousie University has climbed from 7.5 percent of the general student body to 13 percent (MPHEC 2012). In its most recently released institutional plan, Tom Traves, the president of Dalhousie University, said in regards to the universities aggressive internationalization strategy, "the number of Nova Scotia's high school graduates will decline by 30% over the decade, but our aggressive recruitment strategy across Canada and globally promises to provide enrollment and financial stability, even modest growth, as we look forward" (Dalhousie University Strategy Plan 2011, p. 3). Consequently, Dalhousie has developed an internationalization strategy that commits the university to the recruitment of international students, partnerships with international universities and governments to host students, and to the development of international student support infrastructures.

Many Canadian universities, including Dalhousie, Saint Mary's and Mount Saint Vincent, are members of such organizations like the Association of Universities and

Colleges of Canada (AUCC) and the Canadian Bureau of International Education (CBIE) that have made explicit commitments to internationalization. For example, in a 2012 report to members of parliament and senators the AUCC recommended, "that the government enhance support for international education and fund international research collaboration at scale to enable universities to continue to enhance innovation and prosperity for Canada and Canadians (Universities: Putting Ideas To Work for Canadians, p. 5). Internationalization strategies have resulted in major financial gains for international student destination countries. For example, the financial contributions of international students to universities and host nation economies have been estimated to be in the neighborhood of US$80 billion to US$90 billion globally, making international education an attractive option for universities who are looking to access funds that could help minimize the effects of dwindling domestic enrollments, and national and federal funding cuts (Head 2012).

For its part, Dalhousie has increased its international student population in each of the past four years. Although the majority of international students at Dalhousie are self-funded, the overall number of students on foreign government scholarships has increased tremendously in the past couple of years. Currently, Dalhousie has partnerships in place with the Chinese, Saudi, and Brazilian governments to host their students. While, Dalhousie, Saint Mary's, and Mount Saint Vincent universities all share a strong commitment to international education, each also prioritizes engagement with the external communities.

Saint Mary's University's mission statement epitomizes this notion, stating that "the mission of Saint Mary's University is to offer undergraduate, graduate, and

continuing programs; to engage in research and disseminate its results; and to serve the community from the local to the international level" (Saint Mary's University 2012). With an enrollment of just over 7000 students, Saint Mary's University is the second largest university in Nova Scotia. While the international student enrollment growth rate of Dalhousie is impressive, Saint Mary's University has successfully increased its international student population from 14.4% in 2007 of its student body to a remarkable 21.1% in 2012, making it the gold standard of international student recruitment in Canada (MPHEC 2012). As one of the most globally active universities in Canada, Saint Mary's university has partnerships in place with several countries to train their personnel. For example, it has partnerships in place with both China and Saudi Arabia. The university hosts the Confucius Institutes, a cultural education organization that is funded by the Chinese government. Also, Saint Mary's is home to Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) center that provides different services to its students, other international students in the city, and community members (Saint Mary's University 2012).

Comparatively, Mount Saint Vincent is the smallest of the three universities. The university has an overall student enrollment of close to 4000, of which 10.6% are international students. What is impressive about this number is that it has gone up from 8.5% since 2007 (MPHEC 2012). Like Saint Mary's university, Mount Saint Vincent also has its own TESL center. Another similarity Mount Saint Vincent shares with the other two universities is its commitment to internationalization and community engagement. This commitment is embodied in its 2009-2010 International Activities Report, which states, "Over the past year, Mount Saint Vincent University approached

international student recruitment with a new perspective and looked into innovative ways to increase our international student population. Using a multi-layered approach which includes traditional education fair participation, school visits with and without EduNova colleagues, agent-organized outreach, as well as university and language school liaisons have proved to be effective (p. 7). In all, each university has publicly articulated a strong commitment to internationalization, and devoted extensive resources to the development of sophisticated recruitment infrastructures for attracting international students. To sum up, the main reason why Halifax was selected as the research site was because university leaders, local business leaders, and local government leaders have all articulated a commitment to internationalization. Each sector appears to be embracing internationalization as a way to overcome local demographic and economic challenges.

1.4 Research Objectives

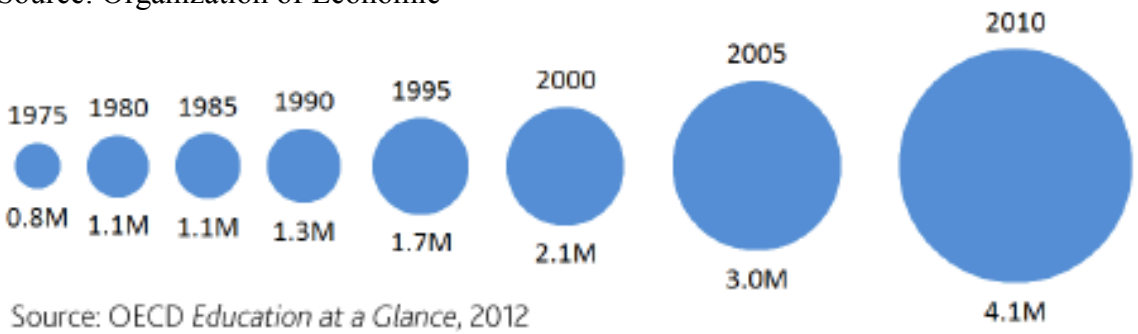
The research objectives for this dissertation were:

1. To gain a firm understanding of the personal experiences of international students at Dalhousie University, Saint Mary's University, and Mount Saint Vincent University.
2. To determine whether the experiences of international students transform their cultural perspectives.
3. To understand what roles local government leaders, local business leaders, university leaders are playing in the internationalization of the city.
4. To understand whether internationalization is leading to cross-sector partnerships in the city, and to investigate the role of universities in these partnerships.

1.5 Rationale for Research Objectives

The demand for higher education is increasing globally. Fueled by this demand, an international market for higher education has blossomed, causing universities across the world to jockey for the right to provide services to students. One way universities are attempting to gain an edge on their competition is to spend resources on websites and recruitment personnel (Guruz 2008). Today, there are about 4.1 million students studying outside their country of origin. Figure 1.3 below shows incremental increases in the globally mobile student population from 1975 to 2010 while Figure 1.4 identifies the top destination countries for international students.

Figure 1.3 Globally Mobile Students
Source: Organization of Economic



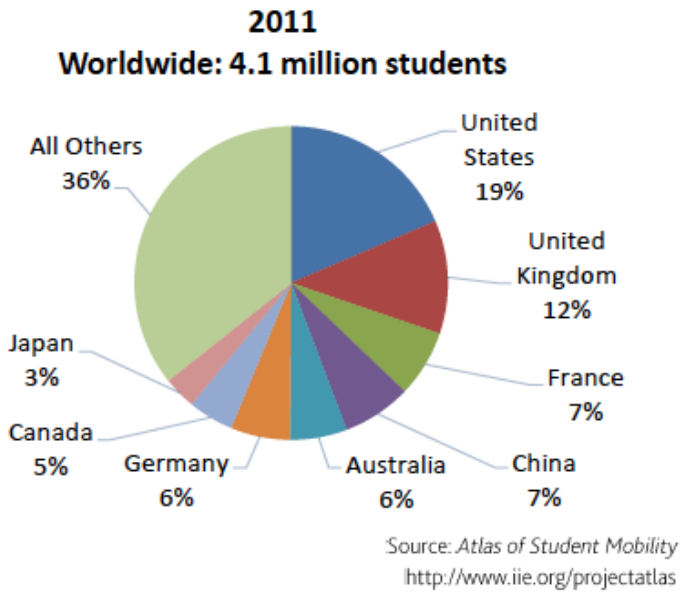


Figure 1.4 Major Destinations of International students (percentage of total)
Source: Institute of International Education 2012

A defining characteristic of the growing demand for higher education according to some researchers has been dramatic student mobility from countries that are "knowledge users" to ones that are "knowledge producer" (Guruz 2008). Some examples of countries that are characterized as knowledge users in the context of international education include, China, India, Saudi Arabia etc., while those defined as knowledge producers include the United States, Australia, Great Britain and Canada among many others (Guruz 2008). The fundamental argument in this literature is that countries that are knowledge users are trying to become knowledge producers. As this desire grows, a by-product is a growing demand for knowledge. With that said, it is unclear as to what role for-profit institutions, on-line providers of knowledge, and branch campuses will play as the demand for higher education continues to expand (Guruz 2008). The growing popularity of programs offered by e-learning institutions like the University of Phoenix might be foreshadowing

the future of higher education. Meanwhile, traditional western universities are scrambling to take advantage of the demand for higher education.

While serving as the personnel training ground for the world is economically beneficial, sector leaders in Canada also see internationalization, as it pertains to the recruitment of international students, as a mechanism for addressing demographic and economic challenges. Several researchers have provided empirical evidence to support the justification for aggressive immigration policies. For example, Moore & Rosenberg (2001) argue that "by 2026, more than 21% of Canada's population will be over 65" (p.146). According to the authors, this is a serious problem because the population is aging at a much faster rate than it is growing (Moore & Rosenberg 2001). Sector leaders from business, education, and government have relied on research findings that highlight the possible economic and social effects of Canada's low fertility rates and aging population, like Moore & Rosenberg's, to generate support for their internationalization agendas.

A clear sign of the success of internationalization strategies in Canada has been the overall growth in the international student population. However, as the international student population continues to expand, some researchers have asked —why focus on international students? Surely, focusing on skilled-immigrants who on average are more educated than Canadian workers is probably more sensible (Ferrer & Riddell 2003). Unlike international students who require a wait and see strategy, skilled-immigrants can be productive right away in the Canadian labor market. There is no doubt that at face value this argument seems to make a lot of sense. But upon closer examination, it starts to fall apart. Immigrants in Canada continue to face high unemployment rates because of

language and accreditation issues (Ferrer & Riddell 2003, Xue 2007, 2008). Comparatively, international students are usually younger, are more proficient in English, and have Canadian credentials upon graduation (Akbari 2008). As a result, international students are well positioned for long-term contributions to the Canadian economy.

Even before international students get to the point of entering the labor force, international students usually make many different contributions to universities. For example, some researchers have demonstrated empirically that international students contribute to innovation in their host countries. According to Chellaraj et al. (2008) "the presence of international students has significant impact on both future patent applications and future patents awarded to university and non-university institutions" (p. 444). Academically, international graduate students contribute as teaching and research assistants in the institutions where they study. As governments continue to cut funding, the number of courses assigned to graduate students has increased (Bok 2003). Such contributions allow academic departments in universities to continue to offer courses without significant restructuring. As noted earlier, international students' economic contributions, which include tuition fees, living expenses, spending of visitors, collectively make up one of their biggest contributions (Weaver 2003). While the academic and economic contributions of international students have been well documented, some researchers have pointed out that universities are increasingly viewing international student recruitment as a revenue stream.

At present, the arguments that have been offered to support the above claim have either called attention to the higher tuition fees international students are paying or highlighted the lack of support resources devoted to their development. For example,

quoting Lee & Wesche (2000), Andrade (2006), posits that "the desire to increase opportunities in higher education for students from abroad is motivated by numerous factors; the most obvious being economic" (p.132). She continues "international student enrollments in Canada are viewed as an important—even essential source of revenue by post-secondary institutions" (Lee & Wesche 2000 in Andrade, 2006 p. 132). Andrade's point, that universities from leading host countries like Australia, the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, and New Zealand are putting more resources into building recruitment infrastructures than into establishing appropriate support services, represents a growing critique among some international education scholars who have identified an increasing tendency by universities to overemphasize the economics of immigration over the need to address concerns about support resources (Altbach & Knight 2007, Altbach 2008, Brown 2008).

While international students are already making a lot of contributions to the Canadian economy, their ability to contribute in the long run is likely to depend on how effectively universities and their cities can help them overcome their adjustment challenges. In her review of relevant international education literature, Andrade (2006) notes, "both domestic and international students face academic and social transition issues in their first year of university, but with distinct differences" (p. 135). Although both domestic and international students experience transition related challenges, international students usually experience more difficulties adapting to university and academic life than domestic students (Andrade 2006). The challenges international students encounter in host cultures most often times stem from students' low language proficiency, loneliness and stress from being disconnected from support networks,

differences between international students' cultural backgrounds and the host nation culture, and disorientation that sometimes results from students' adjustment to different academic expectations (Ramsay et al. 1999, Rajapakasa & Dudes 2002, Ramburuth 2001, Rosenthal et al. 2007, Mendelsoh, 2002). If left unaddressed, the aforementioned challenges can limit or in some cases undermine international students' abilities to contribute in and out of the classroom.

Some international students sometimes develop serious anxiety problems as a result of their inability to communicate in and outside the classroom (Hechanova-Alampay et al. 2002, Roberson et al. 2000). As a result, some international students may not participate in classroom discussions. Although differences between international students' cultures and the host nation culture are sometimes the reason why international students are passive in the classroom, low language proficiency can also discourage some international students from participating in social interactions (Thompson 2011).

In addition to academic and cultural challenges, international students sometimes also face difficulties with discrimination, and with finding gainful employment after graduation (Church 1980, Robertson et al. 2000, Belkhodja 2008). Some researchers have identified stereotypical ideas and a fundamental unwillingness to accommodate differences as potential causes behind some of the discrimination international students are encountering in host countries (Belkhodja 2008). A 2009 study in B.C. found that interview requests rates for English named applicants with Canadian education and experience were more than three times higher than applicants with Chinese, Indian and Pakistani names (Oreopoulos 2009). More specifically, the study found that Canadian applicants with English sounding names received 40% more interview requests than

applicants with Chinese, Indian, and Pakistani names, which led the author to conclude that some employers are discriminating against applicants with international sounding names (Oreopoulos 2009). This finding is consistent with the experiences that were reported by the main characters in Belkhodja's (2008) film "About a Film". Belkhodja (2008) documented that Sandrine, a young woman from Senegal with a PhD, and Asmaa, a woman from Algeria with a MA, were both forced to work at call centers because of the lack of opportunities in their field of study in Moncton New Brunswick. Belkhodja's (2008) findings suggest that international students who are visible minorities in Canada may face serious social and economic challenges with locating employment. Even though visible minority international students who study in Canada will upon graduation possess desirable Canadian qualifications, racial profiling and discrimination may make their adaptation and integration more difficult (Belkhodja's 2008 & 2009). Such concerns that highlight discrimination incidences identify a fundamental need for immigration scholars to problematize the concept of " welcoming communities". Instead of feeling encouraged by the presence of diversity in our communities Belkhodja (2009) contends that we must be proactive:

> Another diversity management challenge in cities with little exposure to difference is to devise policies to make immigrants visible participants in the social, political and cultural development of the city and to ensure that the city undertakes to recognize immigrants as full-fledged citizens. To make this a reality, the city must embark on an authentic planning process involving dialogue with the immigrant communities, including them in the development process, and above all avoiding any attempt to exploit immigrants on the basis of ethnic and cultural differences, confine their role to that of just another exotic attraction at cultural festivals, or consider them as commodities that meet the needs expressed solely by the host community (p.6).

The foregoing section provides an overview of current empirical information about the experiences of international students. Although there have been some

investigations of the experiences of international students in Canada, for instance Zheng & Berry 1991, Chirkov et al. 2006, and Edith & Burney 2003, most of them have been conducted outside of the Maritime Provinces and have focused primarily on the experiences of Asian international students. While this is justified because the majority of international students in Canada are from Asian countries, the number of students from non-Asian countries, such as Nigeria, Colombia, and Chile, are growing. For instance, Nigeria is now among the top ten sending countries to Canada after not making the list in 2009 (IIE 2012). Because the number of students from non-traditional international student sending countries are increasing in Nova Scotia, and because there have not been a lot of studies done to investigate the experiences of emerging cohorts of international students in Halifax, Nova Scotia, with the exception of Thompson (2011) and Belkhodja (2009), this dissertation was an attempt to fill this gap in literature.

1.6 Statement of The Research Problem

To close the aforementioned gap in the literature, two studies were designed and conducted in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The first study investigated the on and off campus experiences of international students from Dalhousie University, Saint Mary's University, and Mount Saint Vincent University while the second study investigated the role of university leaders, local business leaders, and local government leaders in the internationalization of Halifax. The research problem was twofold: on one hand to understand the personal component of internationalization, and on the other hand to extend our understanding of the actors that are shaping the local context of internationalization. In that vein, it is believed that the research findings could be useful

to university leaders, professors, local business leaders, and local government leaders who are looking to attract and retain international students.

1.7 Research Methods

The epistemological framework for this dissertation is qualitative research methodology because it offers the best theoretical framework for understanding the phenomenon of migration. Phenomenon in this context means a process by which something is uncovered (Heidegger 1996). According to Heidegger, this process of uncovering is necessary because people sometimes forget that the lenses through which they see the world are shaped by histories. In other words, our cultural context provides the knowledge that shapes our social world. According to Heidegger, our awareness of the existence of the knowledge that underlie and make our presuppositions about the world possible is lost to us over the course of our being in the world. Heidegger explains this notion in the following quote from his seminal work *Being and Time*. Da-sein in the quotation is the word Heidegger gives to being that is related to human beings. He argues:

> Da-sein not only has the inclination to be entangled in the world in which it is and to interpret itself in terms of that world by its reflected light; at the same time Da-sein is also entangled in tradition which it more or less explicitly grasps. This tradition deprives Da-sein of its own leadership in questioning and choosing. This is especially true of that understanding (and its possible development) which is rooted in the most proper being of Da-sein—the ontological understanding. The tradition that hereby gains dominance makes what it "transmits" so little accessible that initially and for the most part it covers it over instead. What has been handed down it hands over to obviousness; it bars access to those original "wellsprings" out of which the traditional categories and concepts were in part genuinely drawn. The tradition even makes us forget such a provenance altogether. Indeed, it makes us wholly incapable of even understanding that such a return is necessary (p. 19).

Heidegger's point is that our awareness of the ideas that shape our understanding and thinking gets buried under the hustle and bustle of life. As a result, we need a method that will help uncover it. Heidegger offers phenomenology as a solution. While Heidegger's main objective in *Being and Time* is to use phenomenology to gain access to the fundamental component of being, his conception of phenomenology as a method that leads to an uncovering or "of letting things show themselves" can be invoked to justify why qualitative methods were chosen for this dissertation. In the same sense phenomenology was used by Heidegger to help human beings regain access to the underlining idea of being, the interview method of qualitative methodology, through its dialogue and reflection components, can be used to help research participants regain access to the ideas that have shaped their understanding. Because international students sometimes come from different backgrounds, their experiences can vary. Consequently, qualitative research methodology was the best choice for this dissertation because it allows the uncovering of narratives that define and influence behavior while at the same time making it possible to document nuances of individual perspectives (Creswell 1998, Patton 1990). Using the framework that has been described in this section as a base, the next two sections will discuss research questions that were used in the studies and elaborate on the data collection and data analysis methods that were used in the studies.

1.8 Research Questions: Study I

The following questions were used to gather data about the personal experiences of international students in Halifax:

- What are the on-and-off campus experiences of international students in Halifax?
- In what ways are the intercultural experiences of international students shaped by, and affected by sociocultural and language differences?

- Are international students' social interactions limited by language competency challenges?
- How much of the academic adaptation struggles of international students can be attributed to differences in education systems and differences in faculty expectations? What are the experiences of international students in the classroom?
- How would international students characterize their interactions with Canadian students and Canadians in general?
- What are the help-seeking habits of international students? Do they prefer formal support help, those provided by various university channels, or do they prefer informal help that comes from friends, friends of friends, siblings, religious organizations, and off-campus co-national organizations?

Study II

The following questions were used to gather data about the role local business, education, and local government leaders are playing in the internationalization of the city:

- Who are the actors that are shaping and driving the internationalization of the city? How are they accomplishing this? Are they working together? What roles do discourses about low-fertility rates, out-migration rates, and aging play in this movement?
- Are business, education, and government leaders part of this group? Is this an elite affair, or are average citizens impacting the direction of internationalization?

1.9 Participant Recruitment

For study I, 31 graduate and undergraduate international students were recruited from Dalhousie University, Saint Mary's University, and Mount Saint Vincent University through mass emails, posters, and through use of snowball sampling method. Overall, study participants were from seventeen different countries. Thirteen students were interviewed from Dalhousie, eleven from Saint Mary's and seven students from Mount Saint Vincent University. The final sample size had seventeen males and fourteen females. Study II participants were recruited primarily via email, telephone calls, and snowball sampling.

1.10 Data Collection & Analysis

For study I, 31 semi-structured, open-ended individual interviews were conducted with graduate and undergraduate international students from Dalhousie University, Saint

Mary's University, and Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax. The underlying rationale for this study was to investigate the experiences of international students in Halifax in order to fill the current gap in the literature. On average, the interviews lasted between 30 to 70 minutes.

To prepare for study II, the researcher studied internationalization related discourses from the local business, education, and government sectors. Once it was established that sector leaders not only had strong commitments to internationalization but were also working together to achieve their internationalization agendas, sixteen interviews were arranged with sector leaders to investigate their perspectives on internationalization in the city.

For both sets of interviews, participant responses to questions were recorded using a digital audio recorder. Such recordings are usually necessary to ensure that the researcher can review the information after the interview without compromising the interviewing process. For example, research has revealed that extensive note-taking during the interview process can not only compromise the quality of the interview but can also make participants feel uncomfortable (Levy & Hollan 1998). After the data was collected for studies I and II using the digital audio recorder, interviews were then transcribed, coded into categories, and analyzed for emerging themes using Strauss & Corbin's (1990) grounded theory method. Throughout the data collection and analysis process, the utmost attention was given to ethical considerations.

1.11 Ethical Considerations

Before the research got underway, the project was approved by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Board at Dalhousie University. Additionally, to protect

the identity of participants, all identifying markers of study participants have been removed and replaced with pseudonyms.

1.12 Organization of Chapters

Chapter 1 has introduced the reader to the research subject matter, research problem, research objectives, research questions, location of the research, and the overall rationale for the study. Chapter 2 will introduce an overview of theoretical concepts. Chapter 3, 4, and 5 are based on papers that analyze the data collected for study I & II. Chapter 6 provides a summary of findings, study implications, recommendations for future research and discussion of study limitations.

Chapter 2

Overview of Theoretical Frameworks

The research objective for this dissertation was twofold: on one hand to gain a firm understanding of the personal experiences of international students in Halifax, Nova Scotia and on the other hand to understand the roles local business, university, and local government leaders are playing in the internationalization of the city of Halifax. This chapter presents a summary of theoretical concepts that are used in chapters three, four, and five. Section 2.1 will provide a synopsis of concepts that were used to understand the personal experiences of international students in Halifax and Section 2.2 will focus on concepts that were used to understand internationalization in the city.

2.1 Theoretical Concepts for Study I: Transformation Theory

Transformation theory holds that our past experiences shape the way we construct meaning. Transformation theory escapes the deterministic label because it also suggests that new experiences can shift or completely transform our perspectives (Mezirow 1991). The main concepts of transformation theory are meaning schemes, meaning perspectives, and critical reflection. According to Mezirow (1991), meaning schemes are specific beliefs and values that shape the way we make sense of our experiences. A collection of these beliefs and values make up our meaning perspectives (Mezirow1991, 2000). Even though we do not always change our meaning perspectives, Mezirow (1991) argues that we sometimes encounter experiences that cause us to reflect on our beliefs and values. Mezirow (1991) labels such experiences as ‘disorienting dilemmas’. Whenever we experience a disorienting dilemma, the outcome, Mezirow (ibid) argues, can result in a

heightened awareness or understanding of the ideas that have shaped our worldview or sense of self. According to Mezirow (1991), the awareness that results from experiencing a disorienting dilemma can result in perspective transformation. More specifically, Mezirow (1991) defines perspective transformation as "the process of becoming critically aware of how we perceive, understand, and feel about our world" (p. 167). One question that was investigated in this dissertation was what happens when international students experience a disorienting dilemma? Do they develop new meaning schemes to make sense of their new experiences? Do they hold on to their old meaning perspectives or do they discard them?

Researchers (Gill 2007, Erichsen 2011) have investigated this problem and found evidence to suggest that international students sometimes transform their meaning perspective. Although it is quite possible that some international students transform their meaning perspective, I contend that it is highly improbable. The main reason for this is that international students most often times than not demonstrate behavior that suggest that they are not willing to change or transform their meaning perspectives. A number of immigration researchers have reported that international students usually prefer to socialize with co-ethnics or other international students (Robertson et al. 2000). For example, Rosenthal et al. (2006) highlights that "both within the university and outside most students mix socially with people whose cultural background is similar to their own" (p. 76). Such behavior seems to suggest that international students want to hold on to their old meaning perspectives. This makes a great deal of sense because most international students still maintain strong ties to their country of origin. Moreover, students who are planning on returning home may see no reason to transform their

'meaning perspectives'. For some international students, particularly those who want to use the symbolic value of their western degrees for social and economic mobilization in their home country, academic priorities usually take precedence over all other issues. Additionally, instead of transforming their 'meaning perspectives', students may experience events in their host communities that may reinforce the old 'meaning perspectives'. For example, experiences with racism and unflattering media representation of students' home cultures may cause students to be more protective of their existing 'meaning perspectives'. Students may interpret such events as attacks on their culture. In the end, international students' motivation for preserving existing 'meaning perspectives' may be higher than the motivation to transform their 'meaning perspectives'.

While the notion of international student perspective transformation can be challenged, there is evidence to support the thesis that some international students may simply develop entirely new ones instead of transforming their established meaning perspectives. Consequently, students' new 'meaning perspectives' may draw from an entirely different tacit knowledge. A good way to understand this is to consider Hegel's 'I' that is a 'we' and a 'we' that is an 'I' (Hegel, 1952 p. 110) The 'I' in this sociocultural equation represents the individual consciousness. The 'we' consists of the social, political, cultural, economic elements that have shaped the 'I'. In a migration context, the 'we' provides the 'I' with the situation and context. When the 'I' is detached from its 'we' its primary concern is not to change or to transform itself, but rather to hold on to what it knows: hence the reason why some immigrants and international students prefer

ethnic enclaves. My argument is that there is a big 'I' and a little 'I'. This is simply saying that we have different 'meaning perspectives' that we draw from to function in different sociocultural contexts: for example, 'I' as a son and 'I' as a student. Although both are under the big 'I' in the Hegelian sense, they both may rely on completely different 'meaning perspectives' and require completely different tacit knowledge to function (Hegel 1952). An example of this within migration research is Orozco & Orozco's (2001) concept of multiple identities.

Orozco & Orozco (2001) argue, "the children of immigrants follow many different pathways; they forge complex multiple determined identities that resist easy generalizations" (p. 1). According to this study, children of immigrants usually maintain separate identities for functioning at home and at school. A noteworthy point is that immigrant children rely on distinct meaning perspectives to inform their different identities: for instance, functioning at home sometimes require that students speak a different language, obey different sociocultural rules and mores. This phenomenon is not limited to immigrant children. The reality is that many of us maintain different 'meaning perspectives' to function in different social contexts. For instance, we may act differently or speak differently around different family members, and friends. Indeed, Orozco & Orozco's (2001) research demonstrates context is sometimes the catalyst that activates different identities. To sum up, the concepts presented in this section provided the conceptual framework for the analysis of personal experiences of study I participants. The next section provides an outline of the theoretical concepts that were used to investigate the role of local business, university, and government leaders in the internationalization of the city.

2.2 Theoretical Concepts for Study II

Growth Machines

There are several theories in urban studies that can assist our understanding of the way internationalization is governed, why local leaders are interested in it, and how the resources that govern internationalization are assembled. The two main theories are Molotch's (1976), and Logan & Molotch's (1987) "Growth machine concept" and Clarence Stone's "Urban regime theory". In his seminal paper on the growth of cities, Molotch (1976) identifies growth as the main interest of city elites. More specifically, he asserts that the growth of cities is controlled by a group of local elites who share a fundamental interest in the growth of their city. According to Molotch (1976), all growth machine elites believe that attracting capital, and control over land use are the most efficient avenues to achieve growth in cities. Describing growth coalitions, Molotch (1976) wrote:

> The people who participate with their energies, and particularly their fortunes, in local affairs are the sort of persons who—least in vast disproportion to their representation in the population—have the most to gain or lose in land-use decisions. Prominent in terms of numbers have long been the local businessmen, particularly property owners and investors in locally oriented financial institutions, who need local government in their daily moneymaking routines. Also prominent are lawyers, syndicators, and realtors who need to put themselves in situations where they can be useful to those with the land and property resources. Finally, there are those who, although not directly involved in land use, have their futures tied to growth of the metropolis as a whole…..This is the general outline of the coalition that actively generates the community "we feeling" that comes to be an influence in the politics of a given locality (p. 314).

According to Molotch (1976), "growth-machine coalitions" share an interest in growth and mobilize their resources to legitimize and sustain their efforts to achieve it (p. 315). Because of this commitment to growth, growth-machine coalitions are always in a natural state of competition with one another over access to capital, and for the power to control land use (Molotch 1976, Logan and Molotch 1987). In her description of growth machine theorists, Good (2009) highlights these perspectives:

> Their theory explains why various sectors in a city support the objective of growth. For instance, politicians support growth because they rely on campaign contributions from the development industry. The local media serve as 'statesmen of growth. Even labor leaders support growth, because it brings jobs to the city. Indeed, many residents have a stake in the growth of their community—a state that leads them to support development at any costs… (p. 21).

Growth machine concept offers a strong framework for understanding how things are done at the city level.

2.3 Urban Regime Theory

Urban regime theory offers an effective framework for understanding how city leaders acquire the power to get things done. Regime theorists argue that the resources needed for governance are scattered across institutional boundaries (Stone 1989). As a result, local politicians must collaborate with the private sector in order to develop the "power to" govern (Mossberger & Stoker 2001). The 'power to' act is a central concept in urban regime theory.

Stone (1989) notes

> Urban regime refers to the set of arrangements by which a community is actually governed. Even though the institution of local government bears most of the formal responsibility for governing, they lack the resources and the scope of authority to govern without the active support and cooperation of the significant private interests. An urban regime may thus be defined as the informal arrangements by which public bodies and private interests function together in order to be able to make and carry out governing decision (p. 6).

Moreover, Stone (2008) argues that the composition of governing coalitions, the nature of the relationships among members of the governing coalitions, and the resources members bring to the governing coalitions should all be identified as important governance factors. Because urban regimes are usually soft partnerships, their orientation and make-up can change with an influx of new actors (Good 2008). Comparing growth machines theory and urban regime theory, Good (2008) details:

> Like urban regime theorist, growth machine theorists argue that the question of who controls the local agenda is not the only one that must be asked in order to understand community power. However, unlike urban regime theorists, who focus on the fundamental question of capacity to govern, Logan and Molotch are concerned with the purpose of governing. For them, the central question is this: what takes priority on the local agenda? The answer is growth (p. 20).

2.4 The Creative Class Concept

In his book, *The Rise of The Creative Class,* Florida (2002) identifies professions such as scientists, engineers, artists, musicians, designers and knowledge-based professionals, that harness human creativity as drivers of global economic and social development in the last century. Consequently, Florida (2002) defines the creative class as, "people who are paid principally to do creative work for a living" (p. xiii). Describing the differences between the creative class and service and working class, Florida (2002)

notes “the key difference between the creative class and the other classes lies in what they are primarily paid to do. Those in the working class and the service class are primarily paid to execute according to plan, while those in the creative class are primarily paid to create and have considerably more autonomy and flexibility than the other two classes to do so” (p. 8). Although all the classes are important, Florida (2002) argues “the creative class is dominant in terms of wealth and income, with its members earning nearly twice as much on average as members of the other two classes” (p. 9). Florida’s (2002) creative class concept offers another explanation for the growth of cities. Even though the governance structure is important for growth, Florida argues that creativity is the main engine of growth. As proof he points to the significant economic impact of the creative class on most western economies. In the end Florida identifies tolerance, diversity, and skilled human capital as important variables for social and economic growth. Since international students have been identified in the Canadian government’s human capital recruitment strategy, the creative class concept, given its focus on the importance of human capital, will be used to link international education to discussions of human capital.

2.5 Civic University Concept

The “Civic university concept” holds that the disconnection that sometimes exists between universities and their external communities can be bridged by promoting the civic university concept (Goddard & Vallance 2011). The value of the civic university concept lies in the fact that it sees the links that exist between universities and their

external communities as crucial for social and economic growth. Goddard & Vallance (2011) define the civic university as a university that:

> Provides opportunities for the society of which it forms part; engages as a whole with its surroundings, not piecemeal; partners with other local universities and colleges and is managed in a way that it participates fully in the region in which it forms part. While it operates on a global scale, it uses its location to help form its identity and provides opportunities for it to grow help others, including individual learners, businesses and public institutions, to do so too. However building the bridge between the university and the city possesses leadership challenges within the university and within the city (p. 1).

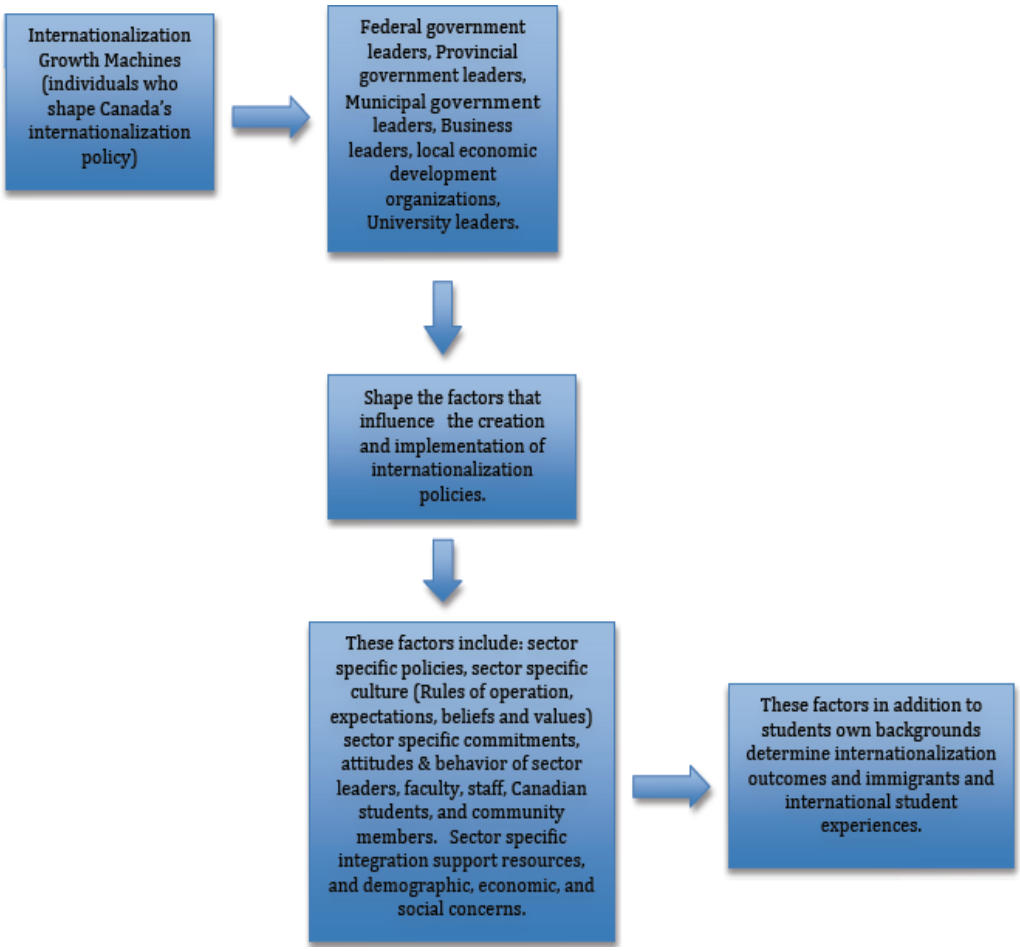
The civic university concept is quite valuable because unlike the growth machine related concepts that identify universities as peripheral actors in the growth of cities, it identifies them as one of the leaders of growth in the city. This idea is gaining traction as the knowledge economy continues to expand. With the identification of human capital, and research & development as crucial ingredients for growth, the value of universities, which is rising because of contributions generated by their research and recruitment infrastructures, appears to be making them more attractive to their external communities. For instance, today an increasing number of universities are among the top employers in cities, and many also hold the rights to patents that have been commercialized (Bok 2003). Goddard & Vallance's (2011) civic university concept offers a framework for understanding the growing role of universities in urban partnerships.

2.6 Internationalization Growth Machines

In addition to using the aforementioned concepts to link international education to the politics of growth, this dissertation introduces and develops the concept of Internationalization Growth Machines. The concept draws on insights from different

bodies of literature, in particular Logan and Molotch' (1987) growth machine concept and Goddard & Vallance (2011) civic university concept. Internationalization growth machines are defined in this dissertation as a collection of business, government, and university leaders who share a fundamental belief in the necessity and benefits of internationalization. The concept varies from Molotch's (1976) growth machine in one specific way: instead of land and economic capital as the base resource that motivates growth machine elites behavior, internationalization growth machine holds that human capital is the base resource that motivates the behavior of internationalization growth machine elites, and varies from Keil's (2003) notion of the global city in that it documents the rise of universities in the governance of cities. Internationalization growth machine elites are united by a fundamental belief that internationalization is the best way to access their desired resource, human capital. To accomplish their agenda, internationalization growth machine elites combine their resources to influence policies, to create sophisticated narratives to generate public support for their agenda, and to form partnerships with international governments. Figure 1.5 presents an outline of internationalization growth machines.

Figure 1.5 Internationalization Growth Machines



2.7 Rationale for Combining Theories

The experiences of international students in Canada are shaped by both personal and contextual factors. On one hand, students' own histories and the histories of the people they encounter impact their experiences. On the other hand, the decisions that are made by government, business, and university leaders help shape the contexts within which international students are having their experiences. As a result, combining theories that allow us to understand the personal and contextual components of international education in Halifax makes a lot of sense. While there is already some available information about the experiences of international students, there are not a lot of studies that have explored their holistic experiences. For instance, most studies focus on identifying the personal experiences of international students without attempting to investigate how these experiences are shaped by the decision making process of sector leaders. Without discarding the valuable information available research has already contributed to our understanding of the experiences of international students, there is a need for studies that help us to understand how international students' experiences are shaped by both personal and contextual factors. This is the strength of interdisciplinary research. It allows researchers to combine the strengths of disciplines to create frameworks that give a more complete picture of the experiences of people. As researchers encounter more complex problems, they are showing more willingness to stray across disciplinary boundaries.

Describing interdisciplinary research in the sciences, Aboelela et al. (2006) contend:

> As scientific knowledge in a wide range of disciplines has advanced, scholars have become increasingly aware of the need to link disciplinary fields to more fully answer critical questions, or to facilitate application of knowledge in a specific area. For example, the discovery that tobacco use was associated with high rates of lung disease was not sufficient to lead to smoking cessation; the addition of research on risk assessment, motivation, and reasoned action were all important in designing programs that have fostered the current lower rates of tobacco use. This recognition has stimulated a steadily growing interest within the scientific community in developing new knowledge through research that combines the skills and perspectives of multiple disciplines (p. 330)

This dissertation combined all the aforementioned theories under one interdisciplinary research framework to shed light on both the personal and contextual factors that impact the experiences of international students.

Chapter 3

Transformation Theory & The Experiences of International Students

3.1 Abstract

Some transformation theorists suggest that international students' desire to eliminate adjustment-related challenges sometimes results in perspective transformation. Findings from this qualitative study suggest that the intercultural experiences of international students reinforced their meaning perspectives instead of transforming them. In other words, what resulted from international students experiences in a new culture, according to this study, was not a desire or need to transform their meaning perspective but rather a strong need to hold on to their culture. Reasons for this include, some international students are not planning on staying in the host country after graduation and therefore see no reason to alter their meaning perspective, and also because discrimination, stereotyping and negative media portrayal of student's culture reduces students' level of attachment to the host culture.

3.2 Introduction

International student recruitment is a key priority for most universities around the world. Because of this, the number of students studying outside their countries of origin has climbed to over four million (IIE 2012). The Canadian government has implemented an aggressive internationalization campaign that identifies the recruitment and integration of international students as a central component of the country's development strategy. Key characteristics of Canada's internationalization campaign include increasing partnerships among national, provincial, and municipal government leaders, new cross-sector partnerships among university, business, and government leaders, more sophisticated and aggressive immigrant and international students recruitment strategies, more liberal visa arrangements, increased partnerships with international governments to train personnel, and the expansion of international student enrollments (Andrade 2006, Schneider 2000, Knight 2007 & 2008). Combined, these changes have resulted in the growth of the international student population in Canada.

From 1991 to 2012, the Canadian government has implemented numerous international student-friendly policies that have resulted in an estimated 373% increase in the international student population (IIE 2012, McMullen & Elias 2011). These increases have provided another revenue stream for universities while simultaneously expanding Canada's skilled human capital pool. For example, a 2011 Council of the Federation report on international education notes, "many of foreign students who graduate in Canada apply to stay in the country permanently through the Canadian Experience Class (CEC). CIC accepted 2,544 CEC applicants in 2009. Many temporary foreign students are also selected to remain in Canada permanently through Provincial Nominee Programs (PNPs) (p. 14). According to a 2012 Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada report, international students contribute in excess of $8 billion dollars to the Canadian economy (Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada 2012). With such contributions, and with all signs pointing to the continued expansion of the knowledge economy, it is quite logical to suggest that international students who stay in Canada after graduation will probably play a major role in helping Canada maintain its competitiveness in the global economy. The recently released Advisory Panel on Canada's International Education Strategy report confirmed this. Key findings from the report were that Canada should increase its international student intake, and that international education is a key driver of Canada's future prosperity (Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada 2012). While the economic impact of international students is now well established, some researchers have pointed out that many of the universities that are recruiting international students do not have the infrastructures in place to fully

support their development (Abash 2008, Brown 2008). This is a noteworthy point because international students generally struggle with a myriad of challenges.

Depending on international students prior exposure to English, western style education, and norms and values, they often struggle with various academic adjustment difficulties, different language challenges, and different sociocultural adjustment problems (Andrade 2008, Church 1982, Lee & Wesche 2000, Robertson et al. 2000, Senyshyn & Zhan 2000, Senyshyn et al. 2000, Poyrazli et al. 2001, Hechanova-Alampay et al. 2002, Mendelsohn 2002, Cheng et al. 2004). Recently, two important questions in regards to the adjustment of international students have been: are international students changed by their intercultural learning experiences or do they develop a more rigid sense of self? In addressing these questions, this paper draws on Mezirow's (1991) transformation theory, on critiques of transformation theory, on an analysis of the findings of researchers who have used transformation theory to analyze the experiences of international students, as well as on original data from interviews with international student.

3.3 Research Design

Thirty-one graduate and undergraduate international students from three Nova Scotian universities were interviewed using an open-ended, in-depth interview method. Students were recruited through mass emails, posters, and through snowball sampling method. The focus of the study was to gain an understanding of the experiences of international students in Halifax, Nova Scotia so that the impact of their intercultural experiences on their meaning perspectives could be investigated. Data were collected

using an audiotape recorder. Interviews were transcribed, and coded using Strauss & Corbin (1991) grounded theory method.

3.4 Theoretical Framework

Education theorists and education psychologists have identified learning as a life-long process. For adult education scholars, learning is not just an abstract concept but one that involves concrete experiences that can profoundly impact the way people see and understand the world (Knowles 1980, Kolb 1984). In this respect, adult education scholars believe that learners bring experiences with them to the learning contexts that influence the way they construct meaning (Bandura 1977, Mezirow 1991). Because of this, learners are not simply empty vessels for teachers to pour information into but have a lot of input into their own learning (Knowles 1980, Freire 1970). Figure 1.6 illustrates the history that learners bring to the learning context. Personal Identity Matrix Figure 1.6.

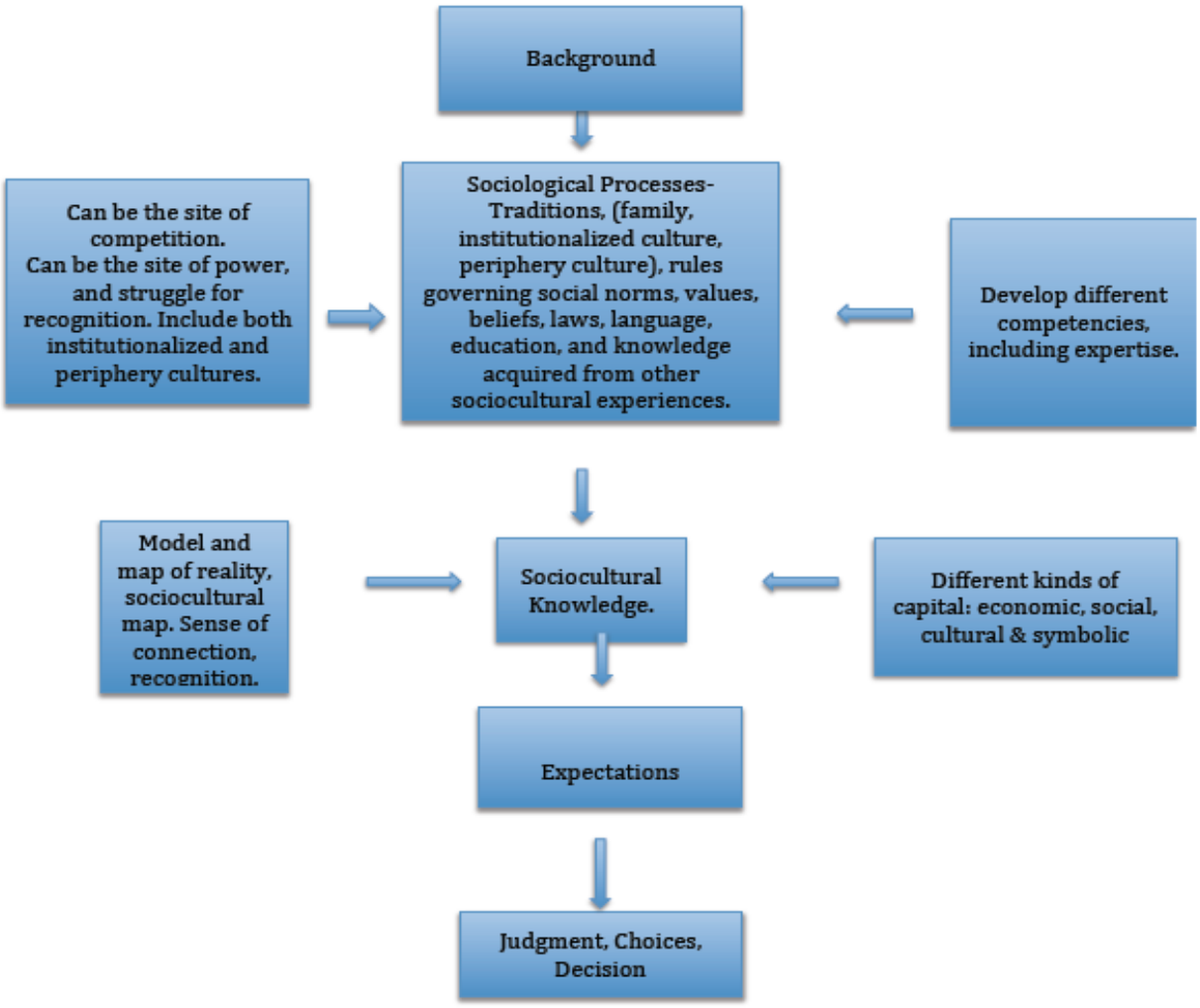


Figure 1.6. Personal Identity Matrix.

As outlined in figure 1.6, individuals bring histories to the learning context that influence the way they understand the world, their expectations, and their judgments and choices. When they cross cultural boundaries into social spaces where the rules that govern interactions are different, as is the case with international students, their ensuing experiences can be the source of many different challenges. Transformation theorists like Mezirow (1991) posit that whenever individuals experience a crisis that incapacitate or

destabilize their ability to make sense of their experiences, which they identify as disorienting dilemma, the result, which usually starts with some critical reflection, can lead to perspective transformation [1]. Before applying this notion to analyzing the experiences of international students, we must first review transformation theory and its strengths and weaknesses.

3.5 Transformation Theory

Transformation theory is a learning theory that suggests that individuals can transform the way they understand the world by critically analyzing their experiences. In defining transformation theory, Mezirow (1991) argues:

> A missing dimension in these psychological theories is meaning—how it is construed, validated, and reformulated—and the social conditions that influence the ways in which adults make meaning of their experience. There is need for a learning theory that can explain how adult learners make sense or meaning of their experiences, the nature of the structures that influence the way they construe experience, the dynamics involved in modifying meaning, and the way the structures of meaning themselves undergo changes when learners find them to be dysfunctional. These understandings must be explained in the context of adult development and social goals. A learning theory centered on meaning, addressed to educators of adults, could provide a firm foundation for a philosophy of adult education from which appropriate practices of goal setting, needs assessment, program development, instruction, and research could be derived (p. xii).

Transformation theory holds that our informal and formal learning experiences shape the way we make sense of new experiences (Mezirow 1991). Though we rely on past experiences to make sense of new experiences, transformation theorists suggest that we can transform our perspectives through critical reflection (ibid). The central

[1] According to Mezirow (1991), Perspective Transformation is what results when the 'frames of references' that allow individuals to make meaning of our experiences lose their usefulness.

framework of transformation theory is built around meaning schemes and meaning perspectives. Mezirow (ibid) defines meaning schemes as specific beliefs and values Individuals acquire through various sociological processes, that enable them to understand, communicate, and navigate specific social spaces. Collectively, the body of knowledge that defines the worldviews of individuals and allows them to make sense of their experiences is what Mezirow (ibid) identifies as meaning perspectives. A similar concept in sociology is "habitus", which is the knowledge that allows individuals to communicate, and navigate the various channels of their sociocultural spaces (Bourdieu 1977). According to Mezirow (ibid) when individuals find themselves in a new social context, one in which they are unable to make sense of their experiences due to fundamental differences in social norms, values or beliefs, the new experiences can cause a 'disorienting dilemma' that can lead to profound changes in the way individuals construct meaning (ibid). Hume (1966) provides perhaps the most elegant articulation of the value of experience in human understanding in his 1748 seminal work *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding.* Hume (1966) reasoned, "For all inferences from experience suppose, as their foundation, that the future will resemble the past, and that similar powers will be conjoined with similar sensible qualities. If there be any suspicion that the course of nature may change, and that the past may be no rule for the future, all experience becomes useless, and can give rise to no inference or conclusion" (p. 38). Hume's main point— that past experiences are what allow humans to make sense of new experiences— is a fundamental idea in Mezirow's transformation theory. By anchoring the human ability to make meaning to lived experiences, Mezirow successfully liberates individuals from being forever imprisoned by essentialist cultural notions and puts the

ability to transform in their hands. In this respect, he echoes a fundamental idea in Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory, that individuals are shaped by and can shape their environment. For Mezirow, individuals are not eternally confined to their perspectives but can instead change or transform them when they are no longer useful. For instance, whenever individuals encounter a disorienting dilemma, experiences that expose their frames of references as ineffective, Mezirow (1991) suggests that they can transform their worldviews by critically reflecting on the fundamental beliefs that shape the way meaning is constructed.

3.6 Transformation Theory: Weaknesses and Strengths

Several researchers, including, Gill (2007), Erichsen (2011) and Baumgartner (2002) have used transformation theory to investigate the experiences of adult learners and have reported transformations in participants meaning schemes and perspectives. For instance, Baumgartner (2002) reported notable changes in the learning experiences of eleven individuals who are living with HIV/AIDS. Longitudinal data were gathered over a span of four years. More specifically, the study found that over the course of the study, participants had developed a "heightened sensitivity to life", a "continued care of the self", an augmented sense of service to others, "continued orientation toward the future", and an ongoing incorporation of HIV/AIDS into participants' identity (Baumgartner 2002 p. 49-55). In sum, the study found enough evidence to suggest that participants had experienced sustained transformations in their perspectives over the course of the study.

While the findings of the study are impressive, there are some important questions that were not explored. For instance, how does the behavior of non-HIV/AIDS

individuals affect individuals who are living with HIV/ AIDS? For instance, how are the lives of people living with HIV/AIDS affected by laws that define, limit, and on certain occasions criminalize certain aspects of their behavior? How are the lives of individuals living with HIV/AIDS affected by social narratives that marginalize, stigmatize, and discriminate against them? In short, what is the impact of such narratives on the learning and transformation of individuals living with HIV/AIDS? A key limitation of the aforementioned study is that it puts too much of an emphasis on the subjective component of transformation and does not fully explore transformation as a social process, which leads to a conclusion that does not fully address power or the social costs of transformation. This is a major oversight considering how power structures social interactions. When we consider social narratives that stigmatize HIV/AIDs individuals, and laws that criminalize their behavior, the fact that the study does not look at power becomes a serious omission. For example, Baumgartner (2002) could have used Weber's (1958) notion of legitimate authority to examine governmental power (laws) that criminalize certain behaviors of HIV/AIDS individuals. Beyond the state's legal power, Weber's (1958) notion of traditional power might have also helped Baumgartner (2002) highlight the impact of traditional narratives that stigmatize certain diseases on the transformation experiences of HIV/AIDS individuals. I mention Weber's (1958) notion of power only to give concrete examples of how power can impact and shape social interactions. Overall, the inattention to power one finds in Baumgartner's (2002) study represents a fundamental problem in transformation theory— it does not properly highlight the role of power in the process of transformation. For example, Taylor (2007) asserts that transformation theory "gives too much attention to the individual and not to

the individual within his or her socio-cultural context" (p. 184). Unfortunately, this limitation is also present in studies that have attempted to use transformation theory to investigate the experiences of international students.

For example, Gill (2007) interviewed ten Chinese post-graduate international students attending graduate school in the United Kingdom and reported that participants encountered various perspectives and views that "provided opportunities for them to develop unique viewpoints, readily accommodating 'otherness' and adopting constructive, tolerant, flexible and critical studies (Gill, 2007, p. 181). More specifically, Gill's study found that international students experienced stress and anxiety due to "lack of practical understanding of British cultural and learning contexts and norms", adapted in order to "fit into the given cultural and educational framework", and changed their perception of self and others (p. 171). She concludes that intercultural learning can not only heighten self-awareness but also can also lead to intercultural adaptation, development of intercultural competence, and reconstruction of self-identity (ibid). Gill (2007) argues, "the essence of intercultural learning is profound personal change and perspective transformation" (p. 180). Is this really true? Do intercultural encounters lead to a fundamental reassessment and change of meaning schemes and perspectives? Since adaptation is a process that includes other individuals, how do power dynamics impact the transformation process? What is not accounted for in Gill's (ibid) analysis is the fact that most countries hosting international students today have different power struggles raging within their borders. Some of these struggles stem from religious differences, cultural differences, economic inequalities, and racial intolerance. As Baumgartner's (2002) and Gill's (2007) findings show, the role of power is not always highlighted in

studies that use transformation theory. As technological advances in the communication and transportation industries and shifting immigration policies continue to make it possible for more frequent cross-cultural interactions, the role of power cannot be ignored.

Liberal immigration policies have greatly increased the frequency of cross-cultural interaction across the globe. Because of the power politics that structure most social spaces, personal transformation or change, like the one discussed in transformation theory, can no longer be understood away from the politics of the social environment. Kymlicka (2002) has discussed such challenges in his thorough analysis of multiculturalism and the 'politics of recognition'. Kymlicka (2002) argues that the politics of recognition, which is in essence an identity struggle, is one of the biggest challenges facing multicultural societies today (p. 329). For instance, he notes:

> The link between common citizenship rights and national integration is now under attack. It has become clear that many groups—blacks, women, indigenous peoples, ethnic and religious minorities, gays and lesbians—still feel marginalized or stigmatized despite possessing the common rights of citizenship. Many members of these groups feel marginalized, not only because of their socio-economic status, but also because of their sociocultural identity—their 'difference' (Kymlicka 2002, p. 329).

In this age of multiculturalism and mass migration, individual transformation cannot be understood without some account of the influence of power—particularly its correlation to the politics and struggle for recognition. In his essay on multiculturalism, Taylor (1994) suggests that the historical misrecognition of the cultural identities of previously marginalized groups like African Americans and Aboriginals in the U.S. had a profound impact on the way those groups saw themselves. He argues, "the thesis is that our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of

others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves" (1994, p. 25). The problem with Taylor's (ibid) suggestion, as is the case with Mezirow's (1991) transformation theory, is that neither fully accounts for the full extent of power in the change process: both seem to think that change is simply a matter of reasoned critical reflection. On this note, Parekh (2000) argues, "…the politics of culture is integrally tied up with the politics of power because culture is itself institutionalized power and deeply imbricated with other systems of power" (p. 343). With that said, researchers who want to use transformation theory must be aware of its limitations; however, even with those limitations, transformation theory is still a powerful theory that can help researchers understand the role of experience and critical reflection in the change process. The remainder of the paper will analyze the findings of the study using the concepts that have been presented in this section. The questions guiding this analysis are: are international students' self concept changed by their learning experiences in Halifax? Or does the experience result in a more rigid sense of self?

3.7 Findings

In general, scholars who have investigated the experiences of international students have found that international students usually struggle with academic and sociocultural challenges. Examples of common international student challenge include difficulties understanding lectures, difficulties with class participation and group work, problems with writing, culture shock, loneliness, and various difficulties that stem from

differences between students' home culture and the host culture (Church 1982, Senyshyn et al. 2000, and Poyrazli et al. 2001, Ward & Kennedy 1991, Lacina 2002, Ramsay et al. 1999, Holmes et al. 2004). This point is emphasized by Andrade (2006) who in her comprehensive review of the relevant international student literature notes, "whether related to academic or social adjustment, international students had more difficulty adapting than domestic students"(p.135).

Similar to the aforementioned findings, participants in the present study reported culture shock, loneliness, difficulties with understanding lectures, challenges with group work and class participation, and writing problems as the most exacting experiences of their learning encounters in Canada. Responses from study participants confirmed that social and cultural differences between international students' home culture and host culture are often the source of most challenges faced by international students.

Participants reported that faculty expectations and faculty student interactions varied in comparison to faculty expectations and student interactions in their home countries. A student from Ethiopia characterized this difference the following way: "My experience was in a formal type of education where you didn't have as much of a chance to interact and get to know professors. Here the relationship between students and teachers is different. It is more friendly and more interactive" (Student 8). This confirms the findings of Bartram 2007 and Robertson et al. 2000 who found that differences between the education systems of international students' home culture and host nation culture can cause some serious academic challenges for international students. Even though many of the challenges international students face are academic in nature, they sometimes encounter other difficult situations.

Apart from academically related challenges, international students also face various social challenges, including discrimination. For example a Malaysian student said:

> The thing is, it really doesn't matter that much if you become a permanent resident or a Canadian citizen. At the end of the day you cannot change your skin color. A store had a contest for a free coffee. So I peeled the sticker and found that I had won. I won a free coffee. The last two letters, ' ee', were missing but I didn't think it was a big deal. I went to the store. The person working there refused to give me my coffee because the last two letters were missing. I felt that if it were someone else that looked Canadian, she wouldn't treat them the way she did me. The way she came at me, it was a different approach. She ended up giving me the coffee after telling me that she won't next time. The thing I don't like is the tone. It is very upsetting to me. You can feel it in the tone. That's really upsetting to me. Next time make sure you have this right. She wouldn't be saying the same thing to an Anglo Canadian in the same tone. I feel that here sometimes, as a person of color you always have to do something extra to really be that somebody. You cannot just be equal skill— you always have to have something extra when you are competing with others academically or professional (Malaysian student).

Such experiences have to be accounted for in studies that explore the experiences of international students. As noted earlier, a weakness of studies that have investigated the experiences of international students is that they have not fully explored the impact of these kinds of non-academic experiences on the transformation process. In other words, what is the impact of discrimination on international students? What kind of an effect does encountering narratives that misrecognize their identities have on international students? The reality is that students enter social spaces within which different narratives are present that define them in certain ways, whether fairly or unfairly, and determine at times how they are treated. For example, such narratives can include ones that define them as visible minorities, and as international students. The reality is that international

students are not entering neutral spaces. When students go overseas they enter spaces that have specific histories and power relationships. Cornel West (2001) argues:

> This vicious ideology and practice of white supremacy has left an indelible mark on all spheres of American life—from the prevailing crimes of Amerindian reservations to the discriminatory realities against Spanish-speaking Latinos to racial stereotypes against Asians. Yet the fundamental litmus test for American democracy—its economy, government, criminal justice system, education, mass media, and culture—remains: how broad and intense are the arbitrary powers used and deployed against black people. In this sense, the problem of the twenty-first century remains the problem of the color line (p. XIV).

West's (2001) analysis of the legacy of white supremacy, views state sponsored actions against marginalized groups not only as historical events but as events that continue to impact the lives of individuals today, even if from a periphery or non-institutionalized position. Similarly, McIntosh's (1988) essay titled, *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack,* defines white privilege in relation to male privilege and uses the discussion to illustrate the broad social implications of the power of white privilege and male privilege in western culture. West (2001) & McIntosh (1988) both call our attention to the lasting legacies of the negative social and cultural histories of most western nations. By calling our attention to things like racial profiling, and police injustice, theirs is an attempt to unmask the face of power in western societies. International students' experiences with discrimination are examples of the manifestations of the power both West (2001) and McIntosh (1988) allude to. For example, a Sudanese student said, "when people in the community see a black person, education is not the first thing that comes to their minds. I think they think of us as a second class citizen". Most recently, Oreopoulos (2009) found that Canadian applicants with English sounding names received 40% more interview requests than applicants with Chinese, Indian, or Pakistani names. This should

be a concern for Canadian universities as India and China are among the top ten countries of international students coming to Canada. Above all, such findings raise some rather serious concerns about whether students' race, or their names will become barriers to their post-graduation labor market integration. Oreopoulos's (2009) finding has strong implications for other western countries as well, as most, including Australia, Great Britain, Germany, France, and the United States have all struggled with different forms of discrimination and racism. While questions about personal change and transformation are very important for improving our general knowledge about the adjustment of international students, questions about discrimination, particularly how it might impact the social and economic lives of international students, are necessary for a complete understanding of their experiences. Evidence in the current research suggests that discrimination has definitely had some impact on students' social lives. For example a Filipino student said, "There seems to be some subtle racism here. It is not in the open but I know what is going on. I feel it below the surface with some people. It affects your interaction with them, your self-confidence. I don't like dealing with them because you feel that".

Students' experiences with discrimination illustrates that certain narratives, such as stereotypes, can pose some serious challenges for international students. Mezirow (1991) believes that "our efforts to understand the world generate the continuous testing of our most fundamental assumptions, not merely the testing of our attempts to extend our knowledge" (p. 41). Do we really continuously test our most fundamental assumptions, as Mezirow (1991) claims, or do we hold certain beliefs, and values that are insulated from the change process? This is a serious question for immigration scholars.

For instance, Cirkov et al. (2008) found that motivation played a significant role in the adaptation of international students at three Canadian universities. While this finding is impressive, it is unclear how students' intrinsic motivation is affected by experiences like discrimination. Are students' social efficacy affected at all? Or are students' self-efficacy insulated from such experiences? A limitation of this study and of transformation theory is that it does not account for impact of powerful social narratives. This criticism has been noted by Clark and Wilson (1991) and Taylor (2004). While it is important to unmask the power relations that structure societies, the subjective component of transformation, as discussed in transformation theory, should not be ignored either. While it is impossible to rule out the possibility of perspective transformation, most of the participants in this study expressed a deeply held desire to maintain their cultures. Participants simply developed new meaning schemes[2] as a way to overcome cultural disequilibrium, while still holding on to their old meaning perspectives. In the migration context, Orozco and Orozco (2002), and Erichsen (2011) have explored the notion of multiple selves. For instance, Orozco & Orozco (2002) found that the children of immigrants maintained separate identities for functioning at home and at school. The remarkable thing about their finding is that immigrant children relied on completely detached meaning perspectives to support separate identities.

This notion of multiple selves or multiple identities seems to also describe the experiences of the participants in this study. Participants reported no desire to change

[2] Mezirow (1991) defines meaning schemes as specific beliefs and values individuals acquire through various sociological processes that enable them to understand, communicate, and navigate specific social spaces. In the context of this dissertation, meaning schemes are defined as the body of information international students accumulate to help them understand and navigate the social and education spaces of the host culture.

their meaning perspectives and instead simply wanted to develop new meaning schemes to function in the new social contexts. Participants reported a heightened desire to maintain their cultures. There are several possible reasons for this: for example, international students' status as temporary sojourners may significantly reduce the possibility of perspective transformation, as students may not see a reason to transform their meaning perspectives if they are not planning on staying in Canada after graduation. Furthermore, even when students encounter disorienting dilemmas that reveal the limitations of their current meaning perspectives, such experiences may not necessarily become catalysts for the critique of the assumptions and premises that undergird students' meaning perspectives. Additionally, some international students may put off dealing with the challenges of their new cultural milieu by spending all their time in co-national enclaves. Moreover, some international students may not want to change their meaning perspectives out of fear of the high social costs of transformation. The reality is that change is both a subjective and objective phenomenon. Because we live our lives predominantly within social relationships, the process of change can also include an objective dimension. For example, although international students may critically arrive at the decision to change their meaning perspectives, individuals within their social circles can encourage, impede or completely suppress their efforts to change. In sum, international students who are planning to return home, and those who fear the high social costs of transformation, may be discouraged from changing their meaning perspective.

Instead of transforming their meaning perspectives, some study participants reported that the experience of being in another culture strengthened their love and desire to maintain their own culture.

> I feel closer attachment to Latin America. First I was like I live in …. I love this country. Now, it is I love, love ….. I have that conviction of loving Latin America and trying to defend what we have. Because there is all this story of development, of developing countries trying to imitate developed countries. That is not the way I think. I wouldn't want to see Latin America as North America. In Latin America there are aboriginal people, especially in Bolivia and Peru; they have a very rich culture. They protect their environment and they have a connection with nature. I will like to keep that Latin America" (Chilean student, Student 1).

> I hate to see the media's negative portrayal of my culture. It seems that is all I see here. It has made me more protective of my culture (Malaysian student: student 3).

> Being in Canada has resurrected my values. For me, I was not a practicing Muslim before. When I came here, I started, praying one time a day then I started praying five times a day" (Malaysian student: student 2).

> Each language has its own beauty. You cannot translate that into English most of the time. Whenever I am around my friends who speak my language, I am different. I am fun loving, very much talkative. Whenever I am with people who do not speak my language, I have to translate everything. The thing is whenever you start to translate your language into English, you sometimes cannot figure out the appropriate word. Whenever I am around Canadians I a m much more sensible (Malaysian student: student 3).

Although students were eager to adjust to life in Canada, they did not believe that their adjustment should come at the expense of their personal values and beliefs. Two participants exemplified this:

> Students are not going to leave their identities behind. Students will integrate, but they are not going to completely change. I'll give you a small example. Sometimes, in my department, my colleagues have presentations. They usually have very good presentations and such but part of this thing is that they have beer and wine and things like that. I told them that I am interested in participating but as a Muslim I am not allowed to drink: I am not allowed to even be present in a place where other people are drinking. Yes, it is your culture but this is my

> religion. I am a person who does not like to break my rules. I respect your culture and understand that this is the way you are used to living. But this is also my culture and this is the way I am used to living. So, if can separate these things so that I can be there to present and to help my colleagues that would be great (Egyptian student: student 28).
>
> Everyone has their values and sometimes those values are not compatible with the Canadian value system. It's different country. That creates a challenge. When you come here everything is new, new way of life, new way of doing things. New ways of being social. So you learn and try to keep things separate. You still form friendships, but they are different. There are some barriers that you just cannot break in. The way Canadians are brought up, sometimes the value systems are not compatible. It's different kinds of friendship. Some kind of invisible barriers that you cannot break (Malaysian student: Student 2).

What these examples demonstrate is that there are certain beliefs, which I will label 'God Ideas', that individuals simply insulate from the change process. In this context, cultural beliefs, and religious beliefs seem to fall under that category. While this in no way discounts the possibility of transformation, it does problematize its analysis to the extent where the discussion of transformation and change has to not only account for personal agency but also for various social, political and power dynamics.

3.8 Discussion

The findings reported in this paper did not include evidence that would suggest that international students in Halifax are transforming their meaning perspectives as a result of their intercultural experiences. Instead, study participants simply developed new frames of reference to make sense of their new experiences. In this respect, my findings stand in contrast to Gill (2007) and Erichsen (2011) who both found that the intercultural experiences of international students led to perspective transformation. Given that Gill (2007) and Erichsen (2011) studies were both longitudinal studies, length of exposure to intercultural experiences may have a stronger correlation to perspective transformation

than mere exposure to intercultural experiences. Even if we were to grant that intercultural experiences over time led to perspective transformation, there is still the issue of power and the costs of social transformation to be worked out.

More specifically, in terms of the links between critical reflection and broader intercultural perspectives, there was no evidence in this study to suggest that the intercultural experiences of international students actually led to broader worldviews. This view faces several difficult challenges. For instance, although the institutionalized cultures in most western countries have embraced and regularly put forward narratives that support and uphold the liberal concept of cultural diversity, fundamental incompatibilities in political, social and economic beliefs, most recently highlighted by Sharia Law debates, debates surrounding the banning of headscarves, and censorship debates surrounding the prophet Mohammed cartoons, illuminate a growing tension in most liberal democracies between minority groups and the institutionalized culture. Zizek (1997) believes this tension results from a fundamental unwillingness by the majority culture to confront the true 'Other'. Zizek (ibid) argues:

> Liberal 'tolerance' condones the folklorist Other deprived of its substance—like the multitude of 'ethnic cuisines in contemporary megalopolis; however, any 'real' Other is by definition 'patriarchal, 'violent', never the Other of ethereal wisdom and charming customs. One is tempted to reactualize here the old Marcusean notion of 'repressive tolerance', reconceiving it as the tolerance of the Other in its aseptic, banning form, which forecloses the dimensions of the real of the Other's Jouissance" (p. 37).

Zizek's critique is that the liberal notion of tolerance, as embodied in the concept of Multiculturalism, is simply a smoke screen or fantasy that allows the true assimilationist project of liberalism to operate undetected (Zizek 1997, 2007). Recent declarations by both the French and German governments regarding the failure of multiculturalism seem

to confirm Zizek's point, especially given the main reason cited for the failure of Multiculturalism in both contexts was that lack of integration of immigrants. Perhaps study participants desire to hold on to their culture might on some level be students' attempt to resist the aforementioned assimilationist project.

With that said, efforts to understand transformation must not simply focus on subjective factors, but must ultimately include the social realities. Perhaps thinking of transformation as both a subjective and objective experience might help. For instance, Hegel (1977) argues, "Each is for the other the middle term through which each mediates itself with itself and unties with itself; and each is for itself, and for the other, an immediate being on its own account, which at the same time is such only through this mediation. They recognize themselves as mutually recognizing one another" (p. 112). He continues "according to the notion of recognition this is possible only when each is for the other what the other is for it, only when each in its own self through its own action, and again through the action of the other, achieves this pure abstraction of being-for-self" (ibid. 113). Hegel's notion of recognition, the "I" that is a "we" and the "We" that is an "I" not only captures the subjective and social basis of our existence, it also captures the politics and power struggle that comes with it (ibid). The fact that change, transformation occurs in social spaces that are heavily contested and imbued with different structures of power should be reflected in discussions of transformation.

3.9 Conclusion

While the subjective variable in the transformation process cannot be ignored, as Mezirow's (1991) work clearly demonstrates, I have attempted to highlight the role of

power in social interactions by discussing the politics of recognition (Hegel 1977, Taylor 1994, Kymlicka 2002, Parekh 2000). Even though international students maintain the ability to change, transform or develop new perspectives, it is important to note that they are making these decisions in spaces that are imbued with various power structures. And since students are not insulated from power relations, attempts to understand their experiences and perspective transformation must account for the social environments within which their experiences are occurring. At the end of the day, although transformation theory is useful for understanding the role individuals can play in the transformation process, it must be paired with theoretical concepts that broaden its capacity to capture the full narrative of transformation.

In response to the questions posed at the beginning of this paper, whether international students are changed by their learning experiences? Or does the experience in the host culture result in more rigid sense of self? Instead of transforming their meaning perspectives when facing a disorienting dilemma, study participants simply developed new frames of references to make sense of their new experiences. This could be because the social costs of transformation might be too high for students to deal with in addition to the stress of coping to a new culture and academic environment. Moreover, the experience of being in a host culture resulted in a more rigid sense of self for a majority of participants in the study. Study participants' reasons for wanting to hold on to their culture were a combination of the following: some students are not planning on staying in Canada after graduating and therefore see no reason to change their meaning perspectives, others want to maintain strong ties to family and friends back home and see their culture as a vehicle for that. Moreover, even students who want to stay in Canada

after they graduate prefer friendships with co-nationals and see no reason to transform their meaning perspectives. Consequently, study participants thought it was a lot easier to develop new meaning schemes to make sense of their experiences in Canada rather becoming vulnerable to the stress and social dislocation that might accompany transformation of their meaning perspectives.

Finally, for future research, scholars may want to explore how the label of 'international student' is itself an expression of power. How might this label limit, control and stereotype students? In many ways, an historical analysis of the construction of the category of international students, in terms of how it came to represent what it represents today –-a separate category of students whose movements are limited by VISA regulations— and work regulations, becomes itself an unmasking of power relations (Foucault 1965, 1975).

Chapter 4

More than a Number: The Experiences of International Students at Three Canadian. Universities.

4.1 Abstract

Attracting international students is a major component of the immigration strategies of most western governments around the globe. In Canada, the national government has identified the recruitment of international students as a key component of its internationalization strategy. When students arrive in Canada, depending on their education and cultural backgrounds, they sometimes struggle with different challenges. This article reports the findings of a qualitative study that investigated the experiences of international students at three Canadian Universities.

4.2 Introduction

Most governments around the world have established international student-friendly immigration policies as a way to increase international student enrollment. Consequently, international education attraction has become a major component of the immigration strategies of most governments around the world. In Canada, the federal government has identified the recruitment of international students as a key focus of its internationalization strategy. Schneider (2000) notes, "other nations, notably Australia, Great Britain, and Canada have recognized the benefits of international students attending their higher education centers, and have developed clear national priorities and comprehensive strategies to attract a larger number of international students" (p. 2-3). Recent policy examples reflecting the Canadian government's commitment to the

recruitment and retention of international students include the graduate stream of the provincial nominee program and the PhD stream of the Federal Skilled Worker Program. The Honorable Minister for Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, Jason Kenney has noted, "Doctoral graduates play a unique role in the economy. They drive research, encourage innovation and pass on their knowledge through teaching…and quite frankly, Canada needs more of them" (CIC Press Release 2011). The minister's comment highlights some key reasons why the Canadian government has decided to expand its recruitment of international students. A by-product of the growth of the international student population in Canada has been the dramatic increase in the overall economic contributions of international students to the Canadian economy.

According to the final report of the 2012 Advisory Panel on Canada's international Education Strategy, "expenditures resulting from international students in 2010 was $8 billion, which translates to 86, 579 jobs and $455 million in government tax revenue" (Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, p. xi). The expected economic impact of international students has motivated western countries such as Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States to aim at increasing their international student enrollment to "earn profits by charging higher fees" (Attach & Knight 2007, p. 292). While the economic contributions of international students has supplied the government with a legitimate justification for expanding its international student recruitment initiatives, it has also identified the recruitment of international students as a potential source of skilled immigrants that can help Canada overcome its impending demographic challenges that are resulting in shortages of skilled labour. Support for this notion mainly stems from the realization that Canada, on account of its

low fertility rates, has lost its ability to replace its population (McNiven & Foster 2006). Regardless of the reasons, whether economic or demographic, what is not arguable is that universities are moving with the passage of each new international student-friendly policy closer and closer towards occupying a central role in Canada's growth campaign.

Today, the majority of Canadian universities have implemented university level internationalization strategies that prioritize the recruitment of international students. As a result, the international student population in Canada has gone up from 36, 822 in 1992 to over 193, 000 in 2012, which represents a 374 percent growth (IIE 2012, McMullen & Elias 2011). This is quite impressive considering that international students now make up over 9.5 percent of the Canadian student population, a 5.5 percent increase since in 1991 (IIE 2012, McMullen & Elias 2011). Such increases have had some serious implications for the universities. For instance, amid government funding cuts and falling domestic student enrollment rates, universities are increasingly relying on the recruitment of international students as a revenue stream. As a result, international student recruitment has become a lifesaver at a time when most universities are fighting to stay afloat in the face of wave after wave of government funding cutbacks.

While the international student population in Canada has increased, so too has interest in their experiences. While the general literature on international students is quite impressive, most of it originates from Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States. Of the studies that have been conducted in Canada, most have focused primarily on Asian international students. For example, Zheng & Berry (1991) investigated the psychological adaptation of Chinese sojourners, Chirkov et al. (2006) examined the role of motivation in the decision of Chinese students to study overseas, Lee & Wesche

(2000) looked at Korean Students' adaptation to post-secondary studies in Canada, and Samuel & Burney (2003) investigated the interactions of South Asian Students with mainstream faculty. While shedding light on the adaptation experiences of Asian international students is important, especially given that the majority of international students in Canada are Asian, the non-Asian student population in Canada is also rising. This is particularly true, for instance in Nova Scotia, where the number of international students from the Middle East, and African and Latin American countries is growing (MPHEC 2012). Because of this shifting demographic and also because the experiences of international students in Nova Scotia have not been extensively investigated, the purpose of this study was to contribute to filling this gap in the literature.

Lastly, while the dominant narratives on international students are justified in highlighting the major social and education obstacles international students are facing in host nations, they tend to focus disproportionately on their challenges, giving only minimal attention to the strengths of international students (Zhang & Mi 2009). This trend in the literature stems from a general tendency to 'pathologize' students. As a result, international students are usually bombarded with narratives about their various deficiencies and pathologies. To address this issue, I introduce in section 4.3 a capital-based sociocultural economy[3] framework for discussing the experiences of international students that draws on Bourdieu's notion of capital and Wittgenstein's concept of language games. Within this sociocultural economy framework, students are discussed as

[3] Sociocultural economy concept, similar to Gay & Pryke (2002) notion of cultural economy, regards social interactions as occurring in specific spaces within which individuals can convert the social and cultural capital they possess into "instrumental and communicative actions" or what I refer to as sociocultural freedom. In moments when individuals move to spaces that follow different sociocultural economy rules, individuals can accumulate social and cultural capital to regain their sociocultural freedom.

possessing a mix of social and cultural capital that allow them to freely navigate the sociocultural spaces of their home country, something I refer to in this paper as sociocultural freedom or what Habermas (1971) calls the ability to understand and control one's environment (instrumental and communicative action, p. 92). After a brief introduction of the research design in 4.4, and a discussion of reasons why study participants came to Canada in 4.5, the reminder of the paper applies the aforementioned capital-based sociocultural economy framework to the analysis of data from the present study.

4.3 Theoretical Frameworks

Bourdieu's forms of capital

Immigration researchers have used many different theoretical frameworks to illuminate familiar aspects of the adjustment experiences of international students as well as to bring to light unfamiliar ones. This paper uses a combination of Bourdieu's forms of capital concept and Wittgenstein's idea of language games to help further our understanding of the adjustment related challenges of international students. Bourdieu (1986) posits that the knowledge individuals accumulate through various sociological processes, including language knowledge, knowledge of social rules and knowledge of academic expectations, form their cultural capital. Additionally, Bourdieu (ibid) identifies social relationships as the main source of social capital. In short, Bourdieu (ibid) defines the social world as a space whose various institutional structures make it possible for individuals to not only accumulate cultural and social capital but also to convert that capital into the ability to achieve various desires (Bourdieu 1986).

Wittgenstein's Language Games

Wittgenstein (1953) identifies language games as activities that are different from one another because of their rules. In other words the rules that govern one activity are different form the rules that govern others. In this sense, participation in each activity requires a tacit understanding of the rules and implicit agreement to follow them. For instance, all members participating in a given language game must accept the definition of words, as well as the rules governing their usage (Mezirow 1991). Bourdieu illustrates this by pointing out:

> Hence communication is possible in practice only when accompanied by a practical spotting of cues which, in enabling speakers to situate others in the hierarchies of age, wealth, power, or culture, guides them unwittingly towards the type of exchange best suited in form and content to the objective situation between the type of exchange best suited in form and content to the objective situation between the interacting individuals (p. 26).

Bourdieu's concept of capital and Wittgenstein's language games can be used to expand our understanding of the adaptation experiences of international students. For example, within a given sociocultural context, the sociocultural rules that inform and govern behavior, what is referred to in this dissertation as sociocultural economy, could be thought of as the rules to a 'cooperative cultural game'. To participate, individuals must accumulate the required mix of capital through various social and institutionalized relationships. In turn, the acquisition of the required mix of capital empowers individuals with the ability to navigate the various structures of their social space. The mix of capital that equips individuals with this ability is what is referred to in this paper as

'sociocultural freedom', or what Habermas (1971) calls instrumental and communicative actions. (p. 92)

In general terms, sociocultural freedom is the ability to navigate sociocultural spaces, and to convert accumulated capital into the ability to 'understand and control one's environment' (Habermas 1971). Because the value of capital is determined by its link to a sociocultural economy that recognizes its value, international students who move to nations with sociocultural economies that do not recognize their capital may struggle until they can accumulate recognizable capital. Bourdieu's forms of capital concept and Wittgenstein's idea of language games allow for the re-conceptualization of international students adjustment challenges as an issue of a mismatch between students capital and the sociocultural economy of the host nation. Because sociocultural freedom returns once international students accumulate recognizable capital, the adjustment related challenges of international students could be characterized as a learning issue. The concepts outlined in the foregoing section will guide the analysis of the findings of the present study. But first, the next section will elaborate on the study's research design.

4.4 Research Design

Thirty-one graduate and undergraduate international students from three Nova Scotian universities were interviewed using an open-ended, in-depth interview method. Participants were from seventeen different countries. Thirteen were from Dalhousie University, eleven from Saint Mary's University, and seven from Mount Saint Vincent University. The final sample size included seventeen males and fourteen females Students. Participants were recruited through mass emails, posters, and through snowball sampling method.

The focus of the study was to gain an understanding of the experiences of international students in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Data were collected using an audiotape recorder. Interviews were transcribed, and coded using Strauss & Corbin (1991) grounded theory method.

4.5 Reasons for Studying in Canada

International students go overseas to study for multitudes of reasons. Historically, researchers have found that students are pushed to go overseas by social, cultural, political, economic, and academic factors (Altbach 1991, Mazzarol & Soutar 2001). For example, Altbach (2004) asserts, "many of the world's brightest students seek opportunities abroad because there are few, if any, "world-class" institutions in much of the world, especially in developing countries. Students also leave home when the specializations they want to study, from astronomical physics to aspects of zoology, are unavailable in their own countries, especially at the graduate and professional level" (p. 3). Students in this study gave several reasons why they choose to study in Canada. The most common reasons given by both graduate and undergraduate international students were, the good reputation of Canadian universities, the high value of Canadian degrees in the global market place, desire to be exposed to different cultures, high quality of education, low cost of living, better visa possibilities, affordable tuition, access to programs that are not offered in their home countries, better post-graduate career opportunities, friends and family members studied or were studying in Canada, frequent school closures due to political disruptions and instability in home countries, opportunities to work while studying, and an easier pathway to citizenship. Although

graduate and undergraduate international students more or less gave the same reasons for studying in Canada, there were some answers that were unique to graduate students.

Graduate students reported that research funding opportunities and a chance to collaborate with world-renowned scholars were important factors in their considerations to study in Canada. Although the "push" factors for study participants were mostly personal, some also mentioned government scholarships and department funding as other reasons for coming to Canada. Furthermore, some study participants also said that they wanted to study in Canada after finding out about Canadian study opportunities through newspapers, and foreign embassy university fairs. Combined, these reasons suggest that while personal reasons represent the majority of the reasons why study participants came to Canada to study, university recruitment efforts also played a role in students' decision.

4.6 Adjustment Challenges: Language

Although international student adjustment experiences can vary, there is general consensus among researchers that language is a common challenge for international students (Church, 1982, Yeh & Inose 2003, Mari 2000). Some researchers have attributed most of the challenges international students face, including social and academic related challenges, to language issues (Andrade 2006, p. 136). This is not all that surprising because language competency is really at the heart of social and academic interactions. Low language competency means diminished ability to participate in social and academic interactions. When there are differences between international students' home culture, in regards to social norms and language, students may temporarily lose their sociocultural freedom. Hechanova-Alampay et al. (2002) note:

> Sojourners entering a new environment are typically not confident that they have clear and correct prior knowledge of expected behaviors and are faced with ambiguous situations and therefore individual differences may be expected to be more salient. However, in time, as sojourners gain an understanding of their environment and expected behaviors, personality becomes more salient and situation effects become stronger. The results support this interpretation (p. 470).

Data gathered from international students in Halifax suggest that a lack of cultural capital, in terms of knowledge of language and social rules, may inhibit the expression of students' individuality. A Chilean student said, "Back home, I am a very competitive person. I like to argue. Here because of language difficulties, I cannot be as competitive. I have to be brief. It is so frustrating" (student I). Other students mentioned lacking the ability to tell and understand jokes: "My personality is sometimes different speaking the language of my country than it is here. In my language, I like to do a lot of jokes, but here I don't want to make jokes. I don't know if they are appropriate. I just laugh when I understand another person. That's the other thing-- I don't understand joke. Or when they talk about politics. I mean I try to read the news, but I don't know that much" (Nigerian Student). Because language is one of the ways personality is expressed, the acquisition of cultural capital may reduce the saliency of cultural differences while simultaneously increasing one's ability to express their core personality. For example, the acquisition of the right mix of capital for student 4, which in this case would include language and social rules, might allow the student to show her true personality.

Language related difficulties are sometimes symptoms that result from the trauma of being dislocated from sociocultural spaces. Such symptoms can go from mild to severe if students are unable to accumulate the recognizable capital. Of international students language difficulties, Robertson et al. (2000) argue, "Because they were so sensitive to their language inadequacies, their full participation in classes was then often

extremely difficulty (p. 100). Some researchers have demonstrated that students' competency challenges may limit their ability to follow and understand lectures (Robertson et al. 2000, Sawir 2005). The results of the current study confirmed many of the aforementioned findings. Students reported difficulties with comprehension and pronunciation, and also identified these challenges as major barriers to their academic and sociocultural adjustment. Students reported challenges that include grammatical errors, fear of not being understood during class discussions, fear of sounding unintelligent, wasting class time, struggles with finding the right words to express ideas, difficulties with the pace of class lectures and discussions, and with deciphering different accents. One student said:

> It was really a big problem for me. In my country the teachers didn't speak English in class. We have only one language. Teachers hardly used English. It's not like I don't understand the way they were speaking. Some teachers have different accents. I had problems understanding. I found that the readings were difficult too. The languages were so hard (student 3 from Bangladesh).

Additionally, study participants also reported writing difficulties and a general inability to express their thoughts as major adjustment problems. One student said, "I entered Canada fully confident, but as I grew to understand my weaknesses I lost my self-esteem. It was a humbling experience for me. For example, I never used to show my work to anyone. I was afraid that they would see my grammatical errors. It was really a struggle for me to capture what I think in my language in English" (Filipino student). The loss of confidence that accompanies the dislocation from social spaces is a major challenge for some international students. This dislocation, which can be described as a loss of sociocultural freedom, can be mitigated by the accumulation of capital that is recognizable in the new sociocultural economy. Researchers like Hechanova-Alampay et

al. (2002), and Yeh & Inose (2003), have demonstrated that language problems and the inability to socially interact with others have been the main source of stress for some international students. In other words, a lack of cultural capital, in terms of vocabulary knowledge, knowledge of the rules governing verbal and non-verbal communication can lead to stress. Simply put, students can struggle when they experience an inability to convert the capital they already possess into sociocultural freedom in the sociocultural economy of host nations. The following are specific examples of some of the responses study participants provided about their challenges with writing and speaking English:

Writing

> Writing papers was very hard for me at the beginning because I didn't know the methods of how to write. I didn't know the rules involved in writing. This is an institution that is characterized with writing. So, I wrote my first paper and it was not very good. I was demoralized because I thought I knew how to write (Ugandan student)
>
> Writing large essays was a challenge. I recognized that the point was to help me improve my writing. The idea that I could write 1500 words was foreign. I had to struggle to reach that point. There was a lot of help from the professor who understood the situation. I definitely agree that writing is a difficult task in a new language because you don't do it often. You don't have much exposure to it (Syrian student).
>
> The most difficult thing for me was plagiarism. We never followed it in my country. We used to read books or journals, and we used to memorize things. In writing, we used to copy and paste. So it was never a problem, but here it is a problem. When I was reading books, I found some really good lines that I didn't want to paraphrase because it was so nicely written. I just couldn't change it. But my teachers were really helpful. They said you should go to the Writing Center, where they taught me how to paraphrase (Bangladeshi student: student 3)
>
> My first semester, it was my first time to write entirely in English. I can understand what people say but my speaking and writing is not that good. Reading is fairly easy for me. But when I was told that I had to write five thousand words, I didn't know how to do that. Because writing in English is a challenge (Chinese student).

Pronunciation and comprehension

> There was one class, the professor was saying one idea and another student was saying something different. It was hard to follow all the ideas. I understood the professors but I couldn't understand the informal language. It is very hard for me to understand. Students sometimes use certain words that I have never heard before, or they are too fast (Chilean student).
>
> It was very difficult. If you raise your hand and want to say something. But because of your accent, they couldn't understand what you were saying. I could understand them but they couldn't understand me. So instead of putting up your hand and wasting class time, you rather be quiet. Even in small group, you will not contribute because they won't understand what you were trying to say. So you better be quiet rather than suggesting something and being asked exactly what you mean. It was really very stressful (Ugandan student).
>
> The other challenge is adjusting to other classmates. Initially, I felt it was very difficult. I had difficulties with the teachers, understanding them after my arrival here because of accents and interactions is different. It was different the way people interacted. Different from the way we interacted in my country (Chinese student).

Evidence from this study suggests that students' language competency issues may reduce their ability to understand colleagues and faculty members. This confirms what other researchers have said about international student language challenges. For example, Ramsay et al. (1999) reported that some international students in Australia experienced difficulties with the vocabulary and speed of lectures. One student said, "Even when I want to participate in class, I can understand personal conversations but I find it difficult when it comes to too many people. I try to understand what everyone is saying and I also want to participate. Whenever I think of something to say, someone says something and it all goes away. I always feel like I'm playing catch-up. I am always behind the conversation" (Korean student). The majority of participants in this study reported that language-related difficulties led to high anxiety and stress levels that weakened their confidence in their communication skills, which confirms many of the findings of other

researchers (Church 1982, Sheng & Berry 1991, Ward & Kennedy 1999, Mori 2000, Robertson et al. 2000, and Yeh & Inose 2003) One student said:

> During my first year here, I felt really inferior. Speaking in public was really difficult. When I first got here, people thought that I was really shy. My confidence was really low. I didn't know what to expect, who I was going to meet outside my country and culture. It is so different from back home. It reduced my confidence. Every time I go back home, I feel like yes. I am back. My confidence bounce right back up. I feel like myself again. I can tell jokes and I can understand them (Nigerian student).

Robertson et al. (2000) found that international students in Australia identified low language competency as a barrier to class participation. Other researchers have also linked language-related confidence to student's participation (Senyshyn et al. 2000). Data from this study suggest that language competencies play a major role in international student adjustment. It seems to not only affect students' participation in class but also outside of it. One student said, "English is not just a language, it also includes the culture. If you cannot overcome the language barrier, there is no way for you to interact and communicate with Canadian people. The more you can speak English the more opportunities you can have with Canadian people. The more you get involve in the society" (Korean student).

Summary and Discussion of Language-Related Findings

While the findings confirmed a strong link between students' low-language competency and some of their challenges, there was enough evidence to suggest that student's own personalities may also impact their adjustment. One student said, "It is hard enough to speak in front of people in my country, doing it here is even harder because of my language difficulties" (Columbian student). Another student said, "I am not even that social in my own country. I would never just randomly go up to someone if I was back

home to talk to them" (Bangladeshi student). Hechanova-Alampay et al. (2002) note, "there are a number of factors that may influence a sojourner's ability to adapt to a new environment. One trait that has been found to have a positive correlation with adjustment is self-efficacy… Self-efficacy is the level of confidence that individuals have in their ability to accomplish task" (p. 461). In sum, it is clear that when international students are dislocated from sociocultural economies that recognize their capital to ones that do not, they sometimes experience a loss of sociocultural freedom, in other words, a loss of the ability to understand, communicate and control their new environment. The identification of language difficulties as central to both the social and academic challenges of international students seems to justify using a concept like sociocultural economy to capture the various experiences of international students.

4.7 Cultural Differences, Norms, Values and their Roles in Students' Adaptation

The previous sections have attempted to show that many of the sociocultural challenges international students face result from a mismatch between students' capital and the host nation sociocultural economy. Much like Wittgenstein's concept of language games, the social spaces of different cultures are usually governed by different rules. For instance, when international students move to different cultures, they sometimes find themselves playing different language games. Because international students sometimes are lacking the mix of capital required to play the language games of host nations, they sometimes experience a temporary loss of sociocultural freedom.

Beyond general cultural differences, some of the students in the current study felt that their inability to partake in the culture of drinking was a major social barrier for

them. This suggests that the sociocultural economy is underpinned by specific values and beliefs. Moreover, it also suggests that international students do not simply exchange one body of capital for another but rather hold on to the old accumulated capital while adding new capital. In fact, self-restrained sociocultural freedom on account of personal values, in regards to drinking, imply that some international students do not just let the new accumulated cultural and social capital dictate their actions but rather seem to still rely on old sociocultural capital for guiding their behavior. This point is illustrated in the following quote:

> Students are not going to leave their identities behind. Students will integrate, but they are not going to completely change. I'll give you a small example. Sometimes, in my department, my colleagues have presentations. They usually have very good presentations and such but part of this thing is that they have beer and wine and things like that. I told them that I am interested in participating but as a Muslim I am not allowed to drink: I am not allowed to even be present in a place where other people are drinking. Yes, it is your culture but this is my religion. I am a person who does not like to break my rules. I respect your culture and understand that this is the way you are used to living. But this is also my culture and this is the way I am used to living. So, if can separate these things so that I can be there to present and to help my colleagues that would be great (Egyptian student).

In addition to challenges with the culture of drinking, some students also mentioned the culture of savings as a major cultural difference. One student said:

> Back home, if you are living in a home and cannot afford to pay the rent for this month, another person will chip in and cover you for the month. But here if you don't have the money to pay for this month, it is as good as living in the streets. Here, it is very hard. Even if you are living with a group, you are supposed to fulfill your responsibility as a person. Here if you don't' learn the culture of saving you are finished (Ugandan student).

In addition to what some study participants called culture of drinking and culture of saving, some participants also mentioned other components of the host nation sociocultural economy, such as the appointment culture and rules governing cultural

obligation as other differences between their home country sociocultural economy and the host nation's that impacted their sociocultural freedom. One student said, "In my country, if I want to see the doctor, I just call and it's done. Here you have to wait for two or three weeks" (Pakistani student). Another student expressed their frustration "Sometimes it is challenging when you want to have something done. There are certain things that you sometimes want answer to right away, but here they have the procedures that have to be followed. You have to book an appointment before you can meet with someone. You have to carry the burden until you meet someone" (Ugandan student). In regards to cultural obligations, one student said, "My Canadian friends just don't understand why I have to take care of my family. For me, my education is a family project. It is a family achievement. It allows me to generate some sense of respect for my family in our community back home. It is a source of social mobility. It allows me to raise the symbolic status of my family. By studying in Canada, I get the ability to express my love to my family by taking care of them, by giving them what they need. It's really the translation of my education into economics." (Filipino Student). Altbach (1991) notes, "it must be kept in mind that, especially for students from the third world, families as well as the individual are part of the decision making" (p. 310).

Another concept used by some participants to describe differences between their home sociocultural economy and the and host nation's is the concept of 'guest culture'. One student notes, "In my country, it is the responsibility of the host to take care of the guest. Here it is different. Everyone is just running around doing their own thing" (Ugandan student). Lastly, a number of participants mentioned that they experienced some off-campus discrimination. Some researchers have reported discrimination as a

challenge for some international students (Church 1982, Robertson et al. 2000, Samuel & Burney 2003, Author et al. 2011). In response to a question about discrimination, one student said, "I was walking down the street and someone pointed and started laughing at me" (Chinese student). Another said, "I was coming home one day from the bars when someone called me a racial slur" (Syrian student). These examples seem to confirm Robertson et al. (2000) finding that "most racist incidents were reported in the wider community, usually in the street, when shopping or on public transport" (p. 96). While students felt that it was important for universities to know about such off-campus instances, they did not feel that these negative experiences were representative of a culture of discrimination in the city. It is also noteworthy that although students reported incidences of racism they did not feel marginalized or excluded by professors. Generally, participants identified such experiences as isolated incidences. With plans in place to increase the international student population in Canada, universities may have to work with local politicians, local business leaders, and local community leaders to make sure such incidents do not become barriers to students' sociocultural freedom.

To sum up, students in this study identified various components of the host nation's sociocultural economy, such as rules governing treatment of guest, alcohol consumption, appointments, one's obligation to family and friends, as some sociocultural economy differences that limited their sociocultural freedom.

4.8 Adjustment Challenges: Academic Culture

Students in this study reported unfamiliar teaching styles, different faculty expectations and different assessment rubrics as major academic challenges. Evidence from participants suggests that differences between students home education system and host nation education systems are partially responsible for the academically related struggles of some international students (Ladd & Ruby, 1999, Carroll 2005, Brown 2008). One student said:

> The biggest difference for me was professor expectations. The professor expectations are completely different here. The big difference is that in education system of my home country only the professor speaks in the classroom. Here students raise their hands and can even disagree with the professor. In my country, if you have a question, it really has to be important for you to ask it in class. Plus, it has to be helpful to everyone in the class, not just to you" (Korean student).

In addition to faculty expectations, students also reported difficulties with group work, and challenges with adding and dropping courses. Of group work, one student said:

> It was way different from the group work in my country because we have a hierarchy in my country. We are so focused on our age. We have different language, different words for your friends, and parents. It is all by age. In my country, when we go to university we always have to figure out how old she is or he is. Even in the classroom. It affects everything we do, even in group work and presentation. In my country, when I was a first year student, I had to listen to other students because they were older than me. Here it is different. I have to talk, to express my opinion (Korean student).

Students also reported difficulties with participating in class discussions.

> I am always self-conscious. Everyone seems to know a lot more than me, more vocabulary (Columbian student).

> When I speak in class and hear my own accent, I often wondered what the Canadian students were thinking. I felt that people would view me less because of it (Nigerian student).

Even with their challenges, international students are finding other ways of contributing in small groups. “I’m not that good at English, so when we have a project, I cannot contribute as much writing English or speaking in public. So that is why I research a lot for them. I bring in resources that they cannot interpret in my language. I need to be part of the group so I participate in different ways” explained one student (Korean student).

One student summarized her experience the following way:

> It is a bit difficult in the beginning. The format was different from the way courses were structured in my home country, in terms of group assignments. That was a bit of a challenge in the beginning because at that time, I felt as if my view was not that important in a way. Because some people dominated the conversation. Also, if the assignment was in three parts, I always was given the easiest one because I am an international student. This kind of classification, it’s not direct. It is not a direct thing. It is a hidden. In the way things play out you get the feeling that they don’t think I am able to contribute as much as they were” (Bangladeshi student).

Lastly, study participants reported a general tendency by faculty members to ‘pathologize’ them: they felt that faculty members overemphasized their challenges and struggles and misrecognized or completely ignored their strengths. The is extremely problematic given that the majority of participants considered interactions with faculty, staff, domestic students, community members as important opportunities to gain access to the mix of capital they need to overcome cross-cultural and transition related challenges.

4.9 Summary and Discussion of Academic Culture Challenges

While language is a major challenge for students, some of them also reported challenges with learning new academic rules. Students attributed some of their academic struggles to a lack of awareness of faculty expectations. In this respect, universities and departments may have to become more transparent about university, department and

faculty expectations. Moreover, universities may have to provide the sociocultural capital students need by disseminating resources in a manner that takes into consideration different learning preferences. For example, universities could disseminate information in written and visual formats. Also, because some students are using language schools and other post-secondary schools to prepare for Canadian classrooms, such institutions may serve as reliable channels for disseminating information about university, department and faculty expectations.

Lastly, in discussing their academic challenges, the majority of students in this study reported that faculty members were very helpful.

> I find faculty members very helpful and accessible (Indian student)

> We read an article once that I had read in my undergraduate. So, I copied the paper I had written and pasted it. The teacher said you have to mention references. They were kind. They didn't check it and said you have to add references. You should consult the writing center or rewrite the paper. I really appreciated the teacher's effort. They were really friendly to me (Malaysian student).

Evidence from the study suggests that department and class size seem to be a factor in students ability to access help from faculty members. Also, students who were proactive in seeking help from faculty members usually got help. Given some of the negative experiences of international students with group work, faculty members may have to be more explicit earlier on in the semester about their expectations for class participation. Also, given that most of the participants felt a general tendency to overemphasize their weaknesses, faculty members may have to find ways of incorporating the varied strengths of international students in the classroom.

In a nutshell, international student's academic difficulties seem to also flow from a mismatch between students' capital and the host nation sociocultural economy.

Depending on the differences in culture, the problem usually stems from the fact that international students already possess knowledge, such as an understanding of education rules, cultural capital that is not recognizable in the host nation sociocultural economy. In such cases, helping students accumulate recognizable capital is paramount.

4.10 Support

As we have seen in this paper, providing the mix of capital students need for navigating the social and cultural structures of the host nation is paramount. With this in mind, it is equally as important to note that international students vary in their support seeking habits. For example, some international students are proactive while others are more reactive. With that said, the majority of participants in this study reported using formal university support resources to address legal needs and informal support networks, including friends, friends of friends, siblings, community organization, and religious organizations for all their other needs. Formal support networks in this context are university channels that provide support resources to students, which can include the writing center, international student center, and faculty members. Although formal support networks are quite useful one student warned:

> The resources are behind the same barriers that a lot of international students have to get over—the language and the social barriers. It's like I am struggling with fitting in due to language and social barriers, and then you design resources to help me but put them in the environments where I have to get over the language and social barriers to get to them (Syrian student).

Informal support networks include but are not limited to students' personal friendship networks, student run organizations, off-campus religious organizations, off-campus social organizations, siblings, cultural groups, roommates, homestay parents, and

student created and directed online support networks. For example, some participants from one of the universities in the city reported that an on-line student support Facebook group helped them gain access to resources that were useful for overcoming transition related challenges. Current international students organize the group, and membership is open to current and incoming international students. For example, in addition to providing information on housing, registering for courses, students can also advertise and post requests on the page.

Of the formal support network, students reported that advisors, departmental secretaries, faculty members and international student staff were very helpful with academic and legal matters. Although there were students who reported that university support resources were inadequate, the majority of students felt that universities were doing a good job with supporting them. A possible reason for this could be that an overwhelmingly majority of the participants reported a strong preference for informal support networks for issues that were unrelated to immigration, such as acquiring a visa, renewing study permits, and acquiring work permits. For example, one student said:

> I think that international students when they come here, they contact people from their own community. So that's why I believe that not too many of them go to the international student office to ask for help or to see what is happening. If they want to know legal stuff, like how to file taxes, then they go to the international student office, but otherwise, if they are having problems, first they consult with the people from their community. If their friends tell them that they have to go and consult with the international student office, then they go there (Syrian student).

International students seem to turn to informal support networks to accumulate the capital they need to regain their sociocultural freedom. Consequently, the best model for supporting international students may be a combination of formal and informal support resources. Some researchers have found that co-nationals were the main source of help

for international students (Pedersen 1975, Hechanova-Alampay et. al 2002). Since the majority of international students seem to turn to informal support networks for help, universities could enlist the help of returning international students, and different student and community organizations as allies in their efforts to support international students. Making sure representatives from students' informal networks have the correct information to pass on to students could be useful to international students.

Furthermore, because international students struggle with both on-and-off campus challenges, the most effective way to support them might be through forming partnerships with various sector leaders in the city. For instance, partnerships with local business, local politicians, and local community leaders could provide access to resources that universities can leverage to provide the resources students need to address their various adjustment related challenges. For example, the Greater Halifax Partnership's International Student Connector Program, which is co-funded by three levels of government and local business and has the expressed goal of connecting international students to local employment opportunities, can be a model on how to leverage cross-sector resources for supporting students.

4.11 Discussion

Although the dominant narratives on international student are accurate in terms of highlighting the major social and education obstacles international students are facing in host nations, such narratives tend to disproportionately focus on the challenges of international students with only minimal attention given to the strengths of international students (Zhang & Mi 2009). In this paper, I have used Bourdieu's notion of capital and

Wittgenstein' s concept of language games to re-conceptualize the issue of international student challenges as a capital issue. Thinking of international student cross-cultural and transition related challenges as a capital problem makes it possible to highlight the importance of social spaces as important sources of capital. In doing so, it becomes possible to conceptualize social relationships and interactions as opportunities for international students to build social capital and to acquire the mix of capital needed for navigating the host nation. In that respect, helping international students regain sociocultural freedom in the host nation's sociocultural economy has to include the facilitation of interactions that make it possible for students to acquire the required mix of capital.

The paradigm shift presented here is an attempt to ultimately get away from the tendency to 'pathologize' international students. While it is true that international students face a lot of different challenges, it is also true that they bring a lot of strengths with them to host universities. Because the positive characteristics of international students are usually not highlighted or identified, university personnel that work with international students miss out on opportunities to nurture and use international students' strengths as a way to empower students to overcome their challenges. For example, the positive psychology literature has demonstrated that human strengths can act as a buffer zone against things like stress, and depression (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi 2000). In a nutshell, implementing a capital-based sociocultural economy framework for analyzing the experiences of international students makes it possible to move from viewing international students as passive actors who are dependent on universities and others for

help to viewing them as active players who can take control and solve their own challenges.

4.12 Conclusion

The students in this study reported language, different academic and social expectations, cultural differences, discrimination, and disproportionate emphasis of their weaknesses above their strengths as challenges. Based on the findings of this study, country of origin did not appear to be a reliable predictor of international student challenges. Instead, study participants' who had prior exposure to English and western style education reported less challenges. While data from this study suggested that gender was not a major factor in participant's adaptation, future researchers might want to thoroughly investigate the role of gender in the adaptation of international students, especially when it overlaps with such traditional and cultural variables like religion.

Lastly, given Nova Scotia's need for skilled human capital, and given that international students have been identified in the long-term labor market plans of the government of Nova Scotia, it is imperative that international students are given the support they need to overcome their cross-cultural and transition related challenges. This is especially important as support networks, whether formal or informal, can be reliable channels that students can use to acquire the capital they need to regain their sociocultural freedom.

Chapter 5

Internationalization & The Expanding Role of Universities in Local Growth Politics

5.1 Abstract

In light of demographic and economic concerns, government and business leaders in Canada are increasingly looking to leverage the recruitment and development infrastructures of universities to gain access to additional talent and innovation. A major part of this strategy has been the implementation of an aggressive internationalization campaign that identifies the recruitment and retention of international students as a key development priority. One consequence of this internationalization movement in Canada has been the expansion of the role of universities in the growth of cities. This paper reports the findings of a study that investigated the impact of internationalization in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

5.2 Introduction

The world economy is changing at a rapid rate. Technological advances in the communication and transportation sectors have bridged most of the gaps that once separated people. Today, the world's population is integrated into a global system that provides multitudes of opportunities for cross-cultural and economic interactions. Quoting Knight (2004), Guruz (2008) notes, "Globalization, in general, is the flow of technology, knowledge, people, values, ideas, capital, goods, and services across national borders, and affects each country in different ways due to the nation's individual history, tradition, culture, and priorities" (p.1). In addition to integrating the world, the 'technologilization' of the world also seems to have increased the level of competition among cities, regions and nations (Clarke & Gaile 1998). Because of this growing competition, nations around the globe are now spending significant portions of their resources on developing and strengthening their competitiveness. Drucker (1986) argues,

"From now on any country—but also any business, especially a large one—that wants to prosper will have to accept that it is the world economy that leads and that domestic economic policies will succeed only if they strengthen, or at least do not impair, the country's international competitive position. This may be the most important—it surely is the most striking—feature of the changed world economy" (p. 790).

Historically, western governments have invested in education and research initiatives as a way to compete in the global economy. Urban scholar Richard Florida (2002) identifies such strategies as the main impetus behind the exponential growth of the "creative or knowledge-based economy" (p. xiii-xiv). For example, he argues that the creative class, which he defines as scientists, engineers, artists, musicians, designers, and other knowledge-based professionals, has a bigger economic impact than both the manufacturing and service sectors (p. xiii-xv). As an example, Florida (2002) notes:

> In 1900, fewer than 10 percent of American workers were doing creative work—most worked on farms or in factories. When my father came home from World War II to take up work in a factory in Newark, New Jersey, fewer than 15 percent of Americans worked in the creative sector. By 1980, the figure was still less than 20 percent. But by the turn of the new century, the Creative Class included nearly a third of the workforce. This is true not just in the United States. The ranks of the Creative Class have reached 25 to 30 percent of the workforces across the advanced European countries…. (p. xiv).

In addition to identifying the rise of the creative class, Florida's work directly links highly skilled human capital to economic development (Florida, 2000, 2002, Florida et al. 2007). Other scholars, including Simon & Nardinelli (1996), Clarke & Gaile (1998), Glaeser & Mare (2001), and Glaeser & Saiz (2003) have also linked human capital to economic development. Highlighting the importance of developing human capital, the President & CEO of Canadian Chamber of Commerce said:

> In tomorrow's world, the greatest competition will be for brains. The best educated and the most innovative people are highly mobile and they will go where the best opportunities are. We need to create those opportunities all over Canada. Canada must invest more in higher education. Spending on post-secondary education is one of the most effective ways for government to spend tax dollars and to make an impact on the productivity and competitiveness of the Canadian economy. Canadian businesses, universities and colleges can and should work together to achieve this objective (Beatty, 2011AUCC article, accessed online).

Different researchers have similarly identified education as a key variable in the growth of cities (Welch 1970, Bils & Klenow 2000). At Canadian universities, the most recent example of the government's commitment to accessing highly skilled human capital has been their commitment to internationalization. Internationalization is defined in this paper as institutional, sector level, regional and national initiatives that have opened up international markets, increased the possibility of cross-boarder education and international research collaborations, and increased the number of partnerships between higher education institutions and international governments (Knight, 2001, 2004, 2007 & Knight & Altbach 2007).

A by-product of Canada's internationalization initiatives has been the expansion of higher education's role in Canadian growth politics. This role has expanded mostly because the sector possesses research, recruitment and development infrastructures that local, regional and national leaders can leverage to address demographic and economic challenges. The clearest example of this has been the recruitment of international students in Canada. The international student population in Canada has risen from 36,822 in 1992 to over 193,000 in 2012 with the introduction of several international student-friendly policies (IIE 2012, McMullen & Elias 2011). For example, Canada now offers several pathways to citizenship for international graduates that include the international graduate

provincial nominee stream, and the international graduate PhD stream of the federal skilled labor program. Additionally, the federal government has also introduced a multi-year post-graduate work permit that temporally offers status to international graduates during the job search process in Canada. Combined, these policies are meant to encourage more international students to stay in Canada after graduation. On account of their contributions to the government's internationalization efforts, Canadian universities are no longer simply peripheral or "auxiliary players" in local growth politics, like the role assigned to them by Logan & Molotch (1987), but are instead central actors in a powerful internationalization movement that is reshaping the structure of urban governance. For example, many Canadian universities have set up industry liaison offices as well as specific positions to facilitate government and community engagement. For example, in July 2012 both the University of Calgary and Trent University advertised openings for Associate Vice-President-Government & Community Engagement and Director of Government and Community Relations respectively. Such positions signal a growing desire by Canadian universities to become more civically engaged.

In this paper, I attribute the growing influence of universities on Canadian growth politics to the 'growth by internationalization movement' in Canada. I identify demographic challenges, the "crisis of competition" that characterizes today's global market place, and the identification of human capital as a critical resource for economic growth, as the forces behind the growth by internationalization movement (Clarke & Gaile 1998). Finally, I use the discussion of the findings of a recently completed qualitative study investigating local internationalization initiatives to highlight the expanding role of universities on local growth politics, as well as to illustrate the

development of special internationalization cross-sector partnerships. The paper begins by discussing the study's research design. Section 5.4 provides an overview of the theoretical framework, while section 5.5 discusses Canada's demographic challenges initiatives to grow its population through internationalization. Section 5.6 discusses the demographic challenges of Nova Scotia and the province's internationalization initiatives. Section 5.6 also introduces Halifax as the research site for the present study and discusses the city's internationalization strategies. Section 5.7 discusses cross-sector partnerships between universities, businesses and government and their role in the internationalization of the city of Halifax. Section 5.8 discusses cross-sector partnerships challenges and 5.9 presents the conclusion.

5.3 Research Design

This paper draws upon multiple qualitative methods data sources including sixteen open-ended, in-depth interviews with leaders from the business, education, and political sectors, and various official policy documents. Strauss & Corbin (1990) define qualitative research "as any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification. It can refer to research about people's lives, stories, behavior, but also about organizational functioning, social movements, or interactional relationships" (p .17). Some of the data presented in this paper come from a thorough textual analysis of internationalization related discourses from local business, education and political leaders. Bauer & Gaskell (2007) assert:

> Most social research is based on interviewing: researchers ask people about their age, what they do for a living, how they live, what they think and feel about X, Y and Z; or they ask them to tell their story of events. Interviewing, structured or unstructured, is a convenient and established method of social research. But as

> well as expressing their views in talk, people also write—to create records, to plan, play or entertain, to establish norms and rules, and to argue over controversial issues. So texts, as well as talk, are about people's thoughts, feelings, memories, plans and arguments, and are sometimes among telling than their authors realize (p. 132).

A qualitative method was the appropriate choice for the study because it allows researchers to categorize the effects of emerging social phenomenon. In this case, given that not a lot is known about the local impact of internationalization on cities, qualitative research methods seemed like a suitable choice.

5.4 Theoretical Framework

There are several dominant theoretical strains in the urban scholarship. Two of the most influential frameworks have been the growth machine concept, put forward by Molotch (1976), and Logan and Molotch (1987), and Clarence Stone's (1989) regime theory. Logan & Molotch (1987) define growth machines as collection of elites who work together to influence and control the growth agendas of cities. These elites are unified by a commonly shared belief that growth is positive and should be at the top of local agendas.

On the other hand, Stone (1989) defines urban regimes as the result of the calculated attempts by urban leaders to secure the resources that are needed for urban governance. According to Stone (ibid) such actions are necessary because resources are spread out across sector lines. Consequently, Stone (1989) posits that in an attempt to gain access to resources, local politicians must form coalitions with the private sector, which controls a disproportionate amount of the resources.

Comparing the two theories, Good (2008) notes:

> Like urban regime theorists, growth machine theorists argue that the question of who controls the local agenda is not the only one that must be asked in order to understand community power. However, unlike urban regime theorists, who focus on the fundamental question of capacity to govern, Logan and Molotch are concerned with the purpose of governing. For them, the central question is this: what takes priority on the local agenda? The answer is growth (p. 20).

Some scholars have criticized growth machine and urban regime theories because of a fundamental omission of the day-to-day activities of individuals within urban spaces. For example, Gilbert (1999) in the book *The Urban Growth Machine* offers a feminist critique of the growth machine concept. She argues:

> Since central cities are increasingly defined by large numbers of low-income, female-headed households, whether employed or unemployed, any analysis that attempts to understand contemporary urban dynamics should be evaluated in terms of its ability to shed light on poor women's daily lives in the city, and the ways in which poor women contribute to the production of urban spaces and urban politics" (Chapter 6, p. 95).

In addition to poverty and gender issues, questions about production, consumption, and the spillover effects of knowledge are somewhat beyond their purviews. To fill this gap, some researchers have investigated the impact of specialized occupations (Baumgartner 1988), information spillovers (Lucas, 1988, Saxenian 1994, Glaeser et al. 1992, Carlino et al. 2001), local competition (Porter 1990), crime (Glaeser and Sacerdote 1999), size of industry, production & consumption (Glaeser & Marc, 2001, Simon & Nardinelli 1996) and learning in cities (Gleaser 1999). Gleaser & Saiz (2003) conclude that growth happens in cities with a high concentration of human capital and a high degree of cross-fertilization of ideas. Even though these theories fill some of the gap in urban scholarship, the role of universities in the growth of cities is still somewhat unexplored. With the

emergence of the internationalization movement, which seems to be moving universities toward greater and more important roles in the growth of cities, there is a need for a theory that explains this development. In many ways, Goddard & Vallance's (2011) concept of The Civic University is an attempt to fill this gap.

Goddard & Vallance (2011) suggest that there is a disconnect between universities and their external communities, and that this disconnect can be bridged by promoting the "Civic University" model. (p. 1). Goddard & Vallance (2011) define the civic university as a university that:

> Provides opportunities for the society of which it forms part; engages as a whole with its surroundings, not piecemeal; partners with other local universities and colleges and is managed in a way that it participates fully in the region in which it forms part. While it operates on a global scale, it uses its location to help form its identity and provides opportunities for it to grow and help others, including individual learners, businesses and public institutions, to do so too. However building the bridge between the university and the city possesses leadership challenges within the university and within the city (p. 1).

The central question for Goddard & Vallance (2011) is whether universities are in or part of their communities. In the spirit of Goddard & Vallance's (2011) civic university concept, I suggest here that internationalization is creating new pathways for universities to become civic universities. In Canada, university leaders, business leaders, and local politicians have all identified internationalization as a suitable mechanism for addressing the country's demographic and economic challenges. I argue that this development has created new opportunities for universities to impact their local and national communities. Even though business, education, and government leaders all have their own unique objectives, the desire to solve demographic and economic challenges through internationalization is moving them toward greater partnerships. Because the primary force behind these partnerships has been internationalization, one could label

them as internationalization growth machines. It should be noted that a major difference between internationalization growth machines, as they are discussed here, and Molotch & Logan's (1987) concept of growth machine is that instead of natural capital or land as the base resource that motivates elite behavior, internationalization growth machine leaders are motivated by the desire to attract human capital. The concept also differs from Keil's (2002, 2003) notion of global cities in that it documents the rise of universities in the governance of cities.

The competition for human capital and talent has intensified because most nations now consider human capital as a critical resource for economic development (Simon Nardinelli 1996, Clarke & Gaile 1998, Glaeser & Saiz 2003, Bils & Klenow 2000, Florida 2000, 2002). This means that local actors have to leverage all available resources to remain competitive in the global market place. In Canada, one way city leaders are satisfying their needs for skilled-human capital in an increasingly competitive global world is to work together. Because of local demographic challenges, the search for skilled-human capital has progressively become more international (Migration Policy Institute 2008). I identify demographic challenges and the identification of skilled-human capital as a critical resource for economic development as the primary forces behind the emergence of internationalization growth machines. The remainder of the paper will analyze the findings of the study using the civic university concept and the internationalization growth machine concept to determine the local impact of internationalization initiatives. First, the next two sections will provide a national and regional context for the discussion of the research findings.

5.5 Canada

Canada's demographic challenges have been well documented. It is now common knowledge that Canada will likely struggle to replace its labor market if it is unable to attract new talent. According to a 2011 Statistics Canada report, "all scenarios suggest a slowdown in the rate of growth in the labor force, primarily because of retirement of baby boomers. The overall participation rate, that is the percentage of the total aged 15 and over that is in the labor force, is also projected to decline" (Statistics Canada, 2011). To address demographic challenges, the Canadian government has adopted an aggressive growth by internationalization campaign that prioritizes the recruitment and retention of international students. For example, the government of Canada appointed a panel in 2012 to develop an international education strategy for Canada (Advisory Panel on Canada's International Education Strategy 2012). In the report, the panel identified international education as a driver of Canada's future prosperity. On the issue of prioritizing the recruitment of foreign students, the report states:

> …we invited partners and stakeholders to identify markets in which the Government of Canada should focus its efforts. One of the main criteria for our evaluation was to look for the markets that offered the greatest growth potential for post-secondary education for Canada, based on market reports shared by DFAIT[4]. Suggestions were shared through the online consultation, the cross-Canada round tables, a collaboration event, and a benchmark visit to Asia. Provinces/territories were also consulted separately through DFAIT to ensure Alignment in efforts. As well, CIC[5] was consulted to ensure that the visa offices in the identified countries would have the capacity to accommodate an increase in study permit applications" (Chapter 7 p. 45).

[4] Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.
[5] Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

While internationalization is a national policy, the factors that determine its pace, whether we are talking about the business or university sectors, are usually located in specific regions. For example, the internationalization decisions of sector leaders in Nova Scotia are shaped by a commonly held desire to overcome region-specific challenges.

5.6 Nova Scotia

While provinces like British Columbia and Ontario have been quite successful in attracting immigrants, Nova Scotia has struggled in its attraction and retention of skilled immigrants. The most recent census documented an unimpressive 0.9% population growth rate for the province (Statistics Canada 2012). According to McNiven & Foster (2009) the province is facing serious challenges because of low fertility rates, high out-migration rates, and a growing senior population. If nothing changes, McNiven & Foster (2009) argue "labor force participation rates in Nova Scotia will decline from 63.2 percent in 2004 to 55.7 percent in 2026" (p. 8). To make matters worse, Nova Scotia has struggled to attract new immigrants. According to the latest estimates, the province only attracts about 2,500 new immigrants per year (Nova Scotia Immigration Trends accessed 2012). According to the Immigration Strategy of the region's "Jobs Here" campaign,

> Nova Scotia businesses and communities need international workers. By 2019, the working age population of 18 to 64 is forecast to shrink in Nova Scotia by 36,000 and by more than 113,000 by 2036. Even today, business leaders say they simply cannot find people with the skills they need to take full advantage of exciting opportunities in changing markets. Attracting more professionally trained and internationally connected workers is crucial if we are to innovate, compete, and grow" (Nova Scotia Job Here Campaign, 2012).

In light of these demographic challenges, the province has identified internationalization as a key strategy for addressing the region's demographic and economic challenges. For

example, in the provinces' 2010 JobHere report, the province identifies the attraction and retention of immigrants as a key workforce strategy (p. 5). More specifically, the province's Workforce Strategy notes:

> One way to increase our skilled workforce is to welcome new immigrants to the province. The government will continue to aggressively implement the province's immigration strategy, aimed at attracting 7,200 newcomers to Nova Scotia annually by 2020. While the provincial Nominee Program is the most direct way for us to increase immigration, newcomers can also arrive in Nova Scotia through federal pathways. By being creative and strategic, the province is also promoting federal pathways to potential immigrants. A total of $4.9 million has been allocated for new settlement funding. New English and French-language immigration websites have been lunched. The government will soon launch NS Start, a pre-and post arrival provincial resource administered in partnership with Immigrant Settlement and Integration Services (p. 15)

This strategy appears to be working. Akbari (2008) notes "immigrant inflows in Atlantic Canada have helped slow population decline, and this contribution has increased in recent years" (p. 3). While the province as a whole is struggling to grow, Halifax, the province's largest city and site of this research, has experienced a 4.7 percent growth. However, while this number is impressive, it is still below the national average of 5.9 percent (Statistics Canada 2012).

According to the 2011 census profile, Statistic Canada reported that the population of Halifax has increased by 4.7% since 2006. Although some of the city's growth has come from the movement of people from rural areas, another source has been through immigration. Moreover, the number of international students in the city has increased. While international students are not considered immigrants, they are being viewed as potential immigrants by the Canadian government. Today, international students account for over 10.6% of the student body of most the city's universities, and contribute over $231 million to the local economy (Siddiq et al. 2009). According to a

recent Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission report, "the number of international undergraduate students increased 138% over the last ten years and the number of international graduate students increased 101% over the same period (Trends in Maritime Higher Education, 2012 p.1).

Not surprisingly, the city of Halifax has embraced an internationalization strategy that encourages the recruitment and retention of immigrants and international students. For example, GHP, which is partly funded by the municipality, funds an international student connector program. Moreover, the economic strategy of Greater Halifax Partnership, an organization that is funded by three levels of government and business has identified post-secondary institutions in Halifax as economic development allies. For example, the Economic strategy of Greater Halifax Partnership notes:

> One of the most important tools we have to implement the Economic Strategy doesn't cost anything. It's called partnership. No single organization has the talent, resources and mandate to implement a strategy on its own. For this strategy to be successful, government, business, not-for-profit organizations, post-secondary institutions and organized labor must build on a foundation of shared ownership, pooling resources, common vision, shared goals, and trust (A Greater Halifax Economic Strategy 2011-2016, p.12).

Findings from this study suggest that cities like Halifax are using internationalization as a way to address labor market needs. The decision to embrace internationalization as a demographic and economic tool seems to be a major force behind the emergence of local internationalization growth machines. A key characteristic of internationalization growth machines is that their elites regard cross-sector partnerships as an effective strategy for accessing human capital.

For example, the director of Association of Atlantic Universities said:

> The expectations of governments and the private sector around universities continue to grow, right. The economic value of universities in communities across the region is well understood now among senior government officials and in the private sector. Having said that there are greater expectations every year. Every one wants to see greater commercialization of university research; every one wants to see university graduates who have the skills necessary to meet the demands of the labor market. So, between governments and the private sector, we have to ensure that we are all on the same page. From an education point of view, we have to relate with private sector, which are the employers and governments, who are our funders. It is sort of a three-legged stool. You need all the legs for the stool to remain upright. We think universities are integral to the region's future (Quotation from interview with the Director of the Association of Atlantic Universities).

The growing competition for human capital between most nation states and the need for innovation seem to be fueling the rise of universities in urban governance. As the director of the Association of Atlantic Universities mentioned, local politicians and business leaders are increasingly looking to universities for new innovation and to satisfy domestic labor market needs. As a result of the increasing role of universities in local growth politics, university leaders have effectively left their peripheral/auxiliary roles behind to become more civically engaged. For example universities in Halifax have formed partnerships with the business and government sectors to help address the city's economic and demographic needs. In this vein, the answer to Goddard & Vallance's (2011) question about whether universities are a part of their external communities seems to be, yes. Moreover, it seems as if internationalization is providing a platform for universities to be more civically engaged. For example, internationalization is allowing universities to use their recruitment and research capabilities to help solve pressing demographic and labor market needs. The fact that an increasing number of universities

are hiring personnel to grow government and community relationships suggests that universities are trying to become more civically engaged. For example, Dalhousie University recently, in September of 2012, advertised in University Affairs magazine for the position of Assistant Vice-president of Government Relations. The candidate is expected to "provide strategic advice on policy and advocacy initiatives requiring government engagement at the municipal, provincial and federal level, and also…project management in support of Dalhousie's governmental initiatives concerns" (Assistant Vice-President, Government Relations Job Ad in University Affairs 2012). Given that Dalhousie has identified internationalization as one of its key initiatives, it is quite reasonable to infer that the person who fills this position will probably be working with local, provincial and national governments to further the university's internationalization initiatives amongst other things.

5.7 Cross-sector Partnerships: Business, Education, and Government

The growth of the knowledge-based economy and the identification of human capital as a critical resource for economic development seem to be shifting the urban governance structure. Once regarded as peripheral or auxiliary actors, universities are now seen as central actors in the recruitment and development of new talent. A number of researchers, including Clarke & Gaile (1998), Florida (2002), Welch (1970) have highlighted some strong connections between skilled human capital and economic development. For instance, Clarke & Gaile (1998) note:

> Human capital, the analytic and information skills critical to the capacity to innovate and diffuse useful ideas, becomes a key element of profitability and wealth creation. In the new global competition, America's new national champion is no longer found among its corporations; it is the nation's stock of human capital. The policy issue becomes when and by whom value is added;

> the implications are that value is added most significantly where human capital is effectively used to identify, solve, and broker problems (p. 25).

Cities are no longer just consumption and production sites, they are also increasingly becoming ground zero for the development of human capital. Today universities are able to leverage their reputation in the global space to recruit students from all over the world. According to the latest statistics from the institute of international education, there are over 4 million international students studying abroad (IIE 2012). While some students return home, a good number have aspirations of settling in the host nation. As a result, internationalization, as it relates to the recruitment and retention of international students, has become a potential source for highly skilled human capital.

The influx of international students into communities across Canada has had some notable economic impact. For example, an International Service and Trades Canada report disclosed that the economic impact of international students in Canada is over $8 billion (International Service Trades Canada 2012). In Nova Scotia, Siddiq. et al. (2009) estimated that international students contribute over $231 million per year to the local economy. Perhaps the most impressive statistics from the aforementioned study is that it also reported that close to 40% of international students in the region wanted to stay in Canada after graduation. This is wonderful news given that Canada's future competitiveness is tied to its ability to recruit and develop new talent, especially considering current low fertility rates.

Although universities in the region have had some success in their recruitment of international students, city leaders, including university leaders, business leaders, and local politicians, mobilized by a shared need for human capital, are realizing that they

need stronger cross-sector partnerships to integrate students. For example, the Director of the Association of Atlantic Universities said: "Our relationship with the private sector employers and with governments is pretty important for the region. I think we have a lot of work to do in terms of building a stronger bridge between governments, universities and private sector" (Interview with the Director of the Association of Atlantic Universities, 2012).

While the business, government and university sectors in Halifax do pursue their own individual internationalization initiatives, a common belief in the necessity and belief in internationalization as a growth strategy is moving them toward greater and more frequent partnerships. For example, the President & CEO of Halifax Chamber of Commerce said: "We need to work on the relationship between business and universities. Build it and leverage it whenever we can. An example of what we could be doing is the Ships Start here campaign[6]. I was part of the group that met every Friday at the table. It was such a diverse group: there were about 20 of us. We pooled our resources and worked for months and months on the program. We parked our egos at the door and agreed to work through a common voice and common channel".

In spite of the fact that each sector has its own priorities, all of the participants in this study expressed a strong desire for more cross-sector partnerships.

[6] The ship building campaign mobilized business, university, provincial and municipal government resources to secure a government of Canada national shipbuilding contract for the province of Nova Scotia
www.shipsstarthere.ca

For example, the Director of Intergovernmental Affairs for ACOA noted:

> I think traditionally there was kind of a wide chasm between the public and private sector. We each had our own set of objectives and we would all go about achieving them individually. Increasingly there is realization on both sides that the private sector needs government to advance its own interest and the public sector needs the private sector to advance its own interests. So, I think we have gotten closer over the last 10-15 years. It is absolutely crucial that we work together to achieve our own sets of objectives. In the area of demographics, we have a business community that is increasingly realizing that it needs a growing labor force and that it can't accomplish this on its own. Governments realize that they also need a growing population and a key component of that is that newcomers to the province and the city have good employment and they need the private sector for that. On the demographic issue we are mutually dependent on each other to advance the issue and try to solve it (Interview with ACOA Director of Intergovernmental Affairs).

A number of researchers, including Gouging & Rochlin (2000), have identified cross-sector partnerships as effective mechanisms for solving social challenges. Waddock (1989) argues that these social partnerships "address issues that extend beyond organizational boundaries and traditional goals and lie with the traditional realm of public policy—that is, in the social arena. It requires active rather than passive involvement form all parties. Participants must make a resource commitment that is more than merely monetary" (p.22). The data from this study support the assumption that Halifax has an internationalization growth machine that consists of university leaders, business leaders, and local politicians. The main force behind the development of Halifax's internationalization growth machine appears to be its need for human capital. The region has had low fertility rates and has one of the oldest populations in Canada (Statistics Canada 2012). The desire to secure more talent seems to be moving city leaders toward greater partnerships. The organization that is unifying the leaders that collectively make-

up the city's internationalization growth machine is the Greater Halifax Partnership (GHP). Through various programming, the GHP has encouraged partnerships among local business, local government and local politicians as a way solve the city's demographic and economic challenges. For example the chief Executive Vice President and Chief Economist of GHP noted:

> Through our international student connector program, our relationship to the university and provincial government is quite strong. The international student connector program has become the basis of our relationship with universities. We have always worked on a variety of things, but they have always been soft partnerships. We say nice things about each other but the connector program has been something we have been able to work directly together. Other than sitting on each other's committees and stuff; these are tangible things we can work together on that benefit both of us; benefit the community; which we are both interested in; benefit the universities as well. So, the connector program has allowed us to find a win/win situation with the universities (Interview with Executive Vice President and Chief Economist of GHP 2012).

The GHP is playing a central role in bringing city leaders together to address the city's demographic and economic challenges. A Halifax Councilor highlights this by noting, "A major challenge that remains is to strengthen the relationships between the three-levels of government, business and education. An organization like GHP can be beneficial in breaking down the walls so that conversations can happen. Because you have a lot of people trying to do the right thing. They all tend to work in silos". City leaders are realizing that their ability to avoid future economic disaster is dependent on how effectively they can cultivate cross-sector partnerships. Programs like the Connector Program are making it easier for sector leaders to work together.

The connector program is a GHP initiative that connects graduating university students with potential employers. The program is funded primarily by the Atlantic Population Table, a collective that gets its funding from the federal, provincial, and

municipal governments. It should be noted that the Atlantic Population Table is now funded through the Atlantic Workforce Partnership. Participants reported that cross-sector partnerships are not only great for individual sectors, but they are also great for the community at large. The recently released economic plan of the GHP, which was produced by a coalition of leaders that included higher education representatives, local business representatives, and provincial and local government representatives, noted:

> Solving our labor market challenges means thinking globally. We have to develop effective ways to attract and retain immigrants and international students. Increasingly, creative cities are global cities. A global attitude attracts the best and the brightest. The world is our marketplace and more and more, the target of our marketing efforts. International and regional partnerships are becoming essential tools for surviving and prospering…." (A Greater Halifax Economic Strategy 2011-1016, p. 11).

In this age of migration and increased competition for human capital, local actors are pooling their resources together as internationalization growth machines to give themselves the best chance of staying competitive in the global economy. The investigation of the impact of internationalization initiatives in the city of Halifax revealed that university leaders are becoming more involved in the city's affairs, and that city leaders seem to be working together as part of an internationalization growth machine to address the cities pressing human capital needs.

5.8 Challenges

While internationalization seems to be pushing sector leaders toward stronger cross-sector partnerships, participants in this study felt that the long-term success of cross-sector partnerships will likely depend on the ability of sector leaders to address sector specific challenges. This is consistent with Goddard & Vallance's (2011) findings. They argue, "Building the bridge between the university and the city poses leadership

challenges within the university and within the city" (p. 1). In the current study, several participants reported that universities could increase their contributions to the city by providing more applicable knowledge to students, and by commercializing more of their research. The President & CEO of the Halifax Chamber of Commerce noted, "The brain power we have at our universities gives us a distinct advantage. Are we taking full advantage of that brainpower? University research that goes on at our universities is fabulous, but we seem to stumble when it comes to commercializing that research. I think everyone would acknowledge that is something we need to understand more".

Internationalization growth machines face many additional challenges. The participants interviewed mentioned that the biggest challenge internationalization growth machine elites are facing is the challenge of balancing sector specific commitments with commitments to the internationalizing growth machine agenda. Participants reported that different worldviews and different ways of operating are likely to pose serious challenges to internationalization growth machine elites. For example, the Executive Director of the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration said:

> The business community sees the need for immigration, but their main focus is on their need to sell more goods and services. So they are not seeing immigrants as potential employees but as consumers. They are not looking at them as entrants into the labor market but as consumers of goods and services. The problem is that immigrants are people; they need a livelihood so that they can be able to become consumer of goods and services (Interview with Nova Scotia Director of Immigration).

Despite the fact that sector leaders want to work together to address the collective needs of the city, sector leaders' specific sector commitments, in addition to sector specific operation biases, are likely to become major challenges for internationalization growth machines. Part of the mission of the GHP is to help sector leaders overcome such

challenges as the Executive Vice President and Chief Economist of Greater Halifax Partnership noted:

> In creating the International Student Connector Program, I guess we made an educated guess, or I did. We felt that the Nova Scotia economy and business community is very hard to penetrate, but we felt that there was not an inherent meanness in the business community. There are two issues. Businesses already have their networks and circles of trust, and regardless of where you are from, it is hard to penetrate that. And businesses are always looking to reduce risk in the hiring process. Hiring is risky, regardless of whom you hire. Whether it is your brother, or cousin or son, or someone from another country. Hiring is a risky process. It all has risks. One of the things that reduce the risk for businesses is getting to know people a bit better. Getting introduced to international students for instance. Being able to see first hand what their capabilities are in a risk free environment is important. The risk is you are going to buy a cup of coffee for someone. In the connector program, there is no guarantee of job. If the conversation works out, there is only an agreement to plug the person into that person's network. As more businesses meet with international students, over time people get to know that these people don't have two heads or anything like that; many of them are quite capable. Maybe we should hire some of these folks. So, we are breaking into that network using the connector approach. The other thing that is happening that is just as important for reducing risks is organizations like ISIS[7] (non-profit organizations), increasingly are beginning to work with international students (Interview with Executive Vice President and Chief Economist of Greater Halifax Partnership, 2012).

Several challenges may stand in the way of the long-term success of cross-sector partnerships. The participants in this study expressed that fundamental differences in the worldviews of sectors may undermine their best intentions of working together. Because of the growing demand and competition for international students, sector leaders also felt that city leaders should invest in a more strategic plan for recruiting international students. The Nova Scotia Director of Immigration said that clearly identifying labor needs with international students recruitment is a primary component for this strategy: "What are our labor market needs of the future? How do we link our international student

[7] Immigrant Settlement & Integration Services

recruitment efforts with our future economic opportunities? We may have to have additional discussions about whether or not the international students who are coming here are studying in areas for which the labor market has demands. The universities may be educating students in a lot of areas but that may not be areas where the labor market needs are". Participants felt that this specified approach may significantly increase the probability of students finding a job after graduation, which would result in even bigger international student economic contributions to the region's economy.

5.9 Conclusion

As city leaders continue to devote more resources toward attracting human capital, the process may continue to expand the role of universities in the growth of cities. The answer to Goddard & Vallance's (2011) question about whether universities are part of their cities seems to be yes. Moreover, it appears as if internationalization represents one way that universities are becoming more civically engaged. While internationalization seems to have catapulted universities to the forefront of civic matters, and facilitated the emergence of internationalization growth machines, the future success of internationalization growth machines will depend not only on their ability to recruit human capital, but also on their ability to help develop and integrate that human capital. On this front, the findings of this study suggest that cross-sector partnerships among local business, universities, and governments, like the ones described in this paper, will play a central role in the future growth of cities. As the competition for human capital intensifies among cities, city leaders will increasingly have to venture across sector lines in order to access resources to grow and sustain their growth agendas. As this happens, the role of

universities, given their recruitment and development infrastructures, will probably continue to increase in their local communities. This paper has presented the emergence of an internationalization growth machine in the City of Halifax and demonstrated how the elites that comprise it are working together to address the city's growth agenda. Additionally, the paper has identified the emergence of the internationalization growth machine in Halifax as the process that is also allowing universities to get more involved in the growth of the city. Future researchers who intend on using the internationalization growth machine concept will have to investigate the extent to which internationalization growth machines compete with one another.

Chapter 6

Conclusion & Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

I have relied primarily on data from two separate studies in this dissertation to illuminate the personal and contextual factors that are impacting the experiences of international students.

Chapter three uses transformation theory to explore the impact of international students intercultural experiences on their meaning perspectives. The main question that framed the analysis in Chapter 3 was- do international students change their meaning perspective as a result of their intercultural experiences. The main conclusion in this chapter was international students do not change their meaning perspectives as a result of their intercultural experiences. Additionally, Chapter three makes the argument that transformation theory should be paired up with theoretical frameworks that illuminate the impact of power on the transformation process. In addition to power issues, chapter 3 also argues that transformation theory must be used in collaboration with other theoretical frameworks because it does not properly highlight the social costs of transformation.

In sum, Chapter 3 makes a strong case for transformation theory as a viable framework for understanding the intercultural experiences of international students while simultaneously highlighting weaknesses such as lack of proper attention to power issues, and the social costs of transformation.

Chapter 4 highlights the various challenges of study participants. It combines Bourdieu's concept of capital and Wittgenstein's concept of language games to present a sociocultural economy framework for understanding the cross-cultural experiences and

challenges of international students. A central argument in Chapter 4 is that there is a general tendency in the international education literature to 'pathologize' international students". For instance, the majority of participants in Study I reported that faculty members overemphasized their weaknesses while misrecognizing or completely ignoring their strengths. Chapter 4 argues that adopting a sociocultural economy framework for analyzing the experiences of international students could be beneficial to international students.

In sum, Chapter 4 uses a theoretical framework comprising of Bourdieu's Forms of Capital and Wittgenstein's notion of language games to analyze the experiences of international students. A fundamental argument in the chapter is that a sociocultural economy framework for analyzing the experiences of international students introduces international education scholars to vocabulary that does not perpetuate the 'pathologizing' problem identified by study participants.

Chapter 5 uses data from interviews with sixteen elites from business, university, and government sectors in Halifax in addition to data from government, business, and university documents to present an analysis of internationalization in the city. The chapter links urban regime theory, growth machine concept, creative class concept, to the civic university concept to analyze internationalization in the city and its impact on the role of universities. The chapter highlights that internationalization is creating more opportunities for cross-sector partnerships in the city. Using data from Study II, the chapter demonstrates the expanding role of universities in governance issues. The chapter identifies domestic demographic challenges, the need for skilled- human capital as forces behind the expanding role of universities in urban partnerships. Given the aforementioned

challenges, Chapter 5 argues that the importance of the recruitment and development infrastructures of universities has increased in light of demographic challenges and the growing need for human capital. Lastly, the chapter argues that because of the growing need for skilled-human capital, university recruitment and development infrastructure will not only continue to make them economically relevant within the urban landscape, but will also continue to propel them to more important roles in local governance issues.

In sum, Chapter five presents important contextual factors that might impact the experiences of international students. In doing so, it identifies a collection of elites in the city, identified as internationalization growth machine, who are controlling the pace and direction of internationalization in the city. Given the challenges associated with domestic demographic problems, growing belief in the necessity and benefits of internationalization, the Chapter argues that city elites will continue to work together as part of internationalization growth machines in order to access resources to attract more human capital.

The ensuing sections will make specific concluding remarks about Studies I & II, identify some possible directions for future research, and make some general recommendations about how to address some of the challenges international students are facing in Halifax.

6.2 Remarks on Study I

For the first study, thirty-one undergraduate and graduate student international students from 17 different countries were interviewed. In all thirteen students were interviewed from Dalhousie University, eleven students from Saint Mary's University, and seven from Mount Saint Vincent University. The final sample size had seventeen males and fourteen females. The data were recorded and the interviews were transcribed, coded using Strauss & Corbin's (1991) grounded theory method. The findings from the first study confirmed much of what has been said about international students. Participants reported language difficulties, sociocultural adjustment challenges, and academic related adjustment issues as serious challenges (Church 1982, Roberson et al. 2000, Andrade 2006). Additionally, there was enough evidence to support the assumption that sociocultural differences and language difficulties may actually impede the expression of students' personality. Generally, most of the participants reported spending most of their time with co-ethnics or other international students.

Based on the findings from this dissertation, additional variables that are shaping the experiences of international students include informal support networks. In addition to university created formal support resources, such as those provided by the international student center, and the writing center, study participants also reported that informal support networks play a significant role in their adjustment. The informal support networks reported by students included social networks comprising of friends, friends of friends, acquaintances from on and off campus organizations, and online Facebook support networks.

In terms of perspective transformation, there was insufficient evidence in this study to support Gill (2007) and Erichsen's (2011) finding that international students transformed their meaning perspective. A reason for the disparity in the findings could be due to the fact that both previous studies were longitudinal studies. Other reasons could include international students may not see a reason for transforming their meaning perspective given their temporary status, they may want to maintain links to their home culture and view transformation as having too high of social costs. While the probability of transformation cannot be fully discounted or eliminated, I have mentioned several challenges that this concept of transformation has to address. For instance, studies that use transformation to investigate the experiences of international students must account for the impact of power on students' experiences.

Although individuals retain the personal agency to make change, they usually make changes within social environments that are imbued with different power politics. I mentioned the 'politics of recognition' as an example (Taylor 1994, Kymlicka 2002). Immigrants, international students, and historically marginalized groups must all negotiate their identity and jockey for representation in sociocultural spaces that are highly contested. Moreover, I also mentioned 'God Ideas', those beliefs that are insulated from the change process, as a challenge of the transformation concept. Additionally, Mezirow (1991) and Taylor (1994) both put forth the notion that the process of seeking knowledge and engaging in critical thinking would naturally lead to broader perspectives. While this is possible, the public failures of the multiculturalism project in both France and Germany present serious challenges to this idea. In both countries, cross-cultural interactions have not led to broader perspectives. In fact, cross-cultural interactions have

increased desires in both countries to insulate the institutionalized culture. Additionally, anti-immigrant sentiments have risen with the influx of more immigrants to those countries. Similar evidence contrasting the notion that exposure to varying perspectives naturally leads to broader perspectives is the rise of anti-immigrant and racist sentiments in most parts of Europe. Ultimately, transformation theory, particularly, as it relates to the cross-cultural experiences of individuals, has to answer to these challenges.

Although transformation theory is quite useful for migration scholars because it highlights the role of personal agency in the transformation process, scholars who want to use transformation theory may have to pair it with other concepts that would allow for the impact of power to be documented: as doing so, will highlight the role of power in the transformation process.

In terms of future research directions, as international students sometimes struggle with making friends with Canadian students, future researchers may want to look into pedagogical tools that can help facilitate interactions between domestic and international students. In this respect, intercultural communication, in particular pedagogical tools that create classroom conditions that encourage students to cross cultural boundaries represent an important future research area.

Also, future researchers in Canada may want to investigate how the emergence of Asian countries like China, Singapore, and Malaysia as international student destination countries would impact the implementation of Canada's international education strategy, especially considering that a majority of international students in Canada are from Asian countries. For instance, Woodward (2012) explores the impact of "the rise of Asia" on Australian Higher Education. In addition to identifying the development of China's

international education capabilities as a threat to Australian international education strategy, Woodward (2012) also identifies the United States as a major threat to the internationalization aspirations of Australian universities. In the Canadian context, investigating the potential impact of the internationalization strategies of Australia, the United States, Great Britain, and China on Canadian internationalization aspirations might be useful, particularly given that Canada is planning on doubling its full-time international student population from 239, 131 to more than 450,000 by 2022 (Advisory Panel on Canada's International education Strategy 2012). Moreover, monitoring the impact of funding cuts, discrimination issues, branch campuses, cross-border university partnerships, quality issues, in terms of maintaining the integrity of programs, on implementation of Canada's international education strategy also might be useful (Advisory Panel on Canada's International Education Strategy 2012).

Lastly, future researchers may also want to look into how the idea, or label of international students actually shapes the way Canadians perceive international students. Relevant questions could include, is the label 'international students' an expression of power? Furthermore, to what extent does the category invoked by this label shape the experiences of international students? Does this label harm student's chances of finding a job?

6.3 Remarks on Study 2

Sixteen local business, university, and political leaders were interviewed. The study found that the cross-sector partnerships among city leaders are increasing in the city of Halifax. The study also revealed that the main forces behind the emergence of

internationalization growth machines, so named because the elites who comprise them believe in the necessity and benefits of internationalization, are local concerns about demographic and economic challenges, and the increasing need for skilled human capital. In short, internationalization growth machine elites have unified to address these challenges by implementing a growth by internationalization agenda.

Additionally, the study also uncovered that the emergence of internationalization growth machines is expanding the role of universities in the growth of cities. The data also revealed that internationalization is providing a platform for universities to civically, and economically engage their external communities. As university leaders continue to engage local business and government leaders in efforts to address local economic and demographic concerns, sector leaders will have to work harder at by-passing the road blocks that usually hobble cross-sector partnerships, mainly the tendency for sector leaders to prioritize and focus solely on sector specific needs, and the lack of understanding of the other sectors language of operation and modus operandi. In short, the long-term effectiveness of cross-sector partnerships will probably depend on the ability of sector leaders to put common challenges ahead of sector specific priorities.

In Halifax in particular, the location of the research that produced this dissertation, there are few factors that will probably continue to strengthen the developing relationship among business, university, and government leaders. These include, the membership of area universities in the local Chamber of Commerce, the shared commitment of business, university, shared belief in the demographic and economic benefits of international student recruitment and integration, and the willingness of business, government, and university leaders to work together. Given the city's high

migration rates, shrinking demographics, strengthening the relationship among business, government, and university leaders could help maximize the enrichment of international students' experiences on-and off campus.

6.4 Dissertation Limitation and Limits of Research

Although the findings were significant, the argument could be made that the sample sizes of thirty-one and sixteen are too small. On the issue of sample size, Bauer & Gaskell (2007) argue:

> More interviews do not necessarily imply better quality or more detailed understanding. There are two bases to this claim. First, there are limited number of interpretations or versions of reality. While experiences may appear to be unique to the individuals, the representations of such experiences do not arise in individual minds; in some measure they are the outcome of social processes. To this extent representations of an issue of common concern, or of people in a particular social milieu, are in part shared. This can be seen in a series of interviews. The first few are full of surprises. The differences between the accounts are striking and one sometimes wonders if there are any similarities. However, common themes begin to appear and progressively one feels increased confidence in the emerging understanding of the phenomenon. At some point a researcher realizes that no new surprises or insights are forthcoming (p. 43).

Bauer & Gaskell's point accurately describes my research experiences. The saturation point for the first study was about 26 students and 14 for the second study, after which no new information was uncovered. The decision was made to do extra interviews to ensure that the saturation target had been reached. So despite the fact that interview sizes of thirty-one and sixteen may seem small, they provided enough information for the major themes in both studies to be identified and categorized, and also for the saturation target to be reached.

6.5 Final recommendations

1) Because universities do not have the resources in place to support each student, designing resource services that empower students to take a central role in their own adjustment might be a more efficient use of resources. For example, universities could provide more online tutorials to help international students with adjustment related challenges. The online tutorials could be categorized as pre-departure, and post arrival. The pre-departure program could cover such themes as essential communication and academic skills. Tutorials should be disseminated in various mediums, taking into account learner's preferences for consuming information.

2) Create an international graduate student scholar speaker series. Invite international graduate students to talk about their research and projects.

3) Create a critical thinking/study skills blog site.

4) Create a feedback/advising blog where videos and articles can be posted for students. For example, the international student office in collaboration with the career development office and writing center can post videos explaining immigration documents, financial issues, writing fundamentals, interviewing tips etc. Also provide a space where students can ask questions.

5) Create an international student advice blog, where international students can offer advice to other international students. The content should be disseminated in written and

audio-visual formats, ensuring that all learners can find formats that suit their preferred ways of learning.

6) Create an employer blog site. On a rotating basis, different employers can offer students advice on how to prepare for careers and summer jobs.

7 Create a *Dream Job Shadow Program* that will let international students shadow individuals who are currently working in careers that are of interest to them.

8) Internationalization growth machines elites, identified in this dissertation as government leaders, university leaders, and business and community leaders, have to take a more active stand against discrimination and racism in their communities.

10) Universities should increase their level of engagement with their external communities, and use the relationships to help address students' challenges and to help integrate them into the labor market.

11) With the number of foreign born in Canada increasing each day, the issue of helping students develop a 'global perspective' may be the most important issue facing universities today. The likelihood of students studying in classrooms, or working with people who were born outside of Canada is pretty high. With that said, universities should help Canadian students and faculty develop global perspectives, or what is sometimes referred to as 'glocal' perspectives'.

12) Create an Intercultural Education Center. Ideally, the center would disseminate resources on intercultural communication, offer workshops and courses on intercultural education, and conduct research on intercultural education.

13) The Canadian government should offer permanent residency to international students who want to remain in Canada upon graduation. While this may seem drastic, Republicans in the United States House of Representatives are trying to pass a bill that will increase the number of permanent resident visas for foreigners graduating from American universities with advanced degrees in science and technology. Also, president Obama of the United States and Mayor Bloomberg of New York State have called on congress to pass a law that will offer permanent residency to graduate students who complete MA and PhD programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

14) Finally, Rather than simply focusing on a disease model approach for helping international students with their various challenges, universities should take a page out of positive psychology and add a positive dimension to their support models. This paradigm shift is an attempt to ultimately get away from the tendency to only highlight the single story of challenges in international education narratives. Currently, discourses about the experiences of international students seem to all flow from a disease model paradigm that seem to only want to 'pathologize' international students. While it is true that international students usually face multitudes of challenges, it is noteworthy to point out that they are

not solely defined by these challenges. Moreover, lost to such discourses is the fact that international students bring a lot of positive characteristics with them to their host countries. Because these characteristics are usually not highlighted or identified, university personnel that work with international students miss out on the opportunity to nurture and use international students strengths as a way to empower students to overcome their own challenges. The underlying idea of this student-centered model of analyzing international student challenges is that helping international students identify and nurture their strengths allows university personnel to empower students to take a more central role in their own transition. Providing conditions that help international students gain and maintain awareness of their strengths during their process of transition can become an important countervailing factor to the negative narratives that students are likely to encounter.

Simply put, if implemented, the suggested paradigm shift would functions as a gentle reminder that international students, like all other students, are defined by the sum of their parts. Consequently, the responsibility of educating international students, becomes a task of not only helping them address their various challenges, but becomes a journey of helping them identify and nurture their strongest qualities. Positive psychology research has demonstrated that human strengths cannot only act as a buffer against mental illness but can help individuals lead normal and less troubled lives. In a nutshell, instead of viewing international students as passive actors who are completely at the mercy of their environment, universities should instead view them as individuals striving for self-determination (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi 2000). In such a context, the role of universities would not only be confined to fixing students weaknesses, but

also, perhaps most importantly, would extend to nurturing students' strengths.

Appendix A

Student's Advice to Government Leaders, Administrators, & Staff

- "If I could meet with the presidents, I would ask them, do you think that international students are worthwhile? If they say yes, I would ask, what are you doing to make sure they can use the knowledge you are giving them in life, and outside of campus? Because at the end of the day, what kind of a reputation would your schools have if students can't use the knowledge they are getting from your university. If students cannot use the knowledge you are providing them, what are the reasons? Do you know or attempting to know them? You give students degrees when they graduate. It is a sign that they have met your expectations. It should also be the time when you should find out from students if you have met their expectations. I think university presidents can solve the problem of students not finding a job if they really want to. All they need to do is to talk to business leaders. The two of them need to talk to each other so that universities would know what kind of skills students should have." (Sudanese student).

- "Ultimately the task of helping international students lies in the hands of Canadian students, not the university. Because when I came here, I wasn't really looking to make friends with university administrators." (Syrian Student)

- "The faculty—how culturally competent are they in understanding the struggles of international students. The writing center for example, do they have a special module for international students? Meaning, is it the problem of the international students to be accepted into undergrad not knowing English. Why did they accept them in the first place? If they are here, they should provide services for them. It is not all about visas, and socialization, it is about bringing them here as a cultural person. And how that culture can be used or utilized into understanding how truly diverse the world is. Faculty members need to understand how to teach diversity. As far as I am concern this is not new, it is about putting to practice the values and ideas when it comes to multicultural policies, diversity etc."

- "If the education system here is trying to allow people to graduate and work and be productive here in the community, they need to integrate students with the community. If we graduate here and are trying to get a job, obviously we are smart people and took on the challenge of coming here to study. We have what it takes to be motivated to work here. But if you don't find the community as welcoming or as warm, they you will just leave the community. Look for another opportunity outside. It is important. I know the Canadian government is trying hard to integrate people, but I think they need to work harder."

- "Provide more professional development opportunities for students: create more skill based workshops for students: such as interviewing, networking, computers etc."

- "Don't plan events as if we are all similar."
- "We need more opportunities to connect with Canadian students."
- "Since faculty members are the ones on the front lines of helping students, they should assume a bigger role in their adjustment."
- "Provide a week of orientation for international students."
- "Allow international students to become permanent residents before graduating: it may help with employment prospects."
- "Provide more post-graduation help. Follow up with students after they graduate to find out where they are, what they are doing, and what challenges they are facing."
- "Inform students about writing rules: things like APA, MLA, and citations before they get here."
- "Let students know about plagiarism before they arrive".
- "When you design support programs, do so with international students in mind.
- Employ more diverse mechanisms for delivering support to students (for example, tutorials could be delivered online in both written and audio-visual formats)".
- "Help students learn how to approach people in Canada."
- "Create more funding opportunities for students."
- "Get rid of or reduce the differential fees."

Appendix B

Students' Advice to Faculty

- "A good way to involve us in the classroom is to use examples from our countries in the classroom".
- "Create a global classroom. For example, use more examples from around the world to illustrate your points".
- "When you write tests, make sure the examples you use are not too culturally specific".
- "Know that students are going to struggle at the beginning of the class".
- "Know that students are hyperconscious about their language difficulties and that sensitivity might limit their participation in class".
- "Provide more help opportunities for students outside of class".
- "Talk to other faculty members, including ones from students' country of origin, to find out what teaching techniques are working with students".
- "Put more of your focus on students and less on getting through the material".
- "Let students know what the expectations are and make sure they understand them".
- "Use more PowerPoint".

Appendix C

Students' Advice to other International Students

- "Prepare for culture shock".
- "Prepare for the cold weather".
- "Set your goals"
- "Expect your first year to be really difficult (don't take a lot of classes during your first year)".
- "Know that interpersonal skills are very important".
- "Know that things will get better the longer you stay in Canada".
- "Know what you want to do with your degree".
- "Practice public speaking".
- "Learn colloquial English. It is important for small talk".
- "Get volunteering and internship opportunities if you want to eventually work in Canada".
- "If you are coming from a big city, prepare for how small Halifax is going to be".
- "You have to ask for help when you need it".
- "Use your network of friends for editing, and for practicing for presentations"
- "Know that presentations are great for building your confidence".
- "Try to overcome the fear of showing your work to other people".
- "Learn how to write a resume early in your studies".
- "Work on your English, especially writing and pronunciation before you come to study in Canada".
- "Get involved with the English environment".
- "Know that you are expected to participate in group and classroom discussions".
- "View class participation as an opportunity to practice your English".

- “Learn about the culture of saving, in Canada (*make sure you save your money)”.
- “Learn about the appointment culture in Canada”.
- “Listen to Canadian radio stations online to improve your comprehension and to get used to hearing different accents”.
- “Expose yourself to different writing styles”.
- “Become familiar with essay writing”.
- “Polish your research skills”
- “Know that finding a job is not an easy task”.
- “Know that some programs require a lot of reading”.
- “Expect some readings to be very difficult”
- “Google is a reliable source for finding what the equivalent brands are of the products you used back home”.
- “Know that things are expensive”.
- “Don’t fear the awkwardness of speaking to people”.
- “Learn to act with your anxieties there”.
- “Know that group work settings are great for connecting with Canadian students”.
- “Know that the international student center activities are wonderful for making new friends”.
- “Maintain communication with your family”.
- “Travel the city, region and country if you can (save for trips because they can be expensive)”.
- “Get to know the bus system: it is a wonderful and cheap way to travel in the city”.
- “Make sure you take time to have fun—don’t just work all the time”.

- “If you have been promised funding, make sure you confirm the amount and the length of time you will be getting the funding. Make sure it is enough for you to live on”.

- “Know that you may not be able to find all the foods you are used to back home. A good way to find the foods you are used to here is the restaurants; however, know that restaurants are expensive”.

Appendix D

Reasons Why Students Want to Stay in the Region.

- “Easy pathway to citizenship”.
- “Great work/life balance (Weekend culture)”.
- “Friends and family”.
- “Great place to raise kids”.
- “Short Commute time”
- “Politically stable”.
- “Safety”.

Appendix E

Reasons Why Students May not Stay in the Region

- "The fact that I am a minority here. Even if I stay here with my family and friends, it is something that could be challenging. I grew up twenty years in my country, I am used to things there. I know where to find things. As a student, I can stay on campus. It is a safe space, but if I get out from school, it could be difficult in the society. I have experiences with it working a part-time job. I work with Canadian people. Compared to my friends who work with people from our country, I feel the differences".

- "Can't find a job".

- "Better job offer somewhere else".

- "Culturally challenges with working with Canadians".

- "No Canadian job experience".

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