

**IN A CLASS OF THEIR OWN:
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS, CLASS IDENTITY AND
EDUCATION MIGRATION IN ATLANTIC CANADA**

by

Sinziana Chira

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DEDICATION PAGE

I dedicate this work to my infinitely supportive husband, with all my love and gratitude, to my loving parents and grandparents, who I adore and miss immensely, and to the participants, whose perspectives are endlessly inspirational and fill me with many hopes for their bright futures.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	vi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	viii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.0.1. Nuances Of Classed Capital And Education Migration: Main Research Themes	7
1.1. Overview Of Chapters	29
1.1.1. Education And Immigration Policy Review: Chapter Two	29
1.1.2. Chapters Three And Four: Class Capital And Social Reproduction Within The Family .	33
1.1.3. Chapters Five And Six: Institutional Roles In Social Reproduction.....	37
1.2. Methods	40
1.2.1. The Participants: Demographic Notes.....	43
1.2.2. The Researcher As Insider	50
1.2.3. Atlantic Canada As The Study Site.....	54
CHAPTER 2: CLASS, EDUCATION AND MIGRATION IN CANADA	62
2.0.1. Public Descriptions Of International Students In Canada: Dissonant Voices	64
2.1. Federal, Provincial, Institutional: Negotiating Education Internationalization	70
2.1.1. Historical Perspectives: The 1950s	71
2.1.2. Neoliberalization And Deregulation: The 1990s	72
2.1.3. Universities And The Border: The 2000s.....	82
2.2. Designing Immigrants: State Roles In Differentiating Student Streams	89
2.2.1. Exclusions And Inclusions: A History Of Canada’s Immigration System	91
2.2.2. Weighted Decisions: Federal/Provincial Responsibilities	98
2.2.3. Implications: Locating International Education Within Promises Of Skill	102
2.3. Conclusion: International Students Within Larger Matrices Of Capital	105
PART I: THE PRE-DEPARTURE YEARS	109
CHAPTER 3: LEARNING TO MIGRATE	113
3.0.1. Theorizing International Education As An Intergenerational Classed Project	117
3.1. Generations Of Migrants: Education Migration Through Family Scripts	123
3.1.1. Pioneering Ancestors: Family Mobilities Through Memory And History	125
3.1.2. Gender Identities And The Limits Of Ancestral Family Scripts	133

3.1.3. Migrating ‘The Right Way’: Migrant Role-Models And Family Networks.....	137
3.2. International Education: A Lifestyle	147
3.2.1. As Seen On TV: Media Scapes And Education Migration Dreams	154
3.2.2. Strategic Education Towards Migration.....	158
3.2.3. Looking Outwards From The Start	161
3.3. Conclusion: International Futures, The Best Laid Plans	164
CHAPTER 4: MIGRATING TO LEARN	167
4.0.1. International Students And Borders: A Literature Review.....	174
4.1. Leaving On Time: Students Expedite The ‘International’.....	179
4.1.1. Women’s Departures: Gendering The Race Against Time	185
4.1.2. From Personal To Practical: Factors To Consider When Planning To Study Abroad ..	196
4.1.3. A ‘Most Welcoming’ Country: The Role Of Canada’s Reputation.....	209
4.2. The Road Ahead: Students Crossing Borders	212
4.2.1. The Gatekeepers: Diverse Visa Experiences Around The World	213
4.2.2. Helpful Advisors: Complementary Industries To Education Migration.....	218
4.2.3. Students, Reinvented As International	222
4.3. Conclusion: Migrating For Education, Amidst Borders And Gatekeepers	230
PART II: LIFE IN CANADA.....	234
CHAPTER 5: STUDENTS, INTERNATIONAL IN ATLANTIC CANADA	243
5.1. International Students In Atlantic Canada: Colonial History, Economic Aspirations And Demographic Realities.....	252
5.1.1. Atlantic Canada’s Demography And Economy: A Brief History	254
5.1.2. International Students In Atlantic Canada: University Led Regional Development.....	258
5.1.3. International Students On Campus: Theorizing Contact Zones	261
5.2. Students Arrive In Atlantic Canada: A Cohort Approach.....	271
5.2.1. The First Cohort Arrives Before 2008: Early Years Of Education Internationalization In Atlantic Canada	271
5.2.1.1. <i>The Importance And Impacts Of Language Skills</i>	<i>279</i>
5.2.1.2. <i>Fast Tracked: Broadening Routes To Permanent Status</i>	<i>283</i>
5.2.1.3. <i>Searching For Diversity In Atlantic Canada: Gendered Views.....</i>	<i>285</i>
5.2.2. The Cohort That Follows: Accelerated Internationalization In The Atlantic	287
5.2.2.1. <i>Financial Dilemmas: Tuition Consultations And The New ‘Good Jobs’</i>	<i>291</i>
5.2.2.2. <i>Life On Campus: Internationalization In Progress.....</i>	<i>294</i>
5.2.2.3. <i>Side Tracked: Growing Concerns For Narrowing Immigration Routes</i>	<i>299</i>

5.3. Conclusion: Canadian Dreams Amid Uncertain Canadian Realities	303
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION.....	306
6.1. Capital And Contingencies: Continuing Journeys	312
6.1.1. Building Global Futures: Class Identities And Gendered Mobilities	314
6.1.2. Giving Back: Binding Capitals in Transnational Families	318
6.1.3. Duty To Self: Actualization And Its Gendered Personal Costs	322
6.2. Key Lessons Learned: International Education and Class Leverage.....	325
6.2.1. From Settlement to Non-Return: The Capital Value of Permanent Status	328
6.2.2. Family Migrations: Networks and Nuances	331
6.2.3. Bringing Gender In.....	332
6.3. End Notes: International Students, In A Class Of Their Own	335
REFERENCES	339
APPENDIX.....	376

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the migration pathways and transnational class projects of international students studying in Atlantic Canada. Bourdieu's concepts of class and capital guide my analysis of the complex relationship between education internationalization and class capital accumulation strategies. I suggest that legal permanent status and post-graduate career opportunities have become salient currencies in the Canadian context, rivalling the academic capital associated with elite universities elsewhere in the Global North. In addition, I expand on Bourdieu's concepts to highlight the role of gender and race in education mobility. I propose that such considerations reveal important nuances of capital embedded within higher education degrees in Canada, where federal and provincial immigration policies have combined to allow international study as a viable pathway to immigration. The study shows that families draw upon accumulated class capitals to invest strategically in education opportunities, assisting this generation of migrants in their quest to achieve middle class settlement in Canada. The thesis employs multi-methods, including historical, media and policy analysis to provide illustrations of relevant provincial/federal policy negotiations and in-depth interviews with international students and recent graduates in the Atlantic region. Atlantic Canada was chosen because this region has had notable success in attracting international students in recent decades, partly resulting from concerted efforts to address a declining regional population. It is also a region with a significant range of universities seeking to maintain viable enrolments. Amidst the volatile and often inconsistent accounts of their desirability as education consumers and as ideal migrants on national and regional scales, students in this study continue to aspire to middle class identities in Canada, even as accumulated forms of class capital and their values are tied to political, economic and social contingencies. Ultimately, students remain vulnerable to precarious statuses in Canada and transnationally.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

AAU- Association of Atlantic Universities
ACOA- Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
AMSSA- Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Services Agencies
CBIE- Canadian Bureau of International Education
CBC- Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
CEC- Canadian Experience Class
CFCIE- Canadian Foundation Center for International Education
CECN- Canadian Education Centers Network
CIC- Citizenship and Immigration Canada
CICIC- Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials
CIDA- Canadian International Development Agency
CMEC- Council of Ministers of Education, Canada
CsF- Ciências sem Fronteiras, the ‘Science Without Borders’ Scholarship Program
DFATD- Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development of Canada
EE- Express Entry
ESL- English as a Second Language
EU- European Union
FSWP- Federal Skilled Worker Program
ICEF- International Consultants for Education and Fairs
IELTS- International English Language Testing System
IESR- International Education Strategy Report
IRPA-Immigration and Refugee Protection Act
ISCB- International School Consultancy Board
LMIA- Labour Market Impact Assessment
MPHEC-Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission
NOC- National Occupational Classification
OECD-The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
ONSC- One Nova Scotia Commission
NB- Province of New Brunswick
NL- Province of Newfoundland and Labrador
NS- Province of Nova Scotia
NSDE- Nova Scotia Department of Education
PEI- Province of Prince Edward Island
PGWP- Post-graduation work permit
PNP-Provincial Nominee Program
PR- Permanent Residence
St. FX- St. Francis Xavier University’s
WES- World Education Services
WUSC- World University Service of Canada

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This thesis charts the migration projects of seventy-two international university students and graduates originating from twenty-nine countries, who study or have graduated universities in Canada's Atlantic region. The research documents the cultural capital currently embedded within Canadian degrees for international students originating from around the world, revealing it as contingent primarily on gender, race and ethnicity. A second prominent theme pursues the role of intergenerational accumulated wealth, class identity and social networks – Bourdieu's economic, cultural and social forms of capital – in leveraging belonging to the migration category of *international student* in contemporary Canada.

Significant work has been dedicated to illuminate the complex relationship between education internationalization in various countries of the Global North and class capital accumulation strategies unfolding around the world (Baas, 2012; Fong, 2011; Marginson, 2008; Waters, 2006). Drawing on this literature, I suggest that the impetus to gain legal, permanent status and to secure work and settlement opportunities post-graduation are particularly salient cultural currencies in the current Canadian context. I propose that such considerations are increasingly important nuances of capital attached to higher education degrees in Canada, where state policies have positioned international education as a viable step towards wider migration aspirations.

Furthering this perspective, current education migration streams in Canada can be investigated as processes of migration capital accumulation. As such, aspiring migrants invest in Canadian degrees in order to potentially overcome disadvantages they expect to accrue through transnational migration, both in the short and the long terms. Similar step-

wise migration strategies have been described in studies related to various other migration streams (Ryan et al., 2015; Paul, 2011), as well as related to international students, predominantly in Australia and the UK (Baas, 2012; Robertson, 2011; Birrell, Healy & Kinnaird, 2007; Li, Findlay, Jowett & Skeldon, 1996).

This study focuses on the Canadian context and is located in Atlantic Canada. This region of Canada is positioned by demographic and economic realities to significantly gain from international students' presence on its many campuses, as well as their potential long-term settlement post-graduation. Atlantic Canada is comprised of four provinces- Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador- that share similar demographic challenges. Within Canada, these provinces contain the highest population of seniors and the fastest shrinking population of those of working age (MHEC, 2015; Statistics Canada, 2011a). Despite the aging and shrinking population, and due to colonial history, Atlantic Canada is home to seventeen universities with campuses in 25 communities. Although none of these institutions are on the whole noteworthy on international ranking lists (Academic Ranking of World Universities, 2015; Times Higher Education, 2015), some stand out in specific academic fields. In recent years, many have also become notable in their attraction of international students, both nationally and internationally.

For example, in 2015, Dalhousie University, of Halifax, Nova Scotia, was named 95th most international university in the world in a ranking produced by the Times Higher Education (2015). In 2016, Dalhousie made it into Canada's academic ranking website University Hub amongst the top five 'best Canadian universities for international students', after McGill, the University of British Columbia, the University of Toronto and

the University of Alberta (Huffington Post, 2015). Saint Mary's University, also of Halifax, is currently one of Canada's leaders in terms of most international students as a percentage of the student body, with over 30 percent international enrollments compared to the last decade's national average of eight percent (CANSIM, 2016; McMullen & Elias, 2011). Like these institutions in Halifax, many universities in the region also stand out in terms of attracting international students. For example, while the number of international students has increased by 84 percent nationally in the last decade (Canadian Bureau of International Education [CBIE], 2014a), the top regional growth rate of this demographic over the same time period was recorded in Prince Edward Island at 198 percent (Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission [MPHEC], 2016).

Positioned to explore this regional feat, this study draws on links between education and immigration policies meant to attract and retain international students to Canada. In particular, it investigates forms of classed capital accumulation unfolding transnationally through education migration at this destination. Participants' journeys are significantly revealed to also be part of intergenerational migration projects, which shape both the impetus to migrate as students and the eventual negotiations of settlement and belonging for graduates in Canada.

As the study reveals, students anticipated migration from an early age, and were poised to avoid the downward social mobility their parents' generation associated with deskilled transnational migration to the Global North. Students and their families attempted this by investing in Anglo-American education as a form of capital accumulation. Notably however, in my findings, international education ultimately appears less as a vector for accumulating localized *cultural capital* – marking class status

and access to ‘good jobs’ in home countries (Waters, 2008; Ong, 1999); and more as a way to accumulate *migration related capital* (Paul, 2015; Ryan, Erel & D’Angelo, 2015) – drawing closer to legal status, as well as economic and social integration in Canada or more broadly, within the diffused geo-political space of the Global North.

Connections between classed capital accumulation and international migration for education have previously been established (Waters, 2008; Ong, 1999). Waters (2008; 2006; 2004) has significantly developed this field in the context of Canadian higher education internationalization, showing how Hong Kong middle class parents strategically invested in Canadian passports and degrees through the 1990s and early 2000s. Main aims included bypassing the challenging admissions standards that characterize Chinese higher education and ensuring graduates’ employability in Hong Kong’s highly competitive economic environment (2008, 2006). As such, the full benefits of accumulated capital in the context of this previous research were largely contingent upon graduates’ return to Hong Kong post-graduation. Therefore, Canadian degrees were shown to help secure access to careers that replicated middle class status upon graduates’ return. For Waters’s sample, permanent status in Canada was achieved as a means towards the international degree. Canadian citizenship was most often obtained by parents who either become immigrants themselves, overwhelmingly in Waters’s sample by participating in investor immigration streams, or by orchestrating giving birth in countries with *jus soli* citizenship rights, like Canada. In these cases, considerable financial capital, invested in the host country, was exchanged into cultural capital in the home country.

However, more recent investigations of international student flows point to strategic investments in international education that are linked differently to settlement goals in the Global North. New routes are undertaken with the aim of reproducing or achieving middle class status in host countries post-graduation (Baas, 2012; Fong, 2011). The recorded shift may be attributed to a popularization of international education paths, welcoming investments from students of more modest class backgrounds, who are however uniquely positioned to significantly further a family's capital accumulation through foreign degrees leading to settlement success in graduation countries (Fong, 2011). For this generation of international students, familial investments in international education become an important prerequisite to obtaining legal status and ensuring economic and social integration success in the country of graduation.

These observations significantly align with the realities emerging from my study, as 72 percent of surveyed students or graduates indicate they do not intend to return to home countries after graduation, but rather were working towards settlement in Canada (61 percent in total- including 27 percent who intend to stay in the Atlantic region) or more broadly in the Global North (remaining eleven percent). This reality has been consistently highlighted the last decade in both regional (Lebrun & Rebelo, 2006) and national (Kunin, 2012; CBIE, 2014b, 2009) statistical analyses of incoming international students. Adding to these findings are my participants' normative statements, that appear to establish not why one should migrate, but rather how one should migrate 'the right way' so as to succeed economically, socially and in terms of legal status in Canada and the Global North post-graduation, as follows:

There are [a] few ways you can immigrate to Canada...For us [international students], we can graduate university and find work and then you can immigrate, but it's better because we pay tuition and get degree and then we get better job and can stay here [in Canada]

better. For example, my uncle tried to immigrate to Canada as worker and he did not find good job and could only stay here... [He] came back to China with no citizenship... To get a permanent citizenship and be a real Canadian it's better to study here, you learn the Canadian culture.

- *Doris, China*

[My relatives who went abroad] they were not good examples to follow. What they would do was temporary work, manual labor that you can do in your own country, and they would fail [to gain permanent status]. We [my parents and I] always thought everybody should do something according to their capacity, not just leaving for the sake of leaving but that you should do something with your life.

- *James, South America*

I started to look through the Internet at available university programs since it would be best for me to go abroad rather than as a skilled worker it would be best to apply as a student... In terms of those who leave [my country in Southeast Asia as skilled workers], a lot of them did not do professional work [after migration], but more temporary work, but more like temporary permanent jobs, like working at the cashiers or the gas station. In [home country] those type of jobs we leave for persons who have no college degrees but for some [co-nationals] who go abroad, even though they have their college degrees, they are unfortunately in those jobs... When I was in high school I found out that my [family member] was working as a cashier in [country in Global North] even though he has his college degree- why is he working as a cashier?

- *Adam, Southeast Asia*

Actually when we decided I was going to Canada [to study] I found out they [my parents] had also planned to go to Canada when they were younger... my mom actually did not want to move, because she was worried of what kind of jobs they could get in Canada.

- *Ashley, Middle East*

I really appreciate my parents' education because I grew up independent. Most of my friends are like treasure from their family... But I was different because of education... When I was grade nine my parents had to realize 'my girl is too strong and really want to be a successful person'... In Chinese society as woman you are the person who teach your children and keep the family well, not go out and have a good career and be successful at that. But since school I wanted to be that kind of person, who has very strong career and make a lot of money. So my father start to think, if I want to be that kind of person the traditional Chinese education system will not be perfect... When I was grade nine they start to searching international schools and even say to me 'how about you go abroad?'

- *Nuo, China*

The main story [of my migration] started with a close family friend... they immigrated to Canada, and she would say 'you have to immigrate to Canada, they have job opportunities, we have multiculturalism'. So I believed in this image of Canada, and I wanted to go, to move there... My parents were not like that, they were not risky people [people who take risks]... my dad, no, he would always say 'I don't want to go to make pizza for people or put gas in their car when I have a good job here'. My dad is [a highly skilled professional].

- *Zara, Middle East*

As these contributions illustrate, participants in this study frame their migration trajectories by narrowly negotiating their own identities of class, gender, race, national origin and ethnicity amidst perceived hierarchies of migration categories largely reflective of immigration policies implemented by Canada and other countries interested in screening migrants based on education and skill. Decoded in this context, the pursuit of Anglo-American degrees is not only expected to provide a pathway to meeting one's full potential in the Global North, in James's, Adam's and Nuo's accounts, or 'becoming a real Canadian', as Doris put it, but also notably to fulfill intergenerational transnational classed projects of reproduction and upward mobility. Education migration becomes a nexus of capital exchange, with families and students leveraging localized forms of classed capital in both sending and receiving countries to accumulate transnational forms of capital legitimated in the Global North. The central objective of this thesis is to contextualize and explore the roots, means and effects of these processes.

1.0.1. Nuances Of Classed Capital And Education Migration: Main Research Themes

Employing Bourdieu's (1990; 1986) theory of practice to unpack current international education migration dynamics is a complex process, because it unites multiple layers of historically and geographically specific forms of capital that work at migrants' sending and receiving locations. In simple terms, families and students leverage varied forms of capital in home countries to make international journeys possible. Their choice of investing in Canadian degrees is in turn shaped by an awareness of education and immigration opportunities tied to Canadian degrees and shaped by Canada's education and immigration policy sectors.

Migration streams and constructions of work and settlement avenues have been significantly shown to be products of leveraged forms of capital themselves, further complicated by migrants' identities of gender, national origin, ethnicity and race; and to be volatile, bound to change over life course and time (Kofman & Raghuram, 2015; 2006; 2005). In addition, the ways capital travels and becomes accumulated through migration is also an ongoing process of negotiation between the migrants and policies encountered at departure and destination points (Paul, 2015; Ryan, Erel & D'Angelo, 2015; Erel, 2010). The complexity of these layers is woven through this thesis, and unpacked at every step of students' migration. I briefly outline key concepts here, as I employ and build on them in the chapters to follow.

In general terms, Bourdieu (1984) has theorized that individuals' actions can be accounted for by investigating the interplay of *habitus*, *capital* and *field*. Bourdieu (1990) defines habitus as:

“a product of history [that] produces individual and collective practices – more history – in accordance with the schemes generated by history. It ensures the active presence of past experiences, which, deposited ... the form of schemes of perception, thought and action, tend to guarantee the "correctness" of practices and their constancy over time, more reliably than all formal rules and explicit norms. The habitus is a system of dispositions – a present past that tends to perpetuate itself into the future by reactivation in similarly structured practices, an internal law through which the law of external necessities, irreducible to immediate constraints, is constantly exerted” (p. 54).

Habitus accounts for the class basis of worldviews and predispositions (Bellamy, 1994), and the related decisions that result in the social reproduction of class advantage. In *The Logic of Practice*, Bourdieu (1990) significantly draws upon socially constructed memory and history in order to explicate and locate individual actions within class hierarchies.

The concept of habitus has drawn significant debates as to its amenability to social change, and the complex location of individual agency within it. Some theorists have argued that habitus acts as a form of class DNA (Kennett, 1973), directing class reproduction as inherent social location (Giroux, 1982). The concept is developed most notably in this form in Willis's famous *Learning to Labor* (1977), a study that describes the effects of social class background as cyclical in terms of educational choices and job attainment in England's West Midlands. The study significantly points to the interconnectivity of the economic and education systems, illustrating how poor education choices fill working class jobs.

However, Harker (1984) argues for a more nuanced perspective. He notes that habitus can be reinterpreted as a "mediating construct, not a determining one" (p. 121), allowing for a social learning curve of sorts. In this way, with historical progression come habitus shifts brought on by strategic agency. Harker (1984) writes:

"Willis typifies Bourdieu's theory as... a cyclical sequence of: structures ...produce habitus; which provides the dispositions toward practices; which reproduce the original structures... Bourdieu & Boltanski [state] that: "the educational system depends less directly on the demands of the production system than on the demands of reproducing the family group". Willis (1983) himself notes that "Individual working class kids may succeed in education – never the whole class" (p. 129), which points to the need for a level of analysis less than 'the working class'. Bourdieu's theory would suggest that the reproduction of family groups is more significant than that of whole classes. It will be recalled that habitus itself is largely concerned with transmission within families. Willis's own analysis of 'the lads' should not be taken as an analysis of the working class. What of 'the ear'oles' who are equally from a working-class background? The reproduction of family habitus (values, dispositions etc.) would seem to offer the possibility of a finer grained analysis, and thus get us closer to knowing that which is not reproduced. It is what is not reproduced that is at once the engine of change and the arena for human agency" (p. 124).

My study engages with this finer grained analysis of habitus, one that allows for locating the power of agency within. More specifically, and through recoding ongoing social

reproduction projects initiated through familial investments in education migration, my study is nestled within the framework of family, a unit with a flexible and relational operationalization of class identity. In my approach of locating habitus within family, I follow previous ethnographic investigations of classed migration, including Salaff, Wong and Grave (2010) as well as Olwig (2007), both studies primarily exploring habitus within family settings. I am particularly inspired by Salaff et al. (2010) observation of habitus within the family as non-deterministically shaping cognitive frames, which in turn may inspire migration for some, though for others, they may not. Instead, Salaff et al. (2010) propose the investigation of relational social processes occurring within the family, as well as concurrent institutional and social processes impacting the family, that together shape agency.

Following this approach, Salaff et al. (2010) uncover family scripts, which they define as “cognitive frames that families develop as part of their shared way of life as they adapt to other institutions” (p. 11). Family scripts are akin to habitus, products of leveraged familial memory and history, through which current events and opportunities are filtered to frame appropriate agendas for action of family members. In the same vein, I primarily pursue an analysis of class identity, and its related habitus, as leverage – as opposed to pre-determined tracks. I expand on the applications of family scripts to reveal the intricacies of operationalizing of habitus in migration studies.

Further nuancing the subtleties of class leverage, Bourdieu (1986) argues that:

“capital can present itself in three fundamental guises: as *economic capital*, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the forms of property rights; as *cultural capital*, which is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of educational qualifications; and as *social capital*, made up of social obligations

(‘connections’), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of a title of nobility” (p. 244).

Capital accounts for important and quantifiable distinguishing factors between social classes, complicating class identity beyond the basic realities of accumulated economic wealth. Numerous previous studies have established the importance of tracking cultural and social capital in unpacking both education choices (Ball, 2002; Bellamy, 1994; Coleman, 1988) and migration projects (Paul, 2015; Ryan, Erel & D’Angelo, 2015; Erel, 2010). I will review both these forms of capital here in an effort to map out their worth for international education migration.

To begin with, Bourdieu (1986) notes that:

“Cultural capital can exist in three forms: in the *embodied* state, i.e., in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the *objectified* state, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.), which are the trace or realization of theories or critiques of these theories, problematics, etc.; and in the *institutionalized* state, a form of objectification which must be set apart because, as will be seen in the case of educational qualifications, it confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which it is presumed to guarantee” (p. 244).

The concept of cultural capital is thus designed to account for distinctions, often subtle, between social classes, which are nonetheless markers of belonging to groups of privilege and are convertible into tangible economic advantages. Cultural capital accounts for the informal knowledge gathered by individuals from family and other contexts of life. It determines manners of being, of self-presentation, of formulated identities. In “The Forms of Capital” (1986), Bourdieu further notes of cultural capital:

“Because the social conditions of its transmission and acquisition are more disguised than those of economic capital, it [cultural capital] is predisposed to function as symbolic capital, i.e., to be unrecognized as capital and recognized as legitimate competence, as authority exerting an effect of (mis)recognition... Furthermore, the specifically symbolic logic of distinction additionally secures material and symbolic profits for the possessors of a large cultural capital: any

given cultural competence (e.g., being able to read in a world of illiterates) derives a scarcity value from its position in the distribution of cultural capital and yields profits of distinction for its owner. In other words, the share in profits which scarce cultural capital secures in class-divided societies is based, in the last analysis, on the fact that all agents do not have the economic and cultural means for prolonging their children's education beyond the minimum necessary for the reproduction of the labor-power least valorized at a given moment" (p. 245).

In the context of formal educational attainment, cultural capital has been extensively utilized, starting with Bourdieu himself (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990), to illustrate how educational institutions are in fact not socially neutral, but rather active in symbolic social reproduction processes. As such, educational institutions turn embodied and objectified forms of cultural capital into degrees, or academic capital, which in turn replicate social standing, or symbolic capital (Weis, 2016; Marteleto & Andrade, 2014; Katsillis & Rubinson, 1990). Moreover, cultural capital has been significantly shown to impact program choices. For example, in the context of international education, Carlson, Gerhards and Hans (2016) and Weenick (2010) show that parents' interest and participation in internationalized or cosmopolitan education programs is a form of cultural capital at work, a marker of class identity and class aspirations.

In wider migration studies, the concept of cultural capital has been employed to analyze how migrants reconfigure social positions disrupted through migration (Ryan, Erel & D'Angelo, 2015). Cultural capital has also been shown to intersect with migration policies encountered at various scales, both in terms of migrants' abilities manipulate such policies, and in terms of states' use of cultural capital markers to create migration hierarchies (Goldring & Landolt, 2011; Dobrowolsky, 2011; Kofman & Raghuram 2015; 2007; 2006; Kofman, 2007). However, in regards to how cultural capital travels across transnational fields, Eral (2010) provides a compelling argument against conceptualizing

this type of capital as a backpack that simply moves across borders as it accompanies migrants. Instead, she argues for investigations that recognize the challenges of reconfiguring class identity through migration.

Various forms of cultural capital can help either to smooth, or to additionally challenge, these reconfigurations in various ways. For example, in terms of education, a degree obtained in a country of the Global North can be regarded as a form of cultural capital with symbolic value, and may travel better across borders within this geopolitical space. However, the ultimate ability to monetize such a degree is classed and additionally reflective of cultural and other forms of capital, as this thesis will illustrate.

Of social capital, the second form of capital included in the theory of practice, Bourdieu (1986) has noted:

“social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group– which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital... These relationships may exist only in the practical state, in material and/or symbolic exchanges which help to maintain them. They may also be socially instituted and guaranteed by the application of a common name (the name of a family, a class, or a tribe or of a school, a party, etc.) and by a whole set of instituting acts designed simultaneously to form and inform those who undergo them; in this case, they are more or less really enacted and so maintained and reinforced, in exchanges” (p. 248).

According to Bourdieu, social capital is a potent asset contained in social and other types of membership relationships, including families. Two key factors differentiate individuals’ social capital, namely the size of their network and tangible forms of capital contained within their network. As such, a wealthy family can confer superior social capital, but so can a well-connected one.

Coleman (1988) has significantly expanded on this concept. Coleman isolates three prominent forms of social capital, namely “obligations and expectations, information channels and social norms” (p. 95). He goes on to highlight how social relationships can be instrumentalized to achieve goals, for example by acting as information channels. Matters become more complicated however as exchanges within networks are shown to rely on trust and expected returns. In this light, social capital can act as limiting to individuals, as they have to comply with social norms imposed by their network in order to benefit from its embedded capital.

For example, in the context of education, Coleman illustrates how expectations and norms within the family, as well as those originating from community or peer groups, can significantly impact choices and outcomes for students. Utilized in this way, social capital has become a benchmark concept for research concerning education choices, including studies investigating the effects of school community (Condrón, 2009), parental involvement (Lawson & Lawson; 2011; Horvat, Weininger & Lareau, 2003), peer groups (Park, 2012; Morris, 2008) or neighborhood (James, 2012) on education choices and outcomes.

In the context of migration, social capital has been extensively researched for its potency in shaping migration journeys. Migrants have been shown to draw on social networks, familial or otherwise, for information and support in initiating and sustaining migration projects. However, social capital has also been revealed as potentially oppressive, as network support often becomes contingent on fulfilling network expectations and norms (Trandafóiru, 2013; Barber & Lem, 2012; Zloniski, 2006; Hochschild, 2000).

Both forms of capital outlined here – cultural and social – have been revealed as additionally contingent upon the identity markers of gender and race, which are in turn shaped through historical and geographical contexts. In this vein, the third component of Bourdieu’s theory of practice, namely the concept of *field*, can be used to further establish an individual’s ability to access and utilize various forms of capital. This establishes an individual’s social power in a given social context. Of *field*, Bourdieu (1991) writes:

“The social world can be represented in the form of a (multi-dimensional) space constructed on the basis of principles of differentiation or distribution constituted by the set of properties active in the social universe under consideration, that is, able to confer force or power on their possessor in that universe. Agents and groups of agents are thus defined by their relative positions in this space. Each of them is confined to a position or a precise class of neighbouring positions (i.e. to a given region of this space), and one cannot in fact occupy - even if one can do so in thought – two opposite regions of the space. In so far as the properties chosen to construct this space are active properties, the space can also be described as a field of forces: in other words, as a set of objective power relations imposed on all those who enter this field, relations which are not reducible to the intentions of individual agents or even to direct interactions between agents” (p. 230).

In this view, agents, or individuals, compete for resources within fields, each assuming a position that reflects structures of power. In this set-up, class mobility is based on instrumental use of capital.

This understanding of the world as made up of social fields helps explain positional contradictions that individuals encounter in different contexts of their lives. For examples, it accounts for disparities in power experienced by women across social fields (home and professional fields for example), speaking to how various forms of capital are socially infused with more or less value depending on their relationship with the dominant culture (Huppatz, 2009; Yosso, 2006).

The utilization of social fields can also importantly account for disparities in the values of capital, which have been shown to oscillate through social constructions of race and ethnicity (James, 2012; Aronowitz, 1999). As such, while Bourdieu's work does not specifically address the nexus of class, race and ethnicity within the theory of practice, a longstanding tradition in the social sciences has been dedicated to recording such meaningful intersections (James, 2012; Olwig, 2007; McNamara Horvat, 2003; Aronowitz, 1999).

For example, Warner's *Social Class in America* (1949) makes an early case for the importance of ethnicity and race as impacting class inequalities in the USA. In this vein, McNamara Horvat (2003) notes that "in Bourdieu's formulation, every aspect of an individual's social condition, including race and ethnicity, contributes to class membership and the development of the habitus" (p. 2). Furthering this point in the Canadian context, James (2012) goes on to illustrate how Bourdieu's forms of capital are accumulated differently based on the holder's ethnic and racial social locations in contemporary Toronto. Illustrating the multiple contexts through which differences in capital values are incurred, James (2012) documents, for example, the often negatively-weighted social capital embedded in peer networks and in neighborhood communities of ethnic and racial minority urban youth. James also underlines the lesser cultural capital of high school diplomas obtained in underfunded urban schools and the devalued financial capital for families owning property in surrounding neighborhoods.

James's (2012) varied examples point to an important aspect of documenting the class, race and ethnicity nexus, namely its historical and geographic boundedness. Race and ethnicity imply histories of group relations that are specific to a particular geographic

space and have evolved there over time. Within Bourdieu's theoretical model, race and ethnicity can thus be shown to direct the value of capitals through particular fields.

Further, the notion of fields can be employed to explain the oscillations of capital through migration, which is a particularly important component for my study. Thus, participants depart social fields where their racial and ethnic identities direct a certain set of capitals and related values. Upon arrival in Canada, they enter a social field where ethnic and racial identities original to this space are assigned to them. As Olwig (2007) explains "ethnicity therefore becomes an identity that is ascribed to people based on natural [physically visible] characteristics, not something that is necessarily actively chosen and defined by individuals depending on their particular situation" (p. 13).

Moreover, migrants' access to classed capitals during their journeys and upon arrival in Canada is additionally directed based on national origin and migration categories (Kofman & Raghuram, 2015; Barber, 2008; De Genova, 2005). This process, framed through policies of sending and receiving countries, becomes particularly relevant at and after border crossings, when both the migration categories employed to gain international mobility, and the migrants' national origins, create additional matrices of capital value. On this complex nexus of factors and their reconfiguration through migration, Morrice (2014) notes:

"Individuals are born into a particular habitus and will inherit ways of thinking, attitudes and values; they will acquire the cultural and social capital necessary and appropriate to move and exist within their particular social milieu... The social and cultural capital accumulated is generally recognised as legitimate and has an exchange value; therefore individuals can draw upon their cultural capital in order to access appropriate education and employment opportunities. Their social capital can be drawn upon to navigate their way around systems and to access societal resources. However, with movement across social space, one of the commonalities shared by all migrants, this can change dramatically. The capitals which migrants have accumulated might not be recognised as legitimate and may

have little or no exchange value in the new field (p. 154)...[Instead], policy and social discourses can be thought of as schemes of perception and classification which symbolically construct groups and ensure that relations of subordination and domination are reproduced. Policy and the language it uses impose taxonomies, identities and institutes entitlements and rights. It defines what kind of migrant subject it is possible to be” (p. 157).

Following Morrice’s (2014) points, my own engagement with Bourdieu’s theory of practice proposes a theoretical framing that regards international education as part of a distinct social field and thus a possibly holistic prism of analysis. As such, even though, through the process of migration and upon arrival in Canada, participants are assigned different social positions based on national origins and localized notions of ethnicity and race, I argue that students nonetheless utilize a common migration category and enter a common field, that of international higher education in Canada. I therefore set out to explore their leverages of capital within this common field.

The significance of education migration as a distinct field within my study allows for a recalibration of the sampling method. As such, I move away from a sample based on national-origin or shared ethnic identity in the host country, sampling techniques previously used in other studies of mobile students (Baas, 2012; Fong, 2011; Waters, 2006) I focus instead on migrants’ population of a common field, that of international education in Atlantic Canada. This approach is similar to the methodological framing recently used by Bilecen (2014), who explored a multi-national sample of international students in Germany. Like Bilecen, I strive to reveal common experiences based on factors such as shared migration aspirations and encountered challenges within the context of education migration, rather than communalities based on country of origin or ethnic identity developed upon arrival at foreign destination.

Nonetheless, in the context of my study, this approach has its challenges, as Bourdieu did not address a world beyond the bounded nation state (Naidoo, 2004). On this point, I follow Marginson (2008), who defines the field of international education as:

“networked global systems with commonalities, points of concentration (nodes), rhythms, speeds and modes of movement”, asking “can Bourdieu assist our imaginings of global higher education given he is nation-bound and knowledge formation is both primary to universities and quintessentially global? Yes, with some qualifications ... Bourdieu’s notion of field of power, with agents ‘positioned’ and ‘position-taking’ within the field, continue to be a useful starting point” (p. 304).

Marginson goes on to utilize Gramsci’s notion of hegemony and Appadurai’s concept of scapes to stretch Bourdieu’s field to a global scale. Hegemony can be described as a principle of power stemming in social class, through which the privileged classes assert dominance over lower classes through control of cultural aspects- education, mass-media, beliefs- rather than through direct oppression. In this way, both social oppression and the inequality between classes appear as natural (Mann, 2011). Gramsci’s concept of hegemony has been extensively utilized in education research to point to hidden curricula of inequality that favor some groups of students to the detriment of others, generally along class (Fierer, 1970), gender (Morris, 2008), racial and ethnic lines (James, 2012).

Marginson (2008) applies the concept of hegemony to global education and argues that previously national academic fields have developed into global fields, but this process has led to a global hegemony of knowledge whereby

“[Hegemonic power] is accumulated in worldwide networks dominated by American institutions that define not just scholarly and managerial agendas but the idea of a university in this era. Hegemony is enabled by and expressed in American global geo-strategic mobility... This paper notes four aspects of US hegemony: research concentration and knowledge flows, the global role of English, and American universities as people attractors and as exemplars of ideal practice” (p. 308).

Marginson further nuances his observation by noting:

“It is unhelpful to consider the global as a single space, open and volatile, which contains the whole of human action. It is one identifiable space where human action is played out, suffused with unpredictability in the manner of Appadurai’s scapes. It sits alongside the national and local spaces and connects with them at many points. Working across all three of these relatively open spaces we find more bounded and predictable (although no longer closed) domains such as law, governmental regulation and finance. These domains of practice have their own global aspect or dimension, and they intersect with Appadurai’s global scapes, but they are not reducible to the global (still less the national) ‘as a whole’... In a more global era they are bigger and less stable than they once were, and infused with greater dynamism and unpredictability by the scapes. One such domain of practice is higher education and the associated research. Within such domains, Bourdieu’s notions of field of power and position-taking retain the larger part of their potency” (p. 313)

Marginson’s argumentation is inspired by Appadurai’s (1996) understanding of globalization as facilitated by various forms of global scapes (i.e., finance-, media-, techno-, ideo- and ethnoscapes). The scapes are meant to encompass the flow of people, resources and ideas intensified through globalization. While Appadurai does not theorize higher education as a distinct field, his concept of scapes has been adapted in the context of internationalizing education, recently defined as:

“the transnational flow of ideas and people in regard to research and higher education and where nodes of knowledge centres, peripheries and positional dynamics shift over time but are connected through modern communication technologies and different epistemic, ethnic and learning communities. Through the notion eduscapes we open up for analysis understanding educational landscapes in terms of their positional dynamics within asymmetrical power grids” (Forstorpa & Mellströmb, 2013, p. 336).

This approach readjusts the research scope to accommodate examinations of global education circuits as social fields, with elite universities as simultaneous study sites and participants in internationalizing higher education (Knight, 2012; Sidhu, Ho & Yeoh, 2011; Madge, Raghuram & Noxolo, 2009a; Luke, 2007). Many studies sharing this focus have rendered careful analysis of scale, with stocks and flows of students catalogued to

evidence global knowledge hegemonies through unidirectional flows of students from South to North (Madge, Raghuram & Noxolo, 2009b; Khadria, 2006) and to monitor emerging education hubs (Knight, 2011; Li & Bray, 2007; Ndoleriire, 2003).

Marginson (2008) for example catalogues higher education institutions into nine categories on a scale from ‘elite and prestigious’ to ‘profit-driven’. This scale is designed to account for institutional global pull based on factors such as research renown, but also affordability. Marginson (2008) notes that emerging categories align with streams of students attracted, price of degrees, as well as institutional independence from neoliberal pressures of cost cuts and academic research impact. As such, the most competitive international students flock to ‘super-league universities’ (most in the US and UK) in order to maximize the cultural capital of international degrees. In turn, the super-league universities are least affected by economic and academic vulnerability, thus maintaining high standards of academic integrity. The scale unravels through the categories, eventually reaching institutions deemed as global ‘degree mills’. These are most vulnerable to economic realities and are thus most focused on attracting as many full-paying international students as possible. In turn, graduates of those institutions get degrees infused with less valuable forms of cultural capital than those from ‘super-leagues’. Findlay, King, Smith, Geddes and Skeldon (2011) summarize this argument in a compelling way, as follows:

“Focusing on universities as institutions through which these processes of differentiation have been reproduced, Marginson and van der Wande (2007) distinguish horizontal and vertical differences. Vertical differences include institutional features such as capacity (size and subject diversity), status (the university’s age or world ranking) and resources – all significant in differentiating institutions within the ‘field of power’ (Bourdieu 1984) that is higher education. Horizontal differences include level of specialisation, segmentation between private and public sector universities, language of instruction and academic

culture. While these horizontal differences may not be a necessary reason for increased differentiation within a hierarchical system, Marginson et al. note that “under certain historical circumstances horizontal differences have vertical implications such as the advantage accruing to English language nations in this era” (2007, p. 14 in Findlay et al., 2011, p. 120).

On this tangent, Marginson’s work complements previous studies which have focused attention on the pursuit of international education and more specifically Anglo-American degrees as nuanced forms of cultural capital accumulation (Kim, 2011; Waters, 2008; Ong, 1999). In this dissertation I draw upon these themes, but suggest the integration of state roles in social reproduction and the resulting exchanges of classed capital mobilized for gaining legal status and for negotiating work and settlement opportunities for international students. These forms of capital are now embedded within higher education degrees in Canada, as state policies have positioned international education as a viable step towards other migration goals.

Furthering this perspective, current education migration streams in Canada can be investigated as processes of migration-related capital accumulation, whereby aspiring migrants, vulnerable to taking on undesirable social positions through and after migration to the Global North, engage in international education in order to overcome anticipated disadvantages.

Similar strategies have been described in studies related to various other migration streams (Ryan et al., 2015; Paul, 2011), as well as related to international students in Australia (Baas, 2012; Robertson, 2011; Birrell, Healy & Kinnaird, 2007). In these cases however, settlement aspirations far outweigh academic achievement. For example, in Baas’s sample, students overwhelmingly pursued short Masters courses, their degree lengths perfectly matched to the minimum requirement for Australia’s Permanent

Residence policy. This is almost a complete reversal to Waters's earlier study (2008; 2006), that finds many international students had underperformed in the national university entrance exam in Honk Kong, and thus had failed to secure a place en route to a middle class lifestyle at home, attempt to make up for this setback by investing in Canadian degrees. Yet their ultimate goal is to return to the home country post-graduation and restore their middle class status, through employing the cultural capital tied within the Canadian degree.

Further nuancing the way academic and settlement opportunities are weighted within international education pathways to Canada, my findings point to a different, yet equally complex matrix of student streams – who leverage capital as relevant in academic fields, but also in terms of legal status and settlement prospects in Canada or the Global North. Unlike in Waters's work (2006), in my sample, twenty-four students (33 percent) came from very strong academic backgrounds in home countries – measured by ratings of previous university attended, results at national and international examinations, such as the Gaokao¹, A-levels or the International Baccalaureate, as well as international awards and recognitions, such as winning top places at international science or math Olympiad competitions. As well, twenty students (28 percent) noted they pursued competitive degrees in departments or with supervisors that are 'world class' – even as their universities in Canada are not 'Super-Ivy'. Moreover, fourteen students received comprehensive funding from their program or from independent academic organizations of distinction. A more careful review of students' specific situations in Canada can thus

¹ China's highly competitive National Higher Education Entrance Exam.

expand the mapping of student flows from this novel perspective of balancing academic and settlement goals.

Of particular relevance in this field are localized constructions of value and desirability imposed upon migrants by policies and discourses they encounter at their study destinations. As such, and motivated by Morrice's (2014) argument that "policy and social discourses... impose taxonomies, identities and institutes entitlements and rights [and] define what kind of migrant subject it is possible to be" (p. 157), I investigate national and regional debates regarding connections between education and skill and migrating desirability in Canada to establish the current cultural capital value imbedded in Canadian degrees for international students.

In Canada, international students have been linked in the last two decades to other migration streams deemed in federal and provincial policies as 'desirable'. These include foreign investors, entrepreneurs and temporary foreign workers (Dobrowolsky, 2011; Ley, 2010; Waters, 2003). These migration categories now supply a growing population of 'desirable migrants', yet whose 'desirability' is a moving target, shifting to match changing economic and social parameters that are often regionally defined (Dobrowolsky, 2011).

In more general terms, international students have been conceptualized in Canadian education and immigration policy and practice – and in media reporting of education and immigration debates – in ways akin to other migration streams designed as iterations of John Stuart Mill's homo economicus (Ley, 2003). Such depictions have been shown to legitimize the premise that student migrants, through such virtues as youth, education, personal wealth and flexibility in meeting Canada's shifting economic

demands, can simultaneously alleviate state spending in higher education and immigrant attraction and settlement sectors (Gates-Gasse, 2012; Dobrowolsky, 2011; Simmons, 2010).

However, as international students' presence on campuses in Canada is tied to, and even exacerbated by systemic underfunding of higher education sectors, these students are emerging as poster children for a neoliberally recalibrated post-secondary education system (Lewis, 2008; Mitchell, 2003). This system, designed for cost recovery, also fosters contentious constructions of higher education as a consumer good, infusing neoliberal principles onto emerging campus diversity and established multicultural values. In consequence, international students' voices contribute important perspectives about new meanings of multiculturalism, belonging and identity, locating economic migration, consumerism and education within them.

Amidst apparently inconsistent narratives on global, national and regional scales, students in this study are shown to engage in processes of negotiation whereby various forms of capital and their worth are in flux. To reveal them, I focus on constructions of international students' worth and desirability in academic, policy and media discourse in Canada, which are simultaneously unpacked within reconfiguring immigration and higher education systems. The developing tensions lay the foundations for the dissonance that currently defines international education migration in Canada.

Of particular importance to these debates is the role of gender in both constructions of transnational desirability and education mobility, and particularly as it relates to class identity. Significant work has pointed to the gendering of variably skilled economic sectors and migration routes (Kofman & Raghuram, 2015; Piper 2013; Pessar

& Mahler 2003). However, gender nuances within international education have been less explored. Keneway and Bullen (2003) have called for gender equity in documentations of mobile students, noting that “women international students’ perspectives are mentioned by a very few authors... [as] it is assumed that the student is male” (p. 6).

Keneway and Bullen’s observation draws attention to important intersections between gender and Bourdieu’s forms of capital within the field of international education. In this field, gendered patterns of stratification occur in both sending and receiving countries, whereby women migrants leverage their class identities differently than migrating men, through processes akin to those previously recorded by migration scholars focused on women’s transnational mobility (Kofman & Raghuram, 2015; Piper, 2013; Yeates, 2009; Pessar & Mahler, 2003; Hochschild, 2000; Parrenas, 2000).

Women’s negotiations are marked not only by localized constructions of classed femininity, but also by the inclusions and exclusions of immigration policies that create gendered hierarchies of migrant desirability (Kofman & Raghuram, 2015; Tastsoglou & Dobrowolsky, 2006; Pessar & Mahler, 2003). For example, Kofman and Raghuram (2015; 2007; 2006) have shown that the profile of migrants deemed desirable by skill-driven immigration systems are in fact determined by socio-cultural parameters that consistently devalue feminized migration flows, framed both in terms of feminized skills and in terms of family migration circuits.

Joining the growing body of work that has followed Keneway and Bullen’s call in the field of international education (Brooks, 2015; Fong, 2011; Park, 2010), this thesis is committed to tracking gender as it intersects class identity and migrant desirability at all stages of international students’ migration. In this way, I hope to contribute to the

growing body of feminist work undertaking the expansion of Bourdieu's concept of capital as it intersects with gender in different fields (Jones, 2014; Miller, 2014; Thorpe, 2010; Huppatz, 2009).

As previous studies have argued (Miller, 2014; Huppatz, 2009; Adkins & Skeggs, 2005; Labarge, 1995; McCall, 1992), Bourdieu's work has been largely devoid of gender nuances, with initial articulations of the theory of practice describing capital as gender-neutral. Nonetheless, as McCall (1992) concludes of his original writings, Bourdieu recognizes gender as a:

“distinguishing mechanism within the social group defined by the volume and composition of the initial capital. In this context, secondary usefully refers to a mediating dimension of position in social structure... Bourdieu does unwittingly offer such a possibility through what I offer as the second reading of secondary. He variously refers to secondary criterion as "hidden" "unofficial" and "real". By this Bourdieu exposes how real principles of selection and exclusion are hidden behind nominal constructions of categories such as occupation and educational qualification. Although forms of capital correspond to occupational fields (e.g., literary capital, scientific capital, etc.), they have gendered meanings because they are given form by gendered dispositions. In this light, there must be a clearer understanding of the relationship between capital, dispositions, and gender” (p. 842).

McCall highlights in Bourdieu's writings the gendered nuances of capital, reaching the poignant conclusion that class identity is quintessentially gendered for the theorist, even as it is not overtly presented in this manner. Importantly, McCall's (1992) review referred to Bourdieu's body of work preceding “Masculine Domination” (2001), where the author himself addresses the matter of the intersections between gender and capital as a revision to his earlier work. In this later writing, Bourdieu reexamines the concepts of habitus and capital through the prism of gender. As McCall (1992) had anticipated, Bourdieu notes that masculine domination has been hidden within class habitus and moreover reproduced through the key social institutions of family, school and state. In his theoretical

unraveling of emerging social hierarchies, Bourdieu urges researchers to remain astute to emerging processes of inequality that have become hidden through their normalization of masculinity as privilege (Mottier, 2002).

However, the subject of capital remains ambivalently addressed by Bourdieu and ongoing studies continue to debate whether women are depicted as primarily repositories of various forms of capital for family and society, or as capital accumulating individuals in their own right (Huppaz, 2009; Silva, 2005; Reay, 2004; Lowler, 1999). In studies engaging with this debate, women have been shown to be integral parts of capital accumulation processes for spouses and families (Huppaz, 2009; Lawler, 1999), but to also draw their own capital from belonging to, and investing their own resources within the marital and familial relationship (Reay, 2004). For example, in her study of women's class identity negotiations, Lawler finds that participants define class belonging based on husbands' occupations, while their own professional and educational achievements feature less prominently as class self-identifiers.

On a complementary note, much has been written about the classed aspects of mothering and classed family care (Vincent, Bail & Kemp, 2010; Huppaz, 2009; Gillies, 2006; Duncan, 2005; Reay, 2004). Such studies have repeatedly illustrated how women use class capital at their disposal, such as the privileges of professional – and more flexible – employment, to maintain or further class projects for their children and their extended families. In these ways, nuances of capital have been shown to simultaneously control and empower women in ways that are specifically gendered. I plan to engage with these ambivalent processes further in the context of family and education migration as this dissertation unfolds.

1.1. Overview Of Chapters

This dissertation documents international students' experiences before, during and after physical migration with the aim of establishing the role of international education as a form of transnational capital accumulation. A secondary aim is to contextualizing students' experiences and views within larger theoretical debates, media rhetoric and policy initiatives that together shape the value of international students in Canada. As such, the analysis to follow alternates between multi-level institutional perspectives regarding students' migratory paths, and detailed, personal accounts of students' journeys.

1.1.1. Education And Immigration Policy Review: Chapter Two

In order to establish the role of state policy in social reproduction processes that mark the intersections between classed capital accumulation and international education, a clear outlook of Canada's multi-layered immigration and education history and current policy direction is required. As such, the next chapter in this dissertation, Chapter Two, serves the significant purpose of investigating the multi-layered policy shifts in Canada's immigration and education arenas. These policies are particularly relevant, as they have, in the last decade, positioned international education as a viable step towards more permanent migration routes. In order to uncover their roots, I highlight increasingly acute needs and challenges faced by both the education and the immigration systems in this country, including demographic and economic concerns (Alboim, 2011; Banting, 2010). By reviewing the historical and contemporary policy solutions to these needs, I reveal

how the Canadian state has contributed to the creation of hierarchical migrant streams that favor some – *but not all* – international students in ways problematically linked to social class and further nuanced by national origin, gender, ethnicity and race.

A review of this policy landscape also reveals the complexities that lead to discordant policy implementations at different institutional scales – comprising of federal and provincial agencies, education institutions and private actors. As this chapter shows, when considered together, these historical needs and multiple institutional layers of responses, although often oriented in similar directions, have given rise to acute contradictions that serve to reproduce social inequality. These include the simultaneous construction of international students as desirable for economic contributions and potential, as well as possibly fraudulent migrants (Waters, 2008; Simmons, 1999); as enriching the multicultural wealth of Canadian campuses and communities, while at the same time challenging academic standards (Mitchell, 2003) and transgressing white-normative Canadian academic spaces (Gilmour et al., 2012; Henry & Tator, 2009); and as unattached global agents in problematically gendered constructions of high skill mobility (Brooks, 2015; Fong, 2011; Park, 2010), yet simultaneously expected to work towards settlement in Canada’s economically stagnant regions, such as the Atlantic (Gates-Gasse, 2012; Dobrowolsky, 2011; Alboim, 2011; Simmons, 2010).

Ultimately, the chapter shows that the past decade has seen international students in Canada alternately fast-tracked and side-tracked both as participants in higher education and within federal and provincial immigration pathways. Through its review of volatile policy landscapes, the chapter provides a general backdrop for the unfolding of students’ journeys, as described in the rest of the dissertation. It allows for an

understanding of possible motivations of international families and students eager to study in Canada. Further chapters will then show such motivations to additionally reflect historically established hegemonic values of Anglo-American degrees and reveal them as linked to historical and immediate immigration prospects. Ultimately, thusly created aspirations have the power to alter students' positions within social fields, bring in new vulnerabilities, growing pressures and responsibilities for international students, which constitute the themes of the remaining chapters of the thesis.

The four chapters that follow this contextual introduction are based on data gleaned from semi-structured interviews with students and graduates. As both random and snowball sampling techniques were employed in reaching participants, these arguments presented in these chapters are not meant as representative of the population of students and graduates in Atlantic Canada, even as the sample generally matches demographic realities of this population in the region. Rather, the aim is to offer nuance to the many statistical accounts that have already focused on international students, both regionally (van Huystee, 2011; Siddiq, Baroni, & Nethercote, 2010; Lebrun & Rebelo, 2006) and nationally (CBIE, 2014b, 2009; Kunin, 2012; McMullen & Ellias, 2011). Therefore, the data chapters follow personal accounts of education migration. Together, they track a temporal arch of students' migration for education, with a common end-point in Atlantic Canada.

The four data analysis chapters follow a structural make-up focused on participants' perspectives. Each chapter starts with four vignettes shared by different participants, whose experiences have been carefully selected to evoke in the reader a feeling or an image that facilitate a better understanding of how students experienced

each stage of their journeys. Main themes emerging from the vignettes are then unpacked in more detail using sociological theories, multi-level institutional outlooks, as well as contextualization within the larger students' sample. Voices from other interviews intertwine to give a sense of shared or different experiences for each theme evoked by the initial vignettes and participants quoted reoccur to allow the reader the continuity of perspectives through the varied stages of the migration journeys of international students.

The first two data analysis chapters focus on students' journeys before arrival in Canada, while the latter two chapters depict life post-migration. As such, each two chapters are grouped together and introduced by a short review of most useful analytical lenses. Chapters Three and Four generally track processes of class reproduction initiated in the family, and are introduced by a brief review of relevant theoretical tools. Chapter Three follows the inception of the idea to migrate in general, and more specifically as a student, while Chapter Four illustrates how practical routes to Canada are established.

Meanwhile, Chapters Five and Six review students' lives in the Atlantic region and mostly center on the lived impacts of policy in social reproduction and mobility projects, thus nuancing the role of multi-level state policy in social reproduction processes. These two chapters are introduced by a short review of the policy landscape and give special attention to the specific policies that frame regional realities for incoming students. Following this, Chapter Five records early arrivals in Atlantic Canada and Chapter Six concludes by presenting an outlook of students' journeys.

1.1.2. Chapters Three And Four: Class Capital And Social Reproduction Within The Family

Chapters Three and Four bear titles inspired by Li et al.'s (1996) article "Learning to migrate and migrating to learn: A study of the experiences and intentions of international student migrants", as well as by Bass's (2012) own utilization of this phrasing to capture the structure of his arguments regarding Indian international students' settlement paths in Australia (p. 18). However, while these authors illustrate that education abroad in itself breeds future migrations during the life course (Li et al. 1996), and that students learn to become migrants while undergoing study sojourns (Bass, 2012), I additionally argue that *learning to migrate* often happens much earlier, in home countries, and can take intergenerational forms, whereby both migrant and non-migrant relatives inspire or actively teach students about how to strive for opportunities abroad.

Chapter Three, entitled *Learning to Migrate*, commences the students' journeys by documenting factors that frame participants' desire to migrate in general, and to migrate as students in particular. This chapter locates international education within processes of class capital accumulations. Through further employing Bourdieu's concepts of class, capital and habitus (Bourdieu, 1996; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Bourdieu, 1990; Bourdieu, 1986), the chapter contextualizes the finding that for many participants, the arch of mobility begins with ancestors' generations.

It has been previously illustrated how stepwise international migration can help migrants accumulate capital and eventually gain access to their preferred destinations in the Global North (Paul, 2011). Much has been also written about the role of social networks in mobilizing forms of capital and establishing migration routes (Ryan et al., 2015; Castles & Miller, 2003; Portes, & Landolt, 2000; Mahler, 1995; Boyd, 1989).

Migration ethnographies have also suggested that such processes of capital accumulation can occur across different generations of the same family (Salaff et al., 2010; Olwig, 2007).

In this chapter, I investigate participants' migration impetus through family stories that I frame using the concept of family scripts, thus employing a theoretical model drawing on strategic retelling of family histories and memories to nuance habitus, previously utilized by Salaff, et al. (2010). I show how education migration is linked to previous generations' migration experiences and aspirations, as well as to capital accumulation processes that start with parents and grandparents and mark, in different ways, the childhood and adolescence years of the eventual migrants in my sample. This view also provides an invaluable opportunity to situate international education within historical ebbs and flows of international migrations.

The chapter illustrates how family scripts become increasingly binding for would-be students and their parents as years go by, transforming aspirational class projects into normative education and migration trajectories. Supporting an understanding of scapes of globalization as central to cultural aspirations, especially in the realm of education (Appadurai, 2004; Singh, 2004), this chapter shows how families critically engage with media stories and advice from relatives abroad, as well as local and international social networks. These longitudinal processes eventually establish the benchmark of middle class migration through education, bound to graduate citizens of the developed world with all forms of capital embedded in this status (Fong, 2011; Waters, 2008; Ong, 1999).

These aspirations turn into lifestyles that spread across social fields as desirable modes of social reproduction, shifting parenting styles and shaping educational paths to

include pricey educational programs often packaged as pre-requisites for international education, such as Anglo-American private schools, English language and foreign education exchange programs. The chapter engages with previous studies that have recorded a shift in preference for cosmopolitan education amongst middle class parents at various locations around the world (Carlson, Gerhards & Hans, 2016; Maxwell & Aggleton, 2015; Igarashi & Saito, 2014; Weenick, 2010). In my study, the paths chosen and investments made prove increasingly limiting to participants, morphing into one-way tickets to universities abroad, at fast accruing financial and personal costs.

Chapter Four, entitled *Migrating to Learn*, sees students and families actively plan and set about to accomplish their journeys to the Global North. This chapter depicts potentially the tensest period of students' journeys, as the years of hard work, savings, sacrifices and planning explored in Chapter Three are coming to a head. The critical time period depicted in this chapter commences for most participants in the twelve to fourteen months preceding international departures. In this brief timeframe, students' journeys become accelerated. Students and families calculate final budgets, decide which countries, universities and programs to apply to, as well as how to go about visa applications and last minute travel, financial and living arrangements. The short time frame and its associated feeling of urgency is deeply felt by participants, whose focus on the timeliness of departures points to significant links between migration decisions and the family life cycle, as well as the limiting nature of negotiations regarding available forms of capital. Previous research has illustrated how the timing of migration can be contextualized using the life course framework and its interactions with cultural and social capital, factors that position potential migrants within metrics of power, which in

turn appear mediated through gender and race (Salaff & Greve, 2013; Ley & Kobayashi, 2005; Boyd & Grieco, 2003).

In the context of education migration, some studies have noted that successfully launching international education migration journeys significantly depends on the migrants' ability to convincingly fit within tight parameters that match cultural expectations of the life course and migration and education within it (Fong, 2011; Salaff et al., 2010; Olwig, 2007; Ong, 1999). My diverse sample offers a further opportunity to illustrate how the timing of migrations for education is negotiated across cultures. Therefore, I draw upon the family life cycle framework (Courgeau, 1985) to investigate the social time clock of international education migration across cultures.

Such parameters have also been shown to be reflected in institutional policies regulating migration streams, and enforced at borders by visa and other gatekeeping agents (Fong, 2011; Mahler, 1995). Therefore, parallel to negotiations of support within the family, this chapter also outlines the impacts of multi-level institutional agents in managing international student streams – impacting the ways migration routes are chosen, funneling access to institutions of academic renown, and framing immigration opportunities. The chapter thus captures the multiple institutional levels with which students engage and the important gatekeeping roles played by government agencies in both sending and receiving countries; at the level of universities, and their various departments; as well as by private actors such as immigration and international education consultants, who are becoming increasingly intrinsic to establishing international education routes.

Participants' progression through this process supports a reexamination of borders as crucial to the production of classed mobile subjects within the field of international education (Cunningham, 2004; Hannerz, 1997). As well, this chapter importantly reviews the circumstances that make Canada the common endpoint destination for my participants, documenting the intricate federal, provincial and institutional accounting for Atlantic Canada's recent preeminence on the international education map.

1.1.3. Chapters Five And Six: Institutional Roles In Social Reproduction

While Chapters Three and Four track migrants' childhood and adolescence around the world, observing common themes shaping education migration from these very diverse locations, Chapters Five and Six are set in Atlantic Canada.

Chapter Five, entitled *Students, International in Atlantic Canada*, participants review experiences upon arrival in the Atlantic region. These experiences are then shown to be rooted in multi-layered debates and policy directions negotiated between federal, provincial, university and private sectors in the Atlantic context, and that frame students' potentials for Canada and the Atlantic region. Such debates breed inequality at every step of students' journeys, through setting tuition costs, as well as by placing support services and permanent legal statuses within or beyond the reach of the students. Ultimately, they shape the ways students are able to instrumentalize and reconfigure different forms of capital available to them through and after migration. This chapter captures the challenges experienced by the diverse demographic of international students documented by my study, allowing the reality of economic challenges and social integration struggles to set in as it does for the participants throughout their own migrations.

Addressing the progression of policies regarding international students' study and immigration opportunities in the Atlantic region, the sections of this chapter are organized around two different cohorts of students, who, by virtue of their year of arrival, encounter strikingly different policy and demographic realities on the ground. This approach underlines the effects of the various stages of policy changes, including the early integration of international students into designer migration streams in the mid 2000s at the federal level; the aftermath of these federal shifts in international enrollments; and the reframing of federal and provincial programs of immigration processing ongoing since 2015. These policy changes are shown to have significant implications for graduates attempting to build long-term futures in the Atlantic region. In this vein, this chapter also includes data emerging from the five follow-up interviews with original participants, who were still attempting to secure long-term futures in the region.

Chapter Six is the concluding chapter of this dissertation. Its arguments circle back to the importance of investigating international students as part of intergenerational class projects, as only such contextualized understandings can help explain expectations of ongoing journeys and evaluations of their success. This chapter engages with academic and policy debates around notions of permanence of migration journeys (Baas, 2012; Salaff et al., 2010; Ong, 1999), setting them against students' own negotiations of outcomes to their own Canadian ventures. In my sample, these negotiations appear as shaped by mounting pressures to fulfill multiple and often conflicting identities and expectations, explored in previous chapters as intimately linked to class, national origin, ethnicity, race and gender.

Such expectations include that of self-fulfillment – in terms of career and personal life, expectations from family – often supported through various forms of social reproduction, including upholding classed identities in terms of career paths, contributing through remittance, facilitating family chain migration, fulfilling social time clock expectations regarding marriage and child bearing and the like; and even expectations rooted in national identification, both with countries left behind, and with Canada, and especially the perceived demographic and economic needs of the Atlantic region, which some participants see as challenges they can contribute to. Notably, although most of participants study at, or have graduated from non-elite institutions, their framing of onward plans reflect similar feelings of social responsibility as previously observed amongst elite graduates of ‘super-league’ universities (Power, Allouch, Brown & Tholen, 2016).

As such, this chapter illustrates how students’ post-graduation plans are reframed against the realities encountered at their destinations in Atlantic Canada, as well as current and historical understandings of the types of capital embedded within Canadian degrees, with tangible impacts on the ways students evaluate their presence, identities and goals in Canada and onward.

While the chapters of this dissertation seemingly imply a temporal and geographical continuity in processes of staging migration, they are in fact not meant to support a narrative of linear migratory movement from origin to destination amongst international students. As the data analysis will emphasize, different stages of migration often occur in simultaneous, reverse or circular orders, reflecting migrants’ agency and

their ability to creatively mobilize various resources at different times, amidst external pressures from families, governments, the market and so forth.

Moreover, the divide between family and state rooting of social reproduction is also somewhat artificial, as those frames intersect in complex ways throughout students' journeys. I strive to illustrate their connected nature throughout this dissertation.

Therefore, the organization of the different stages of migration as outlined in the chapters of this dissertation should be understood as conceptual, rather than actual divides in the process of migration. The main aim is to organize different literatures along similar conceptual lines, as opposed to proposing the organization of migratory experiences in any particular order.

1.2. Methods

This study relies on, and aims to reflect, students' perspectives of migration, tracking the events and factors that shape education journeys as they appear and are articulated at particular moments in students' lives (Kim, 2008; Peacock & Holland, 1993; Portelli, 1981). This approach allows the research to be somewhat shaped by what seems relevant to the participants, a flexibility that makes semi-structured interviewing part of preferred methodologies of studies concerned with in-depth understandings of individuals' migration trajectories (Ley, 2010; Olwig, 2007; Mahler, 1995).

In practice, this translated into the development of semi-structured interviews that employ probing questions, including prompters such as 'Tell me a bit about yourself', which allow the participants to explain their identities in their own words. Interview data was collected as participants told of their migrations at various paces, some interviews

lasting close to four hours, but most lasting about two hours. Participants were prompted to articulate their migration trajectories by questions such as ‘When did you first think of /leaving home to study abroad?’, which allowed each participant to start their journey where they thought it appropriate, and also captured previous migrations either regionally or abroad. Interview questions allowed for participants to engage with various operationalizations of Bourdieu’s theoretical concepts, but were not designed to assume that these concepts directed migration in all cases. For example, participants were asked if and how family played a role in their education and migration choices, a question vague enough to allow students to interpret *family* in whatever way they saw relevant and to report the extent of family involvement as they saw fit. Some took it to mean immediate family, others included friends, extended and fictive kin, while others still stretched the concept to include family members dating back several generations.

The flexibility that defined the study questions also extended to defining study participants, reflecting the contested nature of the label *international student* as a clearly defined migration category (Raghuram, 2013). Consequently, public calls to participate in the study, sent out through academic departments, student service centers and international student centers on university campuses, relied on potential participants’ self-identification as international students, regardless of their visa status. While most responders were in fact holders of student visas, some respondents held other statuses in Canada, including working visas, permanent residency and Canadian citizenship. Some students, who were on international student visas but felt closer to ‘Canadian culture’, such as American students for example, replied to the call for participants to ask if they could participate given that they may lack a level of *internationalness* often expected of

international students. In all cases, these students were encouraged to participate and further elaborate on their own perceptions of belonging to the international student category.

The resulting data was analyzed and coded around key *moments and factors*, which were then recorded in a spreadsheet. The *moments* reflected common phases of migration generated and identified as important by participants, such as when participants first considered study abroad, how and when they chose their ultimate study destinations in Canada, how they prepared for imminent departures, how they experienced border crossings, first days in Canada, general impressions of study abroad upon arrival and so on.

The *factors* centered on persons, groups or trends contributing or defining migration experiences and were divided into sub-factors. For example, factors recorded whether participants mentioned family members, social or romantic relationships, media (social, entertainment and news), immigration policy, tuition rates and other factors as having input into migration plans, while sub-factors recorded what relationships/ policies etc. were mentioned, at what stage and in the migration process, and in what way they impacted migration. Factors and sub-factors were recorded in columns of a table. When read across lines, entries could be understood to convey information such as ‘friends/ (in) high school/ helped with university choice’; or ‘uncle abroad/ while at university in home country/ helped financially/ helped with visa or immigration planning’; or ‘grandparent/ in elementary school/ helped motivate’, or ‘visa policy change/in high school/ shift away from Australia and favored Canada’ etc. Once coding was completed, data trends were observed and data reporting was organized around emerging prominent themes.

1.2.1. The Participants: Demographic Notes

Most participants were recruited through research calls emailed through international student centers and academic departments at universities in the capitals of the Atlantic region, although some heard about the study through their social network. The data I report on in this study emerged from interviews conducted between January 2012 and January 2013. The main set of 42 interviews was collected in Halifax, Nova Scotia – most through 2012 and 2013, and represents the core data set for my dissertation. I also refer to a secondary set of interviews collected across the capitals of the Atlantic region for a comparative perspective. This data is used in order to qualitatively and quantitatively contextualize emerging themes and highlight provincial differences when relevant. Moreover, in the spring of 2015, a follow-up round of interviews was conducted with original participants who had remained in the region and stayed in touch, willing to share the most recent developments of their journeys. All interviews were conducted in English because this is the official language of all urban centers where students lived, and because all participants were enrolled in, or had graduated, academic programs that had English as the main language of instruction.

1.2.1.1. Gender

Of the 72 international students making up the emerging cumulative sample, 29 participants were male (or 40 percent) and 43 were female (or 60 percent). The overrepresentation of female students in the sample speaks to the methodological goals of the study, and reflects the reality that the gender gap in international education migration is closing. However, it is important to note that in 2011, McMullen and Ellias found that

women accounted for less than half of international students in Canada, while in 2012, the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC) found that 42 percent of international students in Maritime universities were female (MPHEC, 2015).

1.2.1.2. Age

In terms of age, most participants (78 percent) were between 20 and 29 years of age at the time of their interviews. As such, 27 participants were between the ages of 20 and 24 (38 percent), and 29 were between 25 and 29 years old (40 percent). Nine participants (or 12 percent of the sample) were 20 years old or younger, and seven were 30 or older (10 percent). The youngest participant was 18 at the time of her interview, while the oldest was 38. The age distribution represented in this sample largely matches national age trends amongst international students (McMullen & Ellias, 2011). A longitudinal study of international students in Canada found that the median age of this population is getting younger. Thus, while in 1992 almost 27 percent of international students were older than 30, and 48 percent were younger than 24, by 2008, 66 percent of students were younger than 24 and only 13 percent were older than 30 (McMullen & Ellias, 2011).

1.2.1.3. Origin of Participants

Overall 34 students come from Asia (47 percent), with 23 participants originating from China, six from countries in Southeast Asia and five from South Asia. Eleven participants (16 percent) came from the Middle East. Eleven participants (16 percent) originated from South America. Seven participants came from the USA (10 percent).

Four participants came from the Caribbean (5 percent), four from Europe (5 percent, two from Southern Europe, one from Eastern Europe and one from Central Europe) and one participant migrated from Central Africa.

With respect to countries and regions of origin, this sample replicates national and regional trends regarding international students in Canada. Thus, students from Asia account for almost half of all international enrollments both nationally and regionally (MPHEC, 2015; McMullen & Ellias, 2011). In the Maritimes, students from the USA and the Middle East make up the other two largest national groups (MPHEC, 2015). In addition, the number of students from South America is on the rise in Canada as governments in that region, including Mexico, Chile, Brazil and others, are investing in foreign credentials for their students (Bernhard, 2014). These trends are captured in my sample.

1.2.1.4. Levels and Topics of Study

29 participants (or 40 percent) were pursuing undergraduate degrees at the time of their interviews, 23 were enrolled in Masters programs (32 percent) and 12 were pursuing PhD degrees (17 percent). Eight participants had already graduated from universities in the Atlantic region (11 percent), three from Bachelors programs, three from Masters and two were holding PhDs. In terms of degree level distribution, my sample generally follows national trends, as 66 percent of international students in Canada are working towards undergraduate degrees (McMullen & Ellias, 2011). In my sample, of the participating undergraduate students, 60 percent were in STEM sectors and 40 percent were in Humanities, Social Science and Psychology programs. Of those in STEM fields,

33 percent were pursuing Business, Accounting or Economics degrees (10 participants), 17 percent were Math and Science majors (5 participants) and 10 percent were Engineering students (3 participants).

In this respect, the sample captures international students' preference for degrees in Business, Accounting and Economics programs and Engineering degrees, which currently represent around 20 percent of national enrollments each (McMullen & Ellias, 2011). At the Masters level, 20 participants, or 87 percent were enrolled in STEM fields, 13 in Science programs, including the health professions faculties, four in Economics, Accounting and Management, and three in Engineering programs. Only 3 participants were pursuing Masters of Arts programs. Similarly, amongst the 12 PhD candidates participating, only one was in an Arts faculty, so a remarkable 92 percent were in STEM programs.

The clustering of international students in STEM sectors at all levels of study is an increasingly relevant trend for Canada. As World Education Services (WES) highlights:

“[in Canada] nearly 47,000 international students enrolled in STEM fields in 2012, representing one-fourth of the total international student population. As compared to a 51 percent increase of international students in all programs, enrollments in STEM programs grew 60 percent from 2008 to 2012” (Chang, 2014).

While the gender disparities in STEM fields have been long documented through sociological research (Gayles, 2011; Bystydzienski & Bird, 2006), my sample also reflects an additional tangent of the recorded gender gap, namely the underrepresentation of women in higher academic programs. Of the 23 undergraduates participating, 20 were female, while of the 12 PhDs candidates participating, only three were female, reflecting

the reality that there are fewer female PhD students across all fields in general in Canada, and that this trend is exacerbated amongst international students (McMullen & Elias, 2011). Potential reasons for the disparity can be found in all data analysis chapters, which illustrate that women's international education journeys are overall more challenging and held to different standards than men's.

1.2.1.5. Immigration Status

Because recruitment relied on self-identification of students as part of the 'international student' category, the immigration statuses of participants vary. The majority of the participants, 93 percent, held student visas at the time of their interviews. Of these, four participants had already sent their applications for permanent residence and another six participants were actively gathering documents for an imminent application. One had gone through Provincial Nominee Programs, but most were applying directly through the Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP) or the Canadian Experience Class (CEC). In addition, three participants had already obtained their permanent residence status (PR), while two participants were already Canadian citizens. A detailed discussion of the immigration pathways of participants will unfold in Chapter Four.

1.2.1.6. Social Background

International students have been largely normalized as a privileged group, assumed to originate from social upper-middle class backgrounds. Ethnographic research from the 1980s and 1990s certainly supports the image of the young elite globetrotter in search of brand-name international education (King & Ruiz-Gelices, 2003; Ong, 1999).

However, as current studies of international students reveal, the recent expansion of this migration category has significantly transformed its demographic to include, in growing numbers, students who overcome significant economic challenges to cross borders for education (Bass, 2013; Fong, 2011).

In my sample, 19 participants (26 percent), originating from the USA, South America, Asia, the Caribbean and Africa, came from families where parents did not have post-secondary education, with some parents never finishing high school. The majority of these parents held working class jobs – taxi drivers, postmen, factory workers or are farmers. In two such families, both Chinese, the parents had created successful businesses and had been able to elevate the family’s financial welfare to the point where participants described their economic status as ‘well off’, but the rest of the students in this category described their background as very humble. In contrast, only four other students, originating from China and South America, came from remarkably privileged, upper-middle class families, based on indicators such as parents’ professional careers, financial stability growing up, participation in class-marker activities, such as conspicuous consumption, frequent international travel and vacations, as well as the amount of money they had as allowances in Canada.

However, the majority of students in my sample, 49 participants (68 percent), came from middle-class families, with at least one parent having attained a post-secondary university degree and working as a professional. My respondents tended to come from families who owned their homes but were concerned and at times strained about finances. Travel abroad while growing up was often described as a luxury, for a few occurring rarely, for most not at all. However, families would strategically invest in

education rather than spend on consumer goods and vacations. The priority given to education spending and its role in shaping participants' identities and migration routes will constitute a main theme of this thesis.

1.2.1.7. Note on Confidentiality

Throughout this dissertation, most participants' countries of origin and cities of destination are kept private, although most interviews were conducted in Halifax. When a local difference colors an experience, that difference may be highlighted as needed, but all interview data is recorded as being conducted in *the Atlantic region*.

Because of the diversity of countries of origin in the sample, and the reality that often a participant was one of very few students from a particular country to study in a particular city in Atlantic Canada, I generally found it more appropriate to group participants based on geographic regions and will describe participants' origins throughout the study mainly in terms of such regions of origin, rather than identifying specific countries. I am aware that in doing so, I gloss over significant diversity. However, this approach positions the study to speak to international students' shared identity across national backgrounds (Wimmer, 2007; Glick Schiller, 2007). As well, this approach allows me to add yet another layer of confidentiality to participants' identities. For similar reasons, all participants have been given pseudonyms, and in most cases these pseudonyms are of Anglo-American origin in order to keep national origins private.

I make an exception for participants from China. As such, I identify them as a distinct national group because the number of students from this country is greater than from any other country in Canada and the Atlantic region. The number of students from

China is also greater than any other nationality on all campuses I conducted interviews in and this group is well represented in the study sample, accounting for 32 percent of all participants. Therefore, this national origin is not a revealing demographic factor in the context of this study. At random, some Chinese participants were given Anglo pseudonyms, while others were given Chinese pseudonyms to illustrate the reality that some Chinese students adopt Anglo nicknames through processes described in some detail in Chapter Three.

1.2.2. The Researcher As Insider

While the way social scientists ask questions is imperatively important in framing the answers received, my fieldwork also suggests that who the researcher is perceived to be in the field also impacts these answers. I came to Canada as an international student, but I did not recognize my experiences to have a strong potential basis in directing my methodology at that time. My understandings of *international students* at the start of this project were largely directed by policy and media reporting on features that my work eventually contested, such as notable wealth and class privilege, transient sojourns to Canada and thus a detached attitude towards local community matters, and general disinterest in settlement in regions such as Atlantic Canada due to the size of urban centers and the lack of local attractions. I did not embody these features myself, but nonetheless suspected they were possibly shared by *other* international students due to their overwhelming prominence in public debates, such as the ones to be reviewed in Chapter Two.

In my fieldwork, I did not make it a point to share my ‘international student’ identity in the recruitment of my participants. However, I was always struck at their ability to immediately recognize me as a member of their community at all locations in my fieldwork, and even as I was sharing my findings at conferences across Canada. Initially I suspected this was because Halifax is after all a small urban center, and some of my participants might have known somebody who knew me and could have filled them in on my international background. I knew this had happened on a few occasions so extrapolated that my identity as an international student was evident due to such ties. However, as it kept happening throughout the region, it became a part of fieldwork. Notably, my participants’ ability to recognize me either as international, or Canadian, also had strong racial and ethnic components. As such, my accent was often spotted by fellow Europeans. Meanwhile, on some occasions American students assumed I too was American due to my ambiguous accent, while some Middle Easterners and most Chinese students assumed I was Canadian.

Participants’ perception of my identity was not a topic of discussion I encouraged, but it would often inadvertently come up. Europeans would ask if I visited cities they lived in or visited themselves, some intent on common reminiscing on ‘our European days’ or shared views I was meant to understand as ‘our European views’. Similarly, Americans would ask about my origins, one adding that my accent reminded them of a California accent. Meanwhile, Chinese students often framed their answers using the words ‘you Canadians...’. Faced with their assumptions, I would try to set the record straight, explaining my origins.

I immediately noticed however that once such records were straightened, it generally allowed my participants to be more at ease with sharing the challenges they were experiencing in Canada. Some participants actually explained that they had until that point refrained from sharing racist or discriminatory incidents for fear they would offend me as a Canadian, while others indicated they felt overall more at ease that I was a fellow migrant students and thus could understand a dimension of their life that is transnational, a dimension I too shared and inhabited in my own life. Many would add ‘you know what I mean’, following an emotional description of leaving a parent behind at an airport, tears in their eyes, not knowing when a next reunion would occur, or a Skype conversation with an aging grandparent who acted as a primary care giver growing up, or a sibling or good friend inquiring about the hardships of life in Canada, both participant and I holding back tears as we relived individual, yet deeply shared moments. The power of these moments was made even stronger by their cross-cultural nature. I did not interview any students who shared my nationality, and yet it seemed all students I interviewed shared much in common with me. However, there was also a wealth of difference.

As such, I always made a point of encouraging participants to articulate their experiences as much as possible during interviews, so as not to rely on my interpretation of their words and thus avoid unrealistic assumptions. I found that their emerging articulations were much more powerful, straightforward and clearer than any of my own ideas. Such instances highlighted the power of having somebody ask open-ended questions about oneself. I had never gone through this exercise for my own experiences as a migrant, and thus they remain largely unexamined. In contrast, my participants spent

an hour or more reflecting, articulating and sharing their experiences, recounting them, examining them and evaluating them. I, on the other hand, listened, and tried to interject only minimally. This practice continued through my data analysis, as I was intent, and indeed more comfortable, keeping my own views on the subject researched as separate from the data at hand. In this way, I felt more confident that my ability to measure emerging themes was not impacted by my own experiences.

Much has been written about the implications of *living the research* (Wickramasinghe, 2010; Sprague, 2005; Fonow & Cook, 1991). While some have even argued that objectivity and neutrality are not realistic assets of ethnographic research in general (Hughes, 1980), most studies on this topic have pointed to advantages and disadvantages of both *outsider* and *insider* status in the research field. In reading such reviews, I became increasingly ambiguous about my own status as insider or outsider in my fieldwork. To begin with, I did not share national identities with any of my participants, nor was it always clear to either researcher or participant how to interpret the common bond of being international students together. Arguably, my insider status was limited to that of any researcher engaged in the study of a professional community familiar to them.

However, it is of note that the vast majority of ethnographic accounts in this field to date emerged from scholars who were in some ways insiders for the populations they researched. Basak Bilecen, the author of the most recent study on international students, is a fellow international student. Michiel Bass, the author of an ethnography on Indian international students in Australia, was inspired to pursue this topic at a time when his romantic partner was an Indian international student in Australia, and Baas himself

became an international student in Australia to do the research (p. 211). Vanessa Fong, whose study documents Chinese migrants studying around the world, explained how she experienced insider status as a Chinese migrant returnee interacting with fellow Chinese migrants (p. 27).

I highlight this reality as it serves as a compelling testimony of the way research is in and of itself a way to highlight the challenges encountered by populations we feel connected to, attempting to make sense of larger problems that stem from meaningful experiences. By the same token, given the presence and contributions of international students to Canadian campuses, I anticipate and celebrate a swelling of such studies from more perspectives, and hope my work can serve to inspire further dialogue.

1.2.3. Atlantic Canada As The Study Site

The ability to document the nuanced demographic shifts of international students' populations, vital to understanding new realities for global education migration, is contingent on locating this study outside global urban hubs previously associated with international education in Canada, such as Montreal, Toronto or Vancouver. The decision to go beyond such large urban centers responds to the need for explorations of the widening geographic margins of the international education trade, as they are the fastest expanding segments of this market (King & Raghuram, 2013; Baas, 2012; Fong, 2011).

In light of these research objectives, Atlantic Canada constitutes an ideal site for my research because this region currently hosts one of the fastest-growing international student populations in Canada outside the large urban centers of Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver (CIC facts and Figures Table 25, 2013).

Most international students in the Atlantic region study and live in the urban centers that also constitute the region's four provincial capitals of Halifax, Nova Scotia (hosts 6,061 students), Fredericton, New Brunswick (1,294 students), Saint John's, Newfoundland (746 students) and Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island (725 students) (CIC Facts and Figures, 2011 – CIC Facts and Figure 2013 no longer provides an 'urban center' category). As such, the interview distribution of this study – 65 percent in Halifax and 35 percent distributed amongst the other three provincial capitals – reflects the regional demographic distribution.

1.2.3.1. Halifax, Nova Scotia: A Growing Hub of Post-Secondary Internationalization

Most students in this study experienced Canada in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The Halifax Regional Municipality has a population of about 400,000 (Statistics Canada, 2015). The city's population has a median age of 39 years of age, which is increasing at a faster rate than the rest of the Atlantic region, yet at 4.7 percent, it is still below the national population growth rate of 5.9 percent (Felming, 2012). Ninety-one percent of Halifax's population list English as their first language and only 7.5 percent self-identify as a visible minority.

As of 2013, most immigrants in the Atlantic region have landed in Halifax in the past decades, although in recent years other Atlantic capitals have recorded rivalling numbers. Moreover, less than half of newcomers settle in the city in the long term, a trend shared throughout the region (Akbari, 2013). Halifax hosts six of Nova Scotia's eleven universities, as well as three campuses of Nova Scotia's Community College. About 30,000 students are enrolled at these post-secondary institutions, more than 20

percent of them international (Williams, 2012). As previously highlighted, two universities in Halifax have recently celebrated internationalization benchmarks. Saint Mary's University is the current national leader as the university with most international students as a percentage of the student body – 30 percent, compared to the national average of 8 percent. As well, in 2015 Dalhousie University was named 95th most international university in the world in a ranking produced by the Times Higher Education (Parr, 2015).

Most up to date government statistics do not capture the nationalities of international students studying in Halifax. However, top five countries of origin for the province of Nova Scotia in 2014 were China, with about 50 percent, and USA, Saudi Arabia, Bermuda and India, with about 10 percent each (MHEC, 2015). A more detailed discussion about the regional and municipal trends that attract students to Halifax and the Atlantic region can be found in Chapter Five.

1.2.3.2. The Atlantic Region: Centers of Post-Secondary Internationalization and Reflections on the Cohesiveness of the 'Atlantic Region'

The decision to report on findings from secondary locations in my study aligns with previously outlined research objectives. To begin with, universities in these unassuming urban centers, with populations of under 100,000, are experiencing some of the fastest growth rates in terms of international enrollments in Canada. For example, Charlottetown, PEI, has gone from hosting 100 international students to approximately 800 students in a matter of 5 years, from 2006 to 2011 (MHEC, 2015).

As well, these urban centers are largely experiencing the same demographic realities as encountered in Halifax, defined by an aging and shrinking population, low

ethnic and racial diversity, with population growth and immigration settlement rates lagging significantly below national averages. As Haan (2014) concludes, “from a demographic perspective, the Atlantic provinces are strikingly similar. Demographically, we are one” (slide 3). In consequence, incoming students take on added value for all provinces included in the study, promising a new diversity infused by youth, education and high skills.

Moreover, reflecting complex multi-layered negotiations between provincial, inter-provincial and federal agencies, the Atlantic provinces often share common strategies, programs and funder streams when it comes to international recruitment and settlement efforts of international students. Notable actors operate across provincial lines, as many initiatives share regional leadership. For example, the Atlantic Association of Universities (AAU), a voluntary membership association that unites 16 universities and operates on membership funds, has been active in reporting on the regional benefits of international students before and after graduation, framing regional agendas and policy directions across provincial lines (AAU, 2013; 2010; 2009). The AAU had suggested a regional international education brand in 2010, although the proposed project has not been finalized to date. As well, many recent international recruitment efforts made by universities across the region have been funded by the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), which is a federal government agency mandated with the economic development of the Atlantic region (University of Prince Edward Island News, 2012; Saint Mary’s University News, 2012).

Tuition levels and living costs across locations are also comparable, and are certainly distinct from the education costs accrued by international students in bigger

Canadian urban centers. As such, most universities in Atlantic Canada are situated at the lower end of the national spectrum, with tuition hovering at around \$10,000 for international students in Arts programs. Comparatively, the University of Toronto and the University of British Columbia charge international students up to \$30,000 for Arts degrees (Universities Canada, 2015).

As well, my study is informed in its regional outlook by ongoing migration research that regards the Atlantic region as distinctive in the broader Canadian context and thus a viable geographic basis for a cohesive methodological framework (Haan, 2014; Akbari, 2013; Ramos & Yoshida, 2011; Tastsoglou & Jaya, 2011; Reid, & Savoie, 2011; Thornton, 1985).

As a general note to be developed in more detail in Chapter Five, my data also supports a regional outlook. Students commonly tended to conflate the geography of Atlantic Canada into a single location, the one they studied in, even as interview questions were designed to explore and highlight differences that make each study location unique. More specifically, participants were asked about their perceptions of language and population diversity and urban center size (informed by methodologies developed by Siddiq et al., 2010; Belkhodja, 2009; Akbari, 2008) as well as the availability of adequate housing, schooling, health and faith services, entertainment and transportation (public transportation, road networks, proximity to airports etc.), which allow for the creation of desirable lifestyles in Canada (Tamang, 2011). Additionally, the localized presence of culturally-specific businesses and service sectors (restaurants, beauty parlors, locations of worship) as well as the presence of internationally trusted

brands and potential employers were also explored as they have also been found to color migration decisions and experiences (Trotter, 2011; Bohonos, 2009).

However, these specific factors, with the potential to make up substantial differences in the daily lives of participants at each of the four study locations, were not identified by the students as uniquely noteworthy at any one location. Instead, participants tended to conflate the realities they encountered in Atlantic Canada and often juxtaposed them to personal or recounted experiences of life and opportunities in larger urban centers such as Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver or Calgary.

Across study locations, students from certain ethnicities, mainly those from China and certain countries of the Middle East, reported encountering more established ethnic communities, and matching proliferations of ethnic products, markets, or congregation venues, at all four urban centers. Conversely, participants who were amongst very few co-nationals on and off campus, were often similarly unique across the region.

This is not to suggest that these differences do not exist, but rather that the existing differences did not seem to decisively impact the experience of incoming students in ways unique to a particular urban location in Atlantic Canada. As such, participants keen on life in large urban centers listed above were likely to describe urban centers in the Atlantic region as too small, regardless of whether they studied in Halifax or Charlottetown. Similarly, participants interested in settlement in the Atlantic region were most likely to want to settle in their province of graduation.

Notably however, my study does not capture the realities experienced by international students studying at rural locations, nor does it reach the Francophone diversity experienced in regional centers such as Moncton, New Brunswick. This urban

center, in a constitutionally bi-lingual province, accounts for a demographic of immigrants and international students that is significantly different from the one I encountered in the primarily Anglophone centers that are part of my study².

Nonetheless, I am motivated to conceptually frame my study site as ‘the Atlantic region’, because Halifax, Charlottetown, Fredericton and Saint John’s, much like many other many other Anglophone second-tier urban centers around Canada, have not yet been charted as part of the international education map, and little is known about how and why international students from around the world make their way to such locations and what experiences and impacts emerge from this migration both for the students and their host cities. Moreover, there are indications that such urban centers attract a different and expanding demographic of international students in dire need of exploration because they are potentially most vulnerable (Fong, 2011). Through widening my study site, I can thus better explore common points that attract international students to these second-tire locations, as well as investigate the demographic realities of the incoming students across the different locations.

However, situating my study site within a regional unit has its theoretical and practical challenges. As such, my study depicts Atlantic Canada as a geo-political abstraction constructed on currently shared agenda setting but also encompassing

² Those newcomers often originate from member countries of La Francophonie, testimony to Franco-centric colonial histories and current immigration programs designed to sustain the Francophone population in this province. Such programs impact international students by eliminating the language barrier that most other international students experience in Anglophone centers as members of the ESL community. Moreover, Francophone students have other tuition regulations that reduce the burden of differential fees to some extent. For those reasons, and because my French was not up to par to conduct a series of interviews, this diversity is not reflected in this study.

significant points of divergence, evoking Massey (1988) and Allen's work (1998) that contextualize *the region* as infused with ongoing, converging and diverging social, economic and political processes shaped through time and informed by long histories of power relationships, histories that are not part of this study.

CHAPTER 2: CLASS, EDUCATION AND MIGRATION IN CANADA

In the past decade, Canada has experienced a significant expansion of its share of the international education market, going from attracting two percent of the global population of students on the move in 2000 (The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2010, p. 304) to over six percent in 2012 (OECD, 2013a, p. 305). In fact, from 1980 to 2008, Canada's intake of international students had already increased almost 400 percent (Moore, 2008, p. 2), and this group currently accounts for more than eight percent of all university enrolments nationally (McMullen & Ellias, 2011). As well, higher education now makes up Canada's eighth largest export sector, and the largest Canadian export to China, bringing in almost eight billion Canadian Dollars in yearly revenue (Horvath, 2012).

While these numbers make it clear that higher education is now a booming economic sector for Canada, historically, and through the years when my research unfolded, public debates and regulatory approaches regarding the presence and added value of international students for Canada on and off the university campus have been fraught with significant ambivalence. This chapter offers some perspective on ongoing media and academic debates and policy directions which have, in the last decades, positioned international education as a viable step towards more permanent migration routes and have bundled within Canada's brand of international education unique forms of cultural capital. More than the review of current affairs, I attempt to situate these debates – and the new realities they bring about – within relevant histories of education and immigration in Canada, thus further unpack the meanings of diversity on the Canadian campus.

The chapter also serves to establish a backdrop for the unfolding of my research in Atlantic Canada. It allows for an understanding of possible motivations for international families and students eager to study in Canada, which are shown in further chapters to reflect historically established hegemonic values of Anglo-American degrees, additionally linked to historical and immediate immigration prospects. Ultimately, such emerging aspirations, while holding the potential to alter students' positions within transnational social fields, bring in vulnerabilities, growing pressures and responsibilities for international students. These emerging realities constitute the themes of the remaining chapters of the thesis.

Canada's recently accelerated internationalization milestones were made possible by the confluence of federal, provincial and institutional activities responding to changes in both immigration and education sectors, most driven by larger economic and demographic challenges for Canada. This chapter provides a review of the multiple actors involved and their mandated roles in the attraction and retention of international students. However, in order to contextualize unfolding results, I start this section with a summary of current national and regional points of view, made available to wide audiences by Canadian and international media outlets. This media review serves not only as an indication of national and regional agenda setting, but also provides an idea of what participants and their families likely came across in the media regarding their migration category before and after arriving in Canada – thus maybe gaining a sense of the landscape to be navigated before and after arrival in Canada.

2.0.1. Public Descriptions Of International Students In Canada: Dissonant Voices

In 2011, as I was preparing my doctoral proposal defense, a photo of a Mongolian international student sharing a smile with then-Minister of immigration, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Jason Kenney appeared above the front fold of the *Toronto Star* (Appendix Image 1). The student, holding a banner that read “Attracting Top Talent” in bold letters, was described in the article as “the future of Canada’s immigration,” a depiction the ideal Canadian immigrant – young, educated in Canada, and already gainfully employed at the time of obtaining permanent status (Keung, 2011, para. 11).

This picture became emblematic of the growing importance of international students for Canada’s immigration system. Amplifying its reach, it circulated widely through national and international news outlets and blogs (Mosaic Edition, 2011; O Canada, 2011; Canada Bound Immigrant, 2011). An electronic search of the image, using the search engine Google, reveals it made its way around the world on sites covering Canada’s immigration shifts in a multitude of languages, including French, Portuguese, Turkish, Persian and Mandarin. A year later, then-Minister Kenny attempted to replicate the image by personally welcoming a second international student, this time a young man from India, to permanent residence status in Canada (Image 2, Appendix). In his speech for this occasion, Minister Kenney noted:

“All of our research tells us that immigrants who have Canadian university degrees or diplomas and Canadian work experience and who are younger and who have higher levels of English or French language proficiency are those who succeed the most in terms of their economic opportunity in Canada... We invite those brilliant young foreign students, who have completed at least a two-year degree or diploma and one year of work in Canada, to stay as permanent residents... [This] is the future of Canada’s immigration program, welcoming bright young people from around the world who have already shown their initiative, drive and enterprise by at a young age doing their research all around the world and choosing Canada as the best country to be coming here and

investing in a higher education in our good colleges and universities, doing well in school, finding a job, finding an employer who likes them... They won't be going through any credential recognition gap. They have improved or perfected their English or French language skills. They have work experience, which of course, the absence of which is the key hurdle for immigrants to find jobs in Canada. In other words, they are set for success!" (CIC speaking notes for Minister Jason Kenney, 2012).

The outlined direction of prioritizing students as immigrants coincided with years of record recruitment of international students to Canada. While between 2004 and 2008, the growth rate for this demographic was at 17.81 percent, between 2009 and 2013, the growth rate doubled to 31.85 percent. As well, students' transitions through various statuses swelled during this period. While in 2003 only about 7,000 international students held post-graduation work permits, by 2013, over 70,000 had obtained a work permit. Moreover, in 2009, close to 13,000 international students obtained PR status, compared to the recorded transition of only about 4,000 in 2003 (Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Services Agencies of BC [AMSSA] Information Sheet, 2013).

The growing demographic of international graduates with Canadian credentials and the right to work in Canada was especially celebrated in the Atlantic region as a promising solution to looming demographic and economic challenges (Denton, Feaver & Spencer, 2009). Local media ran stories such as 'International Students Offer Hope to Employers' (CBC New Brunswick, 2011) and a regional report entitled "Immigration and Universities in Atlantic Canada: A Marriage Made in Heaven" (AAU, 2013) highlighted the promising long-term demographic and economic impacts of international students for the region.

At the time the AAU was releasing the aforementioned report, the federal government had noted its intention of accelerated recruitment of international students to Canada. The intention was outlined in a 2012 federal report released by Canada's then-

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development [DFATD], Ed Fast. The report, entitled “International Education: A Key Driver of Canada’s Future Prosperity” announced the government’s commitment to doubling the intake of international students within the decade (DFATD, 2012). National and international media outlets highlighted the proposed direction with such articles as ‘Canada Aims to Woo International Students’, a story that ran prominently, both in the New York Times and the International Herald Tribune (Smith, 2013). National media continued to report on the ambitious recruitment goals under titles such as ‘Canada Wants to Double Its International Student Body: The Federal Government Plans to Attract More Than 450,000 International Students by 2022’ (Purdi & Heon, 2014).

On the heels of the report and through its ongoing media coverage, Citizenship and Immigration Canada [CIC] announced that it would increase surveillance for the swelling numbers of students. New policies, initiated in 2013, require universities to report on international students’ attendance and were debuted in national media under such titles as ‘Canada May Limit Study Permits And Visas of Foreign Students: Ottawa Wants to Weed Out ‘Disingenuous’ Foreign Students Who Use A Student Visa As A Back Door to Immigration’ in the Toronto Star (Keung, 2012). CIC spokesperson Nancy Caron was quoted in the article as noting:

“The proposed regulatory changes would ensure that study permit holders are genuine students by requiring students to enroll in and actively pursue a course or program of study after arrival in Canada... Disingenuous study permit holders use their study permit as a primary means to gain full access to the Canadian labour market” (para. 2-5).

Through the changes, the Atlantic region continued to highlight international graduates’ favorable position when it comes to regional settlement. In 2014, the Nova Scotia Office

of Immigration announced changes to its Nominee program – a provincially run pathway to permanent status – to the CBC under the headline ‘Change Opens New Door For International Grads’ (Colley, 2014). However, nationally, by 2015, reporters covering changes coming from the CIC were running with titles such as ‘International Students in Limbo Under New Immigration System Changes’ (Choise, 2015) or ‘Foreign Students Left Behind by Express Entry’ (Keung, 2015b). These news stories reflect ongoing immigration changes mainly regarding the introduction of a new application streaming system entitled Express Entry. Requiring English language testing and additional employment conditions, the new system has already proven less favorable to students’ transitions to permanent residence status (Mas, 2016). Moreover, follow-up articles such as ‘Foreign Students Denied Work Permits Over ‘Distance Learning’: Taking Too Many Online Courses at Niagara College Means At Least 50 Students Will Miss Out On The Coveted Post-Graduate Work Permit’ (Keung, 2015a), highlight additional caveats to students’ desirability as immigrants in the Canadian context.

Furthermore, while international student numbers grew on and off campus, so did the critical commentary about their presence in Canada’s university classrooms. In 2010, Maclean’s Magazine published an article entitled ‘Too Asian? Some Frosh Don’t Want to Study at an Asian University’ (Findlay & Köhler, 2010), which lamented the loss of ‘Canadian’ higher education values due to the presence, in growing numbers, of over-competitive and high academically achieving Asian students. In 2013, *University Affairs* printed ‘Internationalizing the Canadian Campus: ESL Students and the Erosion of Higher Education’, an opinion piece penned by two Canadian university professors who argue that international students have “insufficient abilities in English or that their

academic and cultural preparedness is not up to speed” (Friesen & Keeney, 2013, para. 3). These students are thus threatening the standards of Canadian academia. Offering yet another perspective on the issue of campus support, a Toronto Star 2014 article asks in its title ‘International Students Or ‘Cash Cows’? These Global Whiz Kids Pay Three Or Four Times More Tuition Than Their Ontario Peers, But Are They Getting the Cultural Support and Health Services They Need?’ (Brown, 2014).

On the whole, these news stories capture the multiple voices adding input and framing students’ presence and potential for Canada. Together they appear dissonant, often even contradictory – international students are simultaneously the ‘future of Canadian immigration’, especially for regions in demographic crisis such as Atlantic Canada, and ‘disingenuous migrants’ looking for short cuts through Canada’s immigration system. Students are encouraged to gather Canadian work experience so as to contribute to the Canadian economy and gain experience counting towards permanent pathways, but are criminalized and under surveillance for trying to work too much. This group of migrants is simultaneously overly academic and a threat to Canada’s high academic standards. Contributions of new international groups are also described in oscillation, between infusers of cash in a struggling higher education sector and a welcome addition of multicultural wealth on the university campus. These multiple and contradictory voices accurately capture Canada’s haphazard approach when it comes to international education. They also speak to the nuances of capital embedded within Canadian degrees for international students. The remainder of this chapter is dedicated to tracking and connecting these interconnected threads.

Previous studies have critically illustrated Canada's lack of a cohesive strategy concerning international students (Waters, 2008; Sidhu, 2006). Due to the country's government organization, responsibilities regarding international education – concerning multiple governance fields including education, trade and immigration – are split between federal and provincial levels, as well as institutional actors such as universities, private recruiters and so on.

The federal government holds authority over significant sectors such as immigration policy – including study visas and ultimate immigration decisions, as well as international policy and trade. Provincial governments hold responsibility over education management and funding, as well as some responsibilities over immigration in accordance with federal/provincial agreements (Government of Canada, 2010). In addition, education providers such as school boards, community colleges and universities each mandate the availability of places for international students within their institutional reach, as well as the price of available spots. Each coordinates their own internationalization projects, including international recruitment efforts, in collaboration with private recruitment agents, and some are operating venues abroad. In turn, some of these institutional projects require or attract the support of provincial or federal government bodies that provide accreditations and/or funding for internationalization efforts. The sections that follow in this chapter present a further breakdown of roles and responsibilities in the education and immigration sectors of Canada.

2.1. Federal, Provincial, Institutional: Negotiating Education Internationalization

Canada's history of national formation has occurred as such that the federal government does not hold a direct role in managing the country's education. Elementary, secondary and post-secondary sectors come under the jurisdiction of the education departments or ministries of each province or territory. The exclusive rights of provinces to pass education laws are outlined by Section 93 of the Constitutional Act of 1982, formerly the British North America Act of 1867. In accordance with these documents, which are the result of Canada's pre-confederation history, provincial governments direct federal funding as they see fit for such matters as curricular content, accreditation and administration of education institutions (Gidney & Millar, 2012). In turn, post-secondary institutions receive funding from provincial governments based on individual agreements that evaluate operating costs and enrolments (O'Neill, 2010).

In this set-up, and more specifically in matters of education internationalization, the federal government has been historically involved in three main areas: 1) facilitating international recruitment by providing coordination between multi-level actors on a national scale and providing outlets for information to international students around the world; 2) student screening at borders, since federal agents are responsible for granting entry visas and study permits and 3) most recently, accrediting education institutions that can receive international students. Through the decades, the federal government has alternated its focus between its three main roles of attraction, screening and surveillance in the context of international education, the shifts reflecting the changing conceptualizations of this migration category through time.

2.1.1. Historical Perspectives: The 1950s

Historically, the Canadian federal government has supported the attraction of international students in ways that reflected and furthered its international political agenda. For example, through the Cold War, Canada's federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development [DFATD] led the nation's participation and financial support for the Colombo Plan for Co-operative Economic Development in South and Southeast Asia, an economic development initiative designed to keep communist influences at bay in countries relevant to Commonwealth leaders. Similar strategic political and economic considerations also impacted Canada's participation in programs such as the West Indies Program, The Canadian Commonwealth Scholarship, the Commonwealth Technical Assistance Program and Fellowship Program for Educational Assistance for the French-Speaking States of Africa, all of which held strong international education components (Chira, 2008; Sidhu, 2006; Cameron, 2006). These programs saw students from all over the world arrive in Canada for education through the 1950s and to the 1970s, although in limited numbers and with the understanding that they will return to home countries post-graduation (Cameron, 2006; McAllister, 1988).

Through the 1980s, the federally funded Canadian International Development Agency [CIDA] also engaged in a variety of international education programs that brought international students to Canada in the name of international development. In partnership with World University Service of Canada [WUSC] – formerly International Student Services, a non-profit organization for international development – CIDA supported such programs as the International Student Management Program (initiated in 1981) and other similar projects that saw several thousand students get degrees in Canada

(WUSC, 2012). Also in the name of humanitarian aid, CIDA partnered with Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Canada [CIC] to fund WUSC's Student Refugee Program, which started in 1978 (WUSC, 2012). The exception amongst the other types of scholarships presented here, this program granted refugee students a path towards Canadian citizenship post-graduation.

2.1.2. Neoliberalization And Deregulation: The 1990s

While humanitarian support remained on the federal budget sheet through the 1990s, a new era of neoliberal governance spurred a different approach to federal support for international education opportunities in Canada. According to Harvey (2007), as a principle of governance, neoliberalism relies on:

“a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. The state has to guarantee, for example, the quality and integrity of money. It must also set up those military, defense, police, and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights and to guarantee, by force if need be, the proper functioning of markets. Furthermore, if markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, health care, social security, or environmental pollution) then they must be created, by state action if necessary. But beyond these tasks the state should not venture. State interventions in markets (once created) must be kept to a bare minimum because, according to the theory, the state cannot possibly possess enough information to second-guess market signals (prices) and because powerful interest groups will inevitably distort and bias state interventions (particularly in democracies) for their own benefit” (p. 2).

As Harvey (2007) notes, the general rule of neoliberal governance dictates that national governments should strive to create new markets from formerly economically-draining sectors to the national economy, including education, and then eventually limit governmental management of those markets. The end goal is to allow private actors to

take over these spaces. Harvey (2007) goes on to show how principles of neoliberalism became pervasive in government policies adopted in the 1980s and 1990s in the UK and the US, in response to a shared economic downturn and the rise to power of fiscally conservative governments in those nations.

Canada was also impacted by the economic recession affecting those nations (Cross & Bergevin, 2012). According to Waters (2008), this spurred Canada's neoliberalization of a variety of sectors, including education. She argues:

“The sea change in Canadian national education occurred in the late 1980s as a result of the publication of two major reports that criticized the current system (Radwanski, 1987; Sullivan, 1988; both cited in Mitchell 2003). They called for a more practical, business oriented approach to learning, geared towards success in the global economy and backed by the Progressive Conservative Government in the 1990s. The move from a ‘Keynesyan welfare state paradigm’ to a ‘neoliberal economic model’ in Canada can be traced to the 1993 general election and, in particular, the Social Security Reform introduced in 1994, which instigated a C\$2 billion reduction in federal government spending on higher education and paved the way to additional provincial level retraction” (Chapter 2, Section 2, para. 1).

In the context of international education, the neoliberal ‘sea change’ brought about renewed federal attention towards education opportunities for international students in Canada, matched by an expanding federal budget for international recruitment. Given the nature of the federal task at hand – namely to expand Canada's share of the international education market – the DFATD became a federal frontrunner in internationalization activities. While telltale signs of this sector's neoliberalization under the leadership of the DFATD have been significantly documented in academic literature for over a decade (Knight, 2011; Waters, 2008; Lewis, 2008; Knight, 2006; Potter 2002), I would like to draw attention here to some specific examples that are not only indicative of the dynamic interplay between multiple levels and actors engaged in international

education in Canada over time, but also emerge in future chapters of this dissertation as having a direct impact on the participants in this study.

The first is the development and dissolution of the Canadian Education Centers Network [CECN], whose eventual demise left behind a patchwork of information gaps, which participants in this study attested to. The second is the 2001 Trade delegation to China that indicated increased interest in the direct export of the Canadian model of education as a packaged good to Chinese public and for-profit education institutions. This move endorsed the rapid development of education programs now often seen as pre-requisite to higher education in Canada, which also affected students in this study. Both examples speak to the DFATD's management of internationalization opportunities, and illustrate how the arch of its activities significantly matches the outlined principles of governmental neoliberal leadership towards deregulation and devolution.

The first example that illustrates this arch is encapsulated by the rise and fall of the Canadian Education Centers Network [CECN]. In 1995, the DFATD and CIDA joined forces with the CIC to create the CECN. Designed to promote Canada as a study destination by sustaining venues and staff that would act as information hubs abroad, this initiative began as publicly funded. The DFATD and various federal agencies contributed C\$16 million to the network's establishment (Waters, 2008, Chapter 2, Section 3, para. 10). By the time of Waters's study was completed in 2006, the CECN had become a non-profit private enterprise, in what Waters deemed "characteristic of the blurring of public and private sectors under the directive of neoliberalism" (2008, Chapter 2, Section 3, para. 6). Speaking to a next phase neoliberal progression, the CECN would eventually

close altogether in 2009, its unraveling marking a new era not only for the CECN, but also of its main founding partners – the DFATD, CIDA and the CIC.

Of the CECN closure, a contributor to Maclean's Magazine notes:

“[T]he CECN's problem was that fewer and fewer educational institutions were buying its services. Many larger schools conduct their own international recruiting and didn't need or want CECN's help. In other words, this story may just be a run of the mill case of one business's failure to offer the right service at the right price, rather than some wider systemic failure...I'm also told that part of the reason the CECN had a tough go of it is that its operation involved running and staffing more than a dozen offices around the world. The idea was that local students with questions about Canadian education would be able to receive help and advice at those offices. But that has to have been a very expensive undertaking. Universities and colleges weren't willing to kick in enough cash to support that and everything else the CECN was doing and there may be a good reason for that: foreign students can get all of the information they need on the internet, at school websites and so on” (Keller, 2009, para. 3).

In other words, in this sector, neoliberal devolution has been achieved in that individual institutional actors – universities and colleges – now conduct their international recruitment on their own, while the onus to find the correct information and stay informed has been shifted to the migrant student. This new process is not without its challenges, as this section will further explore.

Notably, the absence of clear information access is lamented by some students in my sample – their experiences addressed in Chapter Four (for one compelling testimony of the quest for information in South Asia, see Neal's account in that Chapter). These students point to the emerging gaps in information in ways that are nuanced by classed identities. As such, closing the CECN's doors was done with the expectation that students have access to technologies such as the Internet, as well as possess the communication skills to seek out the information themselves. The required levels of information access and communication skills imply significant financial and cultural capitals. These

assumptions prove untrue in some cases. Students' growing needs for support have contributed to a proliferation of private, for-profit agencies in students' countries of origin. This thriving private industry of international education consultants capitalizes on aspiring migrants, offering them the opportunity to leverage forms of capital that are easier to gain, for example, money, to acquire those harder to garner, such as knowledge of where to find education opportunities abroad. Particular instances are also addressed in Chapter Four (for an account of reasons to hire a private agency, see Bao-Yu's reasons in that Chapter).

In this new world, CIDA, also a federal partner in the CECN, and an active contributor to a variety of humanitarian programs since the 1950s, closed its own doors in 2013 under the leadership of the Conservative government. Notably, some of the programs it contributed to in recent history, such as the International Student Refugee, live on under privately operated umbrellas (WUSC, 2012).

While the DFATD may have shrunk its direct managerial capacity of international recruitment programs, it continues to work towards national coordination, for example by contributing C\$2 million³ towards the creation of a Canadian international education brand launched in 2008 and relaunched in 2016 with a slightly different logo (Council of Ministers of Education Canada, 2016). This government agency also sets national benchmarks for international recruitment, as outlined in the 2012 report (DFATD, 2012) that made a media splash for ambitiously aiming to double Canada's intake of international students within the decade, as described in the introduction of this chapter.

³ The branding exercise reportedly cost C\$3 million – the rest of the bill was covered by provincial governments. The exercise was frostily received by individual universities, as representatives reported they prefer to brand themselves (Scherf & Macpherson, 2008, p. 11).

The DFATD is also committed to support individual institutions in achieving international recruitment goals (DFATD, 2012). As such, the DFATD is currently a partner of more than a dozen multi-level public and private agencies working towards education internationalization in Canada. Those include, at the level of the provinces: the Council of Ministers of Education, the British Columbia Council for International Education; the Manitoba Council for International Education; the Canadian Association of Public Schools – International; and private organizations such as: the Canadian Bureau for International Education and the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (for a complete list of partners of the DFATD, see Global Affairs Canada, 2015).

The DFATD also routinely includes international education opportunities in its various trade agreements (for complete list, see Global Affairs Canada, 2015). Perhaps the most notable such agreement, as highlighted at the beginning of this section, occurred in 2001 under federal leadership, when Canada’s trade delegation to China “culminated in the official signing of contracts establishing joint venture education programs Sino-Canadian International College (SCIC) and Sino-Canadian International School (SCIS) with universities and government organizations in China” (Canadian Foundation Center for International Education [CFCIE], 2016). The CFCIE is a private for-profit Canadian organization “with the mission on the establishment of CFCIE's Chain Models of post-secondary and secondary level educational institutes across China” (CFCIE, 2016). This initiative is part of fostering a growing network of elementary and secondary schools and universities abroad, that follow Canadian curricula to varying degrees. Testimony to neoliberal roots that call for government/private partnerships, the schools’ establishment

was promoted by the federal government through trade agreements. Such agreements were in turn spearheaded by private agents across borders and practically achieved in collaboration with individual universities or provincial school boards, as well as with the involvement of private education providers. Moreover, those schools tend to act as ‘feeder schools’ for Canadian secondary and post-secondary institutions.

At the elementary and secondary levels, such schools are accredited by provincial school boards and are either managed by the boards or in partnership with international school boards or private agents at locations abroad. The faculty is made up of Canadian and local teachers, and the curricula reflect that of Canadian schools, complete with English instruction. As of 2016, there are 114 elementary and secondary schools in more than 20 countries that have been accredited by Canadian boards of education. Boards from all of Atlantic Canada’s provinces have accredited 36 of these schools. Of those, 29 are located in China, one in the Caribbean and one in South Asia (Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials [CICIC], 2016).

Illustrating the multi-level nature of setting up and operating such a school, a press release authored by the Nova Scotia Department of Education [NSDE] reads:

“Students halfway around the world will soon be learning about Joseph Howe and Bay of Fundy tides when seven schools in China begin using the Nova Scotia high school curriculum. Education Minister Angus MacIsaac and Ning Bai, president of Pattison Education Group of Vancouver, signed an agreement today, June 3, allowing the group to offer the Nova Scotia public education program at the schools. The program will be taught in English by Canadian certified teachers... Pattison Education Group operates Pattison College in Vancouver and has many agreements with Chinese schools and government. It is hoping to enroll about 100 students per school and begin offering some of Nova Scotia's curriculum as early as September. Students will follow the Nova Scotia program in English and also continue some studies in Chinese. Graduates of the schools will be the first to receive diplomas from both the governments of Nova Scotia and China. Students also have the option of spending a year in Nova Scotia as part of the province's international students program.... Foreign schools wishing to use

Nova Scotia's curriculum must meet the same high standards as schools in the province... Some of the Chinese schools are public while others are private... Agreements provide for an administrative fee to be paid to the Department of Education. Any profits gained are reinvested in the Nova Scotia public school system” (2003).

Such initiatives are particularly attractive to Canadian institutional education actors because they simultaneously alleviate demographic and economic challenges, often exacerbated in regions such as Atlantic Canada. International students are incorporated into shrinking Atlantic Canadian classrooms before, and hopefully after, graduation from secondary Sino-Canadian schools, while revenue from sharing curricula and teaching expertise is used to supplement the gaps left behind by shrinking budgets for education.

In my sample, 17 participants attended private Anglo-American international schools, some with Canadian curricula, while 14 additional participants spent at least one semester, but sometimes more than one year, and a few as many as four years of high school, studying in a country in the Global North during their secondary school years. Their stories and the aftermath of participation in such programs are addressed in Chapters Three and Four (a compelling personal account of transitioning from a Canadian international secondary school to a Canadian university is shared by Nuo in Chapter Four).

At the post-secondary level, similar economic and demographic pressures also make international students highly desirable, especially in regions such as the Atlantic, where the cohort of 17 to 29 year-olds is shrinking faster than in any other region of the country (MPHEC, 2016). Moreover, as indicated before in this Chapter, in Canada, post-secondary institutions receive funding from provincial governments based on operation costs and enrollment numbers. Tuition levels reflect provincial levels of contribution, and

their growth is generally capped as per provincial regulations. However, such caps do not apply for international students in most Canadian provinces, notably except Newfoundland and Labrador. As such, international students' tuition fees can help off-set university budgets and have been on the rise in the last decade. Statistics Canada records the trend in recent years as follows:

“Nationally, average tuition fees for international undergraduate students rose 6.5% to [C]\$21,932 in 2015/2016, following a 5.3% increase in 2014/2015. Newfoundland and Labrador was the lone province with no increase, as its tuition fee freeze included international students...Average tuition fees for international full-time students in graduate programs rose 3.2% to [C]\$14,350” (2016).

Newfoundland and Labrador was in the past advised by the province's Governor General to reconsider its tuition freeze, especially in light of growing numbers of international students (CBC Newfoundland and Labrador, 2014). However, in this province, as in the rest of the Atlantic region, comparably lower tuition costs constitute a significant recruitment advantage, and so tuition increases are somewhat of a balancing act for university administrations.

In this context, new international degree models are making headway, especially those that simultaneously speak to curricular exports, university recruitment challenges and keeping costs low for incoming students. Somewhat similar to secondary curricular exports described before, such models operate on the basis of X-Plus-Y university degree programs, whereby international students spend X years of their degrees in less expensive preparatory courses, often in countries of origin, where they enjoy Canadian expertise and additional English language training at a modest cost for an international degree, and the remaining Y years of their degree in Canada. At the end of such programs – which

generally take in total four years – the students receive a fully accredited Canadian degree.

These types of programs are highly attractive to Canadian universities because they guarantee a constant and predictable stream of international students, which is not the norm for yearly institutional recruitment efforts. Such arrangements are also financially convenient for students, who significantly reduce their tuition and living costs in Canada by spending fewer years fully enrolled and living abroad, yet receive a degree equivalent to four years of international study. However, such arrangements can expose institutions and students to the increasing pressures of deregulated markets, whereby some such programs emerge as highly reputable, while others have attracted significant criticism.

For example, Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia operates a Two-Plus-Two partnership with China's Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University (FAFU), part of the Sino- Canadian International College Project (FAFU, 2015). This program is orchestrated between a well-regarded Canadian academic department and its equivalent in China, which requires of students competitive results on the Gaokao. However, an arrangement whereby international students would be brought to Dalhousie's programs by the private, for-profit organization Navitas, initially endorsed by the university's administration as a viable way for the institution to gain access to a steady stream of international students, enjoyed less success. The proposal was met with significant resistance from faculty, who published an open letter entitled "Diversity Yes. Outsourcing No", that noted:

"Faced with a shrinking Maritime population and a faltering economy, Dalhousie's administration is looking for ways to increase enrollment. They are

especially keen to recruit international students. Certainly this is a good thing. The University stands to benefit from the revenue that international student fees generate and we all stand to benefit from a more diverse campus community. But we all stand to lose if the University goes ahead with a proposed plan to outsource the teaching of international students to Navitas, an Australian for-profit company that specializes in recruiting and teaching international students whose academic standing is generally low (typically below Dalhousie's admission criteria)... On Dalhousie's campus, Navitas proposes to set up a private college to educate international students who are inadmissible by our current criteria. Students who successfully complete its program would receive the equivalent of first-year Dalhousie credits and would then be admissible to our second-year classes... this "back door" into Dalhousie would allow students to pay for the privilege of bypassing our standard admission procedures" (Dalhousie University Faculty Association, 2010, p.1)

In light of such concerns, the initiative was abandoned at Dalhousie. Navitas continues to operate at other universities in Canada, although none in the Atlantic region (Navitas, 2016). However, the Navitas case points to a new institutional vulnerability brought about by the push for education export and the void of support in navigating the international recruitment market, over which institutions in Canada have little control. Students' vulnerability lies in seeking increasingly low-cost education programs without fully grasping the difference. This vulnerability has been previously extensively recorded by Fong (2011), and appears in this study in Chapters Three and Four. The impact of program choices on long-term settlement from the perspective of immigration policy is discussed in more detail in the next section of this Chapter.

2.1.3. Universities And The Border: The 2000s

Given the unevenness of the international education landscape, one federal body that has expanded its operational reach in this sector is Citizenship and Immigration Canada [CIC]. Notably, CIC's expansion has also occurred in line with previously highlighted principles of neoliberalism – through numerous partnerships and devolutions

– to the point that its multiple policies, implemented by different partners, can sometimes read as contradictory to incoming students.

As previously noted, CIC has occasionally partnered with federal, provincial and private organizations to sponsor programs such as the Student Refugee Program. This federal government department has also historically partnered with Canada Border Services Agency to handle the processing of visas and study permits for incoming students. Currently, eligibility to study in Canada requires acceptance at a Canadian institution and asks of the candidates:

“money to pay for... tuition fees, living expenses for yourself and any family members who come with you to Canada and, return transportation for yourself and any family members who come with you to Canada. You must be a law-abiding citizen with no criminal record and not be a risk to the security of Canada. You may have to provide a police certificate. You must be in good health and willing to complete a medical examination, if necessary. You must satisfy an immigration officer that you will leave Canada at the end of your authorized stay” (Government of Canada, 2014).

In recent years, CIC has also significantly expanded beyond this initial mandate to provide entry for incoming students in two ways: 1) it has expanded the rights associated with study permits for incoming students to include work opportunities but with that, it has expanded its regulatory power through increasing surveillance of incoming students and 2) it has significantly included international students in new streams leading to work and immigration opportunities in Canada post-graduation. Both these approaches have been achieved through partnerships with different levels of government and the private sector, and will be explored in detail in the next two sections of this chapter. Of the changes, CIC notes, “the objective of these initiatives was to promote Canada as a destination of choice, both for study and potential immigration, as well as to help address labour market needs” (Government of Canada, 2011).

The proposed objective thus directly contradicts the border request that students “must satisfy an immigration officer that you will leave Canada at the end of your authorized stay” as cited above. Notably, the 2015 government review of the International Student Program does not highlight problematic discrepancies, concluding instead that “the ISP aligns with federal roles and responsibilities to manage the entry of international students to Canada; however, there is also a strong role for provinces and educational institutions to play in terms of supporting program integrity” (Government of Canada, 2015d, p. 12).

2.1.3.1. Study And Work Permits: Blurring Lines

A detailed policy review reveals increasingly blurring lines. Students entering Canada today have the right to work both during and after their degrees through off-campus and post-graduation study permits, but notable restrictions have shaped these rights within the decade. In terms of off-campus study permits for international students coming to Canada, CIC has worked with Employment and Social Development Canada, also a federal agency, to develop work opportunities of incoming students. Here is a timeline of relevant changes. In 2003, CIC initiated a series of partnerships with provincial governments to grant international students the ability to work off-campus in Canada during their studies. The first such pilot project took place in Manitoba, and the program expanded in 2004 to Quebec and New Brunswick. By 2006, such partnerships were in place across all provinces and territories, giving full-time visa students the right to work off-campus for up to twenty hours a week while classes are in session and full-time during scheduled study breaks.

The change however also implied that each education institution would sign a separate agreement with its respective provincial government, whereby university departments would report to the provincial government on the academic standing of applicant students. Only international students in good academic standing would receive work permits, and should students lose their good academic standing, they would also lose their work privileges. In 2008, the program received an online portal connecting student applicants, universities, as well as the relevant branches of the provincial and federal governments through a step-by-step process of approval at the different levels.

In 2014, the application process would be scrapped altogether, but state surveillance of incoming students would expand. Changes to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act that took effect on July 1, 2014 now allow students who study full-time at “designated institutions” to automatically gain the right to work during their degrees in Canada. However, education institutions go through an accreditation process with their respective provincial ministries or departments of education. Significantly, they are asked to report on all international students’ attendance while in Canada. CIC notes of the changes:

“New rules to reduce the potential for fraud or misuse of the program, protect Canada’s international reputation for high-quality education and improve the services available to genuine students came into force on June 1, 2014. The new rules: limit the issuance of study permits to applicants who will be studying at a designated learning institution (DLI), including institutions that are designated by provinces and territories on the basis of meeting minimum standards; require students to actively pursue their studies while in Canada; and allow full-time international students enrolled at designated institutions in certain programs to work part-time off campus and full-time during scheduled school breaks without a work permit” (Government of Canada, 2015a).

As such, in the case of international students in Canada, CIC's management of borders has brought them onto university campuses through mandatory reporting and attendance checks.

The status of 'students *only*' is thus carefully monitored to avoid both benign and much more somber misuses of this entry pathway, from undue access to the Canadian labour market, to potential security threats to the nation. Previous studies have noted how surveillance requirements constitute a concrete meeting point of international education and border risk management (Marginson, Nyland, Sawir & Forbes-Mewett, 2010; Urias & Yeakey, 2005). This perspective is becoming increasingly relevant in understanding the prominence of borders in international education migration, as well as the role of international students in understanding neoliberal phenomena of borders stretching – processes through which non-governmental actors enforce borders beyond the geographic lines of nation states (Vaughan-Williams, 2010; Pratt, 2005; Salter, 2004).

Speaking to analogous phenomena of border permeability and their added power to expulse undesirable individuals (Gilbert, 2007), the government's increased surveillance of international students' activities while in Canada also has practical implications in terms of students' rights to work and, implicitly, to settle in Canada post-graduation. Since April 2008, international students who have studied in Canada for two full academic years, gained the right to apply for a post-graduation work permit [PGWP] of up to three years with no restrictions based on type of employment and no requirement of job offer at the time of application. However, the caveat of the program is that PGWP are a one-time, non-renewable type of work visa. Therefore, if the holder does not successfully initiate the immigration process (by having a PR application received and

accepted by an immigration office) or secure permanent legal status in Canada within the expiration date of the PGWP, they must leave Canada.

The change was soon accompanied by the September 2008 launch of the Canadian Experience Class [CEC] – a stream of migration operated at the federal level and specifically dedicated to those who had studied and worked in Canada. The post-graduation work permit program is described by CIC explicitly as a precursor of the CEC. The program description reads:

“The Post-Graduation Work Permit Program allows most international students who have graduated from an eligible program at a post-secondary institution to gain valuable Canadian work experience. A minimum of one year of work experience in managerial, professional or technical positions (i.e., at level 0, A or B under the National Occupational Classification system) will be necessary to apply to stay permanently through the Canadian Experience Class” (Government of Canada, 2008).

The CEC quickly became the most popular entryway towards permanent residence for international students. By 2011, the CEC also prioritized PhD experience, allowing international PhD students to apply with no work experience, after completing PhD qualifying exams at Canadian universities.

However, the 2014 changes to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act also add limiting conditions to access both post-graduation work permits and the CEC. As such, students who study on a part-time basis, who obtain their degrees through a certain percentage of credit transfers from other institutions from outside Canada, or through distance learning courses, become ineligible for post-graduation work and thus are required to leave Canada immediately after graduation.

Interestingly, through this policy reconfiguration, a group of international students who had graduated from Niagara College in Ontario with liberal art degrees were denied

work permits and asked to leave the country by a CIC immigration officer. The students had arrived from India with enough transfer credits to complete a two-year study program in six months. One of the students sued the federal government in 2015 and in 2016 a federal court overturned the immigration officer's decision, granting the student a work permit in Canada. Dozens more are planning a class action lawsuit to overturn similar CIC decisions (Keung, 2016). Speaking to the dissonant governmental approach currently framing students' post-graduation opportunities, the federal judge noted of the case:

“The officer acted unreasonably in relying on the (immigration department) manual to assess the application based only on the courses actually taken from Niagara College, rather than based on all credits that contributed to the applicant meeting the requirement for the course of study completed at Niagara College” (Keung, 2016, para. 7).

Said the vindicated student:

“We all came with a dream of getting a good education and getting work experience, and we made sure our school was recognized by immigration ... We checked with the college when we applied. It said we would qualify for a three-year work permit under the current immigration rules” (Keung, 2015b, para. 7-8).

While none of the students in my sample reported adverse effects due to changing work permit regulations, my participants nonetheless talk about being close to the cut-off at different points in their journeys. In Chapter Four, Neil shares the story of what he suspects to be an unscrupulous recruitment agency that offered him a 'cheap' ride, but upon discussions with family members, he was able to steer clear of the offer. Less connected and knowledgeable friends took the offer and upon arrival in Canada feared losing eligibility to work post graduation – and implicitly to gain permanent legal status Canada – after graduation. Also of relevance to this topic, in Chapter Five, Parker shares how unexpected financial constraints forced him to study part-time for a semester, but he was able to obtain a work permit because he graduated before the federal changes took

effect. I foreshadow these instances briefly here as they speak to the ease with which a student can lose work and settlement rights, but also the classed nature of the ongoing triage, which has the potential to disproportionately affect less well off, less well connected and less knowledgeable students – in other words students vulnerable in terms of classed capital.

Overall, the 2011 and 2014 changes to the federal framework of post-graduation opportunities, which on the one hand favor the ultra highly skilled – those in PhD programs – and on the other hand, greatly limit the opportunities of the students who seek international education on the cheap, introduce particular ways in which academic capital and settlement options are leveraged based on classed capital in the Canadian context. As such, understanding how this policy landscape is navigated by students in terms of my proposed framework of capitals, and the resulting evidence of student streaming based on class privilege becomes increasingly important. Further unraveling the complexities of policy for students in the Canadian context, the next section of this Chapter explores how emerging student streams are additionally overlaid upon larger immigrant selection practices, which are in turn based on problematic historical and currently salient constructions of desirability. As the section will show, class remains a determining factor in these debates as well.

2.2. Designing Immigrants: State Roles In Differentiating Student Streams

In Canada, immigration is primarily the responsibility of the federal government. However, Canada's current immigration framework has allotted significant responsibilities over immigration matters to Canada's provinces and territories. Thus,

while international students' avenues to permanent residence are ultimately determined through federal pathways, such as the previously noted CEC, international graduates' applications can be prioritized and fast-tracked through provincial immigration offices. This type of fast tracking significantly cuts the wait time of obtaining permanent residence [PR] and opens up a variety of resources towards building social and economic networks in Canada. As such, once pathways to permanent status become real, students escape their temporary status, with all its related restrictions – meaningfully defined by Goldring and Landolt (2011) in the following terms:

“[In the Canadian context] precarious legal status captures the multiple and variable forms of ‘less than full status’, and is defined by the absence of key rights or entitlements usually associated with the full or nearly full status of citizenship and permanent residence. Specifically, precarious status is marked by any of the following: the absence of permanent residence authorization; lack of permanent work authorization; depending on a third party for residence or employment rights; restricted or no access to public services and protections available to permanent residents (e.g. healthcare, education, unionization, workplace rights); and deportability. Precarious status includes ‘documented’ but temporary workers, students, and refugee applicants, as well as unauthorized forms of status, e.g. visa overstayers, failed refugee claimants, and undocumented entrants” (p. 328).

Pointing to the stratifying nature and scale of education migration, Goldring and Landolt's (2011) description of students as inhabiting a precarious status in Canada diametrically opposes earlier studies that saw this group as ‘highly skilled globetrotters’ in the Canadian context (Gosh & Wong, 2003; Mahroum, 2000), as well as wider studies that continue to record international students in these terms (Kenway & Bullen, 2007). These descriptions however, tend to accurately apply to education migration occurring within the Global North, as opposed to directional migration from the Global South to the Global North (Findlay et al., 2011; King & Ruiz-Gelices, 2003). The differences reinforce Marginson's (2007, 2008) institutional vertical and horizontal differentiation

theory, whereby *some* students, through migration, become part of a global elite and have access to its accrued power, while *others* are relegated to less desirable locations within the field of international education. The remainder of this chapter will explore the role of state policies in replicating these differentiated streams.

The chapter's remaining subsections will each explore the history, importance and implications of the current governance set-up regarding routes to legal permanence for international students in Canada. In my analysis, significant attention is paid to the nuances of capital required to access pathways to legal permanence, as well as the widening pitfalls for those unable to meet these requirements, which make international students in Canada particularly vulnerable to prolonged precariousness (Walsh, 2014; Valiani, 2013).

2.2.1. Exclusions And Inclusions: A History Of Canada's Immigration System

Since its inception, Canada's nation building project has heavily relied on immigration. However, from the early days of settlement, state practices of inclusion and exclusion have dominated Canada's immigration history. Even as early as the 1600s, the two colonizing nations of France and England vied to control migration streams as a means of ensuring colonial sovereignty. Early examples include the 1663 state sponsorship of hundreds of French unmarried women sent to help settle New France and prevent previous waves of mostly French men from marrying native women (Carter, 1999). Control over immigration streams through Confederation remained strategic in nature, meant to ensure that newcomers were of desirable religious, racial and ethnic stock.

Also foreshadowing are early relationships between private enterprise and public policy in negotiating migration streams. For example, in 1871 and as part of its accession to Confederation, British Columbia made the construction of a pan-Canadian railway a condition. The project, named the Canada Pacific Railway, alternated through the decades to its completion between state and private enterprise, and massively relied on Chinese immigrants to provide low-cost and available labour. Despite their valuable contributions, the federal government greatly limited these migrants access to permanent status in Canada by passing the Head Tax in 1885. Designed to respond to complaints from labour unions of unfair competition, the Head Tax only allowed Chinese immigrants who could afford to pay a tax of C\$50 per person to settle in Canada. The sum would rise to C\$500 by 1903 (Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, 2016a).

The immigrants that would eventually use the Canada Pacific Railway to settle Canada's Western provinces in decades to follow were also selected based on criteria of race and ethnic origin. Following the Immigration Act of 1896, the federal government offered Aboriginal land for settlement preferentially to central and northern European nationals and white Americans (Carter, 1999). The federal Immigration Act passed in 1906 further restricted immigration and formalized deportation based on vague caveats of cultural compatibility, illustrating the assimilationist basis for immigrant integration of this age. It also included a discretionary requirement that select immigrants may be asked to show money and possessions in order to be allowed to settle (Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, 2016b).

Not until the 1960s did direct racial and ethnic discrimination end (for a complete list of federal immigration policies that were racially or ethnically discriminatory in

nature see Canadian Council for Refugees, 2000). Such policies meant that through the 1950s, the bulk of newcomers to Canada were, in proportion of ninety percent, white Europeans. In the vein of change, 1967 marked the introduction of a points system, through which immigrants' desirability would be reconfigured around immigrants' education and skills deemed desirable for Canada's economy. The points system significantly altered the demographic make-up of Canada's newcomers, meaning that by the 1980s, European migrants constituted the minority, while educated, well-off settlers from countries in Asia, the Middle East, and to a lesser extent, Africa dominated immigration streams (Ley, 2010). Currently, Canada's top immigration sources are China, India and the Philippines (CIC, 2015).

The points system amplified classed migration, as migrants able to prove accrued privileges of economic wealth and high education levels would be prioritized. Through these demographic shifts, in 1971, the federal government highlighted its dedication to values of cultural pluralism by turning multiculturalism into an official federal. Added to law in 1988 through the federal Multiculturalism Act, the policy was meant to reflect the contributions of the many ethnic groups that form Canada, and to establish an institutional benchmark of unity through diversity for the nation (Wood & Gilbert, 2005).

The Multiculturalism Act of 1988 notes that:

“The Government of Canada recognizes the diversity of Canadians as regards race, national or ethnic origin, colour and religion as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society and is committed to a policy of multiculturalism designed to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians while working to achieve the equality of all Canadians in the economic, social, cultural and political life of Canada” (Canadian Multiculturalism Act, 1988, para. 8)

However, the decades that followed Canada's introduction of the immigration points system, even with the addition of multiculturalism as national law, remained marked by fundamental social inequality.

Since its inception, the points approach has been significantly contested by migration scholars. To begin with, categories of skill desirability are far from apolitical. Instead, various iterations of desirability align with ongoing inequalities. For example, Kofman and Raghuram (2007; 2006) have shown that the profile of migrants deemed desirable under points systems are determined by socio-cultural parameters that consistently devalue feminized migration flows, framed both in terms of feminized skills and in terms of family migration circuits.

As well, in the Canadian context, a wealth of studies has pointed to the detrimental effects of using social class as predictor of immigrants' potential in a new country (Simmons, 1999; Boyd, 1989). In particular, the issue of ongoing discrimination pertaining to newcomers' high credentials and work experience by Canadian employers has been shown to create an immigrant underclass of highly skilled, yet underemployed and underpaid, workers (Oreopoulos, 2011; Ferrer & Riddell, 2008; Reiz, 2007; Picot, Hou & Coulombe, 2007; Bloom, Grenier & Gunderson, 1994).

Notably, and despite the multiculturalism rhetoric used at the federal level to describe newcomers' diversity, studies have also shown how the points-based approach to Canadian immigration has relegated migrant's contributions to the nation to purely economic exchanges (Dobrowolsky, 2011; Kofman, 2007; McLaren & Dyckb, 2004). Despite these well-founded objections, Canada's immigration streams continue to be dominated by immigrants selected based on skill. All accepted migrant categories,

including refugees, have been shown to be selected based on their potential economic contributions to Canada (Simmons, 2010; Basok & Simmons, 1993).

I highlight these historical realities here for two main reasons. The first is to give a sense of the historical and more current deployments of class, gender, race, ethnicity and national origin as exclusionary identifiers for incoming migrants, as these help frame the eventual policies my participants have to navigate through their migration projects. The second reason, and equally as important, is to give a sense of the immigrant experience in the 1970s and 1980s, because these experiences become the benchmark of conceptualizing immigration success for my participants' generation. In my study, 29 students, or over 40% the sample, indicated that they drew conclusions about migration streams and their success from relatives or members of social networks that had migrated to the Global North from the 1970s on. Of those, 22 students reported that their migration models had been relatives or members of their social network who had immigrated to Canada from the 1970s on. The lessons learned and conclusions drawn based on these stories are presented in some detail in Chapter Three. They show how the emphasis on skill and education, prevalent in immigration policies of countries interested in migrant selection using such parameters, including Canada and Australia during this period, effectively shaped a new generation of migrants intent on achieving success by exclusively relying on such achievements.

Moreover, immigration streams that currently favor students at the federal level – the CEC and the Federal Skilled Worker Program [FSWP] – are in some ways policy responses to the challenges of credential and skill conversions faced by these previous migration waves. As such, these current programs reward those who have Canadian

credentials to begin with, and in most cases (except the PhD CEC division that allows applicants to apply while undertaking PhD programs in Canada) have already succeeded on the Canadian labor market (Simmons, 2010). The program design theoretically reduces the potential for migrants' relegation within Canada's economy brought about by degree or skill conversions. Chapters Five and Six of this dissertation conversely show that some of these expectations are not met in reality, as international graduates, despite holding Canadian degrees, continue to face employment barriers upheld by complex social constructions of identities of class, gender, race and ethnicity. The next section to follow here establishes more direct policy requirements for students at the federal level.

2.2.1.1. Federal Paths To Legal Permanent Status in Canada

The CEC – currently the most popular entryway for international students in Canada – was officially launched in 2009. However, Waters (2008) tracks initial links between Canada's federal immigration policy and international students' recruitment as potential immigrants to 2002, the year the federal government started granting extra points to foreign holders of Canadian university degrees applying through the FSWP. Waters argues that these initial changes were in equal parts intended to serve Canada's need for skilled migrants and as a way to intensify international recruitment of students to Canadian institutions (Chapter 2, Section 3, para. 1). The CEC and the FSWP are the federal pathways attracting the bulk of applications from international graduates to date. However, getting through to these pathways has, over recent years, become increasingly difficult.

Most notably, in 2015, the federal government added a step to the triage of immigration applications, through the addition of the Express Entry [EE]. EE is an online data base where those seeking permanent status in Canada upload personal qualifiers, defined by the federal government as “skills, work experience, language ability, education [and] other details that will help us assess them” (Government of Canada, 2015b). The system is supposed to not only automatically evaluate candidates based on skill and education levels (those with Canadian study and work experience receive extra points), but also to act as an employment database, giving Canadian employers the opportunity to select desirable candidates by giving them a job and elevating their points baselines. Provincial immigration offices can also elevate applications, because of particular reasons and ways that will be described in the following section of this chapter. At pre-set intervals, the pool of self-registered candidates is evaluated and the top percent are asked to apply to available spots in the various federal streams – such as the CEC of the FSWP.

The introduction of the EE has negatively impacted international students’ chances to obtain permanent status, albeit in a differentiated fashion. To begin with, the anticipated EE launch led the federal government to additionally cap the CEC in 2014, resulting in the return of thousands of applications to graduates across Canada in October 2014, with the invitation to apply through the EE in 2015 (Choise, 2015). As highlighted earlier, post-graduation work permits are non-renewable, and many of the students whose applications were returned lost significant time in their quest for permanent legal status.

Moreover, regardless of Canadian education achievement, the EE asks candidates (and their dependents who over the age of 18) to undertake standardized English

language testing, at the candidate's cost. As well, while all academic degrees obtained favor applicants, degrees obtained outside Canada only count if converted through World Education Services, a non-profit organization, also at the cost of the candidate. Similarly, Canadian work is awarded points only if it falls within a desirable National Occupational Classification [NOC] sector, which currently includes managerial, professional and skilled work. As well, job offers or positions held are only recognized by the system if the candidate's employer produces a Labour Market Impact Assessment [LMIA] offered by Employment and Social Development Canada, a third-party federal department (Government of Canada, 2015c), at a significant cost to the employer (starting at C\$1000).

In all these ways, the pathway to permanent status for students has become more exclusive and deregulated. The added power of employers significantly puts immigrant selection in private hands, a reality made especially problematic as ongoing studies find that employer discrimination against newcomers, as well as ethnic and racial minorities, holds strong in Canada today (Oreopoulos & Decief, 2012; Oreopoulos, 2011).

Participants in my study address the ongoing policies changes in Chapters Four, Five and Six, where both federal and provincial migration pathways – and particularly their complex interplay – are additionally explored from students' perspectives.

2.2.2. Weighted Decisions: Federal/Provincial Responsibilities

Provincial considerations are especially salient, as the last two decades have seen significant devolution of federal power to provincial actors in the context of immigration policy. A devolutionary approach to matters of immigration was built into Canada's

Constitutional Act of 1867 (Vineberg, 2009). Referring to immigration specifically,

Section 95 states:

“In each Province the Legislature may make Laws in relation to Agriculture in the Province, and to Immigration into the Province; and it is hereby declared that the Parliament of Canada may from Time to Time make Laws in relation to Agriculture in all or any of the Provinces, and to Immigration into all or any of the Provinces; and any Law of the Legislature of a Province relative to Agriculture or to Immigration shall have effect in and for the Province as long and as far only as it is not repugnant to any Act of the Parliament of Canada” (The Constitution Act, 1867).

As such, the early years of Confederation saw both federal and provincial governments directly recruit immigrants, by undertaking activities such as sending immigrant recruitment agents to the United States and Europe. However,

“by 1874, it was clear that the practice involved considerable duplication, waste of resources, and in some cases actual conflict which reportedly had an injuriously prejudicial effect on the minds of intending immigrants. It was therefore decided at the dominion-provincial level in that year that the federal minister of Agriculture would be vested with the sole responsibility of promoting immigration of Canada from abroad.” (Kelley & Trebilcock, 2000, p. 77)

The federal monopoly over matters of immigration would only be revisited in the 1970s, spurred by two factors. The first was the concern that newcomers overwhelmingly settled in the three largest metropolitan areas of Canada – Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver.

The second was Quebec’s Quiet Revolution, which took place in the 1960s and saw this province challenge the federal government over the preservation of the French language through immigration to Quebec. These concerns were partially addressed in the 1976

Immigration Act. Historians at Pier 21 Canadian Immigration Museum (2016c) note:

“A key feature of the act was the requirement of the minister responsible for immigration to work in close cooperation with the provinces in immigration planning and management. After consulting with the provinces, the minister was required to make an announcement in Parliament regarding the number of immigrants it proposed to admit within a specific period of time. In an effort to reduce ministerial discretion, the minister also had to report the number of special

permits issued each year allowing individuals to enter or remain in Canada” (para. 6).

A further step in federal to provincial immigration devolution would occur in 1998, the year that saw the provinces of Manitoba, British Columbia and Saskatchewan establish the first Provincial Nominee Programs [PNPs] in Canada by signing individual agreements with the federal government. Currently all provinces and territories in Canada operate PNPs, with the exception of Quebec, as this province upholds separate agreements with the federal government regarding immigration management.

Federal government documents overwhelmingly refer to the purpose of PNPs in economic terms. For example, a 2011 CIC federal program evaluation notes:

“the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) was introduced in 1998 to give provinces a mechanism to respond to local economic development needs. Over the years that the program has been in existence, the environment within which it operates has changed significantly. PNP has grown a great deal, representing 20% of the total economic class immigration in 2009. For some provinces, such as Manitoba, New Brunswick and Saskatchewan, the program is now the primary vehicle through which they attract immigrants to their province” (CIC, 2011, p. 1).

The Auditor General of Canada evaluates the PNP in similar terms, stating:

“The Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) enables provinces and territories, using their own selection criteria, to nominate candidates for admission as permanent residents to meet their specific labour market needs. Agreements with provinces and territories commit Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) to process all provincial nominee applications as expeditiously as possible” (Auditor General of Canada, p. 6).

The PNPs significantly altered the landscape of Canada’s immigration system. They allow provinces to select immigrants based on provincially determined demands, opening up entirely new categories of stakeholders and agenda setters. In keeping with the federal intention for the PNPs, the provincial agenda setting has been shown to be economically driven (Pandey & Townsend, 2011; Dobrowolsky, 2011; Carter, Polevychok, Osborne,

Adeler & Friesen, 2009). As such, provincial nominees tend to be entrepreneurs⁴, highly skilled workers and international graduates, but they can also workers whose classifications are lower on the NOC scale, but who fill vital roles for the provinces – agricultural or service industry workers, for example.

International graduates have become part of all PNPs in the Atlantic region and most streams across the country since the federal government opened students' paths to legal status. As such, by 2008, all Atlantic provincial governments that had negotiated with the federal government the establishment of a stream specifically dedicated to international graduates, although requirements varied slightly across the region. For example, all provinces asked for graduates with diplomas from provincial institutions. However, while NL allowed students to apply 6 months before graduation with a job offer in the field of study, NS and PEI at that time asked for graduates with diplomas in hand and work experience in a permanent full-time job in an area related to the field of graduation and a specific salary level. Meanwhile NB, who groups students under its 'Skilled Worker with Employer Support' stream, asked for a job offer with an employer letter of support. While PNP requirements have a history of being in flux, for most categories in PNPs – including international graduates – local employers held, and continue to have significant sway in selecting applicants, reinforcing the public to private devolution at this governmental level as well.

⁴ Many PNPs had also operated Investor streams that asked migrants to make a direct investment in a local business in exchange for nomination (generally a six figure sum), but such streams closed in Atlantic Canada as the financial commitment was shown not to constitute a strong enough basis for social integration in the nominating provinces (Dobrowolsky, 2011; Ley, 2010).

Once selected as a nominee, the main applicant and accompanying family members have access to varied levels of support depending on provincial regulations, but that generally includes the navigation of the federal application process, as well as settlement services otherwise reserved to PR holders. As well, as indicated by the Auditor General's report quoted above, once a person is nominated, the federal government must expedite their application through the federal system, although a nomination is not a guarantee of PR.

Application fast-tracking happens in multiple ways. With the recent EE changes, provincial nominees are granted points that tend to place them at a significant advantage in applicant pools so as to ensure invitation into PR streams. Once past the EE and into PR streams, immigration officers also give precedence to provincial nominee applications. In these multiple ways, economically desirable migrants become prioritized through Canada's immigration system. Notably however, the EE launch significantly disrupted PNP program applications, leading to the temporary discontinuation of PNPs for international students and other categories of migrants between late 2013 and late 2015. Students in my sample address these disruptions in Chapter Five.

2.2.3. Implications: Locating International Education Within Promises Of Skill

In this current multi-layered immigration system, it has been argued that international students have been added as part of Canada's growing 'designer immigration' streams (Gates-Gasse, 2012; Simmons, 1999). Simmons (2010) defines designer immigrants as "individuals who are selected as if they were custom designed to meet the specific criteria of a neoliberal nation intent on productivity, cost-recovery and

immigrant self-settlement” (p. 85). As reflected within reviewed policy requirements, students theoretically fit within this category for a number of reasons, including for being highly skilled in fields that are of interest to Canada; for holding Canadian degrees that do not require conversion – thus alleviating integration transitions; and because they are already economically integrated in Canada – Canadian work experience acting in support of their immigration applications (Gates-Gasse, 2012; IESR, 2012).

However, as my review of both federal and provincial immigration pathways has shown, the system is also prone to reproducing institutionalized inequalities in various ways. Cultural and social capitals become crucial in determining the amenability of degrees to work and settlement opportunities. In terms of financial capital, the ability to work during a degree is dependent on the ability to pay for that degree in its full-time format and any economic lapse to part-time enrollment can result not only in immediate work sanctions, but also in the loss of access to post-graduation work permits. In turn, post-graduation work permits are a pre-requisite to pathways towards legal permanence; yet increasingly rely on private actors, such as employers, for support. The Canadian job market has been shown to be fraught with inequalities around race, ethnicity and also gender (Oreopoulos, 2011; Fuller & Vosko, 2008; Cranford, Vosko & Zukewich, 2003), and thus requires significant maneuvering on the part of all employees, and especially newcomers, and is made even more difficult along lines of gender and race.

Moreover, in itself, the link between high skill and desirability established in Canadian immigration policy (Simmons, 2010) emerges as problematic in a number of ways. The coalescence of these concepts, long contested by migration scholars, continues to validate debates about “the assimilation capacity of the new immigrants...[or] the

increasing “cultural distance” between autochthons and Ausländer (Hoffmann-Nowotny 1992)” (Wimmer, 2007, p. 7). As Wimmer (2007) argues, this concept of integration is in itself dated, as it presupposes migration as a linear process that finds its end in a homogeneous society migrants integrate into. It thus eludes the complexities of lived migration as a process responding to structures of opportunity and marginalization, embedded within global and localized iterations of class, race and gender.

As well, the amenability of knowledge economy discourses within immigration policy frameworks has been repeatedly disproven through an array of studies showing that migrants considered low-skilled are acutely indispensable to economic growth in the Global North (Barber, 2008; Kofman, 2007; De Genova, 2005; Man, 2004).

Furthermore, as feminist migration scholars have pointed out, the profile of migrants deemed desirable within discourses of the knowledge economy, as well as their coveted skills, are far from straightforward products of market exchanges. They are, in fact, determined by socio-cultural parameters that consistently devalue feminized migration flows, framed both in terms of feminized skills and in terms of family migration circuits (Kofman & Raghuram, 2015; Kofman, 2007). As well, much like other categories of migrants depicted as highly-skilled (McHugh, 2004), international students are normalized as male in research and policy currently defining international education on campuses in the Global North. In this perspective, Keneway and Bullen’s note (2003) that the “tendency has been to normalize male students and, thereby, to assign to the woman student the subordinate status of ‘other’” (p. 6), gains added weight.

Overall, Canada’s current multi-layered system of managing international education migration, split as it is between education and immigration fields and between

multiple federal, provincial and private agents, ultimately operates along migrants' abilities to invest, mobilize or circumvent various forms of classed capital, leaving all students vulnerable, but relegating those most vulnerable – determined through complex identity matrices – in the least desirable positions. The experiences of students in this study, evident at all stages of their journeys but most obvious in terms of settlement options to be described in Chapters Five and Six, largely reflect the unequal set-up. Emerging stories thus match streams of desirability and vulnerability calculated along class, race and gender – with ethnic and racial minority women as most vulnerable, and men, especially of European origin, most able to inhabit desirable positions and best able to frame their expertise as skills most valuable to Canada.

2.3. Conclusion: International Students Within Larger Matrices Of Capital

This chapter started with a review of recent news stories focusing on international students in the Canadian context. Considered together, they appeared dissonant, even contradictory, simultaneously describing international students as the 'future of Canadian immigration' (Keung, 2011, para. 11) as well as 'disingenuous migrants' (Keung, 2012); as valuable contributions to the Canadian economy (Colley, 2014) and as trying to access this labour market fraudulently (Choise, 2015; Keung, 2012); as overly-academic (Findlay & Köhler, 2010) and as 'eroding Canada's academic standards' (Friesen & Keeney, 2013).

The chapter's review of the configuration of the international education field in the Canadian context has shown that these descriptions are not only dissonant and contradictory, but also simultaneously accurate. As such, while *some students* are deemed

to be elite additions to Canada's campuses and invited to become 'the future of Canadian immigration', *other students* are increasingly vulnerable to deregulated recruitment practices, increasing financial pressures and potential criminalization for undue reliance on Canadian wages to make up the gap. While the remaining Chapters of this thesis are dedicated to exploring how lines are established between the two groups, and the intricate negotiations originating from students centered on belonging to each group, I would like to dedicate the rest of this chapter to highlighting potential implications of the current system for all students, regardless of their visa status or nationality, because addressing its detrimental effects requires a holistic view.

The ongoing retraction of public regulation and funding regarding formerly public sectors such as immigration and higher education are increasingly framing access to these sectors as private assets to all individuals. In the specific context of higher education, where international students become contentiously framed as neoliberal poster children, all students are affected. As Lewis (2008) explains, in Canada:

“this rhetoric turn [from ‘common good’ configured through commitments to collective responsibility and social justice, into what is now structured as a ‘private advantage’]... is used to justify the massive underfunding of education at all levels. To be sure, university administrators, while displaying varying levels of zeal in responding to this underfunding, have generally conceded to more or less agree to the private funding agenda, whether this be by way of funding mechanisms designed to link the receipt of public funds to institutional success... or by way of requiring public-private partnerships... or by way of market expansion masquerading as internationalization... Internationally, the desire for North American credentials-as-commodity, matched by the purposeful marketing of those credentials as necessary for legitimacy in the international market place of knowledge, encourages what William Brody, president of Johns Hopkins University, refers to as the ‘global megaversity’ driven by the neoliberal ideology of personal value by which one barter individual privilege in the marketplace of human commodities” (p. 53).

In this way, the internationalization of the Canadian university, defined here as internationalizing the campus through recruitment activities abroad – as opposed to substantive changes to curricula – is an inextricable component of its neoliberalization. The megaversity is now home to all students, not only those who are international, although the latter group may bear the brunt of its cost-recovery activities.

The problematic link between international students on Canadian campuses and consumerist university management has contributed to various forms of backlash to campus diversity, examples of which have previously been reviewed in this Chapter. However, scholars of Canadian multiculturalism have underlined that emerging discourses effectively shape a new multiculturalism in the Canadian academic space, one that celebrates an individualized identity of difference as token, not substance, and that relies on standardized skills to claim common cross-cultural ground (Mitchell, 2003). As such, while a traditional multicultural classroom “was able to work with and through difference, and conditioned to believe in the positive advantages of diversity in constructing and unifying the nation” (p. 387), the new multicultural classroom accepts only superficial forms of diversity unified through standardized constructions of skill, thus unprepared and unwilling to address deeper contentions. As Mitchell (2003) further explains, the new multicultural classroom is thus “motivated not by ideals of unity in diversity, but by understandings of global competitiveness, and the necessity to strategically adapt as an individual to rapidly shifting personal and national contexts” (p. 388). The onus for multicultural competency is thus reverted from the institution to the individual- to all students, including those who are international and has undermined

support for all groups' particular needs – especially those who are international (Sawir, Marginson, Deumert, Nylan & Ramia, 2008).

As well, studies have shown that framing higher education as a consumption good, nationally or internationally, corrodes all students' belonging to the academic community, because consumers are not expected to share, nor do they enjoy, in the obligations, responsibilities and duties associated with building successful communities, academic or otherwise (Naidoo & Jamieson, 2005; Delucchi & Korgen, 2002). The propensity to frame international students as education consumers consolidates this argument. As the most visible symptom of an increasingly neoliberal Canadian higher education, they are asked to pay most of its literal and figurative dues. In the classroom, as through the immigration system, international students remain a paradoxical abstraction emerging through the conflicting agendas of the neoliberal state, simultaneously wanted and unwanted, their status further nuanced by constructions of desirability spanning beyond their own identities, yet dependent on factors of race, class and gender, constructed on the shoulders of history.

PART I: THE PRE-DEPARTURE YEARS

“The theory of practice as practice insists...that the objects of knowledge are constructed, not passively recorded, and... that the principle of this construction is the system of structured, structuring dispositions, the habitus, which is constituted in practice and is always oriented towards practical functions.”
(Bourdieu, 1990, p. 52)

Amongst the overall sample of 72 students, the phrase ‘I always *knew* I’d leave’ appears almost verbatim in 31 interviews, as 40 percent of participants trace the thought of migrating as international students to a vaguely defined stage of personal development. Following Bourdieu’s theorization of knowledge as socially constructed, I argue that participants in this study socially *learn* about migrating as students, both as an ideal type and in its practical forms. Chapters Three and Four, entitled *Learning to Migrate* and *Migrating to Learn*, proceed to document these learning processes, and trace the resulting certitudes of knowledge imbedded within the decision to migrate as students, as well as that of *how* to migrate as students. As the chapters eventually show, students’ learning processes and results are rooted in social class and further nuanced through identities of gender and race.

As a whole, this section of the thesis begins with students’ early years, as some participants pinpoint their first thoughts of migration even before the age of ten, and ends with students at the border. The two chapters illustrate how classed identity work gives rise to increasingly binding migration aspirations that spread through social fields. Meanwhile, growing industries of education programs designed to meet these increasingly popular aspirations eventually support growingly unequal streams of migrating students.

The fact that 14 students, close to 20 percent of the sample, noted that they were inspired and encouraged to pursue education migration based on the story of a pioneering ancestor; and that 29 students, so over 40 percent the sample, expressed that they decided to migrate as students because of lessons passed on from relatives that had migrated to the Global North starting in the 1970s, is indicative that learning to migrate commences within the family.

Following Bourdieu's own application of these concepts (1990), investigations of classed habitus and capital accumulations located within the family are a benchmark within migration studies. Work in this field has extensively recorded the role of cultural and social capitals in mobilizing family members and establishing migration routes (Ryan et al., 2015; Castles & Miller, 2003; Portes, & Landolt, 2000; Mahler, 1995; Boyd, 1989). Migration ethnographies have also suggested that such processes of capital accumulation can occur across different generations of the same family (Salaff et al., 2010; Olwig, 2007; Waters, 2008).

As such, previous research has recorded the benefits, as well as the limitations, of migrating through family networks, which have also been shown to bind in terms of emotional and financial compliance, in exchange for network access. The chapters in this section engage with this literature, further building on Bourdieu's theory of practice to illustrate how migration for education is orchestrated within the family in multiple ways. To further unpack the nature and value of family relationships, I employ the concept of family scripts. Salaff et al. (2010) define family scripts as:

“cognitive frames that families develop as part of their shared way of life. Families construct perspectives about how they were in the past, how they are now, and where they are headed. Their accounts of family life define its core

ingredients and the desirable ways to achieve ideals...Scripts are agendas for action, with normative power that enjoins members to comply” (p. 11).

In my sample, the concept of family scripts is employed both vertically, connecting students to ancestral generations – through what I call *the pioneering ancestor script*, and horizontally, connecting them to currently available transnational support embedded within family networks – framing the *role-model script*. Both scripts rely on identity work.

In the context of ancestral scripts, this work takes the form of memory-making (Erlil, 2011; Olwig, 2007; Raj, 2003), in subtle ways that point to the flexibilities of habitus and that see families collectively remember identities that further current agendas. In the context of role-model script, the work takes on the nuances of social capital based on familial affective ties. As Bourdieu (1990) notes:

“It is first necessary to ask what is implied in defining a group exclusively by the genealogical relationship... To point out that kin relationships are something that people make, and with which they do something, is not simply to substitute a 'functionalist' interpretation for a 'structuralist' one, as the prevailing taxonomies might suggest... If everything that concerns were not hedged with denials, there would be no need to point out that the relations between ascendants and descendants themselves only exist and persist by virtue of constant maintenance work, and that there is an economy of material and symbolic exchanges between the generations. The same is true of affinal relationships: it is only when one records them as a *fait accompli*... that one can forget that they are the product of strategies oriented towards the satisfaction of material and symbolic interests and organized by reference to a particular type of economic and social conditions” (p. 167).

Relying on such purposeful family connections, family scripts become binding for families and students, requiring contributions and dedication in achieving the set migration goal from all.

As Chapters Three and Four illustrate, family scripts give all students, and especially those marginalized across lines of gender or race, the power to persevere and

the motivation to stay focused on education migration projects, often in the face of testing limitations and discouraging gatekeepers. Meanwhile, scripts motivate parents to invest in lifestyles that often contradict localized cultural norms, yet give students the tools and the support to migrate transnationally. Scripts also bind kin networks abroad to inspire and support students' migration projects, thus establishing the basis of the successful orchestration for international education migration within the family and through the trials and tribulations of social and institutionalized norms, policies and regulations that frame this migration category.

In keeping with the participant-centric foci, these data analysis chapters present a structure that follows participants' perspectives. Each chapter starts with four vignettes shared by different participants, whose experiences have been purposefully selected to facilitate an understanding of how students experienced each stage of their migration. Main themes emerging from the vignettes are then analyzed using theory, relevant institutional outlooks, as well as contextualization within the larger students' sample.

CHAPTER 3: LEARNING TO MIGRATE

Zack, a student in his mid-twenties, was born in Southeastern Europe in a small urban locality. His parents attended, but did not finish, university. They both worked at clerical jobs and supplemented their income through farming activities. Zack described his upbringing as strict and often emphasized during our interview that “education was the most important thing” for his family. He remembered that, growing up, at dinner he would often be asked if he was the best student in his class. The answer to this question was most frequently ‘Yes!’, as Zack would go on to receive national and international recognition for his academic ability in secondary school. He attributed the family’s emphasis on education to his parents’ regret about not finishing their own studies, and his grandfather’s status in his hometown as one of few highly educated people. Zack’s grandfather had undertaken a migration of his own in his youth, moving from a small rural locality to a bigger city for “better education and work opportunities”, said Zack. What is more, an uncle had migrated to North America in the 1970s, and his son had become a successful professional there. Zack’s parents celebrated these relatives’ journeys and encouraged Zack to be equally as ambitious and courageous.

Further exemplifying the family’s reverence for education, his parents spent their limited savings to cover living expenses that made it possible for Zack to take up a full academic scholarship offer at private international high school in a neighboring large city. Of the international school and his scholarship offer, Zack notes “They were trying to attract the best kids in the country to improve their [institutional] results...for advertisement”. The scholarship covered the school’s tuition, of about C\$5,000 a year. Zack first traveled the three-hour distance between his hometown and his new high

school at the age of 14, only to return on rare weekends and holidays. When Zack was 18, he decided to leave his country as an international university student, his decision further complicated by the unexpected loss of his mother to a sudden illness. He explained, “moving was like a new start...with my mother gone, my family was thinking of moving anyway [from home town]...it wasn’t like I could ever really go home again...”.

Ella, 20, grew up in a mid-sized city in China. Her parents, both professionals with university degrees, greatly admired their siblings who had migrated abroad. They raised Ella with the idea that she too would follow this example. Ella remembers: “since when I was [a] child they [my parents would] tell me I must go abroad because in my family, my uncle and aunty also go abroad and so I also must go abroad to study for a better life”. When Ella started underperforming in the competitive Chinese education system, the family opted to send her to a Canadian-Chinese high school, a decision that, as with Zack, implied the emotional toll of separation and significant financial sacrifices for the family who lived on two state-regulated salaries. Ella also pointed to other limitations of this decision:

I went to high school with Canadian experience... This high school is very expensive for my family, maybe C\$10,000 per term... But going to this high school [meant] staying in China [for university] is impossible, because I did not prepare for [Goakao] and with my high school, the subjects were too different.

The decision to go to the Canadian high school effectively transformed Ella into an ‘international student in waiting’. This decision was taken when Ella was in her teens. The family then spent Ella’s high school years emotionally and financially preparing for her impending departure. She left upon graduation to study as an international student.

Rachel, in her late 20s, grew up in a large city in the Middle East, her parents having migrated there from a country in Europe when she was very young. Her parents

maintained their professional careers after migration and improved their economic situation. After the move, Rachel reported that she never felt like she belonged in any one country. She explains, “for me, I think because I left my root country at such a young age, I never sprung roots in any other place, so I could leave easily”. In our interview, she explained that her plan was always to travel the world and potentially migrate – a plan her parents supported and saved for. However, growing up, she had been unsure about the exact timing of her anticipated move. After she finished high school, she started university locally, but began to worry about the quality of education she was receiving. She left her country mid-way through her degree, as an international student.

Aram, in his early 30s, grew up in a small city in the Middle East. His parents were retired professionals. At the age of 18, he departed his beloved hometown to attend university in a large urban center, inspired by his parents’ ambition for him to achieve the highest levels in academics. As he remembers with a smile – ‘they [parents] almost kicked me out’. He did not enjoy this move, constantly longing for his friends and family back home. Despite the hardships, he graduated at the top of his class in university and was able to secure a lucrative job in his city of origin. However, once back home, he experienced what he described as ‘reverse culture shock’. He explains:

Somehow my hometown wasn’t that great anymore. Most of my friends had left abroad and there were only a few of us left...we almost felt kind of left behind. Especially with this Facebook thing, you go there and see all of your friends and all of their pictures from abroad...beautiful pictures of their laughing in these beautiful places...I thought that if I don’t leave I will regret it for the rest of my life...and like I was thinking ‘this girl from undergraduate, I was better than her [in school] and now she is away for PhD, or this guy, I was better than him [in our undergraduate program] and he finished his Masters abroad’.

Such comparisons, facilitated by social media, gave Aram the courage to imagine his own success abroad. After a few years of employment, he migrated for post-graduate studies as an international student.

These vignettes illustrate some of the main themes connected to international education migration departures that commonly resonated with participants. In the overall sample of 72 students, the phrase ‘I always knew I’d leave’ appears in 31 interviews, as 40 percent of participants trace the thought of migrating as international students to an immemorial stage of personal development.

In order to illustrate this finding, I have selected these particular vignettes as they speak to the main themes addressed in this chapter, which center on: 1) explorations of motivations for families of varied social backgrounds, but with middle class aspirations, to prioritize education from an early age, as a means to preserve or improve class status and ensure adequate opportunities for their children; 2) illustrations of the complexities of pursuing international schooling options in home countries, not only addressing motivations, financial and emotional tolls of those decisions, but also how they cut across classed lines, occurring both as solutions for scholastic underperformance and as rewards for outstanding academic success; and 3) linking students’ decision to migrate for education to family histories and established kin networks, as well as through peer social networks, as a desirable next step in students’ journeys.

The three main themes highlighted above are reflected in the structural organization of this chapter, which begins with establishing the complexities of classed identity through family histories and aspirations, further nuanced by gendered, racial and ethnic identities constructed in home countries. The second section of this chapter then

moves to unpack the ways family histories practically turn class aspirations of social and geographic mobility into lifestyles that center around non-traditional parenting and education approaches. These include strategic investments in language schools, international schools, semesters abroad and so on. The selection of next steps also occurs along class lines and further aligns with transnationally expanding landscapes of opportunity that further encourage families to, in some ways, break the mould of tradition and encourage children to study abroad, as well as motivate children to dream of study abroad and have the courage to pursue such dreams. In these ways, this chapter sees international education framed within the family as simultaneously historically sanctioned and as an innovative solution.

3.0.1. Theorizing International Education As An Intergenerational Classed Project

The chapter's themes, as illustrated through the vignettes selected above, point to some important theoretical aspects of migration analysis that dictate how the themes outlined here should be read and contextualized. In order to unpack this rich data content, I expand on Bourdieu's (1990) *habitus* in the context of the preparatory steps towards education migration by using Mahler's (1995) notion of *uprooting*, Salaff et al.'s (2010) concept of *family scripts* and Appadurai's (2004, 1990) notion of *cultural deterritorialization*. I theorize the cumulative effects of these processes as shaping a habitus of education migration.

As outlined in Chapter One, for Bourdieu (1986), class is a dynamic cultural construct, built upon leveraged forms of capital, which emerges when tangible value is extracted from diverse aspects of social life. Capital can relate directly to economic

wealth, income and material assets, conferring individuals' financial advantages and symbolic status in society. However, for Bourdieu, capital can also have less visible, yet equally concrete iterations, shaping social and cultural advantages. These iterations arise from access to social networks and awareness of appropriate cultural norms respectively. Individuals accumulate class power from the dynamic interplay of their different forms of capital, that not only shape identities and aspirations, but also allow for strategic investments of class capital to reach identified goals.

As such, an individual can mobilize one form of capital to compensate for another. In this way, social class becomes a fluid process rather than an ascribed social locus, bound nonetheless by habitus. Habitus is simultaneously a way of being and a way of becoming, a structural force, rooted in history, and a practice-generating principle that directs agency. Using such parameters, habitus frames individuals' decisions regarding what actions are appropriate, desirable and worthy of capital mobilization. Bourdieu's conceptualization of social class in terms of habitus and capital leverage is particularly in tune with unpacking the impetus of international education migration as emerging in my data in a variety of ways.

First, the data vividly illustrates the reality that migration is rarely lived as a singular event of departure, but that it constitutes a series of cumulative processes whereby future migrants gradually conceptualize and plan departures, as well as detach from locations and lifestyles in their places of origin. The data also shows how aspiring migrants and their families take real steps towards those planned departures, steps that significantly impact their lives and their families' lives in the short and long terms.

Echoing participant Rachel's comment about 'never really springing roots' due to earlier generations' migration projects, Mahler (1995) theorizes this process in her ethnographic work as *uprooting*, noting that "it is important to recognize that migration has two essential components: leaving one area and going to another. Often times people conflate these two distinct movements" (p. 31). I find Mahler's explanation useful in that it signals the multi-phase experience of migration. In my data, uprooting becomes enmeshed into longitudinal processes of social reproduction (Kofman & Raghuram, 2015), emotionally upheld through meaningfully binding class identities, and practically lived through parenting and education decisions designed to ease anticipated international departures for education.

Secondly, as part of this process, family histories of classed upward mobility – often lived through actual geographic migration, become iterated as powerful means of binding families to unique parenting and education choices, which ultimately shape educational transnational trajectories. In this respect, Salaff et al. (2010) provide additional depth in understanding the power of family histories for migration projects by illustrating the family's importance in "establish[ing] the meaning of events enabling people to respond appropriately" (p. 11). Hence, these authors identify the model of family scripts to be central in the framing of future migration projects occurring within the same family. To reiterate, family scripts are defined as:

"cognitive frames that families develop as part of their shared way of life. Families construct perspectives about how they were in the past, how they are now, and where they are headed. Their accounts of family life define its core ingredients and the desirable ways to achieve ideals...Scripts are agendas for action, with normative power that enjoins members to comply" (p. 11).

This understanding of family backgrounds as instrumental in goal setting for future generations helps explain two common themes emerging from my sample. The first is that, 14 students, close to 20 percent of the sample, indicated that they were inspired and encouraged to undertake migration based on the story of an ancestor – a grandparent or an even more remote ancestor, who had elevated the family’s status through migration, education, entrepreneurialism or a combination of all such factors. As well, 29 students, or over 40 percent the sample, indicated that they decided to migrate as students because of lessons passed on to them from relatives or members of social networks that had migrated to the Global North from the 1970s on.

Moreover, participants indicated that nurturing the will to migrate often entails shifts in parenting styles. As families prepare children for migration, they support children’s independence and self-reliance and celebrate the courage to seek opportunities wherever they may arise. This occurs even in cultural contexts where students noted that subordination is expected of children and youth, especially girls and young women. In this way, class identity and aspirations are weighted against gendered norms and expectations in ways to be further established in this chapter. On this note, 29 students – 19 of them women – directly attribute their participation in Anglo-American education programs to their families’ unique parenting styles. Coming from China (23 percent), South America (23 percent), the Middle East (20 percent), Southeast Asia (20 percent) the Caribbean (seven percent) and Eastern and Southern Europe (seven percent), these students explained that their families strove to raise them to be particularly ‘independent’ (16 participants), ‘internationally-minded’ (ten participants) and ‘global opportunity seekers’ (five participants). As such, participants frame shifting parental attitudes to

eventual buy-ins of educational programs understood as pre-requisites for international education, such as expensive Anglo-American private schools and language courses. Once in such programs, students meet like-minded peers, who harbor and support similar migration aspirations. Parenting decisions and education trajectories thus spread through social fields ordered by class, but they can cross class lines, if strategic forms of capital are leveraged (Salaff et al., 2010). These decisions also become part of social reproduction processes.

Thirdly, in order to further unpack this signaled break in traditional, culturally-rooted parenting and education choices in favor of more individualistic approaches- often associated with learning English and participation in education programs with an Anglo-American curriculum influence, I find Appadurai's (2004, 1990) concept of cultural deterritorialization useful. Heyman and Campbell (2009) summarize the complexity of this term as follows:

[Cultural deterritorialization is] simultaneously a process in the actual world and a conceptual break. It is a break with the past (historical and analytical) vision of social groups having definite, consistent, bounded home spaces. Deterritorialization permits diaspora based ethnic politics to communicate and act across the globe, and it enables the diffusion of mediascapes and ideoscapes beyond their narrow origin places into global networks (p. 113).

Media and information technologies are connected to Appadurai's concept of cultural deterritorialization, and have been previously shown to shape or shift classed attitudes towards migration. In their respective ethnographic studies, Baas (2012), Fong (2011), Barber (2008) and Hairong (2008) have underlined that varied categories of migrants learn to recognize their potentials through transnational social media – Facebook, news stories, literature, movies or other information and communication outlets and technologies. Notably however, these processes are complexly in line with classed

identities. Such processes are also key for understanding migration motivations for my sample.

Importantly, for Appadurai, *deterritorialization* also occurs along class lines, shaping the ways different social categories recognize their potential role within transnational capitalism and take up these roles accordingly. However, when explored from the perspective of family scripts, this concept can be further complicated in terms of its amenity to upward mobility.

By exploring the unfolding of these processes in terms of class identity and the strategic leveraging of class capital, this chapter providing evidence that international education investments are important components of social reproduction and upward mobility projects in ways that sometimes align with familial class identity, and in some ways are meant to improve it. As the sections to follow in this chapter will document, families who invest in education in hopes that it opens transnational migration paths are not always the ones who most readily afford the high price tag. Instead, families find ways to circumvent economic limitations, for example by investing strategically in certain education products rather than others, or by making use of social networks – peers, family members as well as virtual networks – to figure out scholarship, financial aid opportunities or the best ways to migrate on tight budgets. Through such strategic investments, families work together to carve out lifestyles that give their children access to higher education abroad. In turn, their solutions develop into normative migration models for people in their social orbits, creating classed responses to emerging shared concerns.

3.1. Generations Of Migrants: Education Migration Through Family Scripts

Understanding migration projects through spotlighting *the family* rightly remains a methodological benchmark in migration studies to date. As cross-cultural ethnographic research illustrates, family backgrounds, networks, shared histories and goals constitute strong indicators of migration likelihood and outcomes. In the study of international education migration, family-centered ethnographic research has already shed light onto the historical importance and longitudinal development of the ‘international student’ as a distinct migration category, one instrumentalized in various ways in classed migration projects and across various cultural backgrounds.

For example, Olwig’s (2007) rich ethnographic documentation of Caribbean family migrations has traced the role of education within such projects to the 1950s. Similarly, Ong (1999), Raj (2003), Waters (2008), Ley (2010) and Salaff et al. (2010) have illustrated the importance of this migration category for Asian and South Asian families at different historical moments, from retracing colonial ties to the contemporary phenomena of the ‘wild goose family’ (Shin, 2014) or ‘the astronaut family’ (Ley, 2010; Waters, 2008). Most recently, two ethnographic accounts of international students, Fong’s (2011) account of internationally-bound Chinese singletons and Baas’s (2012) investigation of Indian students in Australia, also engage with family migration projects, emphasizing inherited classed identity projects and the role of international education within them, in ways to be further unpacked in this chapter.

Drawing upon this growing literature, I further the argument that family remains key to explorations of education migration. The data I collected reveals the rooting of migration projects within family histories and networks, in much depth and complexity.

In unpacking the emerging themes, I found Salaff et al.'s (2010) theorization of family within migration journeys most useful. Salaff et al. note that family is a dynamic project maintained through consistent engagement, both passive, such as recollection of memories, and active, through communication, support in common goals and visits. Further emphasizing this point, Olwig (2007) notes that engaging with family in this way “summons affective ties, the obligations and duties such ties entail and the warmth and mutual care with which relationships are sustained” (p. 12). Olwig and Salaff et al.'s theorizations of family as dynamically sustained through passive and active engagement with histories, memories, communication and affective socialization – which then afford migrants belonging and identity – has proven instrumental in understanding my participants' complex relationships with ancestors, parents and kin, some of whom they have never actually met, but whom they identify as instrumental in their identity formation as migrants and as international students. As well, family obligations, emotional or otherwise, often shape participants' attitudes towards education and migration, and practically guide migration routes, speaking back to emerging transnational complexities inherent in Bourdieu's social and cultural capital concepts.

This section pursues a theorization of the family within international migration for education, identifying and contextualizing the role of *family scripts* in conceptually and practically shaping both students' identities and their migration routes. As highlighted in this chapter's introduction, my data presents two family scripts I have identified as significantly recurring amongst the international students I interviewed: 1) the script of the pioneering ancestor; and 2) the script of the migrant role model. Pursuing these scripts allows for a deeper unpacking of prevalent statements such as ‘I always knew I'd

leave'. The scripts identified prove instrumental in participants' process of detachment, which precedes actual migration journeys. They also play an important role in establishing international education as part of larger family class mobility and migration projects, pointing to the rooting of international education migration habitus within binding family identities.

Furthermore, scripts recur at different stages of migration to establish and evaluate ongoing projects, as this and further chapters will reveal. Scripts are thus instrumentalized by participants in negotiating the appropriateness of choices at diverse points within transnational journeys. They are used to determine the timing of migrations, deciding to migrate for education and when selecting migration destinations, legitimizing participants' claim of transnational belonging along ancestral lines. Therefore, the scripts uncovered as rooted in family histories in this chapter are further developed in future chapters as they continue to impact participants' migration projects.

Of particular importance are the underlying normative constructions of migration that emerge from the scripts and are delineated along gendered and racialized identities. These often appear as parallels to current and developing neoliberal norms of citizenship and success outlined in Chapter Two, as will be unpacked further in this section.

3.1.1. Pioneering Ancestors: Family Mobilities Through Memory And History

As previously noted, close to 20 percent of participants framed their migration projects within historically-laden family scripts, termed here as *ancestral family scripts*. Most of those students did not present themselves as trail-blazers in the context of their families, despite having left their home country at a relatively young age and having

established a life on their own in a foreign land by the time of their interviews. Rather, many made reference to the importance of social and geographic forms of mobility for their families through the ages and felt strongly that they continued these family projects through their own migrations and hopeful socially upward paths.

As such, participants emphasized that in their families, they were neither innovative, nor alone, in their mobilities. Instead, they described migration for education as continuing a family legacy, for some longer than for others. Strikingly, fourteen students went back to their grandparents' generation in connecting their current status as international students in the Global North with family lineages. They remembered an ancestor, often a grandparent, who they met briefly, if at all, but who was kept alive in the collective family memory as the original adventurer, the explorer and opener of new social paths.

These remembrances have in common a strong component of celebrating individuality, sharing themes such as independence, entrepreneurship, and the overall ability to 'pull oneself up by their own bootstraps', themes that occur across traditionally collectivistic and in more individualistic cultures alike, and often become mantras of sorts for the students themselves throughout their own migration journeys, as further chapters reveal. The ancestors' projects also have in common the end goal of establishing the family's ancestral class status, and my participants see themselves either as inheritors of this status, or as its restorers. As such, in evoking historically-laden accounts of family pasts, my participants engage in complex processes of generational identity formation.

The process of remembering involved in recounting family histories has previously been theorized as a purposeful process. For example, Raj (2003) explains that

evocations of the past in interview data is not simply the sharing of “stories, myths or fables of the past, but moments when the past is evoked, expressed, mentioned, forgotten and remembered” (p. 55). On a further note, Erll (2011) explains how the social construction of memory actively engages with historical events and current symbols of classed cultural capital, giving rise to notions of the past in tune with desirable versions of classed futures. Erll notes:

“Memories do not hold still – on the contrary, they seem to be constituted first of all through movement. What we are dealing with, therefore, is not so much (and perhaps not even metaphorically) ‘sites’ of memory, *lieux de mémoire*, but rather the ‘travels’ of memory, *les voyages* or *les mouvements de mémoire*. Possible contexts of such movement range from everyday interaction among different social groups to transnational media reception and from trade, migration and diaspora to war and colonialism” (2011, p. 11).

These processes are closely tied to Bourdieu’s description of habitus built upon family ties that “exist and persist by virtue of constant maintenance work, and [embed] an economy of material and symbolic exchanges between the generations” (1986, p. 165). In the context of my study, families purposefully locate the importance of migration and education in intergenerational classed projects.

In attempting a chronology of the family scripts presented by participants, two North American interviewees tended to establish the earliest links, referring back to the pioneering colonization of the North American continent and the prominence of British settlements in Atlantic Canada as entry points for many European settlers, as well as the Loyalists’ migration to Atlantic Canada in the late 1700s in opposition to the American War for Independence. While this may seem an odd connection to current cross-border migration for education, these historical events are instrumentalized to show common culture and shared ancestry, creating an imagined North American space that has *always been permeable* to citizens of both Canada and the United States.

For example, tracing her migration lineage all the way to the 1700s, Kloe, the daughter of a clerk and a homemaker, explains that at times she viewed her migration for education in terms of retracing her family's migration routes to her study destination in Canada. Referring to her family's history in Atlantic Canada as a 'secret link', Kloe recounts the achievements of a celebrated 'great great uncle', whose family crossed the border before the War of 1812. The existence of this 'secret link', of a recorded family history at her study destination, made Kloe feel more at home in the Atlantic region. She explains "I still knew nothing about the area, but knowing I had family history up here was pretty nice".

While in a few instances family histories are traced hundreds of years back, most participants go as far as the 1960s and 1970s, a moment of notable global political unrest and displacement for many populations; and the time of the coming of age of students' grandparents' generation. Thus, some Chinese students connected their migrations to their families' histories of geographic resettlement and class mobility which occurred during China's Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution; South Americans made references to post-World War II waves of European migrations to their continent as important in shaping modern transnational families, and the civil unrest that occurred in countries like Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala in the 1960s as making geographic mobility more common; while South Asian and Caribbean students contextualized their migration paths to the Global North in terms of colonial ties experienced and reinforced through their ancestry.

For reasons to be further discussed below, the latter group particularly empathizes with their grandparents' generations – they see themselves caught between struggles for

nationalism and complying with the values of colonizing cultures. While the connectivity of these historical moments to migrating demographics have been documented in various theoretical and ethnographic forms in previous studies (Mahler, 1995; Olwig, 2007; Fong, 2011), a focused connection to international education remains under-explored.

In the Chinese context, Fong (2011), Salaff et al. (2010), Ley (2010) and Ong (1999) have previously highlighted the important impact of the Maoist Era and its policies for generational waves of Chinese migrants. Fong (2011), in particular, unpacks the impact of the Cultural Revolution on shaping perceptions towards migration, education and the Global North for potential international students and their families in today's China. She notes:

“those who grew up in in the autarkic political culture of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) felt too socially, emotionally and culturally bound to China to consider going abroad... Parents pined their yearnings to become part of the developing world onto children born into an era of post-Mao globalization... Unlike their parents, children born into this era believed it would be natural and reasonable for them to study abroad. Parents encouraged their children to study abroad as part of a broader strategy of upward mobility. Many parents born before the 1970s thought that they themselves had little potential for upward mobility... youth born in the 1980s however had great potential for upward mobility” (p. 69).

Fong (2011) emphasizes the intergenerational break between students' and parents' perceived mobility potentials. In my sample, as in Fong's, these themes were integrated by participants into family mobility projects, intricately locating international education within an increasingly evident habitus of migration.

My interlocutors construct themselves as furthering the ideological objectives of a modern China – more open to the West. Lia, 24, the daughter of skilled professionals from a large Chinese metropolis, explains how her English skills are due to intergenerational cosmopolitan attitudes:

My case may be a little special because my mother and my grandfather both knew English, so I started very early. They always thought this was part of their support for me to go abroad. My family always had an atmosphere of migration... So for me, I always had an idea of going abroad ever since I was very small.

While for some families studying English became part of maintaining their family identities, for others, the social and geographic mobility resulting from the social upheavals of eras past, engrained migration in family stories as an opportunity for economic betterment with the promise of elevating class status. The impetus of the times had lasting effects for some families.

For example, when I asked Jack, a student in his early 20s from China, to describe motivations for his choice to migrate as an international student, the framing of his answer may seem surprising in the absence of the historical contextualization of his family's migration script. The son of menial workers with limited education, Jack grew up very modestly in a mid-sized city in China. Before migrating internationally for education, he had never left China, nor had any of his friends. Yet, he describes his family as "already kind of migrants", expanding

My grandfather is actually from [region of China], and he migrated to [new region] for work... If he stayed home, his family had a farm and he did not want to spend his whole life on the farm... I guess my family is pretty diverse, there is the [culture they left behind] and there is the [culture they encountered at new location]. [People from original location] are really smart... they are good at making money, they know how to save money, they are pretty ambitious...that's the general idea.

Jack presents his own international migration as a continuation of his grandfather's internal migration, which had changed the family's outlook about carving their own independent paths in life. Throughout his interview, Jack continues to parallel this ancestral journey for a 'better life' to his own migration story as an international student.

Tracy, a student from Southeast Asia, whose grandparents left their country of origin in their youth, also framed her migration as connected to an inspirational familial

history of success against significant odds. This history led her family to see migration as an opportunity for upwards class mobility. Tracy explained that, in their youth, her grandparents courageously left behind their families and relocated to a new country, where Tracy would be born two generations later. Both grandparents encountered significant hardships on their journey. Neither spoke the language of their new country, so the early years were particularly hard. Tracy's mother often invoked these days of hardship to ensure Tracy remembered the family's humble beginnings. However, Tracy's family story has a happy conclusion, one she intends to carry forwards through her own migration as an international student. As Tracy explained, the family's fortune significantly changed due to the grandparents' entrepreneurial spirit and hard work, as well as their impetus to provide the best education for their children, including Tracy's mother:

I think financially, my grandparents eventually ended up extremely successful because they made a lot of money. They [opened a business]... So they eventually had a lot of money and afforded to send all their kids to school... My mom in particular pushed herself really really hard and got into some of the best schools in the city and she actually went to [North America] for [her degree] and when she came back [to home country], she [took on a prestigious professional job].

Tracy's origin story equates education achievement with delineating class status and international education as a way to elevate that status, an attitude her family upheld throughout her childhood. Like her mother, Tracy attended the best schools in her country and continued the family's aspiration of social mobility by migrating to Canada as an international student.

As these vignettes illustrate, historical connections between class mobility, education, migration and the Western world are significant factors in modern out-migration amongst Asian youths. The values celebrated through ancestral stories, such as

independence, entrepreneurship and reverence for education – especially Anglo-American education – frame students’ habitus and their subsequent migration journeys. As such, unpacking family histories helps establish their impact in shaping the identities of current generations of international students and unveils the role of current international education migration within class mobility projects initiated generations ago.

This reality proves valid cross-culturally. Focusing on undocumented migrants from South America in the USA, Mahler (1995) shows how displacement has shifted perceptions of migration across social classes, shaping an impetus for various forms of mobility. My findings however underline that historical moments impacting Mahler’s participants may also have a role in the continent’s current outflow of international students. Thus, students’ stories of family encounters with displacement appear in my research, although they emerge filtered through a gloss of memory that tends to disproportionately highlight the positive aspects of mobility. As Samuel and Thompson (1990) note, “all recollections are told from a standpoint in the present. In telling, they [participants] need to make sense of the past. That demands a selecting, ordering, and simplifying, a construction of coherent narrative” (p. 7). For example, Fred, in his late 20s and the son of highly educated professionals, who grew up in a metropolitan city in South America, frames his story of international migration for education with the following observation:

My family in many ways had lots of migration. I mean one of my grandparents was from [South American country] and had mixed white [European] and native blood. My other grandfather has mixed white and black blood. My grandmother internally migrated to the capital where one of the family members got political power and a lot of wealth... The thing is that there was a lot of displacement because of violence over the years and people had to go to cities and that was really common till the 60s, so it affected even my parents. So I guess that also impacts [my outlook].

Fred’s family script presents migration in a positive light, as family members are

described as having gained ‘political power and a lot of wealth’ as a result of it. Fred attributes his own upbringing, which favored investments in education and motivated his parents to enroll Fred in a private Anglo-American high school located in another country, to the family’s positive attitude towards migration.

3.1.2. Gender Identities And The Limits Of Ancestral Family Scripts

The interpretation and instrumentalization of family scripts in shaping the classed appropriateness of education migration is however, additionally complicated by gender. For Maria, in her mid-20s and from a rural locality in South America, whose parents did not attend university and work in clerical jobs, the family’s ancestral mobility script encouraged aspirations towards migration early on. Nonetheless, culturally rooted gendered limitations curbed the script’s power. As Maria explains:

My grandfather was from [country in South America other than my own] and my great-grandfather... was from [country in Europe]... My parents would tell us we had this foreign blood and we still have this [European] last name. This history made us international, or I think that’s what my father wanted to believe... When I finished high school, I wanted to move for university, but that was difficult. As I said, my parents had a certain level of education and also this traditional culture that girls don’t leave home until they are married, so it was a mix because my father was trying to give us this different multicultural background to the daughters, but still keep a traditional view.

Maria did not succeed in gaining support to migrate for education after high school due to the gendered barriers she describes. However, the family script proved instrumental in framing and sustaining her aspirations to migrate as a student, a project she eventually set in motion later in life, as will be revealed in Chapter Four. Her experiences, at this stage in the migration planning point to the complex nature of power accrued through family scripts, contingent upon binding realities of the present, that see women as repositories of family capital (McCall, 1992).

Maria's interview also highlights another important aspect of decoding family scripts, reminding us that while participants may highlight and uphold past family identities, relationships with ancestral pioneers are also intricately complicated by current identity politics. Maria explains:

As I grew older I realized...I thought, you know, I am not European, I don't look European, why should I be different than the people that is my own? Actually it was kind of hard for me when I realized that. When I finished university...I worked with a lot of foreign people and sometimes they had this perception about Latin people that they didn't do work as well as [Europeans], so that was tough for me. One time one [European co-worker]...told me 'You are different, you know, and you have to admit that you have [a European] last name'. But to me, why is that different? If I had a different name I would be the same person, so to me that does not make a difference to the person.

Maria's observation underlines the challenging process of reconciling conflicting past identities with current realities, illustrating Greenhouse and Greenwood's (1998) observation that "identity, difference and culture are always heavily charged with histories of asymmetrical power relations, aspirations and vulnerabilities" (p. 4).

In the context of international education opportunities for students from countries with colonial pasts, the modern aspiration to study in the Anglo-American system is often in contention with more current processes of de-colonization. Classed identities passed on through family scripts become key in leveraging belonging to Anglo-American education spaces, despite the inherent contentions. For example, Dan, a graduate student from South Asia, whose family is highly educated, explains why he attended a British-style secondary school that set him on his international education track:

It is very common amongst upper middle class to send kids to [British] boarding school. It's the British style... My grandfather, father and my uncles went to the same school as me, so it's part of our tradition. I went to the school and now my nephew [sibling's son] is starting at the same school...

Holly, a student in her mid-20s from South Asia whose parents are also educated professionals, shares a similar story:

My dad and my grandparents, you know, studied in English and that's quite a class marker, speaking English at home. So I grew up bilingual, because both my parents and grandparents were fluent in English. Well, we were a British colony so we have an Anglicized upper-middle class. And then I went to a private school and there we were discouraged from speaking my mother tongue, so I grew up in a kind of culture that focused on sending people outside the country and encouraged students to really speak in English... My grandmother... went there, a little bit of colonial history... I looked into two or three generations of this school before I got there...

In their interviews, Holly and Dan emphasize the importance of English and Anglo-American education for their families' generational class identities, which they in turn are expected to uphold through their own education choices.

Previous studies have theorized post-colonial migration flows in the context of international education. On this topic, Maringe and Carter (2007) find that current generations of students continue to gravitate towards education exported through colonial links "largely because of the derived cultural capital and language facility" (p. 461).

Mohanty (2006) points to an even more direct process of social reproduction through mastering post-colonial forms of capital, noting that:

"in the colonial period, education in English was a means to social and economic resources, and now, it is also used to divide the society into the privileged and under-privileged classes... Public education, mostly in major regional state level languages and of poor quality, is seen as a disadvantage vis-à-vis education in English, and thus more and more people from the lower strata are forced to seek expensive English-medium private schools for their children" (p. 264).

Mohanty's (2006) observations are certainly upheld in the choices that directed the educational trajectories of my participants. However, undertaking international education is also highlighted as a process of mitigating conflicting identities of class and ethnicity.

Dan, for example, frankly articulates his experience with Anglo-American education, and its role in finding resolution between both aspects of his identity:

You know, my relationship to [British culture] was a confusing thing for me to understand. I mean, I was in a British school, my teachers were British, we were following British traditions, I was playing squash, that kind of thing...but the general perception [in the wider context] was also against them. It's hard to understand why that

is. They were there for hundreds of years and we did end [the colonial era] on good terms... But this thing I came to know [through my international education], I realized I had a more open mind. Because I always read history from more perspectives, and they all say totally different things, so maybe you always remain confused and not think you absolutely know what's going on.

Dan thus points to the benefits of Anglo-American education in ways akin to discourses used to describe cosmopolitan education. As theorized in Chapter One, these education choices are overwhelmingly embedded and signal explicit forms of cultural capital that mark the bearer as part of a privileged group (Carlson, Gerhards & Hans, 2016; Weenick, 2010).

Understanding international students' migration stories as rooted within national histories, which are in turn reframed along classed, gendered, racial and ethnic lines through personal through ancestral family scripts, has methodological, historical and practical implications to understanding international education as a migration category. In methodological terms, the prevalence of ancestral scripts, revealed through allowing participants to frame migration stories in their own terms, speaks to the importance of investigating migration as separate from pre-imposed temporal frames or actual geographic mobility events (Pessar & Mahler, 2003).

In historical perspective, the scripts reviewed thus far point to the personal connective threads that link current education migration trajectories to past historical eras. Contemporary international students look to ancestors' generations to legitimize, empower and reconcile their own migration aspirations. This approach motivates students to overcome various barriers, including contemporary challenges based on gender in patriarchal cultures, as in Maria's case, or attempts at reconciling nationalist belonging with pursuing an Anglo-American education despite marginalizing colonial histories, as in Dan's or Holly's cases.

Ultimately, ancestral family scripts are shown to support classed aspirations pertaining to migration, education or a combination of both, and to encourage participants to persevere even as routes become further discouraging, for example in light of culturally-embedded gender inequality. The purposeful celebration of ancestral scripts in terms of highlighted independence, entrepreneurial spirit and a cosmopolitan outlook help shape particular choices and behavior that gradually gain importance in shaping a new generation of migrants. Woven through the script is the appropriateness to migrate, but also to strategically do so, instrumentalizing education as a class marker and a class elevator.

3.1.3. Migrating ‘The Right Way’: Migrant Role-Models And Family Networks

The second family script that gains catalytic power for students’ journeys is that of the *migrant role-model script*. This script is imbued with both cultural and social capital forms, drawing upon classed expectations for migration projects, as well as social expectations of family support through these projects. This script more directly guides students to migrate ‘the right way’ – to the Global North and as international students. Similar to the ancestral family script, the migrant role-model script is generally based on socially constructed and reinforced familial connections, but significantly develops at the confluence of actual social relationships with the migrant taken as role model, and imagined such relationships, which rely on familial memory and/or that imply a familial commitment of support that is expected to be repaid through the family network.

As noted before in this chapter, this script emerges from over 40 percent of the interviews. These participants attributed their migration as students to strategic parenting

designed to have them emulate, or learn from and surpass, a family migration story generally involving an inspirational aunt or uncle, most often a person of their parents' generation who migrated to the Global North. In most cases, the role model tends to be directly involved in the rearing decisions of the future international student, ultimately presenting them with rather clear normative instructions as to how one becomes a 'successful' migrant. This contrasts the nature of the pioneering ancestor's actions, which proceed, and occur entirely separately from the would-be student.

In historical perspective, this script encourages would-be students to follow the example of a generation of migrants whose mobility projects unfolded from the late 1970s to the 1990s. As described in Chapter Two, these were the foundation years of knowledge points-based systems in various nations of the Global North, including for example Canada and Australia (Walsh, 2014; Baas, 2012). Not surprisingly, the aunts and uncles depicted by my participants often understand and define their migration triumphs and challenges in terms of education, skills and integration potential, rhetorics resonating with policy debates of those decades – as described in Chapter Two. This generation's experience with these debates, and their impacts on migrants' opportunities and adversities through that period, are shown to also contribute to shaping current international students' choices of migration routes, as explored in this section.

Significantly, the script of the migrant role model, reflecting the complexity of relationships enmeshed in social capital, is often equally binding for the potential students and for the various family members involved in the international education project, including the role model themselves. It ties in with the array of obligations and exchanges that have been documented to hold families together through migration (Salaff

et al., 2010; Olwig, 2007; Mahler, 1995), and sheds light onto the advantages and limitations of enlisting family networks of social capital in the context of international education.

Ethnographic evidence investigating the role of social capital through migration has illustrated that, often, migration occurs amid nuanced negotiations between families and their members (Salaff et al., 2010; Olwig, 2007; Mahler, 1995). Remittances are possibly the most visible by-product of such negotiations. Families in the Philippines, Mexico, various countries across Eastern Europe, the Caribbean and other locations around the world have been shown to use the financial support of migrant members in processes of social reproduction or upward social mobility (Trandafir, 2013; Barber & Lem, 2012; Zloniski, 2006; Barber, 2000; Hochschild, 2000). However, engaging in remittance streams also benefits migrants, by conferring them opportunities to maintain social status and fulfill active roles within their families and communities while away. Remittances establish migrants' familial belonging, and grants access to networks of support and care in home countries. For example, Barber (2000) illustrates how Filipino caregivers working in Canada entrust relatives in their home country with various localized obligations of care. Relatives take on an array of activities in the Philippines, from parenting children, to caring for elderly parents. In return, the migrants financially support various family projects, ranging from building new homes, to putting nieces and nephews through school.

Other forms of support, such as information and advice sharing through family networks, have also been documented as common mobilizations of social capital across cultures. In this vein, Olwig (2007) notes that:

“belonging to the [transnational] family is defined to a great extent by being part of the information network, and this means talking about and knowing the whereabouts of various relatives, as well as being the subject of talk by other relatives” (p. 83).

However, transnational support and access to information is further contingent on classed and gendered identities that have been shown to directly shape potential migrants’ pathways to migration, in some cases limiting options available. On this note, Olwig (2007) illustrates how middle-class migrants from the Caribbean overwhelmingly provide “accounts of their emigration [that] show they moved within the British Empire as part of the Royal Air Force, the Anglican Church, or an education program, within a family network or within a combination of both” (p. 67). As well, migration options are gendered. One of Olwig’s (2007) female participants explains:

“[B]oys could go to the States... America was regarded as too wild [for girls]. England was the mother country; it was better, especially for girls. [I wanted to go to England to study nursing] because I had a sister and a brother there, so that gave added protection” (p. 67).

Olwig’s (2007) ethnographic notes resonate with factors that shaped the migration projects of participants in my study.

This section begins to address the ways family relationships frame migration for international students. I provide accounts of how these relationships operate in creating, amongst potential migrants, the initial desire to migrate as international students in both subtle and more direct ways – akin to the complexities of habitus.

This process unfolds through the decades leading up to students’ actual departures. The students’ sample captures the cross-cultural nature of transnational family interactions and support for education. Students who identify the script of the migrant role model as impacting their identities and early migration decisions originate

from diverse locations – including Asia, South Asia, South America, the Caribbean and Europe. Across these different cultural contexts, this script plays an important role in creating and sustaining, amongst the potential students, the desire to migrate in general, and directs their aspirations to migrate as students in particular, as opposed to other available migration routes.

As outlined in Chapter One, through unpacking education in terms of social reproduction of cultural (including symbolic) forms of capital, Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) have revealed this social institution to be far from socially impartial. Instead, important systemic aspects, including education choices, rewards and outcomes are defined along class lines. This section further complicates this theory by locating within it class reproduction processes that occur in transnational perspective.

My data indicates that education choices and their expected rewards are settled upon through negotiations between migrant role models, families left behind and potential students. As this section shows, through such processes, students and their families not only learn to aspire towards migration to the Global North, but also draw valuable conclusions about the Global North based on generational outcomes. Overall, these practices have practical implications for the current generation's social and geographic mobility strategies, as captured in my data.

To begin with, many participants illustrate in their interviews how the script of the migrant role model was instrumental in fostering overwhelmingly positive images of life in the Global North. And unlike any media messaging they may have been exposed to, these accounts were legitimized by trusted figures of authority, such as grandparents and parents, and were thus described as much more impactful. Adam, a student from

Southeast Asia whose aunt migrated to the Global North through the care labor sector in the 1990s, shares how he started thinking of migration at an early age:

We had reunion parties when my [migrant] relatives came back to visit. This started a lot after I was about 12 years old... Generally when they came back they wore the branded clothes... it's a sign of luxury. But most of my relatives I now know only had low [skilled] jobs, even though most of my relatives have college degrees, but when they go abroad they have the low... blue-collar jobs. But when they come back, they have these nice clothes, gold jewelry and probably that's why they do it. Also they would bring back clothes for all the people attending reunion parties, like clothes, chocolates... It's like their bragging rights, to say 'hey this is my status in the [Global North]'.

Addressing the prevalence of such behaviors amongst migrants and across cultural contexts, Mahler (1995) documents the construction of illusions about life in the Global North amongst her sample of South American migrants. Mahler (1995) points to the power of such processes in motivating would-be migrants and sustaining migration chains.

She finds the reasoning behind this behavior to be two-fold. On the one hand, migrants engage in projections of success for families and friends back home, even in the face of hardship. On the other hand, Mahler (1995) shows how migrants are somewhat pressed to upholding personal images of success because “people in the home country do not accept negative depictions of *el pais de la maravillas* [the land of wonders]” (p. 84). As such, revealing the true hardships of life in the Global North makes migrants feel and be perceived as “egoistical” (p. 89). As such, migrants understand and take up their role within their families as providing hope for a better life to relatives left behind.

My data points to a similar ‘complicity of deception’ between migrant family members and those left behind. As such, would-be students and their families in home countries seem to actively participate in developing the illusion of a world without hardships, attainable through migration. Jack, the student from China who in the previous

section discussed the impact of his grandfather's internal migration for his family's identity, also addresses how an uncle's migration to Canada in the 1990s furthered the family's reverence to migration:

That's all they [my extended family at home] talk about 'he lives in Canada and he has so much money'. From my dad and mom, they always tell me that if I get a chance, I need to go to Canada.

At what age did that start?

Well that wasn't really serious, but it started when I was three or four [years old] and they would tell me to start learning English and stuff like that... [T]hen you start to compare every little thing in your life that you think would suck and imagine it's probably so much better in the West, like in Canada. So say if you live in a condo, then you would think "I can get more space in Canada"... Or things like cars, you think if you go to the West you will have a lot of money and have your own car...

Reflecting family connections similar to the ones Mahler (1995) encountered in her sample, Jack goes on to explain that his uncle was often portrayed in family stories as somebody who is working towards getting "as many of us [members of the family] to come out of China [to improve economic situation]... for his personal sake, because he cares about the family". Jack elaborates:

[Growing up] I mostly knew stuff [about studying in Canada] from my uncle. He would just come to China and we would meet ...he wanted me to come to school here [in Canada], get more education, he wanted me to see the world from a more international perspective than just being at home. He told me that I needed to come to Canada for his own personal sake, because he cares about the family, you know, the whole family and he wants as many of us to come out... and be wealthy and live a better life...you know, succeed... That's why he encouraged me to study in the West, especially in Canada, because he lives here.

Jack attributes his own interest, as well as his' family's support towards his international education plan, to the mentorship of his migrant uncle. Based on his uncle's advice, from an early age Jack has come to understand education as an appropriate way to migrate. Moreover, throughout his interview, there was also a strong sense that migrating as an international student would help Jack surpass some of the challenges his uncle encountered post-migration. He explains that, despite the uncle's material success, social

integration in Canada has not been easy. Jack notes that his uncle has “been complaining because he is lonely [in Canada]. Since he immigrated here, I only heard that he has lots of Chinese friends... see, my uncle came here when he was 40 so maybe it was hard for him to integrate.” Jack learned from his uncle’s experience with social marginalization.

In this context, he explains that migration as a student has notable advantages because:

the earlier you come here [to university in Canada] the easier you get integrated into the culture, second the earlier you come here the more time you have to be exposed to the English language environment, pick up the language easier and it can be better.

Many participants made mention of lessons learned from migrant role models in their families. And like Jack, lessons learned served to highlight the benefits of migrating as students. Notably, selecting migrant role models to celebrate and emulate is also a gendered process. Elizabeth, a student in her mid-20s from the Caribbean, whose parents are skilled workers, explains her understanding of gendered migration paths based on family role models she emulated through her own migration project:

Since [aged less than ten], I would frequently visit [city in North America] and that has been a part of my development as a person... One of my aunts migrated when she went to study in [city in North America]... She had always wanted to go to [city in North America], it was her dream, so she went and studied there, got her degree and began working there. She was the first one in my family who migrated as a student... but I guess we have a long history of migration in the Caribbean... Since the 1930s and 1940s, men would migrate and work, in the 40s and 50s, men would migrate to England to help in the war effort and then they would stay there and send for their families. In the 70s and 80s there was a bit of a cooling down, and in the 90s it started back up again, and at that time it was more women [migrating], because the education system opened up to women and they were getting scholarships... So my aunt got in that way, she got a scholarship...

Elizabeth followed her aunt’s example and migrated to Canada as an international student. Her historically informed account of gendered migration from the Caribbean speaks to ongoing research on the impacts of migration on women’s work and men’s work, as it overlaps with developing dynamics of intellectual work and education migration. Often, women who spearhead migration from the Caribbean were involved in

global chains of demand and supply of care-labor (Olwig, 2007). However, these sectors have seen an increased prerequisite of formal training and degree legitimization in the 1980s and 1990s (Kofman & Raghuram, 2015; Yeates, 2009; Hochschild, 2000; Parrenas, 2000). Following this generation's example, current cohorts of female international students are inching closer to closing the gender gap for international education (CBIE, 2014b).

As examples reviewed thus far show us, success stories of international education can be very inspirational. However, failed migration projects also have important lessons to offer. Doris, a student in her early 20s originating from China, whose parents are highly skilled professionals, summarizes this widespread theme in a very articulate way. She explains:

My uncle tried to immigrate to Canada as worker and he did not find good job and could only stay here 1 year... so he could not survive here and came back to China with no citizenship... To get a permanent citizenship and be a real Canadian it's better to study here, you learn the Canadian culture.

This uncle's failed migration project discouraged Doris's parents from attempting migration themselves. However, the uncle's post-migration stories at family gatherings and his advice, shared through the family network, determined Doris's parents to start preparations for her potential departure as a student. This started when she was about eight years old. The family took practical steps to make the migration plan happen, including saving for college abroad, enrolling Doris in English language classes and ultimately having Doris attend an Anglo-American prep-school.

Doris's story is very similar to Derek's, a Chinese student in his mid 20s whose uncle migrated to Canada when Derek was a pre-teen, only to return one year later

without a job he considered appropriate for his training. Upon his uncle's return, Derek explains:

[My uncle and parents] decided me and my cousin would study internationally. She [my cousin] did [academic program in Global North] and is still living [abroad]. We started learning English and my mom and my uncle spend a lot of time with us [my cousin and I] to teach us and improve our education.

However, while for most participants, the script of the migrant role model was consistently presented as inspirational since early childhood, for some, the script became more pronounced at a specific stages in students' education, thus providing timely alternative solutions to emerging problems. In such cases, families experience a turning point in relations between migrant members and relatives left behind. This was the case for Hugh, the son of professionals who grew up in a medium sized city in China. He explains:

My uncle went to Canada in the early 1990s as a [skilled professional]... [After the move] obviously... the family connection is still there, but because I was at such a young age, there was not such a connection between me... or my uncle directly. But we did hear stories from my grandparents about 'oh how your uncle and [family] are doing in Canada'. There were phone calls to my grandparents and to us for Chinese New Year, things like that... Going overseas to study came to the mind of my parents and me as soon as I started high school. That year my uncle [and family] came to China for a visit, for the very first time his entire family came back to visit... [They were invited to stay] at my parents' house... that started making me think 'oh, I'd like to go somewhere [abroad] for university' ... I struggled really hard academically, so... my parents said, 'You know what, let's really push this thing, let's have you get to Canada, because obviously this is not working out for you'.

Salaff et al. (2010) theorize the temporal prominence of family scripts by situating them within the life course. They note that "transnational moves are often time stamped. Exits and returns are associated with life cycle, and the exits are linked to the institutions that manage those passages" (p. 154).

In the context of education migration, paving the way towards international education occurs in concert with diverse family members' life stages and ages. Hugh's

uncle's family visit maybe marked the beginning of a financially stable and socially settled stage of migration for the transnational family contingent, signaling they were ready to mentor the nephew who in turn, was old enough to embrace a migration project of his own. As such, life cycles drive the ebbs and flows of migration, and dictate the moments when scripts are introduced or revived, plans are laid and practical steps are undertaken.

Whether it is woven through family migration projects early on, or it is employed to offer alternatives to challenges that may occur along the way, the script of the migrant role model, like that of the pioneering ancestor, has tangible effects for families and potential students. It binds parents to years of savings for expenses to come during college years abroad, it introduces English language lessons and prompts enrollment in exclusive schools known to funnel students to international universities. In short, the family scripts turn into an international education lifestyle, the nature and impacts of which will be further explored in the next section of this chapter. As well, Chapters Four and Five will further reveal how the scripts tracked in this chapter see a strong resurgence around key migration moments for the students, such as their impending departures or imminent graduations, when the years of planning come to a head, and support as well as conviction are needed again, maybe more than ever.

3.2. International Education: A Lifestyle

To reiterate, Salaff et al. (2010) theorize that while family scripts act as “agendas for action” (p. 11), they rely on, impact and reproduce socially sanctioned agency patterns and institutional structures for achievement. As illustrated thus far in this

chapter, family scripts create normative aspirations, motivating parents to invest their time and finances to make migration projects possible for their children. The highlighted scripts see families celebrate ancestors' independence, entrepreneurship and the courage to migrate, shaping a habitus of migration for younger generations. Aunts and uncles become models of migration success or failure, helping families determine that the end goal of transnational mobility should not simply be a life in the Global North, but rather inclusive belonging to its perceived cultural, social and economic space.

The remainder of this chapter explores how family scripts are complemented by larger dynamics of social mobility and reproduction, resonating, for example, with the growing industry of education exports first described in Chapter Two. The sections to follow here further investigate how the habitus of migration inspires particular understandings of localized and global social and institutional structures, shaping parenting strategies in light of available education choices.

As argued before in Chapter One, locating parenting styles and education choices within social reproduction processes has always been a principal tenet of the social sciences. From key theorists like Marx and Durkheim, to critical texts such as Willis's (1977) "Learning to Labor" or MacLeod's (1987) "Ain't No Making It", cultural capital has consistently been measured against parenting strategies, education attainment, employment prospects, and social mobility. Drawing on units of analysis that center on parents' education and occupations, neighborhood community, race and ethnicity as markers of socioeconomic status, both informal education (parenting and socialization), and formal schooling, emerge as prime determinants of social inequality.

While it is clear that class identities have tangible implications on the socialization and education experiences of participants, investigating processes of social reproduction emerging in this study requires a transnational conceptualization of social reproduction. The data, which draws on an extensive variety of cultural contexts, illustrates points of similarity within processes of social reproduction strategies undertaken by families at different locations around the world.

I propose that this is occurring due to the global expansion of education industries, which package and market education programs to resonate with mobility projects unfolding at these different geographic localities, and yet which have a common end goal of preparing students for Anglo-American education migration. I will document in particular the prevalence of international educational programs, covered in this section, as well as the growing industry of agencies offering other services to migrating students, to be explored in Chapter Four.

Matching the historical trends and recent developments in international education exports described in Chapter Two, the popularization of Anglo-American education programs across social classes is still a somewhat novel phenomenon. Educational programs of this nature have traditionally been seen as elite prerogatives, primarily due to cost and scarcity on local markets outside the Global North (Waters, 2008). Remnants of elitism are still pervasive in materials of instruction, as López-Gopar and Sughrua (2014) have found that ESL textbooks now widely used for English teaching internationally, continue to reference and support an opulent lifestyle of exacerbated consumerism expected of the students participating in the classes, despite increasingly discrepant realities.

In the same vein, the International School Consultancy Board (ISCB) stated in 2014 that enrollment at international schools around the world is supported by “wealthy local parents who want to prepare their children for foreign university degrees [and who] make up 80 percent of the demand for international school enrolments– a significant change from 20 years ago when most centres were dominated by expatriate students” (Custer, 2014, para. 5). This conclusion was reached even in the face of staggering growth in enrolments to such schools, with numbers reaching over 4 million enrolled school children in 2014. Moreover, by 2025, the ISBC predicts its more than 11,000 international schools will enroll over 6 million children around the world. In the next decade, over 100 new international schools are expected to open across China and the Middle East, the fastest growing markets for these institutions.

While American institutions currently dominate the market, public and private education providers using Canadian curricula are also gaining ground, as described in Chapter Two. Currently there are over 100 international schools affiliated with Canadian provincial school boards from Ontario, New Brunswick and British Columbia (CICIC, 2016).

Reflecting the systemic inequalities embedded within the diversified market of education exports, international schools represent just the tip of the iceberg for the global industry of education programs deemed prerequisites to attending university abroad. Academic studies have been critically documenting such programs as they unfold at different locations around the world and contentiously intersect with class (Shin, 2014; Butler, 2012). Gao (2014), expands on this theme as it pertains to the proliferation of ESL private schools in the Chinese context:

“Not only does social-class status influence the learning of English, but the reverse is also true: learning English affects social-class status. Hence, another potentially fruitful line of inquiry would be to explore what aspects of Chinese learners’ English-learning processes help to construct their social-class identities. As English is not only an important academic subject in the exam-oriented educational system in China but also a form of cultural capital in the globalizing world, English learning is becoming a means of promoting social mobility (Butler, 2013; Zou & Zhang, 2011). On the other hand, in terms of increasing investment in English education, English learning functions as a means of reproducing class hierarchies” (p. 97).

Also in the Chinese context, Fong (2011) finds that working-class Chinese parents now make up a significant clientele for Anglo-American education programs, as they hope that “investing in their children’s education could have a bigger payoff in the long run than any other financial investment they could make” (Fong, 2011, p. 78). Such education investments have been shown to displace traditional modes of ensuring financial security in retirement, such as investing in property or savings funds (Fong, 2011, p. 78). Meanwhile, in societies where labor migration has become a mundane part of family life, such as the Philippines or Mexico, investments in Anglo-American education have become part of planned family reunification strategies. Kanno (2014) notes that “for people of such classes, English is not simply a mark of distinction, but a critical tool kit for leading a transnational life” (p. 120).

Reflecting similar stratification processes emerging in my study, 47 students of very diverse backgrounds engaged in Anglo-American educational activities during their middle or high-school years. In this group, 17 participants attended private Anglo-American international schools, 16 others strategically chose to attend high schools with a proven track record of graduates’ out-migration, 11 of them having to move to another city with or without their family in order to attend, and 14 additional participants spent at least one semester, but sometimes more than one year, studying in a country in the Global

North, such as the UK, the USA, Australia or New Zealand, either enrolled in public schools or participating in intensive ESL programs. Participants described these programs as preparing them for eventual international university experiences, thus making it appropriate to group and explore these diverse programs together.

The data also affords an exploration of how these industries intersect with class identities, offering both opportunities for class mobility and simultaneously increasing the vulnerability of those relegated to disadvantageous social positions. Consequently, my findings integrate with a growing body of work recognizing the complex deterritorialized and transnational reconfiguration of classed identities, as processes of social reproduction unfold at the intersection of global capitalism and international education (Kanno, 2014; Darvin & Norton, 2014; Heyman & Campbell, 2009). These themes will be documented in this section, which illustrates how global media wavelengths encourage increasingly deterritorialized cultural norms. These, in turn, accelerate the demand for Anglo-American education products, and practically impact individuals' access to localized and global landscapes of opportunity.

Accounting for these themes also includes documenting new ways in which a growing secondary education industry, with its vast array of programs spanning from intensive English courses, to school exchange programs and international school curricula, is appropriated by families of various social backgrounds to break through local and globalized hierarchies of power.

As the previous sections of this chapter illustrated, participants may receive behavioral cues from traditional channels such as social and family networks, and yet those networks span transnational fields, in a deterritorialized manner. In this context,

deterritorialization emerges out of Appadurai's (1996) theory of globalization as a series of imagined social and cultural spaces, or scapes, that are not territorially bound. Drawing on Benedict Anderson's notion of 'imagined community' (1983), Appadurai explains:

“the image, the imagined, the imaginary- these are all terms that direct us to something critical and new in global cultural processes: the imagination as a social practice...the imagination has become an organized field of social practices, a form of work (in the sense of both labor and culturally organized practice), and a form of negotiation between sites of agency (individuals) and globally defined fields of possibility...The imagination is now central to all forms of agency, is itself a social fact, and is the key component of the new global order”. (p. 31)

Appadurai's framework moves beyond binary depictions of global interactions as culturally heterogeneous or homogeneous, allowing for an understanding of emerging social processes of globalization as multidirectional and irregularly complex. In this context, deterritorialization marks the conceptual departure from understanding cultural processes of national groups as bounded by home-spaces, and accounts for the potency of ideas, images and movements broadcast and marketed across geographies. However, deterritorialization also enables the transparency of unequal positionings within global flows (Heymann & Campbell, 2009). As Appadurai (1996) notes, “deterritorialization in general, is one of the central forces of the modern world because it brings laboring populations into the lower-class sectors and spaces of relatively wealthy societies” (p. 37).

Through applying this theoretical framework, this section reveals activities such as learning English, investing in private Anglo-American schools and acting upon media messages of branded consumerism – commonly construed as wavelengths of global consumption in academic literature – as purposeful actions that are nuanced through classed and gendered identities. Moreover, such actions are critically utilized to gain and

prove the acquisition and fluency of a transnationally mobile cultural capital. However, these processes also introduce an array of vulnerabilities also experienced across class and gender lines, as will be explored in the onward sections.

3.2.1. As Seen On TV: Media Scapes And Education Migration Dreams

Participants in this study pointed to global media and information outlets in shaping their interest in Anglo-American education products. As previous migration ethnographies have illustrated, national and international media outlets create landscapes of imaginary opportunities, risks and desires for potential migrants (Baas, 2012; Fong, 2011; Barber, 2000, 2008; Hairong, 2008). Appadurai's previously introduced theoretical model of globalization frames this process through transnational media scapes. According to Appadurai, these scapes reinforce the hegemony of class positions transnationally, as they unequally shape migratory projects and trajectories.

My data illustrates the potency of scapes and their resulting inequality in to a certain extent. Students from diverse places – including China, South Asia, the Middle East and the Caribbean – mention usage of media outlets, such as accessing TV programming from the Global North or participating in social media with international peers, as a way of gaining knowledge about this cultural space. A notable trend amongst participants is the strategic instrumentalization they apply to media consumption, which often complements international educational choices. As such, participants are not simply *exposed* to media messaging, but rather appear to *seek it out* as a form of cultural capital accumulation in itself.

In many countries, access to media programming from the Global North is not readily available. In many cases, televisions and computers are not common household items, while access to the Internet or international TV channels is even more exclusive. In such instances, students and their families invest in gaining access to this information. Fourteen students from around the world, including from countries in the Caribbean, South Asia and Europe, all noted that their families were amongst the first in their social circles to buy a computer and gain access to the internet, as many noted that media programming was purchased in their household primarily as an education tool, to help youngsters familiarize themselves with the cultural space of the Global North.

Neal, the son of a middle class family from South Asia, explains how he strongly identified with Raj, a character from the popular show *The Big Bang Theory*, whose South Asian roots are often the butt of jokes:

Do you watch The Big Bang Theory? We had that [in home country] too- I always thought [while watching the show at home that] I am just like Raj [laughs] I am totally that way with girls too, and I am a scientist...

Despite Raj's shortcomings, his presence on the show encouraged Neal to imagine himself in that setting and acted as a motivator for his migration. Similarly, Zara, the daughter of highly educated professionals from the Middle East, explains how TV programming helped her feel familiar with Canada long before deciding to study abroad.

She explains:

[A]ll this TV stuff, like the movies *Ann of Green Gables*, *The Road to Avonlea*, I think those made my childhood, so it wasn't like I had no idea of Canada. All this stuff they showed every week on our television, like I think every day from when I was ten... I would watch those things, and I think this made me a good sense of Canada.

On a further note, Ashley, also from the Middle East, remembers how she watching TV with her mother motivated her parents to change key parenting choices, contributing to her enrollment in an international school:

I always knew I would go abroad. I wanted to from when I was little and my parents wanted that [it] too because they think education here is better, in Canada and also in the USA... When I was growing up, there were a lot of shows that are American and Canadian on television... But my country is more traditional... sometimes I was like 'wow, I can't believe they do that in school in the USA'. For example... extracurriculars, my mom and I would always comment about how much better it is to have... art and things in school... and my parents, they started allowing it [meant here as considering it] because they thought I may go [abroad for university].

When an international school opened in Ashley's hometown, her parents enrolled her.

She remembers the financial strain this decision put on her family:

I think for private school students, [people think] you have the money... but I am not saying we are rich, it's just that my family saved the money all their lives for education, because they believe education is the most important investment... I miss them so much, they made all these sacrifices [for me].

Elizabeth from the Caribbean shares a similar story, explaining:

I was part of a generation where there was actually TV in my extended family, so I was exposed to some shows in the United States, like *Saved by the Bell*, which was presenting a really different culture of education from what I had grown up with. We all wore school uniforms and so forth, so to see these kids, it seemed so much more casual... My life was strict and much more academic, I didn't realize there was a social component to school at all.

During her school years, Elizabeth's family enlisted the support of their relatives abroad to have her attend summer school in North America. She remembers:

Going to [North America], getting to experience that [type of schooling] through the summer camps that I attended as a child there was so different from what was in [my home country], it was great contrast for me and I enjoyed it thoroughly.

As Ashley's and Elizabeth's experiences illustrate, the intersection of intergenerational class identities with available depictions of education choices inspire some parents to support their children in increasingly nontraditional ways. The end goal appears consistent across interviews, pointing to parents' ambition that their children become

fluent in ‘Western culture’, a form of transnational cultural capital they pursue deliberately and at significant financial and personal costs.

It is important to note however that even as Western cultural capital competency is consistently described by participants as an important component of pre-migration education, the cultural contents presented in media and other outlets the students engage with in their formative years is not received uncritically. Ramona, a student in her late 20s from South America, whose parents had limited education, shares her perspective on this issue as follows:

People think that everything that is from the States is the best thing. We [in country of origin] are a strong consumer of all the media that the US produces and media is a way to send a lot of ideas and messages to the public. I disagree totally with that, because people have the American dream...there is a lot of consumerism coming from them to us through TV shows and commercials and all that and I think those are bad role models for the young generations. Especially the thing that the girls have to project that they are sexy and crazy... instead of focusing on their studies.

Did you also feel this pressure growing up?

Yes, of course, but I also had access to education that gave me a critical perspective... My family have strong values, I would not like to correlate it with Catholicism, but they did emphasize a lot on morality, although of course I totally disagree that you need to have a religion to do that. The other thing is that I went to public school and we were encouraged to think critically about political events in the world, about ethics, about capitalism, things like that.

Ramona’s emphasis that she attended public school, as opposed to the private, presumably Anglo-American alternative, speaks to the role of media in contributing to the fraught perceptions surrounding alternative education programs in more conservative cultural contexts. While for many participants such alternatives were sought especially because of their perceived stance for professionalism and gender equality, some families, like Ramona’s, worried about the inherent cultural messages. In the same vein, four male international students of various classed backgrounds and originating from the Middle East and Asia explained that although they attended Anglo-American educational programs in their home countries, their sisters were discouraged from doing so by fearful

parents and peers. In this way, Anglo-American education programs become part of localized gendered and classed identity politics.

3.2.2. Strategic Education Towards Migration

When I asked James, a student in his early 30s from South America, when he started preparing for a potential educational program abroad, he told me about what he considers the first steps on his journey. In his view, these first steps were taken when he was just seven years old. James was born in a family of farmers living in a small rural locality. His parents, agricultural workers, had limited education and labored long hours during James's childhood. Growing up, James faced similar educational limitations as his parents. Local schools did not have a good academic reputation, nor did they offer quality English courses.

As such, James encountered obstacles that initially made him an unlikely candidate for international education. However, he explained that all it took to change his fate was a "change in attitude". James saw this change as spearheaded by his father, who critically evaluated and learned from the experiences of relatives struggling to make a better life North America as menial workers, through processes of learning to migrate previously highlighted in this chapter. James explains:

[My relatives abroad] they were not good examples to follow. What they would do was temporary work, manual labor that you can do in your own country, and they would fail [to immigrate]. We [my parents and I] always thought everybody should do something according to their capacity, not just leaving for the sake of leaving but that you should do something with your life.

In James's interview, it becomes evident that his parents were determined to improve the family's classed and racialized positions within global labor flows. As such, James's

parents took active steps to assure their children would have a chance of surpassing previous generations' disadvantages.

At the young age of seven, James was enrolled in intensive English courses in his a neighboring large city. The courses were not only a challenge for the family's limited finances, but also drew criticism from the local, close-knit, community as a reckless child rearing decision. The urban center where James would attend English lessons was at a considerable distance from James's rural home, and was considered unsafe. As it was, James had to commute two hours by train for the lessons. Most times, seven-year-old James was accompanied only by his nine-year-old sibling – his parents had to work, he explains. For James and his family, however, the commute was equally as important as the English lessons. James explains:

Since we [my siblings and I] were kids, my parents sent us to [large city] almost every weekend alone [for English lessons]. Even when I was seven years old and my [sibling] was nine, they would send us alone. I think that is very risky and would never do this with my kids, but they [my parents] would tell us 'go, move around' because they would send us to English lessons every weekend two hours away in this huge city... And so we got used to it. They knew English opens doors [even though] my father had only high school [education]... We were the only kids in my village to do that. Our aunts and uncles would say 'why do you do this? You waste your money.' But my dad always said it was ok for us. They [my parents] consider independence to be the best thing for life. I think that is a remarkable thing what my parents did. It was not a safe city, it was a big city and we got used to it....

James's experiences point to the reality that families around the world strategically evaluate the educational programs available to them in critical and pragmatic ways, and invest in them to remove classed obstacles. Like James's parents, families in this group purposefully transgress localized cultural norms of parenting and education, to pursue access to Western cultural capital for their children. Informed by such factors as family scripts, personal experiences, media messages and the like, they strive to edify, within their means, a new kind of 'good student' – one ready to seek opportunities

internationally. Capturing this trend is a telling line that Zack, a student from Europe, heard once while in high school. He translates it as “Bad students skip school, good students skip the country”.

29 students talked about ways their families chose to enact alternative parenting and schooling choices. These students, 19 of them women, directly attribute their participation in Anglo-American education programs to their families’ unique parenting styles. Coming from China (23 percent), South America (23 percent), the Middle East (20 percent), Southeast Asia (20 percent) the Caribbean (7 percent) and Eastern and Southern Europe (7 percent), these students explained that their families strove to raise them to be *very independent* (16 participants), *internationally-minded* (10 participants) and *global opportunity seekers* (5 participants), even in cultural contexts where participants perceived that subordination was expected of children and youth, and especially of girls and young women.

Speaking to this theme, Nuo, in her early 20s, whose parents are entrepreneurs, connects transgressive parenting, education choices in her country of origin and their intersection with international education path. She explains:

My mother taught me how to be independent... [My father] tell me very much ‘you are independent person, you will not be with your family forever’... When I was grade nine, my parents had to realize ‘my girl is too strong and really want to be a successful person’. That was important to realize because I am a girl... In Chinese society, as woman you are the person who teach your children and keep the family well... But since school, I wanted to be that kind of person, who has very strong career and make a lot of money. So my father start to think, if I want to be that kind of person the traditional Chinese education system will not be perfect... When I was grade nine they start to searching international schools and even say to me ‘how about you go abroad’... so I left home at 14 and to get back it takes nine hours by train.

Nuo’s family instrumentalized the Anglo-American education programs available to them in order to give Nuo a different path in life, one the family perceived not only as a

way to ensure her livelihood, but also as freeing Nuo from more traditional gendered roles. In effect, Nuo's education aimed to help her acquire transnational forms of cultural capital, offering her a gender-empowering, yet culturally acceptable alternative.

Nuo's words are echoed in the migration reflections of young women around the world, with similar themes shared by participants from South America, the Middle East and Southern Europe. Even at this early stage in migration planning, programs deemed preparatory for education abroad are described across cultures as diverging from traditional modes of schooling especially for girls and young women. Consequently, this perception directs gendered streams of students, as gender begins to nuance education migration opportunities. These perspectives, interwoven here and in following chapters of this dissertation, begin to outline the reality that women's international education journeys are undertaken differently than those of their male counterparts.

3.2.3. Looking Outwards From The Start

My data also points to the ways in which the proliferation of Anglo-American schools add a layer of vulnerability for those in less advantageous class positions. Nearly half of the students enrolled in expensive international schools, English language and exchange programs had to access bank and family loans to pay for them. Notably, these education programs granted little assurance that the chosen program would indeed grant study-abroad opportunities post-graduation. Zack, for example, later realized his family's financial contributions of about C\$5,000 towards room and board (he had gotten a full tuition scholarship) may have been unnecessary. He explains:

My dad decided we should do everything possible to get in there [the international school] because I think they had very good marketing and press. They marketed that they

give students an English diploma, an international diploma. They created this impression that they were the only school in the country to have a diploma that was recognized abroad and that they were very exclusive and competitive. But by the time I graduated I realized you can go to a public notary with any high school diploma and translate it into English and you have an internationally recognized diploma. Their [international school] program was in no way special or anything... I think what they did achieve was bringing a bunch of us together, good students who were hell bent on going out [of the country] and we studied together and helped each other, researched how to apply outside, write admissions essays, take SAT courses and things like that... But by the time my [younger sibling] got to high school, we knew all he had to do was go to a good [local] high school and he could also go abroad. No loans, nothing [needed].

Zack implies that a regular school would have achieved a similar outcome in his situation and this may have been true in his case. Throughout high school, he had participated in international STEM competitions and achieved significant recognition. Matching that with an almost perfect SAT score, Zack obtained a full scholarship at a university in the Global North.

Meanwhile, speaking to widening student streams in a global perspective, other participants, especially from China, point to the connection between international school decisions and expectations of immigration opportunities after high-school graduation.

Doris, from China, explains how this worked for her and her social network:

The reason why we choose to want Canada, you know before lots of Chinese students choose Australia, but the [Australian] government change the immigration system there to make it much harder, they increased the value [cost]... now they judge you in different way. I have a friend, she used to go to Australian high school but then her mom found out they will not be able to immigrate there very quickly, so she switched to Canadian high school. Now she is in [city in Canada as an international student].

Ella, also in her early 20s and from China, notes she chose a Canadian international school for similar considerations:

For me, I went to high school with Canadian experience. In China there are now two ways to go to high school. Some people go to normal high school, but I went to high school with Canadian teachers. They teach some English and some Canadian culture. So we need to learn Canadian history and Canadian math so less pressure than normal Chinese high school. This was very useful because from my class, we all come to [study in] Canada.

In light of the immigration potential the school promised, Ella's family invested about C\$30,000 over three years for her to attend a Canadian international high school in China. That decision meant she could no longer participate in the Chinese university entrance exam and immigration became the only way to attend university. She further explains:

Staying in China [after high school] was impossible because I did not prepare for the final high school exam and with my Canadian high school the subjects were too different. So if I take this exam, I will take low score and I will only go to low rank university'.

Similarly, Nuo, the daughter of Chinese entrepreneurs, explains how she came to transfer from one Canadian international school to another during her high school years:

When I was grade nine they [parents] start searching international schools and even say to me 'how about you go abroad' and my father said 'if you go to abroad you will not have [Chinese university] entrance exam and will have better university'. So I left home at 14 [to enroll in international high school in China]. The school was expensive, maybe C\$6,000 a year. To go back [home] it takes me nine hours by train one way, so I only go maybe once a month. At that time I feel almost like my parents throw me out, but I know I had to keep my motivation. So at my new high school all teachers were Canadians, but all students were Chinese. This was junior high and it was cooperation between [Canadian province A] high school and Chinese high school. Then, for high school, [some years later] I change to closer to home [because new school opened]...

So your junior high was a cooperation with [Canadian province A] and you high school was a cooperation with [Canadian province B]. What was the difference and did it matter?

Not really matter that much, I Google international high school closer to home and found this. But with both you only go abroad [as opposed to attending university in China], because we only learn about Canadian culture, you know hockey, Maple Leafs, and about cities and we did a lot of projects on that, on Canadian culture, so I know a lot about that. Because a lot of students like me, we know we will go to Canada after this school so we want to prepare for coming.

These students' explanations shed additional light onto why families come to consider international schools in their own countries as part of children's education. Explored in this perspective, we can understand how educational choices that initially may seem to considerably stretch families both financially and emotionally are ultimately preferred. Most importantly, families' desire to prepare for migration, at this stage a pivotal

motivator for enrollment in Anglo-American education programs, effectively becomes an almost irreversible commitment to migration. As Ella, Nuo and many others explained, the investments in such programs, as well as the fact that they often operate in parallel, not within, national education systems, makes students' attendance of universities in their home countries almost impossible. These themes will be further explored in Chapter Four, which also deals with the effects of these choices for students and families as graduation approaches and they are faced with impending and largely inevitable departures.

3.3. Conclusion: International Futures, The Best Laid Plans

Many students in this study mentioned that they *always knew* they'd leave, explaining that they had anticipated and worked towards their departures for many years, some since childhood. From the Middle East, to southern Europe and from South America to Asia, the sons and daughters of farmers, factory workers, doctors, managers and entrepreneurs, from varied walks of life, explained that their families had undergone elaborate and lengthy preparations to get them ready. Illustrations of Bourdieu's habitus in action, family scripts assured that the wisdom collected by previous generations remains accessible and binding. Testimony to the value of cultural capital within family histories, strength came to students from knowing that their ancestors opened paths as migrants in turbulent times, and that aunts and uncles paved the way before them by figuring out the *best ways* to migrate. Speaking to the workings of social capital, families worked together, so that this generation would go further.

Unwavering convictions that better lives await in the Global North spread through social fields, built on years of evidence brought forth by traveling relatives and friends, parents aware of local limitations, and international media outlets that showed better opportunities abroad. And while their cards may have been stacked in favor of departures, students and families worked hard and made sacrifices to achieve their goals. Attending schools with proven track records of out-migration often meant substantial financial sacrifices, and more than that, for many, it also meant living lives apart from parents, siblings and other loved family members. True to form, students often underlined that such harrowing experiences as leaving home at the age of 14 only to see parents on sporadic holidays, built character and gave them the power to leave family behind on their eventual journeys abroad. However, they also reported feeling abandoned, alone and hurt during these hard preparatory years.

Through it all, the hope for a better future abroad strengthened, especially reinforced by new friends made during these hard journeys. Students at international schools, intensive English programs or in foreign exchanges underlined how they prepared together and motivated each other along the path towards the border, a theme to be revisited in Chapter Four, as the ambitions documented in this chapter narrow to become actual migration realities. Notably, in this early segment of their migration journeys, students and families place strong bets that migration will occur, often leaving little room for alternatives. Again and again, participants told of how focusing on migration routes made attending university in their own countries increasingly impossible, either because families took out loans that required international earnings to be paid off, or because students' secondary education, operating along Anglo-American

curricula, did not match national requirements for admission in post-secondary programs at home.

These narrowing education routes jeopardize students' future opportunities along class lines, affecting especially those whose material wealth is limited, and thus cannot afford to take up the most competitive programs, or whose available cultural and social capitals does not help them discern between the marketed and actual powers of the preparatory education programs they are investing in. Vulnerabilities also emerge along gendered lines. Young women, often inspired by the same family scripts that motivate their brothers to strive for international education, generally have to work harder, not only to be initially identified by families as potential migrants, but also to garner access to the capitals imbedded within familial and institutional networks to achieve their migration projects.

Overall, and through complex combinations of family scripts (that assure them that their skills and international student status make them desirable for nations in the Global North), negotiated access to familial and social networks, purposeful media consumption, and strategically marketed Anglo-American education programs, this generation carve transnationally mobile identities. Their journeys speak to Appadurai's (1996) theorization of global scapes that allow *imaginations* to glide free across the globe, with no barriers in sight. We will see this reality significantly shift in Chapter Three, when students start figuring out the specifics of imminent departures and borderlines appear as increasingly visible, requiring students to work harder than ever before to negotiate their belonging to transnational spaces.

CHAPTER 4: MIGRATING TO LEARN

Nuo, the daughter of Chinese entrepreneurs, whom we met in Chapter Three as she spoke of the emotional toll of attending an international school many hours away from her home, explained her motivation to do well in her new school in terms of an upbringing that encouraged ambition, independence and hard work. However, she also spoke of how she faced some hard times in her struggle to live up to these values. Her first departure from home to attend an international school at the age of 14 was one of those hard times. Exhausted from the long journey it took to get to her new boarding quarters, she had to take an English placement exam shortly upon arrival. The excitement she had felt about the new adventure on the train ride to her school quickly turned to dread. She remembers:

Of all the levels [they had English courses for], I was the worst level...It was hard for me then but I think when people have that kind of pressure, they grow up faster. I had nobody who cared, you know, what I ate or drank today, who was not nice to me at school, nobody to tell that [to]. But when I graduated I am kind of head of my class. I really put all my efforts to study very hard. From the moment I got to this school, I realized I had to work very hard to be that person I am thinking of, to work more than double all my friends and even more in all my subjects to become that top person and know I will go abroad one day...I remember when I told my father the first time I got perfect score and I called and he said 'So what? You don't go to regular [Chinese] high school. This is not a big deal'. [He said this] because he is not with me and he does not know how much I study every day and how tired I am.

Despite feeling discouraged at times, Nuo worked very hard to maintain her top academic standing in high school. Her parents also worked hard to save for her yearly C\$10,000 high school tuition and expenses, as well as about C\$100,000, which was the sum they estimated she would need for her studies in Canada post-graduation.

Nuo proudly remembers the last month of high school, when she finally received multiple acceptance letters from Canadian universities. Granted, even at the end of four years of English schooling, her IELTS scores were not perfect but she was confident she

would do well at her new Canadian university. She decided on a university in Atlantic Canada, because it was the only place that did not require her to spend a university semester taking ESL courses. She shared her good news with one of her Canadian teachers at her high school. The teacher's response surprised both her and her parents.

Nuo explains:

You know what [the teacher] told me? [Teacher] said 'oh [university in Atlantic Canada] is a very good university and you know if you go to that university without language support, just how you are now, you probably be kicked out in first semester'. When [teacher] said that I feel very angry. I told my parents and they say, 'you know, you make your own decisions'. So I went, but because of what [the teacher] said I found a language school for one month [in Canada before classes started at university]... And you know, I spend that month learning what I already knew.

Nuo had proved to herself she could face university in Canada and she even convinced her father that her achievements are remarkable and worth celebrating.

When I graduated we had graduation, which was very impressive. Then, my father was so proud. It was kind of big honor. So he took my award and framed it at his office and every client he sees, he says 'oh, [that is] my girl's award' [laughs]...

Like Nuo, Jack, the son of menial workers, had also been working hard from a young age in anticipation of a degree in Canada. Jack's family did not have the necessary funds to enroll him in international school or in programs that would teach English courses to complement the ones taught in his public school. Jack was however determined to master the language in light of his long-term migration goals. For years, he had taught himself English using library-borrowed textbooks and with the help of a knowledgeable acquaintance. He also had sporadic opportunities to practice his English at yearly family reunions, when his migrant relatives would return to China for visits. Jack's desire to study in Canada was mainly due to a family connection. His entrepreneurial uncle had migrated to Canada in the 1980s and had shaped for Jack the desire to follow, as outlined in Chapter Three.

However, as Jack's time to migrate approached, his uncle advised a delay in the timing of the migration project. Accepting this delay proved hard for Jack, who had constructed a rigid migration timeline for himself. In his view, leaving to study abroad had a clear temporal bracket he had worked hard to meet. Jack's family had always encouraged him to dream of studying abroad and Jack always assumed that this departure would occur immediately after high school. However, as his parents had modest earnings, they could not afford his education abroad, nor did they have access to information about how his migration dreams could work in practice. Thus, the family primarily relied on the migrant uncle for advice, and although financial support was never discussed, Jack assumes his uncle might have felt an obligation to support him in that way as well.

In the face of the mounting expectations, the uncle advised Jack to wait until graduating university before migrating and to consider a graduate program instead of pursuing an undergraduate degree in Canada. Scholarships would be more readily available then, the uncle advised. As it turned out, his parents took this advice. Jack attended a competitive undergraduate program in China, where he made social and academic connections that would eventually facilitate his migration for a graduate degree abroad. However, he remained a bit disappointed about not attending undergraduate university in Canada and at the time of his interview, he hoped the shorter graduate program he enrolled in would give him enough ground to stand on for obtaining permanent residence status in Canada.

Like Jack, Neal, the son of professionals from South Asia, also migrated after completing an undergraduate program, but unlike Jack, Neal thought graduate school was the best time to leave his country. Neal explained in Chapter Three how he had always

dreamed of being an international student and how the show *Big Bang Theory* with its quirky South Asian character Raj, particularly encouraged this dream of his. However, as high school graduation approached, Neal did not feel ready to migrate. Instead, he thought that going to a university a short commute away from his hometown would provide a good practice run to being on his own later.

However, he was determined to make his undergraduate years relevant to future migration goals. Thus, he majored in a particular field he and his family felt would give him most opportunities to pursue graduate studies abroad. At university, Neal found that his chosen program enrolled many like-minded people, who were also planning to pursue graduate studies in the Global North. Together, Neil and some of his fellow students formed a support group, pooling information and skills to decide on countries, schools and programs to apply to at the graduate level. The issue was, as Neal explains, that they had limited access to the Internet at that time, and information proved very hard to come by, his experiences illustrating some of the effects of retrenched public support for information sharing as described in Chapter Two. He explains how planning for study abroad programs occurred in his social group:

We would decide to go to Australia. Why Australia? I don't know! None of us searched the Google. It was more like what the neighbor said and things were like 'Oh my neighbor is in Australia and he is doing well...Oh great, Australia, Australia! Let's all go to Australia!' And then another guy would say 'Oh, my neighbor went to Canada! Oh perfect, Canada! Let's all go to Canada!'

And while momentum would easily mount behind an idea, figuring out a concrete path towards migration proved much more difficult. In the absence of reliable information sources, Neal and his friends made a decision:

We decided we would then go to the Australian embassy and the Canadian embassy [to ask for help]. So I went to the Canadian embassy and nobody even wanted to talk to me...I guess I shouldn't have gone there. I was in [front of] the Canadian embassy and

there was this white guy inside and we kept knocking and ringing the bell and he ignored us and didn't even open the door, he had his back to us but I knew he heard us but he didn't even turn around... [He probably] thought we were trying to skip the [visa] line... So I guess I should not have gone to the Canadian embassy.

There he stood, the young man who had dreams of building a stellar scientific career in the Global North like he had seen on TV growing up, greeted by literal and metaphorical closed doors.

Faced with these challenges, Neal and his friends decided “[n]o more embassies, let's go to the [private] consultancy [firms]...these guys, you just give them the money and they do everything for you”. Payment for the firm added to his family's financial burden. In order to finance his education abroad, the family had already taken out a sizable loan at a local bank.

After sending their university applications through the same private firm, Neal and many of his friends ended up at the same university in Atlantic Canada. Neal felt their input regarding what academic programs to follow was somewhat limited, and that it was the consulting firm that ultimately guided these decisions for them. Neal is still unsure if his current university is the right fit and wonders if his program is truly a competitive one in Canada.

Ramona, the daughter of professionals from South America, explained in Chapter Three that growing up, she was skeptical of the ‘American dream’ because she perceived it as linked to a consumerist, and at times, overly promiscuous culture exported by the Global North that jarred with her Catholic values. However, upon evaluating graduate university programs in her home country, she soon realized she would have to go abroad to fulfill her ambition of being a scientist. Undergraduate degrees had limited resources in her home country and graduate programs were largely nonexistent, she explained. Her

professors would routinely advise those interested in graduate studies to look for opportunities abroad.

Knowing that she would eventually migrate, Ramona took on a part-time job to pay for intensive English courses during her university years. She also made it a point to attend academic events and network widely to gather information about programs abroad. By chance, her current supervisor participated in one of these events and told her about his lab at a university in Canada's Atlantic region. They corresponded about the program, scholarship opportunities and the Atlantic region and Ramona finally decided this is the best place for her to pursue her graduate studies.

Given her highly specialized scientific skill set and her substantial scholarship offer, Ramona anticipated the visa process would go smoothly, although she did share some trepidation due to stories of acquaintances whose visas had been denied. Her process did indeed go well, although a visa requirement gave her pause, she noted. As part of her medical check up, she was required to take a pregnancy test. In the contentious space of the border zone, the Catholic girl who objected to the over-sexualized nuances of cultural exports from the Global North felt she was being evaluated on her chastity, instead of her scientific achievements. While pregnancy tests are generally required to establish the safety of other medical examinations, such as the X-ray to test for TB for example (CIC Panel Members' Handbook, 2013), Ramona highlighted the larger gendered and cultural implications. 'The pregnancy test was too much!' she explained.

As an introduction to this chapter that explores how students figure out and experience the practical aspects of their international study departures, these vignettes showcase the varied passageways that frame international students' entries to Canada. As

well, they illustrate the many gatekeepers encountered along the path towards international education programs.

For some, like Neal, gatekeepers take rather concrete manifestations, as students have to figure out ways to open doors blocking their paths. For others, like Nuo and Ramona, borders appear as personally problematic, enforced by formal and informal gatekeepers, reminding students of positions of vulnerability they worked so hard to overcome. Meanwhile, students like Jack encounter gatekeepers within themselves, in families, or social circles that uphold socially normative migration parameters and require aspiring migrants to comply.

These migration vignettes also underline that international students, like other categories of migrants, are faced with complex limits, boundaries and borders along their transnational journeys. Theorized in Chapter Two from a Canadian perspective, the multiple levels of gatekeepers significantly contribute to the creation of unequal student stream, which triage migrants along identities of class, race and gender. This chapter explores such types of formal and informal boundaries as they are encountered by student-migrants. Following cues from participants, I regard these encounters as imperative sites in the social and institutional production and reproduction of transnational students, giving rise to differentiated global education mobility regimes.

Thus, while Chapter Three explored families' long-term investments to ease transnational transitions and ensure students' smooth international passage, this chapter employs Bourdieu's theories (1986) to document ways through which students' accumulations of various forms of cultural and social capital gathered through years of pre-departure work and investments, are practically instrumentalized and tested at the

political and social borderlines of transnational spaces.

4.0.1. International Students And Borders: A Literature Review

Studies of international students have been to an extent inclined to depict this demographic as quintessentially mobile – theorized as *fluid* (Bilecen, 2013), *hybrid* (Koehne, 2005) or *hyphenated* (Gosh & Wang, 2003), inhabiting a world of *global* opportunity (Kenway & Bullen, 2008). As such, this emerging research field, often concerned with student *mobility* (Bilecen, 2014; Guruz, 2011; Kell & Vogl, 2010), can somewhat obscure the gatekeepers, boundaries and border that render *some* students *less than* mobile.

In reality, international students as a category of migrants have been integral to border securitization debates amongst policy makers in the Global North, particularly in the top designation countries of global student migration such as the USA (Urias & Yeakey, 2005), the UK (Vaughan-Williams, 2010) and Australia (Marginson et al., 2010). At these top-choice destinations, studies have shown how suspected or substantiated national security threats are currently shaping the way students can cross borders, as well as frame the terms and conditions of their stay. Such studies have also recorded the effects of policies that produce and reproduce disparities along class, race and gendered lines (Fong, 2011; Vaughan-Williams, 2010; Marginson et al., 2010; Urias & Yeakey, 2005).

As described in some detail in Chapter Two for the case of Canada, at face value, would-be students are evaluated at borders based on financial considerations, admission to credible/accredited programs of study and satisfying visa officers that seeking

permanent status is not on the agenda. Once abroad, students are incorporated within state surveillance mechanisms generally monitoring all temporary migrants, with the main consideration of respecting their visa requirements – especially around off-campus work. However, a growing body of work has argued that international students in the UK, USA and Australia never really leave the border (Vaughan-Williams, 2010; Marginson et al., 2010; Urias & Yeakey, 2005). Instead, through increased surveillance that often includes reports on course attendance and academic standing, the border reconfigures around them, ready at any moment to become impermeable and facilitate their expulsion.

Moreover, the border permeability debate in the case of students is further complicated by considerations pertaining to the economic value of this demographic for nations on the Global North (Canada amongst them) that have developed education as an important trade sector. Using the USA as a case study, Marginson et al. (2010) describes the challenges of balancing trade and security in the international education arena in the following terms:

“One month after the attack on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center on September 11 2001 the American Patriot Act created a new regime of surveillance governing international students in the USA. Under this regime of surveillance, international students are positioned as potentially dangerous aliens and, as such are subject to blanketed monitoring and tracking... Regulation that limits the rights of non-citizens is in any case inconsistent with the global character of the market. This tension is at the core of governance and regulation of international education, which opens national borders in the national interest but in a suspicious fashion. As noted, in global trade, the notion of consumer rights establishes a global right independent of citizenship. Here the regulations and ideologies associated with the market have moved ahead of the nation-bound framework that still confines our political imaginations. The limitation in this notion of student-as-global customer is that it constructs student and global relations in limited and solely economic terms” (p. 48).

Arguably, in the case for Canada, the ideological contradictions highlighted by Marginson et al. (2010) are even more complicated, as incoming students are also an important pool of future citizens, as illustrated in Chapter Two.

These considerations amplify policies that produce and reproduce disparities along class, race and gendered line in the field of education migration. Analyzing the effects of border policies on longitudinal international student enrollments in the USA, Urias and Yeakey (2005) show that border securitization measures disproportionately reduced the enrollment of students from the Middle East and South Asia, and particularly the enrollment of male students from these regions at universities across the USA.

Fong (2011) adds additional complexity to border permeability debates by overlapping security concerns with transnational constructions of *credible* international students, often defined along life cycle parameters by visa officers. Working in China, she finds that:

“embassy officials were more likely to deny student visas to Chinese citizens who were past their mid-20s or had spouses and/or children because they did not fit the traditional student profile and seemed more likely to focus on other things (such as work or [permanent] immigration)” (p. 82).

The challenging realities of impervious and ever-tightening borders emerging from these studies hardly align with popular imagery of open borders propagated to accompany the flows of capital embedded within international education exports and the subsequent import of international students.

In my data, which includes students’ own perspectives of borders, these ambivalent policy constructions regarding international students appear to give rise to complex processes of leveraged mobility for migrants undertaking transitional journeys for education. In the ensuing negotiations, identity parameters of class, race, gender

reconfigure along the dynamic oscillations of border-enforcing securitization and border-free capital flows. Setting out to explore these themes, this chapter investigates the practical aspects of students' departures, illustrating the ways participants encounter various forms of pressures and in light of them, carve individual routes outward.

The first section of the chapter initially delves into the ways participants decide on appropriate times and concrete pathways towards departure, showing these reference frames to coincide with cultural and political definitions of 'international students' upheld in both sending and receiving countries. What follows is an examination of prominent external constraints shared by most students, which include practical financial planning for degrees abroad, achieving acceptance at foreign universities, and meeting visa requirements. Explored together, these considerations frame the practical ways through which students evaluate and access study abroad programs available to them. As this section reveals, factors such as tuition costs, length of programs and work and immigration opportunities during and post-graduation appear to weigh much more than university prestige or even majors and academic programs offered.

The second section of this chapter follows participants as they finalize their migration plans and embark on their international journeys, exploring how students prepare for impending departures and articulate hopes and dreams for their new lives abroad. This section explores border crossings as seminal migration moments, following an important body of work that has long theorized borders as liminal spaces that position migrants within global power flows which uphold the fluidity of capital while also triaging trespassing individuals (De Genova, 2005; Cunningham, 2004; Mahler, 1995). I draw on this previous research to illustrate the contentious contradictions students

experience at borders, as well as their negotiations to access and belong to transnational spaces, which require a continued focus on leverages of classed capital to highlight practices that arbitrarily position international youth within unequal circumstances.

I also draw inspiration from previously theorized global processes that have been shown to shape transnational citizens (Barber, 2008; Hairong, 2008), processes that draw attention to exploring social, political and economic institutions, as well as personally held views and family expectations, exploring their roles in sanctioning migration (Salaff et al., 2010; De Genova, 2005; Mahler, 1995). These frames help reveal the migration hardships of international students, and integrate this group of migrants within larger mobility debates surrounding inequality bred through global migration regimes more generally.

As such, overall, the aim of the chapter is to highlight the practical processes through which students tryingly negotiate becoming *international* student. I focus in particular on nuances of Bourdieu's cultural and social capital demanded of, and employed by, students to shape migration routes at this stage of their journeys. To this end, I investigate cultural boundaries, determined by leveraged cultural and social capitals, which are shown to encourage or impede migration – such as gender and the related social clock of migration. I also highlight demands on students' cultural capital – such as knowledge about where to find information, the ability to evaluate international programs, to obtain advantageous tuition arrangements, as well as to successfully complete visa applications. In addition, the role of financial capital – which includes securing financial support for the degrees, the costs of the visa process, and the financial ability to access the growing industry of private agencies that has positioned itself as a

triage site for aspiring international students – are also shown to be complexly connected to students’ and families’ ability to leverage additional forms of cultural and social capital.

Similar leveraging processes also become evident in students’ navigation of border regulations. At these checkpoints, some students emerge as more favorably positioned based on cultural and social capitals and are shown to encounter more permeable transnational borders. Moreover, in the context of the border, visa regulations and perceived or actual requirements can also be viewed to create ripple effects in local social circles, whereby willing migrants evaluate their own fit with visa categories and work to meet these requirements or find alternatives before initiating visa processes.

As such, throughout both sections of this chapter, nuances of capital remain key analytical tools, their employment underlining the complex inequality patterns observed in my sample. For the study participants, these experiences are eventually shown to have lasting effects on migration journeys, framing students’ perceptions of Canada as well as their own belonging and settlement potentials.

4.1. Leaving On Time: Students Expedite The ‘International’

As illustrated in Chapter Three, amongst participating students, the idea to migrate developed through the years, with distant departures long anticipated and dreams of life abroad often rehashed with family and friends. However, the exact parameters and logistics of actual migrations remained largely nebulous until departures suddenly appeared imminent.

The exact timing of the exits, countries to migrate to, academic programs to pursue, visa processes, exact budgets required and ways to fund migration dreams remained more or less unsettled for years. As such, despite all the preparation and anticipation described in Chapter Three, many students reported pressing feelings of urgency around establishing practical migration plans. Many felt that years of planning came to a sudden head and reportedly experienced fears that the chance to leave may be missed forever if migration does not occur in a *timely* manner. For the vast majority of participants, across all cultures and class backgrounds, these feelings occurred between their senior years in high school and their first two years in university, although their actual departure times varied considerably.

Students spoke of ‘timing out’ on their education migration opportunity, and qualified experiences in their lives such as internships, jobs, and even years spent studying in home countries in high school or university, as a ‘waste of time’ or a ‘way to kill time’ before starting migration journeys. Moreover, in light of mounting time pressures, many described how their choices of countries to migrate to and schools and academic programs to pursue eventually narrowed, going from ‘right for me’ to ‘right for now’ in what effectively became a serious race against time.

I begin this section by exploring how and why study departures become time stamped for students. Planned migration journeys have been previously theorized as corresponding to particular life cycle stages. As Salaff et al. (2010) note, “transnational moves are often time stamped. Exits and returns are associated with life cycle, and the exits are linked to the institutions that manage those passages” (p. 154). In the specific case of migration for education, the Canadian Bureau of International Education (CBIE)

found in 2009 that “the typical international student attending university [in Canada] is 25 years of age” (p. 8). Fong (2011) provides some explanation as to this trend, observing that in her sample of Chinese students,

“study abroad was seen as an especially high-risk, high-reward kind of opportunity that was open primarily for the young... Chinese families and developed countries’ embassy officials alike considered study abroad most appropriate for young, single, childless high school or college graduates” (p. 81).

In her sample, she observes that most participants considered departing as students between the ages of 18 and their mid-20s.

Framing this expectation, students spoke of cultural and social pressures from elders and peers to fit their migration dreams within traditional expectations of timely marriage and childbearing. As well as, social and academic networks were also described as depicting international education migration as a time-sensitive option for furthering education and career goals at the beginning of the work life. The emerging time-stamped exits can also be seen to overlap with requirements from more formal gatekeepers, such as loan or visa officers, to eventually define *when* one can become an international student.

The observations emerging from my research indicate that Fong’s findings apply beyond the cultural parameters she is focused on. Across the different cultural contexts and classed backgrounds reflected in my sample, students, their families and their peers shared the belief that migrating for education, with all its promises of success in the Global North, has a temporally narrow window of opportunity that could easily be missed.

Acting on this belief, all participants left their countries of origin before their 30th birthday. The youngest to depart amongst the overall sample were three students who left

before their 18th birthdays, having obtained their first student visas as high scholars in order to attend secondary exchange programs abroad. They all became university international students in the Global North immediately after their high school graduations abroad. Another 24 students managed to time their exits so that they left immediately after high school graduations, while five others followed within two years of their high school graduations, accounting for gap years and admissions, visa or funding disruptions. Three more left within five years of their high school graduation. Students in this group either opted to take a break from school to work full-time, or had scheduled departures delayed due to unforeseen circumstances. Eight other students left mid-way through college programs they had started after high-school, three of them actually abandoning these programs with no credits earned, while two managed to transfer some credits. Three more left while pursuing Two-Plus-Two programs, similar to those described in Chapter Two. Fifteen others left immediately after their college graduations, seven followed within two years of their college graduations, and two more left in the five years following their graduations, all having worked in between academic programs. Additionally, four more students left during graduate degrees they had started in their home countries, while one more student left after completing his graduate degree in his home country.

Regardless of when they actually departed, about 60 percent of the students (45 participants) indicated they felt they had left at an *appropriate* time according to their individual goals and cultural parameters. Conversely, 40 percent indicated they wished they had left at a *different* time, consistently earlier than their actual departure dates. Reflecting this variety in actual departure moments, *leaving on time* effectively meant

different things in different cultural contexts. However, across cultures, social class, further complicated by localized and transnational gendered and racialized parameters, defines landscapes of opportunity and appropriateness for education migration projects. To establish the perfect time frame for exits, participants initially took their cues from family and social networks and then further adjusted their journeys to fit institutional requirements.

For example, Mei, daughter of Chinese professionals, explained that in her case, *leaving on time* meant starting her international study program shortly after graduating high school. Midway through high school, she had transferred to a private school with a focus on English proficiency. The decision made it hard for her to attend a university program in China. This made her study abroad plan a high-risk decision, a theme common amongst participants, as explored in Chapter Three. Should she fail to secure a spot at a university abroad, her parents advised that she return to high school in the Chinese education system to complete the grades she had missed. Moreover, her private secondary program put significant financial strain on her parents, as the recovery of their investment was only possible if she secured a lucrative career upon graduation from a university abroad. Mei explained that some of these risks would be eliminated if her migration plans occurred in a timely manner. As such, attending the last few years of high school in the Chinese system would not have worked as well with her migration timeline because:

[i]n China we get all the knowledge in 9th and 10th grade and then, in 11th and 12th grade we review for the national university exam which decides which university we are going. I wanted to go abroad, so this is not good for me.

Instead her new school, with its ESL program, was a way to ‘save time’ by learning English while still in China, presumably as opposed to attending a language school or an

English preparatory semester post-migration programs that add length to university degrees abroad.

Mei underlined that her time-efficient plan was not unique amongst her peers. She explained that about a quarter of her middle-school class in the medium-sized urban center she grew up in were concerned with figuring out timely routes towards degrees abroad. If anything, her plan was erring on the conservative side. Shortly after middle school, many of the wealthier families in her social group had already sent their children abroad for English prep-schools, or on exchange programs. Such moves, previously recoded by both Waters (2006) and Fong (2011), anticipate the highly competitive Chinese higher education system and aim to give students ways to circumvent the potential crisis of not qualifying to attend a good university in China.

Mei however, had to make do with leaving once she graduated high school. This was the case as her parents were facing a time-critical race of their own. While Mei focused on mastering English, her parents were adhering to a strict savings plan to ensure the family's financial readiness for her education abroad. Mei explained that all parents at her school would regularly have meetings with the headmaster, who would share the most updated estimates of tuition and living costs for a four-year-degree in various countries of the Global North, including Canada. And as her parents often remarked, the totals estimated were a fast-moving target. When she started at the school, the expense estimated for a four-year degree in Canada was about C\$80,000, and two years later, it had risen to C\$100,000, matching the fast-growing tuition rates and living expenses associated with attending universities in Canada, as described in Chapter Two. By the time she actually left, even the C\$100,000 in savings, which meant about C\$25,000 per

term, proved a bit tight. Mei noted that once she started her program in Canada, “parents, they do tell me that they hope that I can graduate earlier or something, because it costs a lot in here and it’s become higher and higher, so they want me to graduate earlier”. She went on to explain that a timely graduation would not only relieve the financial pressure her parents are under, but would also allow her more time to find a suitable spouse and start a family despite the disruptive effects that migration had on her social life. Her account illustrates the gender nuances of capital at this stage of negotiating departure.

The gendered race against the complexly challenging timelines of education migration echoes previous ethnographic records. In her study, Fong (2011) notes that the self-imposed deadlines are primarily a reflection of socially sanctioned behaviors for Chinese youths. Most Chinese students and their families consider international education as a precursor to settling into lucrative careers and starting families. This view starts a race against time to complete education programs abroad preferably by the time students are in their mid to late 20s.

4.1.1. Women’s Departures: Gendering The Race Against Time

Fong (2011) further observes that, in the Chinese context, girls in particular are held to stricter timelines due to the socially-sanctioned belief that “women face a shorter biological clock than their male counterparts both in terms of the period in which they would be fertile and in terms of the period in which they would be considered young and attractive enough to attract a suitable spouse” (p. 83).

Fong’s observation aligns with the beliefs shared by participants in my study as well. Of the fourteen Chinese women I spoke to, nine shared concerns about coordinating

their studies abroad with finding appropriate spouses and starting families. One migrant student had waited to get married and then coordinated her migration plans with her new husband's career. Meanwhile, of the nine Chinese men who participated only one, who was in his mid 20s when he first migrated, was considering his marriage prospects amidst studying for his degree. In fact, most students from China explained that marriage puts financial strain on the groom's family and so men postpone marriage until graduating and achieving financial security. For women, marriage tended to take precedence.

In my nationally diverse sample, I also found Fong's observation to hold true not only amongst students from China, but also for many students from other societies around the world, including other countries in Asia, South Asia, the Middle East and South America. Similarly to the women from China, all but one of the six the women from the Middle East who participated also reported they had put significant thought into timing study migrations so as to avoid disruptions to starting a family. More than half of the women in this group had coordinated their international study programs with spouses or betrothed marriage partners. Meanwhile, of the seven Middle Eastern men, only one was married at the time of departure and one other, who was in his early 30s, shared concerns of finding a partner in light of migration.

These testimonies point to the reality that international education journeys are differently timed and outcomes are held to different standards based on gender. Moreover, while similarly gendered concerns seem shared across cultures, different societies sanction alternative solutions regarding these departures. As such, Chinese women are encouraged by family and peers to expedite their departures in the hope of either finding a spouse abroad or returning in time to settle down in China (more details

on the pressure to marry or return to China at the end of degrees are found in Chapter Five). Meanwhile, women from the Middle East, who held somewhat similarly building priorities regarding marriage and starting a family, were generally encouraged to postpone departures until they created stable relationships with potential spouses, many of whom eventually accompany them on their transnational journeys.

Mara, the daughter of professionals who was pursuing a professional degree in Canada in her mid-20s, embodies this cultural preference. Mara had seen some peers migrate to study abroad during her undergraduate degree, and her good academic record warranted encouragement from faculty to apply for study opportunities abroad. However, Mara waited to get married before attempting migration and coordinated her plans with her new husband. She remembers the time they were waiting to hear if they had been accepted that “it was very stressful because if he was accepted and I was not accepted, or the other way, we [both] would not go.” As it turned out, they were both accepted at universities in the Atlantic region. In addition to working hard as international students, they also became new parents after migration, having their first baby midway through their degrees in Canada. Although Mara noted that studying while being a new mother has its challenges, she felt she had managed to balance the cultural, personal and academic matrix of norms regarding education, career and family in the best way possible.

Like Mara, women from nine diverse cultural and class backgrounds also spoke of altering their migration plans to accommodate a boyfriend or a spouse. However, while the majority of participants spoke of encountering gendered pressures in planning their migration at this stage, some also indicated they took direct steps to prevent it. For

example, Ramona from South America, who migrated as a STEM student, explains:

I also had a boyfriend at the time [when I started to plan my migration], and we tried to plan to travel together because it was a serious relationship. But he didn't speak English and in the end I ended the relationship before coming here.

Judith, a student from Central Europe in her mid-20s and also pursuing a STEM degree, explains:

You know, once you finish high school, that's the point you can go and do something. You are not settled yet. You know, I had a boyfriend, and if I would have moved in with him for four or five years, which is how long an undergraduate in [country of origin] is, I would be so settled, I was not trusting myself to be able to go away [abroad] after that. *Why was it important for you to leave?*

I wanted to see something else. Well, this will sound stupid, but I really wanted to be a famous [scientist], and I knew that was not going to happen in my country, because [my country] is not known for [this scientific field]... I wanted to work [in specific science field] and you just can't do that in Europe, you have to go to America. So I knew that I had to go to America and I knew that if I was settled in [home country] I'd have a very hard time leaving and I said 'Ok, I have to go now!'

My data additionally suggests that men also feel the pressure of cultural expectations to lead migration journeys for partners. Charles, a student in his early 30s from South America, shared a male perspective about having a romantic partner adjust her study migration based on his choices:

I think she [my partner, also an international student] is here basically for me because I am in this university... we discussed this because I told her 'I don't want that you follow me because we don't know what's going to happen. I love you but what if we broke up and then you are here in a university doing a [program] in an area that is not convenient for you?' So at the end she did this research and said 'ok, the university you are at is a good university in my field so it's a good option for me even if you were not here'. That was important for me because I know she is in a good university doing what she likes...

Zack, a student in his late 20s from Southern Europe speaks to the same theme:

I wanted [my partner] to join me... I sent her information about programs here and everything... [Then] when she came [as an international student], I felt like I was also responsible for her happiness, for everything in our lives, in my program, in her program... For me it was a big motivator to work hard, to provide a happy life.

In line with these accounts, of the ten students who were joined in Canada by partners or spouses, only two women had spearheaded migration and both were married to European

men. Three men, from the Middle East and South Asia, had brought along highly educated wives, who were employed below their qualifications in Canada or stayed at home with children while the husbands were studying. Five others, from South America, the Middle East, China and Europe, had spearheaded migration plans with wives and partners who had eventually enrolled as international students themselves.

Further speaking to this theme, women from around the world provided some context for the challenges of departing alone. For example, Florence, a student from Southern Europe, talked about experiencing the *fear* of going abroad independently, a fear she shared with other female peers in her undergraduate degree.

We [my university friends and I] used to discuss that yes, we should leave, we cannot study here [in home country for graduate school]. So it was really three [girls] that would influence each other. Also, our professors would say 'don't be afraid to go abroad, there are a lot of opportunities out there'. A lot of them had foreign degrees... In the end, actually I was the only one to leave. One girl found a good job and she immediately went there and the third friend was afraid in the end so she never applied, so I was the only one to leave.

Florence's successful departure, unique in her social circle, was also the result of a specific turn of events that boosted her social capital by significantly broadening her access to information and transnational migrant networks. While growing up, her father had insisted she follow in his professional footsteps and take over the family business. Unfortunately he passed away before her university years. However, her university years coincided with a family' members' return to the home country for retirement. This family link meant new found forms of cultural and social capital in the shape of insider knowledge and personal links to a future life abroad. This capital gave Florence the courage to overcome her fear of departure, a circumstance not afforded to her friends, despite their access to academic networks that could have facilitated education migration.

Students' family scripts unpacked in Chapter Three can also provide opportunities

to further explore gendered departures along class lines. For example, Maria, in her mid 20s and from a rural locality in South America, told us in Chapter Three of how her family script of a European grandfather empowered her to consider opportunities for international migration. Nonetheless, classed and gendered limitations regarding the appropriateness to migrate as a young woman curbed the script's power. I reiterate Maria's explanation here, so it can be analyzed as it relates to theme of gendered departures highlighted above:

My grandfather was from [country in South America other than my own] and my great-grandfather... was from [country in Europe]... my parents would tell us we had this foreign blood... This history made us international, or I think that's what my father wanted to believe... When I finished high school I wanted to move for university but that was difficult. As I said, my parents had a certain level of education and also this traditional culture that girls don't leave home until they are married so it was a mix because my father was trying to give us this different multicultural background to the daughters but still keep a traditional view.

As Maria found, her family script, an objectification of Bourdieu's habitus (1990; 1994), may have been inspiring to her, testimony to its cultural capital value. However, it did not garner enough support from her family, illustrating the gendered limitations to social capital. Nonetheless, the script gave her the impetus to persevere, as she worked through her university years to find a viable way to migrate. She initially attended university close to home and after graduation took on a job locally. In a few months, an opportunity at work offered a promotion, but required a move to a neighboring country. More mature and financially independent at this stage of her life, Maria was able to secure more support from family for her new migration plan, especially as it was perceived as more approachable – it was temporary and in a country with a similar culture as Maria's own.

The following years saw Maria excel in her field. Tapping into independent developed sources of social capital, she built an international professional network. When

it came time to think of upgrading her credentials with a graduate degree, this international network allowed Maria to convert this accrued social capital into practical support she used to figure out the best education opportunities around the world. Utilizing this wealth of social capital, Maria chose Canada, where she was able to secure a significant scholarship. The scholarship made it possible to migrate without any financial backing from her parents. In this final way, Maria leveraged social and cultural forms of capital for financial capital, circumventing the initial gendered limitations she encountered and eventually reached her dream of becoming an international student on a tight budget.

Maria's experience is not unique in my study, as young women from around the world report facing similar gendered limitations in accessing available forms of capital. Like Maria, many found independent ways to circumvent these limitations. For example, Sara, a student in her mid-20s and the daughter of educated professionals from the Middle East, also felt she had to first pave her own way towards international education, breaking the gendered limitations of her family's migration script along the way. For years, Sara's family boasted notable stories of previous generations of international students, some of whom had returned to distinguished careers in her country, while others had built successful lives in the Global North. The issue was that all previous generations of migrants in her family had been men, supporting the family's gendered conceptualization of migration. Thus, although her uncles, who had become established in North America, would talk about their successful lives and great experiences as international students, they never particularly encouraged her to consider migration herself. She explains, "I am a girl and because they knew I am close to my father, my

family... they didn't ever suggest [I study abroad because] they think that my father would not like me to leave". Nonetheless, she found the stories of education and life abroad inspiring and she considered her own migration potential. As her high school graduation was drawing close, Sara attempted to enlist support from her transnational family network to facilitate her migration to the Global North. She remembers:

When I was 18 I just asked my [migrant] uncle how to come abroad to university and he told me I have to apply to a school and pay that amount of money for it... He did not show any support. But also, I was sure at the time that my father would not send me abroad at the age of 18. So that is why I changed my mind and stayed there to study [for undergraduate].

Upon the realization that migration at this stage would not be possible, Sara spent the years that followed proving to herself and to her parents that she would be able to succeed abroad if given the opportunity. As an initial step, she transferred to a better university in a city different than her hometown. The move provided a more challenging university experience, and also meant leaving home for the first time. She explains:

I went to [a bigger city to] attend university. I think it was a good step because my father at first didn't want me to even go to another city. So my [male relatives living in the bigger city] told him they will take care of me and they told him they will make sure I will transfer back to my home town after one year. But I didn't go back. I stayed... I think time convinced him [my father]. I had good grades and I always went back, every two weeks.

While her family slowly adapted to her being away, Sara was also building independent social capital by staying in touch with high school and university friends, many of whom had migrated internationally as students. By the time she was planning her own transnational move, this network of successful migrants, most of them women sharing Sara's class background, would prove significantly involved in guiding and supporting her departure in very practical ways. These good friends not only shared university

admissions tips and reviewed her applications, but also deposited her admissions letters to save international postage fees.

Moreover, the international success stories of her friends also helped reinforce for Sara's family the social appropriateness of her migration dream, normalizing her aspirations as common amongst women her age and coming from similar class backgrounds. In this way, Sara successfully departed as an international student, with the support of family and friends, and with the self-confidence in her own ability to prevail far from home.

Many young women from around the world, including Florence from Southern Europe, Mara and Sara from countries in the Middle East, and Maria from South America, explained how their desired exits as international students had to be postponed due to matrices of gender and classed capital, thus supporting previous research that has found women to act both as repositories and as capital accumulating individuals within families, as previously discussed in Chapter One (Huppaz, 2009; Silva, 2005; Reay, 2004; Lowler, 1999).

However, in my work, gendered expectations are not only posing additional demands on women. Some, albeit fewer, young men in my sample spoke about how gendered responsibilities to family also challenged their departures. This was the case for Parker, the son of an entrepreneur and a homemaker who grew up in the Caribbean. Throughout high school, Parker had been working hard to meet all academic requirements that would ensure successful admission into competitive universities in the Global North. Following the post-colonial education system of his Caribbean nation, he passed his A-levels with flying colors and applied to his top choice universities in the

Global North in a timely manner. However, before his scheduled departure, Parker's father passed away unexpectedly. Faced with this life-shattering event, Parker felt responsible for his siblings and grieving mother. The upon graduating high school, the family business became his full time job, as well as an important means of keeping the family financially afloat. In the years that followed, Parker worked hard to cope with his new circumstances, and despite the challenges, he managed to keep alive his dream of one day studying abroad. As his siblings matured and successful business choices allowed the family to save enough to meet their needs, Parker saw a renewed opportunity for migration. He considered reapplying to universities abroad, this time with a new major in mind, one directly informed by his experiences at the helm of his family's business. His experience would later make for compelling application letters and ensure successful admission at universities abroad.

Like Parker, 40 percent of participants in this study thought they had not left *on time*. However, interviews in this group also share an important common theme, that of presenting accruing delays as eventually beneficial to migration experiences – converting experiences into capital accumulation activities. Although circumstances varied widely, most students in this group presented their activities during pre-departure years as directly informing their migration goals. For example, Jack, the student whose transnational family networks advised a delayed departure as described in Chapter Three, saw his 'wait time' as building towards his migration plans by noting:

I had four years of living on my own and being independent and also I spend my entire undergrad [in China] learning English and getting to know the [Canadian] culture here. That got me where I am today.

Moreover, while after his high school years, Jack admitted to feeling lost in terms of figuring out migration routes, during college things considerably improved. He met like-

minded peers and supportive faculty who provided road maps towards study abroad opportunities. As such, the years he spent ‘in waiting’ proved to be instrumental to his migration goals after all, helping him accumulate cultural and social capital that would eventually outweigh the financial capital requirements.

Echoing this theme, of the 41 students who attended university programs in their home countries, like Sara, 22 students attended universities away from their hometowns and spoke about these experiences of internal migration as a stepping-stone to international migration, thus turning delays into cultural capital. Sixty percent of this group was made up of women. These students highlighted developing new skills such as independence, learning about responsibility and the ability to make it on one’s own, as main resulting assets. Similarly, students who had full-time work experience pre-migration, like Maria, tended to emphasize relevant skills earned on the job, highlighting international projects and multi-national work environments as key qualifying experiences for eventually studying in international classrooms.

As such, the emerging theme of framing migration as contingent on cultural capital accumulations becomes recurrent at this stage of students’ migration planning. The second section of this chapter further unpacks how these themes develop as students face and cross borders, linking to other ethnographic work on migrants’ attempts to meet formal and informal expectations associated with specific migration streams and related identities (Barber, 2008).

So far, this stage of the migration process sheds important nuance on the ways acceptable migration timelines occur along complex negotiations locally and transnationally. Central to such negotiations are gendered parameters that nuance class

capital to define the *appropriateness* of migrations and the *timeliness* of departures. As the vignettes reviewed in this section illustrate, this stage of migration coincides with students' development as young adults. At this stage, family support, although still very important, is no longer the deciding factor for migration. Instead, students work independently to circumvent initial limitations they encounter within families and begin to take control of their own migration projects.

4.1.2. From Personal To Practical: Factors To Consider When Planning To Study Abroad

Once workable timelines for migration were established, participants found that their migration plans had to be additionally reconfigured, to fit a variety of practical requirements for education migration. At this stage, concerns around securing funding for foreign tuition fees, achieving acceptance at universities abroad and successfully obtaining student visas take precedence.

The CBIE (2009) found that, of the international students coming to Canada, “63 percent of college students and 29 percent of university students report off-campus work opportunities are very important in their decision to come to Canada. In each case, even more students rate post-graduation work opportunities as very important (49 percent of university and 74 percent of college students) (p. 1)... This survey also suggests that for many international students, it is difficult to meet the financial demands of living in Canada. About 1 in 4 report that they are struggling, saying that it is sometimes or always difficult to pay their living expenses. Further, about 4 students in 10 report some or big problems obtaining money for living expenses and about as many report problems obtaining money for tuition fees” (p. 2).

Recent ethnographic studies (Baas, 2012; Fong, 2011) emphasize that the cost of study programs and their links to immigration opportunities are becoming increasingly important to students on the highly competitive international education market,

particularly in light of the demographic changes that see increased diversification of class backgrounds amongst participants in international education.

As such, these studies point to the reality that the current generation of international students is not as economically privileged as previously documented generations (Waters, 2006; Ong, 1999), and thus contemporary international students are most susceptible to the ebbs and flows of global capital markets (Baas, 2012; Fong, 2011).

Reporting similar findings, this section of the study is dedicated to exploring ways through which international students who eventually come to study in Atlantic Canada face their pragmatic options, fitting their dreams within increasingly narrow parameters at this stage in their migration. On the advice of family members both distant and close, of bank loan officers or education consultants, future students are encouraged to apply to universities based on competitive tuition and living costs. They begin to consider institutions that are not prestigious, seem undesirably geographically located or do not actually have the majors students are hoping to pursue. Academic programs are in some cases evaluated based on brevity, and incoming admissions letters are weighted based on factors such as the fastest letter to arrive or lowest ESL course requirements, as students and parents are conscious that adding length to education programs abroad also adds additional expenses and delays students' earning potentials. These factors additionally shape the emergence of student streams based on classed capitals within international education flows.

For most students in this study, destination countries were ultimately evaluated based on perceived ease and timeliness of obtaining a visa, the generosity of off-campus

and post-graduation work permit regulations, sought to allow for students to supplement tuition fees and gain work experience in the Global North, and post-graduation immigration opportunities. Concerns around work and immigration options were prominent even in cases where immigration was only a remote possibility, as students sought out to ensure viable returns for the significant investments families were putting forward to make migration possible in the first place.

Moreover, selected geographical routes also became tied to commitments that ensured financial support from family, social circles or even institutional actors, such as hired consultants, visa or bank loan officers. The remainder of this section investigates emerging constraints, focusing on the gatekeepers that shape them and the migration routes that take shape as a result and that lead students to Canada, and more specifically the Atlantic region, in what becomes the final stage of the lengthy process of students becoming international.

In this study, combinations of financial and immigration considerations elevated Canada as a country of choice, and especially the universities in Atlantic Canada to the top of students' lists, even as most students noted they had never heard of the Atlantic region, or its main cities and universities, before applying to study here. Speaking to emerging classed streaming, over 30 percent of participants indicated that a main reason for selecting their university in Atlantic Canada was the comparatively low cost of tuition and living expenses. However, many of the students whose academic achievement offered a wealth of cultural capital in the form of symbolic status in the academic world, also leveraged advantageous scholarship offers. In the latter group of 14 students, all but one at the graduate level and all but two in STEM fields, received comprehensive funding

offers, as twelve more students, mainly undergraduates and across a variety of academic fields, received some amount of scholarship. Overall, 20 students indicated they chose their university also based on university rankings, an interesting academic program or a research match with an ideal supervisor.

Of those of who had accumulated limited cultural capital in the form of academic achievement, eight indicated the university they eventually attended was in fact the only institution in the Global North to accept them, or to accept them without further conditions (such a ESL prep-semester). Four of those students selected the university they were attending because it was the only institution that did not require them to complete additional mandatory language courses before they could start their degrees.

Another 14 students utilized accrued social capital to select their study destination. These students followed personal connections to Canada – seven of them followed romantic partners working or studying in Canada, four migrated through family networks, and three chose Atlantic Canada as a study destination primarily because of peer networks.

Across all groups, from those who had outstanding academic records to those who followed family or peer networks, students also pointed to serious considerations regarding immigration opportunities. Twenty percent indicated that Canada's competitive visa and immigration opportunities were the deciding factor in their ultimate school choice.

Further complicating this complex decision-making matrix was the reality that students in this study were applying in the aftermath of the global economic crisis, which for many nations, started in 2008. As outlined in the introduction of this section, 30

percent of students indicated that the main reason for selecting their university in Atlantic Canada was the low cost of tuition and living expenses. An additional significant finding is that students reported narrowing down application choices primarily based on anticipated scholarship opportunities. As such, even before applications were sent or financial offers received and compared, students and families had already excluded options they perceived as financially disadvantageous.

Narrowing choices at this stage points to the reality that sending university applications abroad is in itself a costly endeavor, with participants reporting that most schools charge between C\$50 and C\$100 for application processing fees. International students face the costly addition of international mailing fees, which can add up to C\$50 per application. As such, most participants only applied to three to five institutions, and tried to choose institutions that fitted budgetary constraints.

For example, Ramona, from South America, explains how the perceived impact of the economic crisis on various countries in the Global North directly influenced where she sent applications for graduate school.

I realized when we graduated that leaving was maybe a dream. The financial crisis was bad...we [in South America] were aware that the US had a lot of problems...that grant money was being cut. Because of the economic crisis, we knew the only options [for study abroad with scholarship] were Europe and Canada...So I applied to universities that had [my desired program] in Canada, and especially here [at university in Atlantic Canada] I had the very nice surprise that I did not have to apply for external scholarships [because the department advertised its own funding for incoming students]. That was very good, because in Europe, you don't get that.

Like Ramona, other students explained how financial worries first put Canada, and especially Atlantic Canada, on their international education map. In terms of tuition and living expenses, Canada is competitive in terms of overall tuition and living expenses compared to alternatives such as the US, UK or Australia. Moreover, in terms of

education costs, most institutions in the Atlantic provinces are situated at the lower end of the spectrum in Canada, with tuition hovering at around C\$10,000 for international students in Arts programs, compared to about C\$5,000 for Canadians. Comparatively, degrees at some of the more prestigious Canadian universities come with a premium in tuition fees for international students. For example, the University of Toronto and the University of British Columbia charge international students up to C\$30,000 for Arts degrees, even though Canadians still pay around C\$5,000 (Universities Canada, 2015).

The reality of more competitive overall degree costs has been popularized in the last decade nationally and internationally, through various media outlets and campaigns designed to boost regional enrollment. Running titles such as “Attention Students: It’s Cheaper Out East!” (Ottawa Citizen, 2007), the national media raised awareness to the region’s potential, a reality that has not gone unnoticed internationally. In this set-up, international recruiters routinely emphasize this point to interested students, noting however that this particular selling point brings in a demographic of financially vulnerable students (Philpott & Kennedy, 2014).

The trends in my sample certainly point to the reality that, although most students had a comfortable upbringing in their countries of origin, they are a group who are financially constrained, and most often embark on their international journeys with little or no financial safety net. In fact, like Ramona, many participants spent considerable amounts of time figuring out how to stretch very limited budgets. Stretching those budgets ultimately becomes an intricate process of leveraging various forms of capital.

For example, when cultural capital in the form of academic standing was not an issue, students highlighted enrolling in Two-Plus-Two programs as a budget-friendly

avenue. As described in Chapter Two, such programs, available at several Atlantic universities mostly through partnerships with Chinese universities, ease the financial burden by offering international students the opportunity to graduate with a four-year Canadian degree after spending only two years in Canada. Students generally study two years in their country of origin, where they pay some additional tuition fees, but also take part in intensive English courses and various pre-arrival training. They then spend the last two years of their degrees in Canada and get a diploma from institutions in both countries, reducing their overall study expenses by almost half. However, Two-Plus-Two programs tend to be very competitive. For example, amongst the Chinese students, those in Two-Plus-Two programs boasted top marks on the Gaokao.

One of these students was Gene, a student in his early 20s and the son of working class parents from an urban center in China. Gene proudly reported that his university in China was part of the very select group at the very top of the national ranking and that his major in particular was also very competitive. He also noted that part of his ambition to attend his university in China was so that he could study abroad, despite starting with a very modest budget.

I looked at Canada and the US. Well, first I thought I will just become a graduate student because it is cheaper...but now I am an undergraduate, because my university has a [Two-Plus-Two] partnership with this university [in Atlantic Canada] so it's cheaper, so I thought it's the right way to enjoy the new life here, so I choose to come here.

Gene's plan to save money by attending a Two-Plus-Two program proved insufficiently discounted. Despite significant sacrifices, his parents were only able to cover one year of the two he was supposed to spend in Canada. As such, Gene eventually attended what he called a 'Three-Plus-One' program, spending only one year in Canada. The principal drawback of Gene's 'Three-Plus-One' was that he forfeited the coveted Canadian

diploma, because he did not meet the minimum course requirements to achieve it. Gene explained how he plans to make the best of this less than ideal situation:

I have to find opportunity to stay for graduate degree, because I only studied one year here and will not gather degree from [Canadian] university. So it's hard for a person with a degree from China to find a job in Canada. So I have to continue to study here, to get a Masters degree and gather a Canadian diploma. I can graduate and stay as a Master student directly.

In order to meet his goal, Gene was working to accrue some localized social capital in Canada. He was using every available networking opportunity in his faculty, hoping to find a suitable supervisor, willing to offer him a comprehensive scholarship.

Like Gene, Elizabeth from the Caribbean also found herself in circumstances that required strategic financial planning. Although she completed her A-levels with top results and boasted an impeccable academic record, Elizabeth's family was unable to provide the financial backing needed to study in North America. Under the circumstances, she had hoped to qualify for a funding opportunity in her home country. She had been working hard throughout high school in preparation for her ambitious goal. However, her turn to apply for the funding coincided with the global economic downturn. She remembers:

By the time I could compete for these scholarships, they were no longer there, because our government could no longer afford it, because the economy was going increasingly downward... So then, my parents realized they'd have to pay out of pocket. So I ended up having to take a break between high school and college.

Following this setback, the family mobilized their efforts to make her departure possible.

The following year, her mother migrated as part of the global skilled labor chain.

Elizabeth notes:

[My mother], as a woman being a [skilled worker], she had the skills [country in Global North] needed, and that is how she got in. She migrated primarily for me and my [sibling], because we wanted to go to university abroad.

While her mother worked abroad, Elizabeth's father also did his best to contribute to her dream. He took out a bank loan with the family home as collateral, to finance her first semesters. Meanwhile, Elizabeth became employed locally, saving most of her salary towards her international education goal.

This example illustrates yet another aspect of the interconnectivity between international education migration projects and other migration streams to the Global North. While Chapter Three explored the role of previous generations of migrants in inspiring, guiding and supporting youth to embark on study abroad experiences, as part of social reproduction and classed aspirational projects, at later stages in the migration process, additional links are established. Four participants reported that a family member migrated in order to secure funding for students' education migration projects.

Notably, this form of social capital often comes with ties to specific emotional and financial expectations, as amply documented by previous studies (Barber & Lem, 2012; Zloniski, 2006; Hochschild, 2000). Illustrating this point, Adam, a student from South Asia, whose international education dream was made possible by his generous migrant aunt who was working in the care chain industry in the Global North, explains the expectations associated with the support received:

When my parents found out [I was accepted at university abroad] they were ecstatic but also quite worried about the financial expenses needed. To compare, in [country of origin] ten persons could study with the tuition required to study [abroad]... My aunt actually offered to pay for my tuition here in Canada and I will pay my rent and expenses from my savings, because unfortunately they did not offer me any scholarships... My aunt is fifty now and she is currently single and she always had difficulty to find the right person for her, so she has always been very generous with us, like we are her own children... She would probably expect that I take care of her when she is older.

In this way, education migration is situated within intricate life course and capital exchange negotiations between generations of migrants.

4.1.2.1. Selecting Majors: Employability and Clustering in STEM Fields

Such negotiations not only shape future commitments, but also impact program and major choice at hand. In Adam's case, his program was decided together with his migrant aunt and parents, all parties having equal input in his ultimate choice. This was a common practice amongst participants, as about ten percent reported that parents and extended family had the ultimate say in their choices of what to study abroad.

Students took into account additional financial and cultural considerations when deciding on majors. For example, Parker from the Caribbean explains how major choices are tied to financing degrees in intricate ways:

So basically the government [of home country] tells banks which degrees to give loans for. So I was in the loan officer's office discussing my [education] loan and I told him I want to do [STEM degree], but it was not on the list that year, because I guess they had too many [in that profession]. So then they told me 'That's not on the list, so you have to choose something else, because otherwise we cannot approve your loan'. So I chose [something else in related field]. But so the government of [home country]... has a say in what I study in Canada...

The preference of foreign governments for funding specific STEM fields over other academic programs has been previously recoded. A prominent such example is Brazil's *Ciências sem Fronteiras* [CsF], which translates to 'Science without Borders'. The CBIE (2014) reports that:

“[This] scholarship program aims to build theoretical knowledge and practical skills for 101,000 students. In June 2014 Brazil's President announced CsF's second phase, comprising a further 100,000 awards. CsF is designed to catapult Brazil into the knowledge economy. Launched in December 2011, CsF has already given 83,184 scholarships of the planned 101,000. To date, these countries have received the most students: the US (32%), the UK (11%), Canada (8%), France (8%) and Germany (7%). Engineering and Technology are the fields of the majority of CsF scholars (52%), followed by Biology, Biomedical Sciences and Health with 18%; Mathematics, Physics and Earth Sciences 8%; Computer Science and Information Technology 6%; Sustainable Agriculture 4%; Pharmacy

and Biotechnology; 2% each; and Biodiversity, Bio-prospecting and Renewable Energy 1%” (p. 65).

Such clustering of available funding in STEM fields is connected, and reinforces, the gendered streaming of migrants’ skills (Kofman & Raghuram, 2015). Such programs are seen to favor, at this stage in the migration process, the mobility of certain students over others.

Moreover, beyond such institutional constraints, students are also additionally compelled by private agents and family members to choose certain majors over others. Neal, for example, found his choice of major challenged by the consultancy firm he and his friends had hired to help with applications abroad because ‘we did not have internet or anything to check for ourselves, you see... the Canadian embassy did not even open the door for us when we had questions, thought we were trying to skip the [visa] line’. Neal was eventually unhappy with the consultancy firm hired:

[I think] there is a problem with the Canadian consultancy that I applied through... When I applied, I met with this [representative from the consultancy firm] and [they] told me ‘there is this course at this university in your field and you can get admitted very easily’...

The advice seemed initially tempting to Neal. A shorter and cheaper course would not only save money in the short term, but also hopefully qualify him to start work in Canada sooner, and thus repay the mounting debt faster.

However, after some debate with the hired consultants, as well as his network of friends and family, which spanned both locally and abroad, Neal decided to stick to his original plan. “I said to the [representative] at the agency ‘there is no way I will do that [program they were recommending]’, because I wanted a very specific program”. Neal eventually applied to the program of his choice. His decision turned out to be a saving grace. He explains:

People I know applied to that course [the consultancy firm was recommending] and only upon arriving [in Canada] found out this was only a very short course and it's pretty expensive for what they actually teach. And you don't qualify to get a job [in Canada] after!

Had he followed the agency's advice, Neal feared he would have lost the chance to work in Canada post-graduation, potentially failing to repay his loan and greatly limiting his career prospects.

Other students reported additional concerns regarding selecting their majors in light of employment opportunities post-graduation. Doris, an undergraduate from China, initially wanted to pursue a degree in the social sciences, but she eventually applied for an undergraduate spot in an economics program. She explains:

If I study Sociology here, I do not have good skill for [if I return] China. Our societies are very different, so the only thing I can do is be English teacher back in China, so he [father] suggest I can do something to combine Chinese and Canadian, so that's why I choose economics.

As these vignettes illustrate, work opportunities post-graduation act as a key motivator in justifying the substantial financial investment required to study abroad. Interest in gathering Canadian work experience was especially prominent, not only in light of permanent immigration avenues, but also in the event students would return to their home countries after their study abroad sojourns. Participants explained that, while a foreign degree in itself may hold value, work experience abroad offers a significant bargaining chip when entering any job market, including back home. Therefore, about 20 percent of the students in the sample only considered programs in countries where the path to employment during school and post-graduation was perceived as clear and relatively easy.

However, the experiences shared by Neal and Doris also testify to the increasingly important cultural capital requirements needed to discern between the

multitude of study abroad paths available, especially as only some are tied to work and settlement in Canada post-graduation. Thus, while some students had family members to guide them in evaluating the value and transferability of degree programs transnationally, families who do not possess this type of cultural capital are increasingly vulnerable to investing in a Canadian degree only to find it has limited value.

To limit their risks, many students and families eventually choose similar majors as relatives, friends or acquaintances, this practice potentially accounting for the clustering of international students in only a few academic fields in Canada. According to the CBIE (2009), “7 in 10 [international students] are in one of five programs: engineering (18 percent), social science (15 percent), business (14 percent), professional (11 percent) and biological science (11 percent)” (p. 15). The clustering of international students in certain academic fields has also recently become a concern in the Atlantic region. A recent media article entitled “International Students Changing Makeup of Maritime University Courses” highlighted the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission’s finding that “only one per cent of international students enrolled in those [humanities] fields at Maritime universities” (McMillan, 2016, para. 2). And while the article concludes that international students’ enrollment choices shift the local landscape of academic programs in Canada, as we shall see in the next section of this chapter, a growing industry of private consultant agencies around the world is capitalizing on helping families make these increasingly challenging and risky major choices.

4.1.3. A ‘Most Welcoming’ Country: The Role Of Canada’s Reputation

The CBIE (2009) found that “Canada’s reputation in general is said to be very important to a majority of college students (about 6 in 10) and about half of university students” (p. 19). For the students in my sample, Canada’s reputation was tightly connected to perceptions of opportunity post-graduation. Sara, a student in her mid-20s from the Middle East, explains:

I wanted Canada because it is a country full of opportunities for people, a multicultural country... especially opportunities for international students because I knew of people who had left as students and made good lives for themselves [in Canada].

Some students indicated they were actually directly monitoring visa and work restrictions even in the early stages of planning their degrees abroad. Doris, a participant from China, explains how her family selected Canada as an early frontrunner based on such considerations:

The reason why we choose to want Canada, you know, before lots of Chinese students choose Australia, but the [Australian] government change the immigration system there to make it much harder, they increased the value...now they judge you in different way.

For similar reasons, and echoing themes of migrant desirability spread through family scripts as discussed in Chapter Three, students from various parts of the world also reported positive expectations for Canada’s immigration policies and the favorable status of international students within them. For example, Ashley, a student in her early 20s from the Middle East, explains her preference for Canada as follows:

Canada, for one thing was way cheaper, and also it seemed like to go to [other countries in Global North] there were a lot of visa issues to go through... I think [for other countries] the application process is long and some required an interview and I just kind of gave up... We just knew Canada was friendly, I am not sure why.

4.1.3.1. Second Chances: International Students Reroute Towards Canada As A Place 'To Call Home'

Canada's reputation as a nation welcoming to all immigrants and with a policy landscape especially favourable to international students, was also a top motivator amongst students who had completed undergraduate degrees in other countries of the Global North and found their chances of settlement in those countries less than favourable. For them, Canada became a front-runner especially because of immigration opportunities. The eight students who were in this situation described Canada as a good place to 'lay down roots' or 'eventually call home'. These students had graduated with degrees from various countries in Central and Northern Europe, Australia and New Zealand. These countries have less favourable work and immigration opportunities for international students, as carefully considered and compared by participants. Fred, from South America, explains:

[After graduating from my first international program] one of my professors in [European country] offered me a PhD position, but I decided not to go. You know, the main reason I did not go there is because immigrating to Europe is very tough and culturally Europe is such an old place and has an old mentality. Like if I go to Germany or the Netherlands or the UK, even if I make an effort to speak the language, I will still feel disconnected from the people... I really wanted to go to a place that was more stable, more permanent, a place to grow old. I felt like I did not belong in Europe but I also did not belong in [country of origin]. So I came to Canada.

As Fred underlines, Canada stands out as a country welcoming to international students and immigrants, where opportunities to work and settle promise a viable future, making the significant sacrifices required to migrate worthwhile.

The experiences highlighted thus far in this section point to the many decisions that occur even before university applications actually are sent out, as students put significant thought and effort into narrowing down their choices. Constrained by limited budgets and facing shifting education, work and immigration opportunities, at this stage

in their migration planning, participants work hard to limit their risks and maximize the returns on years of investments in international education dreams. Within the increasingly complex array of possibilities, those least able to descend between available pathways, who are also least rich in class capitals as defined by Bourdieu (1986) or whose skills are devalued in gendered ways, are increasingly vulnerable to chose programs that are not as rewarding – because they may not be academically competitive in the Global North; because they do not travel well between locations; because they do not offer scholarship support; or because they do not offer settlement and immigration opportunities after graduation. However, as my sample indicates, second chances are also sometimes possible.

As well, from the very start of their journeys, students take on formal and informal obligations in order to make their dreams possible, such as committing to repay a loan or enter into long-term commitments of care to family members able to finance degrees abroad. Eventually, these commitments have real implications for students' pathways. For many, this means only applying to affordable universities located in countries that allow international students to work and seem to encourage the retention of international graduates. These favourable policies are highlighted to achieve the necessary funding to study abroad, either directly, as students work to supplement tuition fees, or indirectly, as they convince loan officers and family members that loans taken up in countries of origin can be paid back with lucrative post-graduation salaries in the Global North. Students' experiences point to the pragmatic realities that routinely propel Canada at the top of application lists and make universities in Atlantic Canada particularly appealing internationally.

4.2. The Road Ahead: Students Crossing Borders

Compromises continue as participants receive answers from universities abroad and start preparations for visa applications, a step which requires students to further tailor their dreams, in attempts to ensure smooth and timely passage to their destinations in the Global North. As foreshadowed in the data analysis thus far, affordability continues to play a crucial role in evaluating incoming admissions letters, as it did when students were narrowing down the list of universities to apply to. For example, Zack from Southern Europe, explains how receiving his scholarship offer made the final decision easier:

I had applied in the US, the UK and Canada. I was excited about all programs, but maybe in different ways, because they were all equally good programs in [study field], so hard to choose from. For the UK I would have loved to stay in Europe, be closer to my family and also life is maybe better, more opportunities to travel cheaper, amazing cities...for the US and Canada, the settings were more rural, more remote and getting there was a long journey. But then, I got a full scholarship from [department in Canada] and that made the decision for me. That was it!

Like Zack, 21 students received some form of scholarship or financial aid, and nine students indicated that such opportunities were the ultimate deciding factor in their university choice.

However, at this stage of the migration process, other considerations also re-emerge. For example, 16 percent of students indicated that they chose to attend a university in Atlantic Canada in light of the self-imposed time constraints discussed at the beginning of this chapter. These students settled on the university they would eventually attend either because they received their first acceptance letter from that university, or because the university accepted them without further qualifying requirements, such as ESL classes. Mei, who at the beginning of this chapter described how her race to depart as soon as possible started in high school, explains how she settled on her university in Canada:

[I preferred] schools I already knew, because in China some [Canadian] universities are popular. Like Victoria, Toronto, Manitoba... [The university I chose in Atlantic Canada] may be good in Canada, but in China when you tell people you study here, most people have never heard about it. But actually my teacher suggested me this city too, so I applied just in case.

Although the university in Atlantic Canada may have initially not been the first choice, as the months rolled on, Mei's concerns about the timeliness of her migration resurfaced.

Actually I first got the admission from [university in Atlantic Canada] and I [decided I] won't wait anymore, so I directly came here... I [feared I would] wait a long time [for the visa]. I waited two months and after two months it's already August so school starts in September, so it was hard...

4.2.1. The Gatekeepers: Diverse Visa Experiences Around The World

Students also settled upon early acceptance letters in hopes of timely visa processing. Derek, a student from China in his late-20s, describes how his path towards international education started later than he had wished, leaving him concerned that he may not convincingly fit within the international student category at the border. He thus feared he would not receive his visa:

Many people [I knew] were going to the UK or USA for undergraduate, but my family could not afford that, so I decided to go to Chinese undergraduate. But [as time passed], things like apartments cost more, so my parents decided to live a very simple life [and sell their apartment] and save some money [for my degree abroad]. So I graduated university in China, but I did not pass the exam for graduate school. I wanted to go to graduate school because I feel like that would give me more options, but I failed this exam, so I decided to study for TOEFL and GRE and apply to USA and Canada that year. I came to Canada [the following year]. I went to any university that welcomed me... [University in Atlantic Canada] sent me the acceptance letter earlier and that gave me more time to apply for visa. It's hard for students like me to get visas, because I am too old, I age out.

Fong's (2011) work with international students from China provides further context for Derek and Mei's concerns. Echoing Derek's fears, Fong (2011) found that:

“Embassy officials were more likely to deny student visas to Chinese citizens who were past their mid-20s or had spouses and/or children because they did not fit the traditional student profile and seemed likely to focus on other things (such as

work or immigration) that student visas were not meant to facilitate” (p. 82). As well, “obtaining a visa required the expenditure of significant time, energy and economic and social capital. Visa application processes sometimes took more than one year because developed countries’ embassies were understaffed, and had difficulty processing the large volume of applications they received. Because the number of Chinese citizens who applied for visas exceeded developed countries’ quotas for Chinese citizens, visa applications were often rejected. Rejection most often occurred when the applicants had questionable supporting documents or when they gave responses in interviews that seemed untruthful, inadequately fluent or suggestive of ‘immigration intent’” (p. 77).

Also documenting this phase of students’ migration for those coming to study in Canada, the CBIE 2009 Survey indicates that about 30 percent of students reported challenges in obtaining a visa and study permit for Canada. Frequently encountered challenges included delays, unfriendly visa officers and inaccessible visa offices. However, only about 10 percent of students characterized their visa procedure as “stressful, frustrating or discouraging” (p. 36).

I find Fong’s observations to be closer to the realities described in my sample than the CBIE survey, for reasons I assume have to do with data collection methods in qualitative, as opposed to quantitative, formats. As such, students in my study rarely described visa officers as *unfriendly*, I suspect because in many cultural contexts, the expectation of a friendly government official is not as entrenched as it is in Canada. Instead, students often described those officials as ‘doing their job’ or ‘doing a good/ thorough job’ and overall expressed appreciation for a thorough system, seen to keep disingenuous migrants at bay, in ways that match debates amply broadcast by Canadian media as described in Chapter Two.

However, the extent or implications of the visa requirements gave all participants some concerns. From Southern Europe to the Middle East, and from the US to South Asia, participating students reported putting significant effort into filling visa forms

correctly and all worried about meeting visa requirements accurately. These unanimous concerns make the visa process a rite of passage of sorts amongst international students.

However, some had more to worry about than others. A strong unequal streaming effect took hold at this stage of the migration journey, as students' visa experiences and associated costs varied greatly, based on the geographical locations of their applications or on the particular passports they held, in ways that uphold racialized constructions of border permeability, as described in Chapters One and Two. As well, students who had managed to secure scholarship offers based on academic standing, in ways revealed as classed and gendered in the previous section of this chapter, also reported an overall easier time with their visa applications than students who did not fall within these aforementioned categories.

Thus, for *some*, the visa process turned out to be overwhelmingly positive. Such accounts, particularly prevalent amongst the few participants who applied for their Canadian visa from a country in the Global North – either because they were citizens of a country in that region, or because they had been temporarily studying or working there – noted the few requirements and steps involved in obtaining a Canadian visa, and highlighted the brevity of the overall process. This was the case for Rachel, a participant of European descent, who applied in a Northern European country. Rachel had recently married a European citizen, and the young couple made the decision to migrate to Canada because they hoped the economic climate would be more favourable than in Europe amid the global economic downturn. Rachel had identified some academic programs to pursue in Canada, while her highly skilled husband had looked into some employment prospects.

After receiving her admissions letter at a university in the Atlantic region, Rachel was pleasantly surprised by the efficiency encountered at the Canadian embassy:

The visa process took literally ninety minutes. I just came to the Canadian embassy with my letter of acceptance from the university, my ID, the fact that I am married [to national of European country], and one hour and a half later we just got it [the visa] in our passports. We gave the documents in and got our papers right then!

In contrast, students applying in countries in Eastern and Southern Europe, Asia, South America and the Middle East, faced lengthier processing times, that generally lasted a few months. Many such locations faced additional screening stages, including medical examinations of varying lengths, depending on the evaluated health risks associated with specific application sites. As well, many students outside Central and Northern Europe had to send passports to other countries, or were required to travel themselves abroad as part of visa applications, either to personally deliver documents, or to attend visa interviews. Students in Eastern and Southern Europe sent passports to Austria, some Middle Eastern students had to travel to Turkey, Caribbean students traveled to designated visa hubs in the Caribbean and so forth. These required processes added delays, as well as significant expenses to visa applications, all contingent on students' countries of origin.

Visa experiences also spoke to a number of themes emerging from my data regarding the gendered and racialized nuances of the class capital embedded in satisfying visa requirements. Akin to theorizations of desirable skills and immigrants reviewed in Chapter Two of this dissertation, students too become enmeshed into states' "classification, differentiation, selection and stratification of migrants in order to filter, as far as possible, welcome from unwelcome strangers" (Kofman, 2007, p. 130). As Kofman (2007) further argues, the mechanisms for triage are particularly problematic.

“On the one hand, the tendency is to privilege the kind of skills and expertise which can circulate easily and rapidly through global networks, relatively unfettered by national regulations and easily absorbed by those in other cultures. On the other hand, the tendency is to marginalize those types of knowledge which are more nationally bounded and/or relational and context dependent” (p. 127).

The implications of Kofman’s (2007) theoretical model find prominent intersections with the lived experiences of students in this study. For example Zara, a student in her mid 20s from the Middle East, summarizes her visa experience as follows:

Honestly the biggest problem was financial, because I had to pay for my passport, for the visa and for the medical test, so it was just paying and paying and paying... For me it [the medical exam] was like, so if I am sick, you would not let me to go [study]? That is not right... I had to go for an interview... not everyone gets an interview. They say it’s random, but I think it was because of my major [was not in STEM field] that they wanted to talk to me. Most girls [in my country] go to European countries and study science and engineering...

Zara’s experience, echoing Ramona’s trepidation at the pregnancy test request shared in the introduction of this chapter, directly illustrates how borders become less porous for *some* women. In this group are those who apply for visas at locations that require extensive medical testing and thus have to undergo a pregnancy test. As well, given established patterns of migration that prioritize STEM fields, border screening may seem additionally challenging to those who do not engage with STEM programs, with discouraging effects.

Moreover, Zara’s experiences point to the differentiated financial capital required of successful visa applicants. Mentioning these requirements was very common amongst the participating students. However, most striking was the participants’ acute understanding of their positioning as *desirable* immigrants, contingent upon proof that they present no potential financial burden or liability to Canada. Students expressed concern about the cost and contents of the medical examination associate with their visas, as well as the ethical principle of being rejected on medical grounds. However, they also

rationalizing these requirements in economic terms. Larisa, a student in her mid 20s from a middle class family in South America, explains:

You have to apply [for the visa] and then part of the process is going to a doctor and he checks you and sees that everything is ok with you, because if you have a disease that may take a lot of money from Canada [for treatment], you will get denied.

Regardless of the length of the list of requirements, most applications took between a few weeks and a few months, with only seven students, or 10 percent of the sample, reporting delays of over four months in their visa processing times. As well, four students applying in various countries in Asia, South America and the Middle East had visas denied on their first try, but reapplied the next year with successful results. In all cases, the initial rejections were assumed by students to be related to satisfying financial requirements.

4.2.2. Helpful Advisors: Complementary Industries To Education Migration

While only four students in my sample, or 5 percent, had their first visa applications initially rejected, the fear of rejection drove many international student-hopefuls and their families to hire private advisors in preparation of anticipated challenges. Such fears seem to contribute to the rise of a thriving business sector offering support services to aspiring students. Services include all matters to do with international education migration, from help with university selection to support with visa applications.

In some countries in Europe and the Middle East, private firms tasked with initially evaluating visa applications have become a mandatory step in the visa process, as sanctioned by Canadian embassies. Without a preliminary check and accompanying

proof of this check from these private agencies, visa applications at these locations are not accepted by the Canadian embassies.

Meanwhile, in Asian and South Asian countries, third parties helping students ensure the completion of their visa applications were mainly described as entirely independent agencies, dedicated to secure transnational routes for paying students. Bao-Yu, the daughter of middle class professionals from a large urban center in China, explains why her family chose to hire a consultancy firm to help her become an international student:

We went there [to an agency] because my mother was quite worried about failing the visa process, so her friend recommended this agency and they got my case. They would help better organize the visa files for you. That [the visa application] was complicated because they asked for very many certified documents. Your police records, bank statements, your grades and university diploma and also a written statement of your intention, why you need to come to Canada. There you should say you have no intention to come to Canada [permanently]... As a concept, the visa officers will refuse you if you have the intention to stay in Canada. It is very well known... I found out about this from the agency but also from the [internet chat] forums, because I looked for application guidelines also on my own... This [applying through the agency] cost C\$1,500. It was cheaper for me, because they also offer to look for schools to apply to, but I had already applied on my own.

Eleven students hired the services of private agencies in their home countries to help prepare university and visa applications. All of these students were from China and South Asia. In a few cases, students had asked parents to retain the services of such firms based on friends' recommendations or success stories shared through social networks. In most cases however, like it happened for Bao-Yu, it was the parents who decided to hire the firms' services for their children. Testimony to feared deficits in cultural capital as a basis for hiring help, the majority of parents who hired agencies did not speak English and had limited or no experience with traveling abroad. As such, in most cases, getting help from agencies was described as way to offset the lack of personal confidence in these matters.

Further illustrating stratification along class capital assets, the scope of services accessed, as well as their pricing, varied considerably amongst participants. Prices were lower for those who had the ability to get further along in the process on their own. Costs went up for those most fearful of what they perceived to be complex demands – most often those who had never traveled abroad before, those who were not fully comfortable speaking English, and/or those who had limited access to networks of support at home and/or abroad to complete the applications.

In this emerging matrix of capitals, some students paid only a few hundred dollars for information about visa procedures and requirements, most paid around C\$1,000, and a few paid about C\$5,000. The more comprehensive support included help with organizing the forms and documents required for university applications and visa files, consultations with both parents and students, and overall extensive handholding and reassurance for all involved throughout the application process.

Another prominent theme emerging from visa application vignettes in the data was the requirement to convince visa officers that students had no intention to immigrate permanently to Canada. This particular requirement to deny settlement intent can be integrated within the Canadian government's concern with clearly delineating students from *disingenuous migrants*, those intent on coming to Canada with the hidden motive of immigration and work rather than studying (Keung, 2012), as explained in Chapter Two. Like Bao-Yu, 30 percent of participants, originating from China and countries in South Asia, the Middle East and South America, mentioned this as a condition for their applications' success.

However, the requirement seemed to either be applied selectively or maybe went unnoticed by other students, for reasons that may reflect both the selective nature of visa applications and the students' own nuanced perceptions of the visa requirements as either formalities with limited impact past obtaining their visa, or actually binding for their entire stay.

Amongst those who did mention it, the feeling of confusion around this condition was unanimous. To begin with, the requirement seemed to demand that migrants predicted their long-term future, at a time in their lives when everything seemed highly uncertain. Moreover, the question did not seem to match students' understanding that Canada is a country in need of immigrants, and one that is particularly welcoming to the settlement of international students. Lia, a student from China in her early 20s, explains what she thought about having to state her intention to return to China after her studies in her visa application:

That [question] was on my [visa] forms. You have to always put 'No' [for intention to settle in Canada], because otherwise you get denied. If you go to the [internet support] forums [for Chinese students], everybody tells you. You have to not show your tendency towards immigration. To me, it was a bit of logical inconsistency, I would consider, because when you apply to get a visa, you have to say 'No!' to Canada, but once you come here, everyone wants to get a job, and also Canada's government tells us they want students to live here permanently, right? Because Canada is in demand of labour, it says so on the news almost each time.

Similar to Lia, Bao-Yu also explains how she rationalized her response about being committed to return to China upon graduation:

At that time, I had not really considered my future at all, so I had little thought for my immigration. I thought maybe I will stay, maybe not. My parents don't know how to speak English, so maybe I will have to care for them. At the time, I was thinking that if I did not get the visa, my future will have to change completely, so I was concerned to be successful [with my visa application].

As these students highlight, their futures in Canada are very unclear at the moment of departure, and settlement options are dependent on their experiences upon arrival, family

views and needs, all of which eventually impinge on students' life plans. As such, the expectation that anybody, much less a young international students, could commit to a definite answer regarding long-term settlement in a new country, is hard to meet.

4.2.3. Students, Reinvented As International

Amidst these ongoing reflections on what characteristics make migrants mobile and successful in the Global North, students facing borders explored ways to delineate their identities as *international students* ahead of their own impending journeys. For participants in this study, the process unfolded as underpinned by strategic attempts to embody the cultural capital obtained through the years of education and investments leading up to their departure.

As such, participants identified and acted to emphasize characteristics they perceived as associated with being *promising* international students pre-departure. For example, they highlighted the perceived connection between global consumerism, personal affluence and affording degrees abroad by signalling awareness and access to global consumer brands, even as these brands were beyond the reach of many interviewees. Some students – mostly from China, but also from countries in Southern Europe and the Middle East – pondered or took on Anglo-sounding nicknames to make their transitions easier. Many students, especially women from South America, the Middle East and Asia, bought American and European branded clothing and accessories to enhance their look of cosmopolitan affluence pre-departure.

Often, these delineation processes were directly informed by what students perceived as expected of them by gatekeepers during and beyond the visa process, as

borders loomed. Participants took cues from global media, teachers tasked with pre-departure preparation at language schools and as part of Two-Plus-Two programs, the private consultants they had hired, as well as from friends who had already traveled abroad as students.

Moreover, at this stage in the migration process, articulations of difference between migrant students and other migrant streams become more common, as students finalize the last details of their trips. As such, participants specifically sought communities of international students, as opposed to co-national or co-ethnic communities settled in Canada. Many explained that they would have more in common with the former group, even as they had learned so much from the latter. A common theme in these articulations was that international students thought they had to be more independent than other groups of incoming migrants – by virtue of mostly traveling alone, without parents and/or with partners their own age. Consequently, asking for information from fellow-international students, even of diverse nationalities, was considered more appropriate than gathering information through ethnic transnational networks.

The remainder of this section reviews these themes, documenting how, when and why participants assert their belonging to the increasingly important *international student* category. This review serves as a powerful reminder that, while characteristics of ideal migrants are shaped, as discussed in Chapters One and Two, by complex global economic and political power dynamics, they are also encountered as *real* and carefully maneuvered by migrants themselves, at crucial moments in migration journeys.

4.2.3.1. *Crossing Borders: Embodying the Category of International Student*

Notable ethnographic accounts have previously documented how migrants' agency comes to light especially at border crossings, where migrants' identities appear recast to fit the acceptable mould pertaining to the particular migration categories they are attempting to embody (Barber, 2008; Hairong, 2008). For instance, Barber (2008) observes that Filipino migrants recognize the requirements of class capital and the further nuances of race and gender within the transnational labour flows they are attempting to embark on. She notes:

“my research with applicants preparing to leave for contract work... reveals a pattern of migrant self-awareness about the need to downplay their skills, sexualities and [middle class] class identities. ‘Performed subordination’ was apparent in migrants’ self-representation as properly demure, subordinate maids, capable of contributing English education to employer’s children but not so educated and worldly that it might be difficult for the employers concerned to tightly control their live-in ‘maids’” (Barber, 2008, p. 1274).

In similar ‘patterns of self-awareness’, students shared their attempts to embody the particular aspects of their migration category. For example, Zara, from the Middle East, explains her preparation for her visa interview as follows:

[For my visa interview] I tried to wear very professional clothing, I put make-up and I wore high heels, totally professional. Well, I had to still wear a headscarf... I remember that day I tried to look really nice... I thought that will matter. I thought for me, ‘I am going to a Western country and to do my degree, so I have to look like a woman who knows what she’s going to do’. So from every detail, from my clothes, from my make-up, from the way I was talking, all really will matter... [The visa officer] asked ‘what made you [want to] go to Canada and apply to university, what is your plan for your future, why this major?’ I said that from my background... I told him my mom is... a really independent woman... So I told him I want to study [abroad]. [Visa officer] also asked who are my favourite authors. I told [the visa officer]... and [they] wrote it down on the computer... You know, you are talking in English with a officer who has your future life in [their] hands, [they] can say ‘Yes!’ or ‘No!’, so you have to be very careful with choosing your authors.

In her account of the visa interview, Zara identifies and attempts to embody some clear characteristics she associates with international students, such as *independence* and

professionalism. In an effort to highlight her own independence, she attempts to dispel any possible preconceptions regarding the independence of Middle Eastern women, signalling her awareness that such messages may be rife in Canadian typecasts (Mahtani, 2009; 2008). Zara goes on to specifically emphasize her family history and her own academic aptitudes to make her point. Her account points to a fine-tuned balance between showing intellectual knowledge, and fitting within a middle class identity showcased through appropriate clothing and attitudes, in complex transnational leverages of cultural capital and its overt symbols.

Other women in the study shared similar accounts. For example, participants from the Middle East, South America and Asia talked about buying new clothing in anticipation of visa interviews or international departures. Bao-Yu from China explained how she took her tips from a friend when shopping pre-departure: ‘my best friend helped me [prepare], because she went to England during one year in school so she would tell me about things in England...when we go shopping’. A common occurrence was also to bring along branded clothing and accessories, which some participants hoped would act as transnationally transferable class markers. For example, Ashley, from the Middle Eastern explained how women in her country, just like women in the US and Canada, ‘love shopping and especially brand name things, like Gucci and like other brands’, highlighting her awareness of branded items as a way to bridge cultural difference. Doris from China also considered this strategy, but ultimately decided against it given that the main purpose of her journey was education. She explains, ‘I think, if I carry a Chanel bag to class, that would be silly. I like the bags, but I think it silly to carry to class’.

Attempts to ensure transnational belonging and cultural fluency at this stage were not only limited to clothing. Almost half of the participants from China had taken up Anglo names before their departures, the vast majority on the advice of advisers at consulting firms, language schools or other preparatory courses. John from China, explains his experience:

I choose my English name so people remember it and it's easier for people to pronounce. In my class in China, my Canadian teacher asks we choose an English name because it's easier for him to pronounce our name. He was Canadian and he came to help us prepare for Canada. I chose my name from [popular Hollywood movie protagonist]. Now it's my name here, my brand, who I am in Canada.

As participants worked on their transnational transformations, most were also cautious, and sometimes reluctant, to reach out to established co-national and co-ethnic communities in Canada, and even to family members who were abroad. This finding foreshadows more nuanced relationships between incoming students and the established co-ethnic communities they encounter at their destinations in Canada than previously explored. As such, previous studies have indicated that international students at universities in the Global North often come to rely on co-national and co-ethnic communities during their study programs (Kamara, 2012; Rosenthal, Russell & Thomson, 2007). My findings suggest a complex process of negotiations regarding in and out-group belonging that is fluid and that shifts considerably during different stages of students' migration, as will be explored further here and in the remaining chapters of this dissertation.

Notably, at this stage in the migration process, although over 60 percent of the students in this study had relatives in the Global North, only one student ultimately decided to study in the same city as their relatives in Canada. Instead, many shared the

desire to embark on migration journeys independently, on their own terms. Twelve students, seven of them women, talked about deciding to migrate independent of family abroad, explaining their decisions in such terms as: ‘I decided to go to where no member of my family had gone before’; ‘I did not want to move in with [my relative] after I moved out from my parents’ house’; or ‘I talked to others of my friends who left as well, and we all say you feel free, you feel happy about the life you are going to make... without the family. Even if my family is ok with whatever I want to do, still it’s the feeling that you are free’.

Indeed, the vast majority of students preferred independence from relatives and co-national and co-ethnic communities abroad, and primarily sought support from other international students of different nationalities. This group emphasized that, as international students, they anticipated having more with fellow students – either co-national, international or even Canadian – than with migrant co-nationals who had migrated through other streams. Dan, from South Asia, articulates this as follows:

There was really nobody here [in Atlantic Canada] that I knew [before arriving]. I went on those forums for international students and they suggested to contact a company with a lot of properties [for rent] to avoid fraud. I booked a two bedroom apartment...I took a Canadian roommate...I never tried to meet anybody from my ethnic community. I think figuring things on your own gives you independence. It’s not that I am ashamed to ask somebody for help, but if you can figure it out on your own, then fine. And I also prefer to take the decisions on my own so if it goes wrong, I can blame only myself.

Adam, also from Southeast Asia, shares a more critical viewpoint:

Before I left I actually emailed the international center and asked about the culture and the life, like where to buy things and food but also about religious community. They actually sent me a list and I go every week to worship. Probably that’s where [church and international students’ center] I will make friends. [I am cautious of the local ethnic community because] people are sometimes jealous and they try to bring you down...

As Adam points out, while ethnic communities were not at the top of students’ list as sources of support at this stage in their journeys, International Students’ Centers, forums

and organizations were almost unanimously highlighted as appropriate venues for information, socialization and practical advice.

Some communities, like that formed by international students from China, had the numbers to sustain a separate community of Chinese students with its own online forums and chat rooms. All Chinese students interviewed noted that such online venues constituted main sources of pre-arrival information and support. Meanwhile, most other participants accessed forums for students of all nationalities studying in a specific region or at a particular university.

In fact, in many cases, these forum communities were the first to alert students to the reality that Atlantic Canada is a destination with fewer international students and less populous ethnic communities when compared to more established education migration centers in Canada, such as Toronto, Montreal or Vancouver. In line with attitudes of independence and self-reliance reviewed thus far, most students reported excitement rather than concern at the prospect of standing out as international at this stage of their journeys. Doris highlights her anticipated benefits of studying at a less popular destination:

Right now there's lots of Chinese in Canada, so Toronto, Ottawa, Vancouver it's lots of Chinese and if you go there, it's hard to practice your English, because you just speak Chinese every day, but in [city in Atlantic Canada there are] not so many Chinese and it's small city, so nicer to practice English.

Zara, from the Middle East, similarly notes, "when I came here, I did not want to have contact with other [co-nationals]... I felt that this is a new country, we speak English."

After years of working to belong to this migration category, students seemed eager to experience migration on their own. Although students' relationships to their migration category and the ethnic communities they encounter in Canada becomes much

more complex once at their destinations, as will be detailed in Chapter Four, at this stage of their migration, participants' feelings towards these communities, as well as their articulated transnational self-representations through identity markers such as Anglo nicknames and fashionable clothing, speak to the symbolic work that shapes belonging to the distinct category of people migrating *for education*.

4.2.3.2. Moments of Departure: Facing Up to International Education Future

Most students vividly described the excitement of their departures. However, the vast majority also noted that the joy of a new adventure came with the hardest step on their journey, which was saying goodbye to family and friends. Bao-Yu remembers her moment of departure:

I remember the airport and saying good-bye to my family. I was worried about how I would face up to challenge. Maybe you think I may say going abroad is kind of cool and you can challenge yourself, but when you face up to the challenge directly, you don't know what would come to you, so I was crying in the airport. It was not a feeling about missing family, it was a feeling of worrying about the future, being horrified.

At her departure gate, Bao-Yu contemplated her apprehensions about how her migration would unfold at her study destination, and in particular her worry about facing up to the challenges ahead in ways that would neither disappoint herself, nor family members, who made sacrifices so her migration could occur. Such fears were very common amongst international students in this study. Arguably, this is a unique characteristic to this group of migrants, possibly occurring due the years of preparation, anticipation and sacrifices that students and families go through to prepare for their journeys, but also because of the young ages at which such international journeys get underway. Elizabeth, from the Caribbean, elaborates:

You have all this responsibility you are faced with... [knowing] that if you get an

opportunity to get out [of your country], you do not mess this up... University education [abroad] is so unique, you have to make use of it, you're never ever going to get this opportunity again.

In this way, feelings of anticipation and excitement about an independent life in Canada are balanced by feelings of responsibility towards those left behind, mothers and fathers, siblings, grandparents, uncles and aunts who worked hard to make international students' departures possible and whose hopes for students' success strongly shapes students' own ambitious benchmarks for successful journeys.

4.3. Conclusion: Migrating For Education, Amidst Borders And Gatekeepers

Literature on international students often focuses on characteristics that facilitate this groups seamless movement across borders with relative ease, most often through networks of academic aptitude and privilege (Dolby & Rizvi, 2007; Gosh & Wong, 2003). Moreover, given the amount of time and resources participants and their families invested in planning for education migration projects, this group's eventual departures had been generally anticipated by students as smooth, well-rehearsed exits.

Contrary to such expectations, participants in this study encountered, and had to overcome, significant obstacles – both personal and institutional – when turning their international education dreams into reality. As many participants found, the years spent preparing and envisioning study departures did not straightforwardly garner family support or emotional, academic and financial readiness for eventual migration projects. Instead, the success of study migration plans became contingent on students' ongoing work to secure various types of support on their own, through family and social networks, as well as from external gatekeepers such as banks, university funding bodies and so

forth. These processes required significant capital leverages and created disparities between migrating students, especially based on social class, gendered identities and along racialized constructions based on migrants' national origins.

As departures drew imminent, new and sometimes unexpected pressures arise. Ensuring the timeliness of migration projects became a common concern, with the theme of *leaving on time* appearing in interviews as a significant aspect of education migration. All participants agreed that migration for education is an endeavour reserved for the young, with students departing before their 30th birthday. However, the right timing for students' departures became additionally contingent upon complex gendered parameters pertaining to personal life goals, such as establishing lasting romantic relationships, getting married and starting families. Overall, such expectations disproportionately impacted women's journeys. Migrant women pursuing international education migration felt either pressured to expedite migration, so as to have more time to find a spouse and start a family after completing their degrees, or conversely, were expected to postpone migration until it could be orchestrated with a spouse and coincide with starting a family. A rich gradient of demands emerged between these two strategies.

Echoing Fong's (2011) similar findings, my study points to the reality that cross-culturally, women's migrations for education follow stricter timelines and are evaluated based on more demanding benchmarks of success than those of male counterparts. Notably, this theme recurs at other key migration moments as will be revealed in Chapter Six, which shows it to affect students' choices and definitions of success during and after their degrees abroad, differently framing women's career and immigration decisions post-graduation.

Moreover, as Fong (2011) also finds, the timeliness of departures is additionally delineated through constraints imposed on students by external gatekeepers, such as visa and bank loan officers whose definitions of ‘successful’ applicants offer narrow images of who credibly fits within international education streams. Age is an important characteristic, but it is joined by many others in the evaluation of *worthy* migrants. Ongoing work from Kofman and Raghuram (2015), Simmons (2010), Barber (2008) and others has shown that there is a significant burden of proof now mounting for migrants in all migration streams, increasingly demanding that individuals interested in crossing borders present themselves, their experiences and their goals through appropriations of migrant categories and characteristics that reflect their desirability within policy discourses.

For the migrants in my sample, selecting student streams as migration routes places an emphasis on upholding ideals of youth, health, high academic achievement and independence. Participants worked to highlight such characteristics strategically, at checkpoints and in visa applications. When visa requirements contained paradoxes and contradictions, such as asking students to deny interest in immigration post-graduation, migrants complied, noting that predicting the future is impossible. And when unexpected obstacles disrupted clear study paths, participants emphasized lessons learned from activities undertaken in gap years, presenting skills gathered and experiences gained as enriching to their potentials as international students.

Moreover, as this Chapter has shown, the fear of not compellingly fitting within the international education migration category has come to feed growing global industries of private international education programs and consultancy firms, whose main purpose

is to help migrants find practical paths toward post-secondary degrees abroad. In the set-up of mounting demands, students were often faced with compromising significant aspects of their international education dreams. On the advice of family members, private consultants and gatekeepers encountered along the way, aspiring students had to re-evaluate desired programs and majors, based on such features as length of study time or projected job prospects after graduation. Universities were selected based on tuition costs and timely admissions letters, while countries to migrate to were compared based on opportunities to work and immigrate post-graduation.

These factors elevated Canada as a top choice destination given a policy landscape that, although in a constant state of change, has historically been promising for new immigrants, and in recent years, has been particularly favourable to international students, offering work and immigration opportunities before and after graduation.

Due to similar considerations, academic institutions in the Atlantic region also stand out favourably, especially due to relatively low tuition and living costs, especially when compared to the North American standard. However, it is precisely those high expectations of social openness, success on tight budgets and favourable immigration opportunities, which eventually make students question their migration success, as well as leave them emotionally and financially vulnerable upon their arrival in Canada. As Chapters Five and Six will show, the unstable realities of life encountered in Canada, fraught with social marginalization on and off campus, the financial insecurities of ever-higher tuitions, and the challenges of narrowing settlement avenues, ultimately place international students in unexpected positions of vulnerability.

PART II: LIFE IN CANADA

“Objective relations of power tend to reproduce themselves in relation to symbolic power. In the symbolic struggle... agents put into action the symbolic capital that they have acquired in previous struggles and which may be juridically guaranteed. Thus, titles of nobility, like education credentials, represent true titles of symbolic capital which give one the right to share in the profits of recognition. Here again we must break away from marginalist subjectivism: symbolic order is not formed in the manner of a market price, out of the mere mechanical additions of individual orders. On the one hand, in the determination of the subjective classification and of the hierarchy of values granted to individuals and groups, not all judgments have the same weight, and holders of a large amount of symbolic capital... are in a position to impose the scale of value... notably because, in our societies they hold practical de facto monopoly over institutions which, like the school system, officially determine and guarantee rank. On the other hand, symbolic capital can be officially sanctioned and guaranteed, and juridically instituted by the effect of official nomination... that is the act whereby someone is granted a title, a socially recognized qualification, is one of the most typical expressions of symbolic violence which belongs to the state or to its representatives. A credential, such as a school diploma, is a piece of universally recognized and guaranteed symbolic capital, good on all markets. As an official definition of an official identity, it frees its holder from the symbolic struggle of all against all by imposing a universally approved perspective. The state, which provides the official classification, is in one sense the supreme tribunal” (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 22).

Seventy-two percent of participants indicated in their interviews that they do not intend to return to home countries after graduation, but rather are working towards settlement in Canada (61 percent in total – including 27 percent who intend to stay in the Atlantic region– or broader in the Global North – remaining eleven percent. However, upon their arrival in the Atlantic region, students encounter challenging realities, many of which strike at the core of initial expectations of status and experiences in Canada.

In the last section of this dissertation, made up of Chapters Five and Six, I employ Bourdieu’s (1989) above-quoted theorization of processes through which capitals, embedded in individual and group categorizations, are validated in social fields. Bourdieu (1989) notes that such processes are occurring between classes of individuals, institutions

and states. As such, I set out to explore how the migrant category of *international student* is converted into symbolic forms of capital and ultimately, into paths towards permanent statuses – both legal and social – within Canadian society.

I therefore initially explore agenda setting activities emerging at multiple levels of the Canadian state through policy and the views presented to the Canadian public through media debates. I go on to review the processes through which students themselves work to position their status as *international students in Canada and the Atlantic region* in privileged social locations, so as to avoid relegation to less desirable positions in the social fields they enter post-migration. Participants' chosen strategies are shown to be aligned with the cultural capital accrued in the long years before eventual migrations.

Chapter Five monitors the short to medium-term adjustment processes undertaken by international students upon arrival. In order to offer context to the social positions incoming students are expected to take up upon arrival, the chapter starts with a review of historical and current economic and demographic realities, which are shown to impact agenda setting around Atlantic Canada's *need* for incoming international students. After this review, the chapter records students' social and academic experiences upon arrival in the Atlantic region, as well as their ability to transform their temporary statuses as students into more permanent migration routes, based on the policy avenues they encounter and work to take up upon arrival. In turn, Chapter Six explores constructions of *permanence* more generally, investigating broader notions of *traveling cultural capital* and its limits, particularly along transnationally constructed lines of gender, race and ethnicity.

Amongst students, immediate struggles upon arrival center on realizations of ESL and academic unpreparedness, social marginalization, financial shortcomings and shifting immigration avenues. These factors, largely unexpected by incoming students, have the potential to destabilize the forms of cultural capital accrued by students and their families in the years leading up to education migration. As illustrated in Chapters Three and Four, students started migration preparations early, and families invested significantly in academic skills and English lessons to make them internationally competitive.

Moreover, based on lessons learned from previous migrant generations, the media and peer groups, incoming students expect Canada to be a society open to newcomers and especially students who, as outlined in Chapter Two, have been hailed on transnational media waves as able to seamlessly integrate into Canada's classrooms, and onward into the nation's society and labour markets. As such, students do not expect social marginalization to the extent encountered upon migration, nor do they anticipate the shifts in policy to erode paths to permanent settlement.

Furthermore, financial struggles – largely caused by the global economic downturn of 2008, as well as the ongoing neoliberalization of higher education in the Canadian context, which saw international students' tuitions grow by 86 percent in the last decade (CBIE, 2009, p. 1) – are thus also largely unexpected. Financial struggles are especially problematic because, as shown in Chapter Four, students' ability to pass strict visa requirements significantly relies on convincing various gatekeepers of financially sustainable sojourns in Canada. As well, as illustrated in Chapter Three, migrating as a student is built upon familial class reproduction and upward mobility projects, which encourage students to project a level of privilege that contrasts with vulnerabilities

encountered post-migration. Participants faced such struggles as food insecurity, precarious living arrangements, and on occasion, the inability to meet tuition costs.

Through it all, as the analysis to follow in Chapter Five will illustrate, students draw strength from class identities, yet such identities make it challenging to ask for needed help. As well, students and their families work hard to avoid being relegated to sub-par employment and social marginalization in Canada, as they see such positions as challenging long-term goals of skilled migration, based on education and social adaptation success.

Given these parameters of class identity, students present admirable resilience in the face of encountered challenges and work hard to reconfigure acceptable realities upon migration. As such, students engage in strategic processes of building cultural and social capitals in Canada. Faced with social isolation and employment struggles, participants turn to international students' communities on campus and ethnic communities beyond campus. They do so in ways that reflect their cultural capital, laden with leadership skills and a spirit of independence and entrepreneurship reminiscent of pioneering generations celebrated in family scripts. As such, 30 percent of the international students in the sample reported becoming involved in activities they deemed important for supporting *other* international students on Atlantic campuses. As well, 35 percent of the students engaged in volunteer activities on campus and in the cities beyond the campus, linking those activities to desired outcomes of social connections and competitive careers. Participants volunteered or worked as part of academic resource centers, university committees or departmental support groups and participated in consultation processes with university administrations about the realities international students encounter upon

arrival – often highlighting areas of pressing need for the expanding community of international students in the region. These activities, to be unpacked in more detail in the sections to follow, point to the real and commendable impacts of international students’ agency and identities as self-reliant, independent and entrepreneurial, highlighted as a strong foundation for participants’ migration projects since early family scripts unpacked in Chapter Three. However, as Chapter Six eventually shows, success in building viable futures in Atlantic Canada and beyond ultimately rests on students’ ability to reconcile expectations with increasingly challenging realities.

Given that students’ challenges are to some extent determined by demographic and policy realities encountered upon arrival in Atlantic Canada, and the fact that these factors significantly shift based on students’ arrival dates in the region, I divide my participants’ experiences and outcomes based on a cohort approach in Chapter Five. As such, the cohort to arrive before 2008 encounter an Atlantic region low in ethnic and racial diversity, as waves of international recruitment are only just beginning to occur. For better and for worse, these students stand out in their classes and in the community as uniquely international and encounter systems of support still designed for much lower numbers of international students.

On a positive note, these students live through years of broadening immigration avenues for their migration category in Canada. They are amongst the first to benefit from the off-campus and extended post-graduation work permits, and to qualify for the newly minted federal Canadian Experience Class and the provincial Nominee Programs. They find support to settle locally at their international student offices, where advisors

collaborate with provincial immigration offices and occasionally welcome federal representatives, who hold immigration information sessions on campus.

Meanwhile, students arriving after 2008 – and are set to graduate after 2013 – encounter other realities on the ground, both in terms of the growing number of international students populating Atlantic Canada’s classrooms and communities, and in terms of the policies of provincial and federal immigration agencies whereby reconfigured immigration paths narrow students’ opportunities to obtain permanent statuses.

As such, in terms of demographic gains, between 2004 and 2008, the growth rate for the international student demographic in Atlantic Canada was at 17.81 percent, while between 2008 and 2012, the growth rate close to doubled to 32.64 percent (growth rates calculated based on CIC Facts and Figures, 2015). Meanwhile, students’ transitions through various statuses significantly swelled during the period up until 2009, when close to 13,000 international students obtained PR status in Canada, compared to the recorded transition of only about 4,000 in 2003 (Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Services Agencies of BC [AMSSA] Information Sheet, 2013). However, ongoing policy changes initiated in 2011 started limiting transition rates until the present time, when the federal government has noticed a significant decrease of immigrating students prompting an in-depth review of the obstacles students encounter and of ways to address them (Mas, 2016).

In 2014, through the launch of the Regulated International Student Immigration Advisor program, those wishing to provide immigration support are required to undergo training and testing managed by the federal government in partnership with CBIE

(International Consultants for Education and Fairs [ICEF] Monitor, 2015). The measure ensures a level of quality control over shared immigration information, at the cost of education institutions that pay for the accreditation. As well, in anticipation of the Express Entry launch, Provincial Nominee Programs were first to close for international graduates in the Atlantic region and across the country, starting in 2013.

By the fall of 2014, the Canadian Experience Class was no longer accepting applications from international students trying to obtain permanent status through this federal stream (Choise, 2015). By 2015, provincial nominee programs would reopen to students, however both PNPs and the new federal Express Entry would introduce higher costs of immigration for students, that now include mandatory language tests, employer generated Labour Market Opinions and other provisions that make both federal and provincial immigration paths overall more costly and less accessible.

Ultimately, after the 2015 launch of the Express Entry, Canadian news reports swelled with stories of international students from across the country, who saw their dreams of immigration crushed by new federal and provincial regulations (Keung, 2015a; Mas, 2016). In a recent press conference about proposed shifts to the current federal immigration regulations, Canada's new Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, John McCallum, noted:

“We must do more to attract students to this country as permanent residents... International students have been shortchanged by the express entry system... They are the cream of the crop, in terms of potential future Canadians" (Mas, 2016, para. 3).

The ups and downs of settlement opportunities in Canada, while clearly marked by federal and provincial regulatory changes, are also significantly nuanced by social

processes that frame students' ability to take up social positions that are more or less favorable in light of unfolding policies. On this note, Morrice (2014) states that "policy and social discourses... impose taxonomies, identities and institute entitlements and rights [and] define what kind of migrant subject it is possible to be" (p. 157). Also, speaking to this topic, Castles (2002) observes: "legal and bureaucratic obstacles... have been seen [by potential migrants] not as absolute barriers, but as factors to be taken into account in personal strategies" (p. 1146).

These observations set the tone for the chapters to follow, which aim to explore how Bourdieu's (1990; 1986) class capitals intersect with volatile landscapes policies to shape individual realities. Students' success is further nuanced through gender, race and emergent ethnic identities developing for participants upon arrival in Canada.

Overall, as data analysis presented in Chapters Five and Six indicates, international men graduating with degrees in STEM fields were ultimately more likely to recognize their skills and accrued capital as *valuable* and *mobile* and thus engaged with policy avenues and onward migration projects from positions of strength. In turn, women were more likely to see their steps as dependent upon responsibilities to parents or partners, and were thus more likely to define the permanence and direction of their onward migration in light of family or partners' wishes. This group, regardless of graduation field, felt overall less *geographically and socially mobile*. Illustrating this finding, twelve students, originating from South Asia, China, Central Europe and South America, indicated they were going back to home countries after graduation due to family or marriage commitments, and of these, only four were men. These and other relevant differences regarding independence, belonging and marginality are shown to

build up throughout Chapter Five and eventually come to a head in Chapter Six, where outcomes of migration projects are more broadly explored.

Once again, in keeping with the participant-focused aims of this study, Chapters Five and Six also build around participants' perspectives. As with Chapters Three and Four, each of the chapters in this section also starts with four vignettes shared by different participants, whose experiences have been selected help the reader empathies with students' experienced at each stage of their journeys. Main themes emerging from the vignettes are then contextualized using theory, reviews of institutional outlooks, as well as integration within the larger students' sample.

CHAPTER 5: STUDENTS, INTERNATIONAL IN ATLANTIC CANADA

Lia, a student in her early 20s from China, landed in Atlantic Canada on a chilly September night, ‘past midnight’, she remembers. Waiting for her was Nina, a fellow Chinese student whom Lia had met the previous winter on an Internet chat forum for Chinese international students. Lia was studying in a large Chinese urban center at that time and had applied to do a graduate degree in a STEM field at some universities across Canada. Nina, an Arts student, was on the forum searching for a roommate to live with in her second year in Atlantic Canada. Lia admits she was initially suspicious of Nina. ‘I asked her why she was looking for roommates on Chinese forums, instead of looking [amongst her friends] at her university here [in Canada]’. Nina replied that friends had been hard to come by for her in Atlantic Canada, so she was hoping instead to find a friend in a girl thousands of miles away. Lia remembers:

We chatted on the Internet and I thought she was a good girl. And she turned to be very very nice to me. When I came to [Canada] she was the only person I knew, and she came to pick me up from the airport. Without her, I cannot imagine how I would have handled everything. I did not have a place to live, I didn’t know where to go, so she planned everything for me. She even advised me what to bring from China when packing...like cooking utensils that you cannot find here... I brought an inflatable mattress because it was much cheaper in China, some books, some very warm clothes... I am very grateful to her.

Lia’s first impressions of her new city were not favorable. ‘Everything was so old, [my apartment building] seemed like an abandoned factory’, she remembers. However, her first days had a familiar feel:

We went to the bank, we went to a restaurant, a Chinese restaurant. It was actually funny because we spoke Mandarin together [with my friend] at lunch and we also spoke Mandarin [with the restaurant staff] and then we spoke Mandarin at [the bank]. It seemed like we were in Chinese network spanning all over the world.

Initially, life in the ‘Chinese network’ was comfortable. But after her first year in Canada, Lia was beginning to feel like the ‘Chinese network’ was more of a confining space than a comfort zone.

Even now [after a year] I don’t have many non-Chinese friends here. Actually none! I know this is not good. You are in Canada and you should try to speak English and make Canadian friends, otherwise you could stay in China, what’s the difference? Canadian students, they are friendly but... I tell you, I did attend once or twice the party of Canadian students in the department getting together, but it’s hard to make friends with local students... I think the first barrier is the language. My English is not perfect.

[Interviewer interjection:] *We’ve been speaking English for almost two hours now and everything you said was clear.*

Yes, but your job is to listen to me and you have patience. But normally in a group, when you are the foreign student, people don’t have much patience listening to you... [Even professors], they are quite friendly but the problem is there are so many Chinese [in my classes] that they cannot distinguish you. I think I am quite outstanding. I would say that, yes, because I have a lot of passion for my subjects and I work very hard but they do not recognize you, they cannot see how hard you have been trying and how passionate you are. You are just one of the Chinese students and there are tens of them... It really depends on the professors. Some will recognize you and see how outstanding you are and they will encourage you and that makes me really [wide smile].

Interactions with Canadians did not go any smoother outside the university campus either. When Lia’s apartment building got a bedbug infestation, the landlord refused to pay for the professional cleaning and would not let her and her roommate out of their lease. Worst of all, racist accusations were made. Lia explains:

They blamed us! They said it’s because we are not cleaning the apartment and we brought the bedbugs. But we are very clean... One time they [the landlord] came in the apartment and we had dishes in the sink and they said ‘oh, your kitchen is not clean. It is because your kitchen is not clean that you have bedbugs. Next time I come here the kitchen better be clean!’. We clean the apartment every week and of course I know bedbugs are not caused because of dirt, but I think they said so because we are international students. That’s their attitude. Even from the beginning when we rent there they ask us to pay four months’ rent in advance, but not for the next four months but for the last four months [of the lease], so we moved in September and we had to pay for May, June, July and August of the next year. We know this is not the regular way and we ask them about it. They say they are afraid because we are international students and what if we go back to China and they cannot trace us and we do not honor our lease.

Despite these disheartening setbacks, Lia was proud to report she had managed to maintain an A+ grade average in her classes. She was also keeping an eye on immigration

pathways because her parents had asked. “They told me I should try and immigrate now. I should try, maybe I will succeed. They told me they would like to join me later on, if I succeed.”

Lia had applied for the off-campus work permit to gain entrance into the Canadian labor market over the summer. At the time of her interview, she had applied for some positions related to her field, but none had called back. She notes “of course it will be better if it will be related to [my field of study] but it’s ok if it is not. [Now I will apply to] restaurant, sales stores, service, tourism, anything. I feel like I am [in my 20s], I should start to earn some money already!”

Zara, also in her 20s and originating from the Middle East, arrived in Atlantic Canada on a sunny day at noon. Her entry into Canada was through a larger airport where she got her study permit based on the visa obtained in her home country. She remembers:

[When] I landed in Canada, I had a very strict officer. We had a very long queue, because we landed in [large airport]. [The officer] said to me ‘this is your [study] permit. For now you are not allowed to work off campus. After 6 months, you can work off campus, but no more than 25 hours a week.’ Then she shouted ‘Got it?’ and I said ‘Yes’ and then again ‘So you got it?’ I had a lot of stress!

Zara had planned her departure with her boyfriend, who was also traveling as an international student, although he had been accepted at a university in a different province. They said goodbye on at the layover point. She continued to her destination in Atlantic Canada alone. Upon arrival, she had caught the back end of a windy hurricane common in the Atlantic region in the summer months. She remembers her first look at her new city as simultaneously eerie and glamorous:

I had this feeling of adventure. I remember [I had] a car [waiting for me], it was like a limousine, to the airport, and I sat in the front seat of that limousine... For me it was a long long way from the airport, to the residence, and when I was in downtown, I was really shocked, [thinking] ‘Is this the city where I have to live?’ The city was small for me, there were no students, no people [on the streets], the trees were broken, I did not

like the city at all. [At residence] I remember the icy face of the secretary, and I had these two [heavy] suitcases, and nobody offered to help. That secretary did not ask about anything, like even 'how was your trip?' Nothing, just ice-faced.

Feeling lonely as one of very few international students in residence, she decided to reach out to a contact her parents had given her should she need assistance. The contact was for an immigrant family who had been living in Canada for some years. They were related to friends of friends, and Zara had never met them. All she knew about them was that they migrated from her home country to the Atlantic region and 'were nice people'. She decided to call them, although before her departure she had not planned to reach out to any co-nationals. She explains:

When I came here, I did not want to have contact with other [co-nationals] ... I felt that this is a new country, we speak English...that was hard for me [to eventually call co-nationals], but we did have the family friends who took care of me ... I had never met them before... [When we met] we went to their house, it was a very [traditional Middle Eastern] house... and I felt more at home. But they had kids... and in a way, that made me feel even worse. Because they were a family, immigrating together, their situation was different. They had each other. So when I saw her, the mom of the family, I started crying... my mom was not there... I cried a lot [the first few months]... In my department, they were all Canadian, they all seemed to be friends, had lots to talk about together... But I could not talk and mostly I could not understand the other students at all, they were talking so fast and I was so confused about the things they were talking about. It was like it was not my English they were speaking. We went around and introduced ourselves and they were all Canadian. I definitely felt in minority, they are all white people... They kept asking all these things like 'Are you Muslim? Do you eat meat? Are you allowed this? Are you allowed that?' They kept apologizing for asking stuff, but they kept asking. It was hard for me to answer....

Zara's first impressions of Canada were vastly different than what she had anticipated based on media exports and family scripts and networks, as reviewed in Chapters Three and Four. She explains:

My imagination of Canada was this multicultural country, with universities full of international students. That was my imagination before coming to Canada, just because of all these websites, and my aunt and the media, so that's what I was expecting... [H]ere there was nothing [like what I expected] in my major, nobody was international...

Things did not get easier for Zara as the first semester progressed. Although she had been accepted in her program with a full scholarship that technically covered all tuition and

housing costs, the scholarship was split equally amongst three terms, while the tuition was significantly higher in the first term, due to residence and student fees collected up front. The difference in fees was thousands of dollars, which Zara was not expecting to have to pay. She had brought some extra money for food and incidentals, but this unexpected mismatch between scholarship and fees would have depleted all those funds, leaving her with no money for food. She went to explain her situation to the university's financial department:

I told this financial [university representative] 'I have money, but I just don't have enough to pay right now'. [They] told me 'this is your problem, not my problem'. [They] told me I should save by going to the Food Bank. I was not used to that, I grew up in a middle class family, so having somebody say that, I was just keeping myself from crying in front of [them]. [They] saw I was upset and told me 'Don't worry, it's only for two years and after that you'll go back to your own country'... I did not say anything and I am very sorry for that now. I should have told [them] 'it's none of your business! How can you say I have to go back to my own country?'

Given this response, Zara was at a loss. Her visa prohibited her from working for the first six months in Canada and her family did not have the resources to send money so soon after departure. Luckily, Zara also shared her concerns with faculty members at her department, who managed to secure access to some extra funding that covered the outstanding fees. However, given her class identity, it took a lot of courage for Zara to share her financial issues with faculty.

Things also eventually improved socially. While she still found Canadians "friendly, but not my friends. They all keep their distance", as time passed, she met other international students who became her close friends. She also eventually came to find a source of support in her local ethnic community.

Now that [I have] my [international] friends here, I feel less lonely. I also have more relationships in [my ethnic] community. Although many of them are immigrants, you still feel like somebody is there for you. I feel like they [my ethnic community] recognize who I really am, who my parents are, that we are middle-class, that we are educated.

Despite the hardships, Zara feels she has grown significantly through her migration.

You know, back home I was always this little girl who could not say anything, who could not debate anybody. I would always cry and tell my mom and know she will help me, she is there for me. So I had to learn to say 'listen, this is the situation, this is my opinion'. This I learned here, to talk with people, to choose my words. I learned in my classes that your words really matter.

Hey, a Chinese undergraduate in his early 20s, whose father was a successful entrepreneur, also had a complex journey to Atlantic Canada. He had first taken a full year of intensive English in Central Canada, then had enrolled in program in a Prairie province and subsequently transferred to a university in Atlantic Canada mid-degree. He decided to move because the winters in the Prairies proved too much for him to bear and he had heard from friends that the weather in Atlantic Canada was milder. As well, the tuition costs in the Atlantic region allowed for significant savings, which Hey appreciated, because he was keen on starting a business and needed start-up capital.

After his first year in the Atlantic region, he achieved his goal, starting an import partnership with his father. The profits were significant. However, he was still working part-time at a local Chinese restaurant, to supplement his budget and get to know the 'local Canadian culture'. Nonetheless, his interest in all things local was only temporary. Hey had decided that, upon graduation, he would return to China and work for his father.

He had this to say of potential settlement in the Atlantic region:

If you want to stay in Canada you need to have a nice house and a good job. I read this and I know this because it's common knowledge if you want to immigrate... [In Canada] money is very bad in jobs. I think I can go to China and make five times [of locally employed friend's] salary and help my father with his business... In my opinion, [city in Atlantic Canada] is best for the old people. It's got sunshine and good air and that kind of stuff. But you know, China is developing very fast. Some people make a lot of money. I hope to make a lot of money when I go back...

For these predominantly financial reasons, Hey had decided that his stay in Canada was going to be temporary.

Mario, on the other hand was determined to settle permanently. The student from Southeast Asia had come to Atlantic Canada in his mid-20s. Mario's mother had migrated to the Global North in the care labor chain when Mario started university in his home country, 'because of education costs'. By the time Mario graduated his undergraduate program, his father and younger siblings had received permanent status in the country where his mother had been working and the family had relocated there permanently.

Unfortunately for Mario, he was past 18 years old when this move happened, so he had to figure out his own pathway abroad. He had tried to join his family in their new country, but could not find appealing study and career opportunities there, so decided to look wider and eventually settled on a university in Atlantic Canada due to a professional connection shared by a former professor.

Mario loved his new city in Canada from the start. His supervisor and department colleagues proved most friendly and welcoming, although Mario found that friendships with international students, and particularly students who shared his nationality, were most rewarding for him. Some things however did not go as smoothly as anticipated. His wife, a recent graduate of a university in Europe, and fluent in both of Canada's national languages, had hoped to find a job in her field. Instead, after months of searching, she started a job below her training level. Mario said she was disappointed with her career prospects. She had an idea for a business, but her visa conditions prevented her from pursuing that. Nonetheless, the family was determined to make Atlantic Canada their home, even as Mario had a few years of schooling to complete. During his initial interview in the 2012/13 data collection period, Mario noted:

We want to apply to the citizenship and immigration papers and I have been reading their [CIC] website. It's my impression they would like us [international students] to immigrate here, but we are not eligible yet...actually [current city] is my favorite city, because I am at the period of family building and I prefer to raise a family here, rather than in [large city]. Everything is smooth here. It's nice to drive in less traffic. I like the proximity to nature.

I caught up with Mario again in 2015 and he shared his many achievements. He had graduated, had a new baby and had gotten a rewarding job in his STEM field at a competitive firm locally. The young family's determination to stay in the Atlantic region had not waivered, especially as they had some made Canadian friends and felt part of the local community. 'I find that it's easier to connect with people when you talk about kids, because you talk about common struggles really [laughs]...like 'Are you sleeping well? How are you managing?'. Mario had also connected with his local ethnic community, where he was attending events that met his interests, but noted he still felt closest to international students rather than co-ethnics, because international students share 'common struggles'.

While things were going great for Mario at home, at work and in the community, his immigration status in Canada was becoming a growing source of concern. Mario found himself trapped within a volatile immigration system made additionally challenging by federal/provincial negotiations. He feared his work permit would expire and he would have to leave Canada and the life he had built here. He explains his situation:

At the beginning [when I graduated] it was pretty convenient because they [Canadian government] give you the work permit for three years to figure things out...but then [I experienced] a series of deadlock events. Basically before I graduated there was still this program with the provincial nominee, right? So if you worked a few months they gave you nomination, but they cancelled that. So then, I had to wait for one year [to qualify through the federal streams]. But it was ok, I felt pretty confident. You know you are a student, you are wanted in Canada, have work experience in Canada. I was not anticipating any problems... unfortunately the application reached them [federal government] right after the cut-off [switch to Express Entry], so they returned it [the

application] and said ‘we suggest you apply for this Express Entry’. The new system is based on two tiers of points. You get the first 600 for the skills that would help you adapt to Canada, language, skills and so on. The second 600 points you get with a skilled job. I thought ‘ok, I have a permanent job’, but [to get the points] they ask for a labor market opinion or you can get the new Provincial Nomination... These are onerous processes... I try to be hopeful [even though] my work permit expires next year [and] you cannot renew it... I qualified for the PR last year, but this year I qualify for nothing at all...I want this to work!

I selected these vignettes as an introduction to the chapter on life upon arrival in Canada because they illustrate some of the main setbacks and achievements, disappointments and hopes that students experienced once they had finally reached their Canadian destinations. These vignettes speak to the main themes to be unpacked in this chapter, which broadly center on students’ immediate struggles on and off campus upon arrival – including the issues of ESL, friendship, loneliness and discrimination – as well as more long-term planning attempts and their intersection with ongoing immigration policy changes in at the provincial and federal levels.

As these experiences unfold as interrelated and at the confluence of campus and regional developments, the first section of this chapter offers some provisions of regional context. I focus initially on nuances of historical development in terms of regional economic and demographic realities, that are then shown to significantly impact the flow of international education migrants in Atlantic Canada, both currently and in historical perspective. Once reasons for developing demographic shifts on the Atlantic Canadian campus have been established, I review emerging struggles faced by incoming students. Eventually, both perspectives – from outside and from within the campus – emerge as critically relevant to shaping the onward migration trajectories of international students and graduates in this study.

5.1. International Students In Atlantic Canada: Colonial History, Economic Aspirations And Demographic Realities

International students' recent arrival in swelling numbers in Canada's Atlantic provinces is testimony to a rich legacy of academic prominence in this region. The Atlantic provinces boast a significantly high number of post-secondary institutions, including eighteen universities which are a direct legacy of the region's rich colonial past, as one of the first European settlements in North America. As part of this legacy, Atlantic Canada is home to two of the oldest Anglophone universities in North America – the University of New Brunswick, established in Fredericton in 1785 as the first Anglophone university in Canada (Belluz, 2010), as well as the University of King's College, now part of Dalhousie University, and the second oldest university to be established in Canada, founded in 1818 (Anisef, Alexrod & Lennards, 2012). As well, Mount Saint Vincent University, also in Halifax, was the first independent women's college in the British Commonwealth (Mount Saint Vincent University, 2014).

As settlement centers in the Atlantic region grew in population and gained increasingly important statuses on trade routes and as part of colonial administrations through British North America, new academic institutions opened their doors, until, in the late 1900s, there were no less than ten universities in the province of Nova Scotia, seven in New Brunswick, and one in each of the provinces of Prince Edwards Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador. In addition to the universities operating in the region, there are also fourteen community colleges, bringing the total number of post-secondary institutions in the Atlantic provinces attracting high school graduates in the region to thirty-three.

There is also a rich history of international education migration to universities in Atlantic Canada, with students coming in from around the world. Archival evidence indicates that historically, most international students arrived to the Atlantic region from the USA, the Caribbean, and South Asia, following established Commonwealth cultural routes (Cameron, 2006). In line with historical trends outlined in Chapter Two, the post-World War Two period brought about a swelling of international student numbers in Canada and the Atlantic region, partly as a result of education exchanges funded through development plans such as the Fulbright and the Colombo, used to secure allies during the Cold War, as well as due to American youths' strategies to resist the draft for ongoing military conflicts overseas (Chira, 2008; Cameron, 2006).

According to Cameron (2006), who provides a unique account of this history as it unfolded between 1930 and 2006 at St. Francis Xavier University [St. FX] in Antigonish, Nova Scotia, this record has thus far remained largely unexplored. Retrieved through extensive archival work, his account reveals that in the 1950s and 1960s, international students accounted for close to 20 percent of the student body at St. FX, with about half of these students coming from the USA and the other half followed Commonwealth connections from Asia, Africa, South America and the Caribbean and funded through international development aid. Incoming students were generally expected to leave Canada post-graduation. Their numbers would diminish to below one percent by the late 1970s and 1980s, following Canada's divestment in development projects and the settlement of Cold War conflicts through the 1980s, in line with trends discussed in Chapter Two.

5.1.1. Atlantic Canada's Demography And Economy: A Brief History

The gap left behind by international enrollments could not be easily filled through local enrollments in the decades to follow. The high number of regional post-secondary institutions was then, and continues to be today, disproportionate to Atlantic Canada's modern demographic realities. The Atlantic region is currently home to about two million inhabitants with a median age over 40, as the Atlantic is home to the most aged population in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2011b).

Population growth in the region is also modest. Between 2006 and 2011, Nova Scotia's population grew by 0.9 percent, New Brunswick's 2.9 percent, Prince Edwards Island's by 3.2 percent and Newfoundland and Labrador's by 1.8 percent, all significantly below the national average of 5.9 percent (Statistics Canada, 2011b).

Demographic trends observed in the region by the most recent Census data reveal that the Atlantic provinces have the highest and fastest growing proportion of seniors (over 65) in Canada, and that the region also has the fastest shrinking working age population in the country. This is due, as Census data indicates, to low birth and immigration rates, and high rates of out-migration amongst local youth and international newcomers (Reid & Savoie, 2011; Denton et al., 2009; Akbari, 2008; Savoie, 2006).

The reality of an aging and shrinking population has been monitored and recorded in numerous academic studies, which have consistently linked the demographic setbacks to the challenges faced by local economies. These have historically relied on traditional, resource-based industries, including agriculture, fisheries and lumber exploitation. Also contributing to the downturn is the dissolution of the coal and steel industries in decades past (Hanson, 2013; Corbett, 2007; Apostle et al., 1998; Barber, 1990). As these

researchers note, on the one hand, such industries experienced global competition that has largely priced out the Atlantic region as a production hub. On the other hand, national and regional neoliberal policies of subsidy limitations and deregulated trade have significantly contributed to the economic downturn of such traditional sectors. The changes disproportionately affected subsequent generations of working-class youth, who have thereafter engaged in labor chain migrations to other Canadian provinces in need of menial laborers, such as Alberta, for work in the oil sands, or British Columbia for work in forestry.

Meanwhile, the Atlantic region has attempted to reposition itself in emerging niches of the knowledge economy, an overwhelming task in the face of limited infrastructure to support the needed changes (Davis, Lin & Vladica, 2006; Ruggeri, 2003). Universities across the region were identified early on by agenda setting organizations such as the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency [ACOA] – a federal government agency tasked with regional economic development, as well as the Association of Atlantic Universities [AAU], an association representing 16 universities across the region – as the front-runners of the impending shifts, depicted in ongoing reports as imminent hubs for the research and development in Atlantic Canada.

In line with this direction, through the 1990s, ACOA, as well as the AAU, published such reports as “The State of Small Businesses and Entrepreneurship in Atlantic Canada” (ACOA, 1998) and “The Atlantic Provinces: A Knowledge Economy Dropout?” (AAU, 1999). These reports call on provincial government, and on university administrations, to redirect available funding streams towards fostering links between local economic growth and post-secondary research and programs.

Part of similar agenda setting activities, in 2006, the Atlantic region was one of the 14 regions in 12 countries selected by the transnational organization OECD as part of an initiative entitled “Supporting the Contribution of Higher Education Institutions to Regional Development” (Garlick, Davies, Polèse & Kitagawa, 2007). Amongst other recommendations, which generally centered on ways to tailor university programs to the challenges faced by the regional economy, the report suggested more efforts towards the retention of graduates to the region. Strengthening post-secondary links to the private sector and the retention of graduates, both Canadian and international, continue to be agenda headliners for the region, recently part of key recommendations of report released by the One Nova Scotia Commission⁵ (2014).

These various types of agenda setting activities, which advocate stronger links between universities and regional economic development, are very much in tune with the neoliberal shifts affecting the funding of post-secondary education institutions across the Global North (Harvey, 2007), as described in Chapter Two. However, the success and viability of these proposed directions for the Atlantic region, as well as the tangible policy shifts and their implications for funding streams at secondary and post-secondary levels, have been critically reviewed by economists (Reid & Savoie, 2011; Savoie, 2006; 2001).

The long-term effects of overall attempts to successfully update Atlantic Canada’s economy to knowledge driven growth have remained relatively modest in most sectors

⁵ The One Nova Scotia Commission is an organization of Nova Scotian stakeholders from a vast array of fields who were tasked to develop a comprehensive ten-year economic plan to address Nova Scotia’s economic and demographic challenges (One Nova Scotia, 2015). The report produced by the commission became known as the Ivany Report, named after the commission’s chair, Dr. Ray Ivany.

(One Nova Scotia Commission Report, 2014; Hanson, 2013; Reid & Savoie, 2011).

Income from most knowledge-driven economic sectors lags behind national rates, and regional economic growth continues to rely on exploitation of natural resources, such as natural gas in Nova Scotia and oil in Newfoundland, although these sectors are still in the process of development. Overall, the region continues to struggle with a stagnant economy, low wage levels and high unemployment. Atlantic Canadian youth continue to relocate elsewhere in Canada in their work life prime (Haan, 2014; Akbari, 2013).

The stagnant economy has also kept the rates of immigrants low in the last two decades, and particularly discouraged highly skilled immigrants from long-term settlement (Akbari, 2008). Overall, all provinces in the Atlantic region attract immigrants at a rate lower than the national average, as the 2011 Census data reveals that “[a] smaller share of newcomers lived in the Atlantic provinces in 2011: 0.9% in Nova Scotia, 0.6% in New Brunswick, 0.2% in Prince Edward Island and 0.2% in Newfoundland and Labrador” (Statistics Canada, 2011c). In consequence, the region is also amongst the least ethnically diverse in Canada, with only 2.6 percent of the population identifying as visible minority in the 2006 Census, compared to a national rate of 16.2 percent (Statistics Canada, 2006).

In 2006, 94.6 percent of Nova Scotians were born in NS, while only 6 percent are first generation Canadians, compared to the national average of 23.8 percent. Only 4.2 percent of Nova Scotians self-identify as visible minorities. These numbers are consistent throughout the Atlantic region. As such, almost two percent of New Brunswickers, one percent of those living in Newfoundland and Labrador, and less than one percent of the population of Prince Edward Island self-identify as ethnic minorities (Statistics Canada,

2006b). The low racial diversity rates are sustained also because, while regionally most newcomers now resettle from China and the Middle East (trends consistent with national rates), the Atlantic region continues to count the UK, US and Northern European countries amongst top sources of immigration (Akbari, Lynch, McDonald & Rankadu, 2007).

5.1.2. International Students In Atlantic Canada: University Led Regional Development

While efforts to turn around the regional economy through knowledge-based growth have been only modestly successful, one sector exceeded expectations. As such, local universities have become significant economic drivers in their own right. As described in Chapter Two, important contributions are made through staggering success in enrolling international students, currently Canada's eighth largest export sector (Horvath, 2012). For this sector, the depressed regional economy of the Atlantic provinces, coupled with shrinking numbers of local youth, have created an international education haven. These factors have minimized local competition for available university spots, and lowered overall costs for education and living expenses, as compared to other regions in Canada and North America.

Furthermore, following national trends of regarding international students simultaneously as short-term economic contributors through tuition and living expenses and potential long-term settlers, policy and agenda setting debates in Atlantic Canada have also highlighted both. In 2009, the AAU published a report that described Atlantic universities as a "two billion dollar industry" (p. i), and evaluated universities' direct contribution to Gross Domestic Product to have increased 31 percent to C\$2.6 billion

annually between 2004 and 2008 (AAU, 2009, p. i). The following year, a regional study measuring international students' impact on the regional economy noted that:

“[t]he initial economic impact of international students in Atlantic Canada was found to be [C]\$376 million in 2009-2010, including an initial injection of [C]\$175 million of new money to Atlantic Canada. The total economic impact of international students was [C]\$565 million in 2009-2010 after application of the spending multiplier...International students spent 1.3 times the amount spent for their benefit by government, university and private sources. International students spend over [C]\$1.91 of new money in Atlantic Canada for every dollar spent by Provincial Governments on their education and health care” (Siddiq et al., 2010, p. v).

Matching the growing demand for international education internationally, between 1996 and 2005, the Atlantic region more than doubled its intake of international students, during a time when attention and investments towards international recruitment can be described as less focused, when compared to current standards. Increased federal consideration and recruitment support would only come in the late-2000s, when both the federal department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development [DFATD] and the AAU launched international education branding campaigns, nationally in 2008 (DFATD, 2012, p. xi, usage explained at Council of Ministers of Education, Canada [CMEC], 2015), and regionally in 2010, although the regional branding project was never completed.

Parallel agenda setting also developed in the region regarding incoming students' high potential as immigrants. In 2006, one of the first regional studies of this demographic surveyed 135 international students across the Atlantic about their university experiences and settlement plans, finding that 67 percent of incoming students were interested in permanent settlement and immigration in Canada (Lebrun & Rebelo, 2006).

A number of macro-level economic and demographic investigations followed, highlighting the promising potential impacts of settling students in the Atlantic region in the long-term (Denton et al., 2009; Siddiq et al., 2010). Largely matching the national rhetoric for the desirability of young, highly skilled immigrants with little integration costs for Canada – led by the federal level agencies, as outlined in Chapter Two – these regional studies also concluded that international students should be a priority for provincial government agencies in terms of short and long term settlement. As outlined in Chapter Two, between 2008 and 2011, all Atlantic provincial governments negotiated the inclusion of international graduates within provincial immigration streams, under Provincial Nominee Programs. Moreover, testimony to the ongoing prominence of arguments in this tenor throughout the region, and despite the federal directive to close Provincial streams to students in light of the scheduled launch of the Express Entry (from 2012 to 2014), the AAU's 2013 report was entitled "Immigration and Universities in Atlantic Canada: A Marriage Made in Heaven" (AAU, 2013).

Notably, by the time of the 2008 branding exercises and federal/provincial debates pertaining to immigration potentials for this demographic were on their way, the Atlantic region had already grown its intake of international students to over 10,000, with another 8,000 students coming in by 2013 (CIC Facts and Figures, 2013). The temporal order of these developments is important, as it highlights the realities surrounding Atlantic Canada's transformation into the hub of international education it is today. As such, the region's success in this sector does not appear to be a straightforward result of strategic programming or growth plans, but rather appears to be the result of complex, multi-level and multi-sited internationalization activities, as described in Chapter Two.

Thus, on the one hand, the case can be made that the looming regional enrollment crisis facing local post-secondary institutions in Atlantic Canada motivated these institutions to invest their limited resources towards international recruitment, as well as potentially relax admissions requirements for international students to fill enrollment gaps. On the other hand, the region's economic depression helped it attract, at impressive – even unexpected– levels, a demographic of students interested in *affordable* international education (Phillpot & Kennedy, 2014), whose numbers seem to be on the rise globally (Baas, 2012; Fong, 2011).

5.1.3. International Students On Campus: Theorizing Contact Zones

In Atlantic Canada, these factors resulted in a population of incoming international students that are at increased risk of systemic vulnerabilities on and off campus. The attraction of students interested in low-cost international education implies increased financial vulnerability of this regional demographic, as these students tend to operate on reduced budgets, that are less able to stretch along with tuition hikes and economic downturns (Phillpot & Kennedy, 2014; Chira 2013).

Moreover, incoming students stand out within the Atlantic region's low demographic diversity. While historical and current immigrant streams to the Atlantic region continue to originate from the UK, US and Northern European countries (Akbari, 2012; Akbari, Lynch, McDonald & Rankadu, 2007), top regions of students' origins are Asia (34 percent), the Middle East (eleven percent), South Asia (nine percent) and the Caribbean (seven percent) (MPHEC, 2012). China is the top country of students' origin regionally, accounting for close to 30 percent of all arrivals.

The factors and effects of social and academic integration of international students within national academic realms have been extensively explored in academic literature. Studies have theorized the increasingly diverse classroom as a *contact zone* (Shi, 2009; Singh & Doherty, 2004) encapsulating powerful cross-cultural interactions, between international students, professors and non-migrant student. Adopted from post-colonial pedagogy scholarship, the contact zone has been defined in the context of international education as follows:

“Contact zones are spatial, temporal locations that have already been constituted relationally and that enter new relations through historical processes of displacement... In these locations... people with disparate historical trajectories and cultural identities "meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination" (Pratt, 1992, p. 4). These asymmetrical power relations are not only historically constituted as the aftermath of colonialism, imperialism, and slavery, but are reconstituted and contested in day-to-day pedagogic interactions. These contact zones have been historically constituted in relation to various influences and processes: (a) legacies of Western colonial and neocolonial practices, (b) recent market-driven imperatives of Western higher education as the sector shifts from education as aid to export and trade, (c) the global spread of English language and Western knowledge, and (d) demands of former colonised people for access to dominant language and knowledge resources on their own terms” (Singh & Doherty, 2004, p. 11).

Studies monitoring the contact zone document the impact of actual and perceived socio-cultural differences on the learning process (Singh & Doherty, 2004; Bradley, 2000; Biggs, 1997). As well, structural issues of academic interactions are unpacked, as academic traditions and teaching styles are revealed to be culturally laden. In this context, classroom power relations and hierarchies are investigated as problematic assertions of ethno-centrality (Koehne, 2006; Scheyvens, Wilde & Overton, 2003).

Matching current demographics of international students at different sites around the world, most attention has been paid to the pedagogical behaviors and needs of *the*

Asian learner in international education settings (Singh & Doherty, 2008; Barron, 2002; Watkins & Biggs, 1996). However, as migrant students' demographics shift across geographies, so do scholars' constructions of socio-culturally typical international students and their particular didactic requirements. For example, an international student profile for continental Europe is *the European Union [EU] student* crossing the borders of EU member countries to study (Brooks & Everett, 2008; King & Ruiz-Gelices, 2003). Meanwhile, literature emerging from formerly colonizing nations is sometimes framed through a colonial lens (Ogden, 2007; Kenway & Bullen, 2003). While drawing on both colonial and Asia Pacific student profiles, Canadian studies of international students are additionally concerned with *the American student*, crossing the border for more affordable higher education and bringing in a particular set of academic contentions (Kenyon, Frohard-Dourlent & Roth, 2012; Moore, 2008).

This methodological approach has rendered rich explorations of international students' ethnically-specific academic needs and challenges on university campuses in the Global North. As well, the approach of investigating the classroom as a contact zone has yielded powerful studies that allow students and educators to describe their own classroom experiences, thus capturing dynamic identity projects folded within international education (Singh & Doherty, 2008; Ghosh & Wang, 2003). Studies speaking to the disparity of gender, as it unfolds through international education, have also emerged from this vein (Qin, 2009; Kenway & Bullen, 2003).

However, scholars have also pointed to the drawbacks of this approach. Apple (2004) has argued that a methodological framework that sees the classroom in terms of cultural binaries can problematically render *the international student* as an "institutional

abstraction rather than concrete persons” (p. 126). In the same vein, Sigh and Doherty (2008) note that this approach can develop artificial constructions of cultural identities and difference. They caution:

“although the concept of culture is alive, well and thinkable in the dominant discourse of internationalized higher education, its relevance could be dead or fast fading in understanding how individuals plot their careers within global flows of finance, ideology, migration and opportunity... To invoke nostalgic deterministic versions of culture and cultural difference in order to understand mobile students is to make a fetish of such difference and to elude the proactive agency and global imagination of these students” (p. 116).

To counter these challenges, Sigh and Doherty (2008) encourage a more critical approach to the cultural politics of representation unfolding in the classroom and beyond it, in ways that capture more clearly the individual motivations behind international education, be they culturally specific or not. These indications are acutely relevant to the findings in my study, which moves beyond a particular ethnic methodological lens in explaining difference in the Canadian classroom, and explores students’ motivations for international study in a holistic manner that looks beyond the classroom as the sole contact zone of impact or relevance.

In effect, a significant component of the recent literature on international students has centered on seeing this group as a unified whole and recording their experiences upon arrival in the Global North more holistically (Bilecen, 2014). Recent studies have explored themes such as challenges on campus, which include social marginalization (Wu, Garza & Guzman, 2015), pedagogical methods of international inclusion (Banjong, 2015; Zhang, Xia, Fan & Zhu, 2015), ways to support international students through loneliness and depression (Erichsen & Bolliger, 2011) and so forth. On the whole, this literature finds that international students, regardless of national origin or ethnic identity,

tend to be socially marginalized on campus, academically challenged, underprepared and under supported in the classroom, and struggling with the emerging effects of these realities on a personal level.

As well, in the past ten years, potentially the fastest growing research area focusing on international students in Canada has explored students' navigation of the policy landscape in bids to settle and gain access to permanent statuses (Gates-Gasse, 2012). This type of research is paralleled in all nations of the Global North whose governments recognize international students as a potential part of skilled migration streams, including Australia (Robertson, 2011; Zigureas & Law, 2006), New Zealand (Campbell & Li, 2008; Butcher & McGrath, 2004) and the USA (Ozturgut & Murphy, 2009). Much of this literature has critically engaged with the policy landscape in the Global North, revealing it to be generally glossed in a rhetoric of welcoming societies and economies in need of skilled labor, and yet fostering a proliferation of temporary statuses which have kept international students, as they do many other migrants, at the margins and in precarious statuses (Goldring & Lundolt, 2013).

Following similar lines of inquiry, a handful of local studies have also documented different aspects of life for international students across the Atlantic region. In 2006, one of the first regional studies of this demographic surveyed 135 international students across the region about their university experiences and settlement plans (Lebrun & Rebelo, 2006), finding that 80 percent of the students were satisfied with their academic experiences at local universities, while 66 percent of the sample wanted more friendship and social ties with local or Canadian students. International students' life on Francophone campuses in urban and rural environments in New Brunswick has been

documented by Belkhodja and Wade (2011), with a focus on how incoming students fit in, on campus and within Francophone communities regionally. In Saint John's Newfoundland, a recent report conducted at Memorial University found this university's international students to be socially marginalized, financially vulnerable, underprepared for Canadian academic standards and institutionally under-supported (Phillpot & Kennedy, 2014). Two previous studies that unfolded in Saint John's also pointed to the growing and largely unaddressed needs for support concerning families – children and spouses – accompanying international students to Canada (Previ, 2014; Knutson, 2011).

In Nova Scotia, several doctoral students have explored similar necessities for support regarding international students' lives on and off campus (Kamara, 2012; Fang, 2012; Song, 2011). For example, students in economic fields at the university of Cape Breton have focused on international students' potential economic contributions locally. One such study recorded international students' need for credit access so they could start their own business (Fang, 2012), while another evaluated work and employment prospects for international graduates in Cape Breton, finding them lacking (Song, 2011).

Echoing the larger tenor of recent international education literature in Canada, on the whole, studies of international students in Atlantic Canada, as most of their national counterparts, have tended to investigate international students primarily as international consumers of Canadian higher education, of campus and community services and of immigration policies. The general argument uses students' direct economic contributions to universities, cities and provinces – often measured in overall tuition and differential fees, living, housing and discretionary spending, as well as the potential contributions students may make as future tax payers, on work permits or as permanent settlers – as a

means to garner support for this growing demographic from the general public and policy makers.

Throughout my Masters and PhD programs, I have also contributed to such regional data collections and dialogue, outlining the positive economic impacts and potentials of incoming students for Atlantic Canada and evaluating immigration policies and settlement support in Halifax (Chira, 2011). I have engaged with these debates, as I support their promised benefits to incoming international students, as well as the local communities in the Atlantic region. I rationalize the appropriations of the overwhelmingly neoliberal terminology that currently dominate this field of research as a strategic approach designed to engage interest in emerging study results and make Canadian stakeholders generally more amenable to the realities and hardships faced by international students in Canada and the Atlantic region. I thus applaud research on the academic, social and psychological needs of international students on Canadian campuses, regardless of its neoliberal framing, as it has been instrumental in highlighting students' vulnerable statuses, as well as setting agendas for much needed support.

However, it is imperative to point out the limitations of positioning international students as quintessential consumers in such debates, which have significant implications for all, including immigrants, Canadian citizens and all members of the Canadian academy. As outlined in Chapter Two, this framing has already garnered backlash on Canadian campuses. Maclean's Too Asian controversy of 2010 essentially read as Canadian students' lament at the loss of the 'white Canadian university', increasingly corrupted by the presence of 'Asian Canadians and international students' (para. 5) who, by virtue of capital investments, force this institution to pander to their particular learning

styles and needs. A faculty perspective on similar concerns was published in *University Affairs*, in 2013, in the article “Internationalizing the Canadian campus: ESL students and the erosion of higher education” (Friesen & Keeney, 2013). Likely meant as an opportunity to highlight the lack of support for international students on Canadian campuses, the article argues of ESL students:

“Insofar as such students are academically or linguistically unprepared to enter the broad cultural debates that animate the educational conversation, their presence in the graduate classroom and in some cases, their receipt of Canadian credentials, occurs to the detriment of the Canadian students and institutions” (para. 8).

While the intentions around these articles may have been to highlight areas of challenge affecting different student groups across Canadian campuses, what undermines both ‘Too Asian’ and ‘Internationalizing the Canadian Campus’ is the adversarial perspective they project of relationships between Canadian students and their international counterparts, whose presence, although highlighted as beneficial to the overall budget of the Canadian university, diminishes its traditional values, which read as ‘white Anglo’ virtues.

The neocolonial underpinning and contentious racial implications are immediately concerning, as explored in the edited volume *Too Asian* (Gilmour et al., 2012). As Herr (2012) observed in this volume, the *Maclean’s* article “is a perfect illustration of the relationship between explicit ideological racism and more implicit ideas about white privilege” (p. 3). The volume’s conclusions resonate with Mitchell’s (2003) observation, made years earlier, that Canada’s university system had bred a new form of multiculturalism, one strongly infused with neoliberalism. Mitchell argues that while a traditional multicultural classroom “was able to work with and through difference, and conditioned to believe in the positive advantages of diversity in constructing and unifying

the nation ” (para. 3), the new multicultural classroom is “motivated not by ideals of unity in diversity, but by understandings of global competitiveness, and the necessity to strategically adapt as an individual to rapidly shifting personal and national contexts ” (para. 5). Most concerning, in the oppositional atmosphere of the new university classroom, nobody truly feels at ease.

Educational consumerism forges a learning environment that has been documented as detrimental to actual learning and largely driven by superficial evaluations of knowledge exchanges, primarily motivated by the increasingly daunting question ‘are all parties getting what they (are) paid for?’ (Naidoo & Jamieson, 2005; Delucchi & Korgen, 2002).

Therefore, in this Chapter, I hope to add a layer of complexity to this question, and its implications for international students. What I set out to explore here is not driven by whether international students in Atlantic Canada are getting the support and statuses *they pay for* on and off campus, whether differential fees are *fairly priced* or whether Canadian students, faculty, staff, communities, employers, immigration officials and so forth are providing interactions *commensurate with economic compensations* provided by international students. My participants rarely articulated their experiences in Atlantic Canada in this way. Moreover, international students in my sample did not seem to perceive their lives in Canada as segmented, in terms of experiences *on campus* as opposed to life in the *broader local community*, or in the local *labor market* and so on.

Instead, students based expectations of friendship, human connection and fairness in any situation, including in academic, labor market or community settings, not as *services to be rendered* because of paid living and education costs, but rather because of

Canada's international reputation as an *open, welcoming and multicultural* society, fostering, through its values and policies, respect and appreciation for those who work hard, and compassion for those who have fallen on hard times, are hungry or in need of a roof over their heads.

As Chapters Three and Four of this dissertation have illustrated, such expectations were built during the years preceding students' departures, either based on mass media exports, or through personal accounts from friends and family members about life abroad. As well, students accept, albeit with some objections – as seen in Chapter Four – that the Canadian government may evaluate them based on factors such as youth, health, skills and economic potential, but they nonetheless expect that their status as students, as well as Canada's favorable reputation as inclusive, implies a certain openness and tolerance that nuance daily interactions with Canadians.

The vignettes that opened this chapter are perfect illustrations of these views. When Zara explained the financial predicament that left her liable to pay outstanding fees she had been previously assured would be covered by her university, she was looking for understanding as a young newcomer to a new country. The financial officer's response however framed the matter as one to do with time limited contracts and balances owed. Zara's confusion and disappointment reflected this misalignment of frames. Similarly, Lia repeatedly contested her status as *consumer first* both in the classroom and in interactions with her landlord, pointing instead at binding values that she expects should govern interactions on and off campus, such as fairness, hard work and human decency.

Inspired by these views, my work proposes an understanding of students' journeys and lives in Canada holistically. I strive to illustrate that segments of students'

lives before and after arrival, on and off campus, before and after graduation, are inherently interconnected, as different phases of the same migration journey and life cycle. These experiences are inspired, lived and evaluated based on the same values and identities of class, race and gender I have thus far highlighted as catalyzing every step in students' migration projects.

5.2. Students Arrive In Atlantic Canada: A Cohort Approach

As outlined in the introduction of this section, realities encountered on the ground by participants upon arrival in Canada differ significantly based on the year of arrival and, implicitly, the year of expected graduation. Therefore, in the following section I divide the sample into participants who arrived before 2008 and were set to graduate or had already graduated before the cascade of policy changes undertaken at the federal, provincial and institutional levels took effect in 2011; and participants who arrived after 2008 and were set to graduate after 2012, thus experiencing the aftermath of those changes.

5.2.1. The First Cohort Arrives Before 2008: Early Years Of Education Internationalization In Atlantic Canada

Eighteen participants arrived in Canada before 2008, and the earliest arrivals in the Atlantic region amongst my sample occurred in 2004. By 2006, six students had arrived in the region, and an additional twelve arrived in 2007 and 2008. This cohort arrived in the region as the international recruitment rate had not reached its full acceleration levels. Many were amongst the first few international students in their

programs, and as trail blazers, encountered systemic issues that may have been somewhat new and unexpected for university administrations.

As described in the previous sections, the time frame of these students' arrivals coincides with unprecedented growth of the international student population at universities across the region. Given that the growth rates were not part of a coordinated strategy, the new international students' numbers were often not matched with significant structural developments of support on university campuses. For example, students in this cohort describe a time when ESL provision on their campus came in the form of conversation groups led by volunteers, many of whom were international students themselves. Newcomers encountered classrooms where they stood out as novel international additions in their courses. They experienced unexpected system glitches, such as miscommunications related to tuition and fees, similar to what Zara experienced, but made worse by the fact that the off-campus work permits were only launched in 2006 and expanded in 2007, so many of these students had few available options to supplement budgets once in Canada. The unexpected beginning of the global financial crisis in 2007 further jeopardized this group's financial situation.

On a more positive note, this cohort came at a time when both campus and immigration opportunities for international students were expanding. Support programs on and off campus were developing fast, and many such programs offered international students the opportunity for input. Many took that up, with lasting positive effects for the next cohorts of incoming students.

As well, national and local work opportunities and immigration routes were potentially most favorable to international students by the time this cohort was close to

graduation, between 2008 and 2012. This group were the first to benefit from off-campus work permits, the extended three-year post-graduation work permits, the expansion of federal immigration pathways such as the CEC, and provincial routes such as the PNP international graduate streams – all geared towards supporting and even fast-tracking students through Canada’s immigration system.

This mixed bag of opportunity and challenge seemed to have positioned these students in overall positive roles. Campus opportunities for change and immigration shifts made these students feel welcomed and wanted in Canada, and this warm welcome encouraged them to apply for permanent statuses with more confidence than the cohort that would follow.

All participants in this group had evaluated their immigration potential avenues by 2012, and even though eleven had not yet graduated their programs by the time of their interviews, the overall results were already overwhelmingly positive. Some did not wait for graduation before applying to immigrate, with two participants obtaining permanent statuses (one PR and one citizenship) before graduation thanks to the CEC PhD stream and changes to federal skilled worker streams, that gave points to students for years in Canada, but took into account previous work experience in home countries.

Of the seven students in this cohort who had graduated, all were employed in highly skilled positions in fields directly related to their degrees in Atlantic Canada. By 2012, one had already obtained citizenship, another had utilized the PNP to expedite an immigration application and obtain permanent residence status, and all the rest were either compiling applications or evaluating their best option amongst the immigration

streams available to them. And so were their six counterparts who were anticipating graduations in the months immediately following their interviews.

Nonetheless, amongst these early arrivals, were five students who still had years left in their programs, three because they were pursuing programs that were scheduled to take up to six years, generally due to co-op terms, and two others due to unforeseen circumstances – one to do with finances, the other with ESL preparedness – both reasons adding unexpected years to degrees in Canada. In line with the issues that delayed these students, collectively, this cohort pointed to systemic financial constraints and the lack of ESL support on campus as the top two challenges faced upon arrival.

Amongst those struggling financially was James, a student from South America and the son of agricultural workers of limited means. James had graduated university with national acclaim and had been accepted at a number of very competitive international graduate programs. He chose his program in Atlantic Canada partly due to the prestige of his department and supervisor, but also because it offered him a competitive scholarship. James's background, as previously described in Chapter Three, was very modest. However, he had no reason to be worried about finances because he had confirmed his exact scholarship amount multiple times during the admissions process. However, upon arrival, he would encounter the same predicament Zara would run into years later, namely the reality that university fees are higher than scholarship installments in international students' first semesters. This meant he had to survive on below C\$100 for food for month. Moreover, James could not supplement his scholarship by working as his graduate program required long hours of applied scientific work towards a competitive STEM project. He explains:

When I came here, I was told it will be a full scholarship... but for the first year, I had a few hundred dollars for the whole month. Renting here is very expensive for that budget. That is hard... I had to communicate to my supervisor. [That was hard, but] it was impossible for me to survive. He was sympathetic, but only a year later I could get about C\$150 more per month. I had to ask my [sibling] for help and it was hard, because [they were] also an international student [in a different country in the Global North] at that time... I cannot get a job, because in my program we work a lot, even weekends.

Three more students in my sample, the last arriving in 2011, described surviving on a full scholarship as an issue. This repeated pattern across cohorts and institutions speaks to the limited institutional learning regarding some aspects of hosting international students, and points to the vulnerability of this demographic regarding basic needs, such as affordable housing and food. In 2013, aspects of food security were explored in a study in Ontario, its results also highlighting this vulnerability in that province, thus indicating a potentially broader issue for international students in Canada (Stewin, 2013).

For the cohort that started programs in Canada before 2008, well-balanced budgets were additionally challenged by dramatic fluctuations in currency markets brought about by the looming global economic crisis. This was the case for Parker from the Caribbean. It took Parker years of hard work, savings and a sizable loan with his family home as collateral to make his international education dream possible. He finally arrived in Atlantic Canada as the global economic downturn was underway and suffered some personal side effects. He explains:

The first two years went great. But then I ran into a bit of financial trouble, because the exchange rate went up, so I could not afford all the courses I needed to take. Because when they made the financial estimation for me, the rate was [at a certain level] but in a couple of months it had reached [a different rate]. So that difference ended up being a lot of money, so I had to only do some courses, not the full load that I was supposed to take... I applied for a bursary and I never got it. I [eventually got work on campus] part-time...

The exchange rate would delay Parker's graduation by a few semesters, but he eventually managed to offset the balance through work opportunities.

Notably, even when facing such challenging economic realities, students were reluctant to engage in any work activities not sanctioned by their student visas and work permits. I did not encounter the proliferation of grey market jobs or flexible interpretations of work hours sanctioned by off campus work permits, as documented by Baas (2012) in Australia. Rather, my findings are closer to Fong's (2011), who describes international students as averse to any rule-bending activities abroad. She explains:

“Transnational students in my sample feared becoming like undocumented Chinese immigrants, they met abroad who seemed likely to remain indefinitely in low-paying fields in the Chinese dominated restaurant and sweatshop sectors” (p. 138).

In line with Fong's observation, before off-campus work permits were introduced in Canada, students in my sample spoke of competing for jobs on campus, but many underlined they had not looked beyond the campus, because that was not allowed as stipulated in their study permits. Once off-campus work permits were introduced, students began looking off campus, but still preferred campus jobs. Overall, students emphasized they were not interested in working long hours to the potential detriment of their academic progress.

I suggest this reluctance stems from the cultural capital imbedded within the international student migration category in Canada, which encourages many students to strive for work opportunities that seem commensurate with their education levels and that promise to translate well into cultural and social capitals necessary for high skill career paths after graduation. That is not to say that participants were not keen on working hard in various positions available, including menial jobs, but rather that decisions to pursue employment were contextualized within prioritizing education first and striving for jobs that can offer valuable skills in the Canadian labor market.

Elizabeth from the Caribbean, explains why she prioritized long term academic progress, especially when faced with economic hardships:

When your dad does that kind of sacrifice [taking on a loan for my education] risking his little house... the fact that he did that and he was saving on my behalf, and he never got to go to university, I knew I had to work [towards my degree] and I had to do well. I took education very very seriously, because I know other people don't get that opportunity, people I know who are far smarter than me and deserve to go to university... I wanted to start helping with all that [financial hardship], but... I did not only want [just any job] but also [for it to be relevant for] a career afterwards, and [get] needed references and so forth.

Moreover, class identities and mobility projects largely helped define part-time job decisions. Regardless of parents' background, the majority of students described part-time work in an office, for example, as more appropriate for them than working at a restaurant. This was mainly because parents and students viewed such jobs as more appropriate for educated employees, like students. They were also worried about the potential challenges of taking on jobs, and were particularly apprehensive regarding off-campus jobs. Common fears included abusive employers and hostile work environments. As such, when jobs off-campus were obtained, parents often reviewed their standards.

In light of such views, when service and blue-collar jobs were considered, a lot of thought went into presenting these jobs as part of the 'Canadian study experience'. Bao-Yu, from China, describes how she carefully balanced her part-time job selection in light of classed family pressures. The job she found was as a waitress, so less desirable, but she needed the money 'because I considered myself to be poor in Canada. Food is very expensive here, so before I got my scholarship, I was worried about food all the time'.

When she found her part-time job, she had to get her parents' approval:

I would have never waitressed in China. Students like me don't consider waitressing. If I was looking to work part time I would have gotten a technical job, to help with my career later on. The waitresses in China get paid very little and have little education, not like students or university graduates. But here, in Canada, this is a way to connect with my community, maybe meet people... And also I like to try new things... The money I made

helped with my living expenses.... I liked working at the restaurant. People were nice and also my employer [was nice]... so this way, my parents were happy. They thought I am exploring my own world and also I communicate with people and that improves my English.

Bao-Yu's explanation points to a larger theme emerging from the data analysis, which reveals that the financial challenges students experience in Canada are hard to articulate to parents once abroad, and are also hard to accept by families at home. This holds true not only for middle class parents and students, but also for students and families of more modest origins, like James. Although not many students articulate reasons for this reality, I attribute this to the many sacrifices made by all families – especially working-class parents – to send students abroad as part of aspirational class projects, most often articulated as ways to accrue forms of capital that would afford students better options than previous generations of migrants asked to deskill in the Global North, as described in Chapters One and Three.

As such, if upon arrival in Canada, students seem to stray from the established social mobility projects because they encounter social and financial vulnerabilities and subsequently take on disadvantageous positions in social and career contexts, this creates discomfort for the parents. In consequence, the topic of financial hardship seemed to be often avoided in communications with parents, and also hard to articulate to university faculty and staff.

Most participants, like James and Bao-Yu, or Zara from the introductory section of this Chapter, were generally reluctant to share their financial troubles with faculty at their universities and unwilling to accept unsuitable work conditions. This attitude is not surprising, when considering students' own conceptualizations of the cultural capital embedded within their migration category, and especially its framing in economic terms

by visa processes as described in Chapter Four. As such, the most likely response in times of economic challenges was to accept the status quo when at all possible, and voice concern and/or take less desirable jobs only when absolutely necessary.

Notably, in what will be further established in this chapter as a typical response amongst participants, personal or shared experiences of hardship often inspire work to help others with similar needs. For example, in his follow up interview in 2015, Zack was reflecting on his progress in Canada and mentioned that, upon graduating and successfully finding employment, he routinely donates time and resources to his local Food Bank, inspired by international friends' struggles and a period in his own life as a student, when he was worried about his own food security.

I will further unpack the roots and value of these attitudes in the conclusion of this Chapter, after the challenges and responses emerging from the next cohort of international students are considered. Notably, the definition of 'good jobs' for international students on and off campus seems to change slightly with the next cohort. This is because more international students start to work off-campus as the off-campus work permit program becomes increasingly popular.

5.2.1.1. The Importance And Impacts Of Language Skills

Amongst the 18 students to arrive before 2008, ten undergraduates and three graduate students, the majority from China or the Middle East, pointed to academic challenges they encountered upon their arrival, which tended to be significantly centered around English language ability. This finding connects with CBIE's 2009 national report that found about 80 percent of international students they interviewed reported a B grade

average (p. 16). Further nuancing these results, participants spoke of the many disadvantages brought about by even minimal language challenges. Rachel, a participant who arrived before 2008, explains:

When I first got here I was not very secure about my English and I kind of needed more time to read and process things, especially during exams ... I understand the university has the TOEFL exam as a standard, but I passed that exam and my grade was high enough. So I am not talking here about not understanding things in class, but it's a big difference between putting somebody in front of a book and putting them in front of an exam.

Hua, who arrived in the same cohort as Rachel, also points to the social implications of limited English language abilities. Arriving at a time when the number of international students was comparatively low, Hua still managed to make 'mostly Chinese friends' on her campus, because 'when your English is poor, not many Canadians will like to spend time with you'.

However, the overall lower numbers of international students for earlier cohorts interacted with language ability in different ways. Thus, while Hua found some Chinese students to form a community, Hugh, also part of this early cohort, was amongst very few co-nationals at his university. Despite being conscious of his English, he was able to move past that and make friends, because, as he explained, he had little choice. As well, the Canadian friends he first socialized with had taken on volunteer roles to do with welcoming international students. Their volunteer activity turned into a lifelong friendship. Hugh explains:

I started making friends right away ... I found it was surprisingly easy to make friends. The very first day I moved into the residence I ran into [some Canadian students]. These guys are still my best friends. They are all Canadian, from [Atlantic Canada]... they are all my closest friends for life. I was really fortunate to find friends like that on my very first day [of university].

This experience is testimony of the potential impact a well-managed welcoming program can have on international students. In line with the 'international student' identity, Hugh

was committed to dedicating time out of a busy work schedule to mentoring incoming international students at his Alma Mater, years after his graduation.

However, campus programs that made this kind of friendship connections possible seemed rare across the Atlantic region before 2008. For example, Rachel, who arrived a year after Hugh, described her orientation as mostly filled with information sessions. She also found the support system geared towards international students as significantly lacking involvement from Canadian students.

I felt like the international center... they were super welcoming and when I first came, my first week here, they had a lot of brochures about the banks and stuff, and that helped. But that's it, you know, that's it. First of all... how many times can I go to a lecture? And second of all, I feel like all they do is international tea parties. [In terms of ESL support] I went to the International Students' Office and they told me 'oh, yes, that is a problem, we keep hearing about it, but sorry, there is nothing we can do about it'.

Rachel's experience speaks to the reality many encountered in the early years of campus internationalization, marked by limited resources for services required by international students on campus. To fill the void of services needed, support systems on campus often relied on other international students to volunteer and find innovative ways to solve common problems 'in house'. Amongst the overall sample, seventeen students spoke about being involved in volunteer activities geared towards *solving international students' issues on campus*. Six of these students had arrived before 2008.

Also in this first cohort, eight students volunteered in the community, at locations that included local organizations supporting refugees, local food banks and other charity organizations, farmers' markets and other community venues. In total, about 35 percent of the sample engaged in volunteer activities regularly. Sara, a student who arrived in the next cohort from the Middle East, explains why she took up volunteering in Canada:

I learned about volunteering when I came here, because I think it's part of the culture. First, it's [about] contributing to the society and also adding to your resume, but

also...[getting involved] gave me another outlook about how volunteering is important for yourself and others, the idea of charity, solidarity with others, all that stuff kind of got highlighted in my life, because when I was here, even though I was so busy with my thesis and working, I really believe in contributing to the lives of people and so it just helps me to calm [my own problems]. It gave me energy.

In 2009, the CBIE survey found that about 50 percent of international students reported ‘providing assistance to fellow international students’ (p. 51). It is unclear if the survey or its responders included activities such as volunteering, both formally and informally, to help other international students with their English, as undertaken systematically by three international students in my sample; or providing community support during or after graduation, as many participants in my sample did.

This theme of participants’ front-line involvement with international students’ ‘issues’ intensifies with the next cohort, as growing numbers of incoming international students also exacerbate support needs and fellow international students who are more established step in to help and take on increasing responsibility.

There are some problematic aspects to this trend, ranging from its connection to limited funding for campus supports dedicated to international students (Phillpot & Kennedy, 2014), to questions regarding Canadian students’ roles towards welcoming international students on campus. However, it is also important to note that participants in my sample who reported taking on volunteering roles also took great pride in their participation and seemed to feel more ‘at home’ on and off-campus in Canada in light of such campus roles.

5.2.1.2. Fast Tracked: Broadening Routes To Permanent Status

Students who started degrees before 2008 were generally more confident about the immigration avenues available to them than the cohort to follow, even though many of these students arrived before the federal government initiated the major systemic changes favorable to international students. Many of the students who arrived before the changes explained that their international education was always potentially part of a larger migration project. However, they could not foresee the ending of this project when they first embarked on it.

As such, had Canada not changed its immigration policies, they would have likely continued their migration journeys to other countries of the Global North, in search of permanent statuses. Zack, a student who arrived in this cohort, explains:

I knew I was probably not going to go back [to my home country]. I mean, even my degree is completely not matching any industries [in home country] at all. But I was not sure I would stay in Canada after I finished [my degree]... If I could not stay here, I would probably be back in [Northern Europe] or the US. I'd be doing a PhD [in one of these countries], or maybe working there...

However, as the federal and provincial policies introduced around 2008 promised to favorably impact students' chances to immigrate post graduation, participants started to see clearer paths to obtaining permanent statuses in Canada.

In light of the changes, after his graduation and employment in a high skill STEM job directly related to his field, Zack chose to apply through a newly established Provincial Nominee stream. He explained that this avenue had been highlighted by the International Student Office at his university, a venue that regularly held immigration information sessions. Zack remembered government representatives often presented at these sessions, but was not sure if they were federal or provincial officials. Amongst those who started degrees before 2008, such sessions were mentioned by many students

across the Atlantic region. These students unanimously described the sessions as informative and useful in figuring out their next steps.

Zack decided to apply through the Provincial Nominee Program after working for over a year at his STEM job. The forms he needed had to be sent to his company's Human Resources department, in a different province. On his end, the list of documents was also extensive, but the overall turnaround of the PNP application was a matter of months. Upon obtaining a nomination, he sent his application to the federal government and became a permanent resident in about a year. By the time I caught up with Zack in 2015, he was a Canadian citizen. During his follow-up interview, he noted his first priority was to stay in his Atlantic province of graduation, a decision that was already detrimental in terms of salary levels, when compared to his earnings potential if he were to migrate 'out West'⁶. This was a common theme amongst STEM workers in the Atlantic region, as other graduates also emphasized facing salary cuts in the Atlantic region. Participants weighing these financial sacrifices in light of their possible contributions to the local communities they had come to call home.

Zack was determined to remain in his province as long as possible, short of unemployment. His emphasis of personal commitment to his province of graduation was also a theme addressed in a number of interviews with students from across the region, especially as they were deciding whether to use PNPs. Bao-Yu had just made this decision in 2012. At that time, she had graduated, and was working at a highly skilled job in a STEM field. She explains why she had decided against applying through the PNP:

⁶ 'Out West' refers in this context to Canada's Western provinces of Alberta and British Columbia, which employed many engineers from the Atlantic region before the oil price drop ongoing through 2015/16 and the disastrous Fort McMurray fire in the spring of 2016.

If you apply through the province, they expect you to stay here and serve this province... That's why they developed this PNP program, I think. Maybe this is not an exact requirement to stay [permanently], but if I will get the [PR] card and then leave, I will feel bad.

Remaining in a province permanently is not a legal requirement of PN programs, but potential applications felt compelled to consider their responsibility to their province when applying. As these considerations underline, participating international graduates tended to take their commitment as potential permanent residents and citizens of Canada very seriously. Therefore, they tended to approach the permanent settlement pathways available to them with careful considerations for the future responsibilities those may entail.

5.2.1.3. Searching For Diversity In Atlantic Canada: Gendered Views

The decision to settle locally post-graduation was also impacted by the demographic realities of that time in Atlantic Canada. Students' arrivals unfolded when the population of international students in this region was still comparatively low in light of later numbers. Most graduates in this early cohort initially anticipated leaving the region, in large part due to its social limitations. Chinese students in particular address this in their interviews, speaking of the impacts of the limited critical mass of international students and immigrants in their communities on potential marriage pools.

Bao-Yu notes:

I love my job very much, but...I have been considering my own marriage. I don't think I will have a chance to get married in Halifax...most of my Chinese girlfriends leave because of this reason...the city is small...My parents also mention about this, they give me some pressure too. I am [in mid 20s] now. Most people get married before [late 20s] in China. So, it's better [for me] to get married soon, so I will probably move. My best Chinese girlfriends moved to Toronto, Ottawa and Vancouver, and they like it. I will join...a new start is good.

Hey, on the other hand, points to the racial and classed limitations he perceives to settlement in Canada:

Marriage...in my opinion, if I want to marry a native girl, it's not possible. I don't think white people can accept Asian people, unless you are very rich. But the thing is, I never talk about money with my Canadian classmates, but with Chinese classmates, we talk about money all the time, to show off. But I don't think I can date a Canadian girl.

The topic of marriage was previously explored in Chapter Four as an important consideration towards the timing of education migration, especially for women.

However, it reemerges post-migration, and at this later time, the pressure also seems to affect men, as is the case with Hey. Although students in this early cohort were more likely to have considered marriage because they were in Canada for a longer period of time, across both cohorts, the majority of students (60 percent of the overall sample) indicated they had given marriage some thought post-migration. Across both cohorts, marriage pools were described as problematic in Atlantic Canada.

Complementing Hey's views, Fong (2011) found that amongst the Chinese students she interviewed, the preference to marry fellow Chinese citizens stemmed from a combination of respect for traditional Chinese courting, marriage customs and nationalist feelings. However, as foreshadowed in Hey's quote, in my sample, class identities played an important role in selecting both co-ethnic and international partners, as well as negotiating approval from parents. Tracy, a participant from South Asia explains:

[When my parents found out I was dating], they were not happy at all about it, but there is nothing they can do. But once they found out my boyfriend's parents are highly educated, they felt much better about it... White Canadian people are seen as good people [by people in home country], so the fact that I am dating one is not a problem.

Like Tracy, participants in both cohorts defined dating and marriage pools through intricate considerations of race and class.

Overall, 46 percent of participants indicated they preferred relationships, or would consider marriage, with a co-ethnic or co-national partner. These students originated from China, various countries in South Asia, the Middle East, Eastern and Southern Europe and South America. These students explained that they longed to recreate part of a world left behind through migration – they wanted partners who would share common understandings of gender roles, could easily share cultural references (jokes, TV shows, food), and maybe speak a common language.

Like Tracy, most of these participants also indicated that a partner who shares their cultural background would also be their parents' preference, although at this stage of migration, personal life choices seemed to be largely made independently. Furthermore, the five women and two men with romantic partners who were Canadian or from regions of the world other than their own, reported being more likely to have their relationships challenged by parents. Students dating in their own national or ethnic communities did not feel this way. Nonetheless, for students in both groups, parental objections did not seem to significantly impact the course of their romantic relationships. Instead, either in response to parents' objections, or in anticipation of such objections, students were unlikely to share dating updates with families at home until relationships were serious enough that marriage was an option.

5.2.2. The Cohort That Follows: Accelerated Internationalization In The Atlantic

The majority of participants, 75 percent, came to Atlantic Canada starting in 2009. Most of these students, 26 participants, arrived in 2010. Fourteen had started degrees between the fall of 2008 and the winter of 2009, while 12 students had been in

Atlantic Canada for one year or less at the time of their interviews. This cohort of students arrived in the region to find a fast expanding population of fellow international students, as total numbers point to a significant increase – from 15,000 students living in the Atlantic provinces in 2008 to 21,000 students in 2013 (CIC facts and Figures Table 25, 2013). Most of these students, like most of my participants, came to Nova Scotia. This province was hosting over 12,000 international students by 2013 (CIC facts and Figures Table 25, 2013).

Students' realities in Atlantic Canada were marked by this fast demographic expansion. On campus, a new diversity meant new challenges and accomplishments for the students in my sample. As Lia noted in her vignette that introduced this chapter, campus dynamics unfolding through these years included large groups of co-nationals sharing classroom space, and vying for professors' attention. With ESL support still a major concern amongst incoming students, a more international classroom also meant less individual support from faculty. Unfortunately, this cohort's thoughts regarding the wider avenues for support outside the classroom did not indicate significant improvements over the previous cohort. However, given the fast expansion of the student population, it is likely extra support existed, yet lagged behind the accelerated growth rates of students' demographics.

The larger critical mass of international students also seemed to attract more racial stereotyping, as many more incidents of racism on and off campus were shared by this cohort, although this may also have been due to the fact that students in this cohort were just a larger proportion of the overall sample.

The new campus reality also meant more competition for jobs on and off campus. The struggle to find jobs was additionally intensified by tuition increases that took place between 2010 and 2012 at almost all universities in the region (Williams, 2012; CBIE, 2014b, 2009). As such, for this cohort, as for their predecessors, financial concerns remain central to the reality of student life in Atlantic Canada.

This cohort's experiences with employment prompted new categorizations of *good* and *bad* jobs in Canada. As such, while co-ethnic employers had been previously deemed desirable, because they were more likely to relate to the students as parental figures, recognizing their classed background and shared cultural values, students in this later cohort indicated that the increased demand of such off-campus jobs through ethnic communities significantly altered relationships with potential employers. As competition exacerbated, employers seemed to become more demanding of employees, and some participants quit their jobs at local ethnic restaurants because of the increasing demands.

The newfound campus diversity also encouraged students who were amongst the fastest growing ethnic groups on campus, including students from the Middle East and China, to initiate or revitalize students' ethnic associations. In turn, the developing spirit of ethnic identification these associations fostered, encouraged student communities on campus to outreach and grow closer to local ethnic communities in the wider urban centers surrounding campuses.

Such connections had mixed effects for the students involved. On the one hand, participants seemed to feel more connected to the world beyond the campus and more at home overall in Canada. On the other, students also became enmeshed into self- and socially disciplined activities rooted in the cultural norms of their co-national and co-

ethnic communities. With the rise of social media use even amongst their parents' generation, an inappropriate Facebook photo shared by an acquaintance or a word of gossip in a Skype conversation could damage a student's reputation at home. Moreover, ethnic communities encountered by students in Canada tended to have different social norms than the incoming students, pointing to the need to carefully qualify notions of class within diaspora studies as theorized by Barber (2010). In my sample, merging discrepancies offered ground for some contention, as will be revealed later in this Chapter.

The complex relationships with local communities somewhat impacted students' feelings of belonging in Canada and the region, feelings further shaped by students' perceptions of ongoing immigration debates in public arenas such as the Canadian media, and the rapidly shifting immigration avenues available to them during these years. The overall perception can be characterized as significantly less empowered than the one shared by the previous cohort. For students who arrived starting in 2009, most graduation dates were anticipated between 2012 and 2015, years that coincided with the narrowing of immigration avenues for international students both federally and across the Atlantic provinces.

To reiterate, PNPs across the region started closing in 2012. In 2013, the CEC was reconfigured to only accept 12,000 applicants a year and while it lowered its work requirement from 24 months to 12 months, it introduced mandatory language testing for all applicants, regardless of the native or foreign origins of their previous degrees. The reconfigured CEC could not make up for the discontinued PNPs, which tended to have less stringent requirements around job level and length of employments for applicants. In

2014, the thousands of international graduates who had applications returned due to the CEC cap sparked a national media debate, which continued in 2015 around the impact of the new Express Entry program for international students. Media articles titled “International Students in Limbo Under New Immigration System Changes” (Choise, 2015) or “Foreign Students Left Behind by Express Entry” (Keung, 2015a) were definitely echoed by the lived experiences of participants in my sample, especially those who had not obtained permanent status by follow-up interviews conducted in 2015.

The overall feelings concerning immigration amongst this cohort varied from lack of efficacy in moving forward, as changing policies were too many to keep track of, to anxious urgency to apply through the settlement pathways still open, before more changes could hamper graduates’ chances to immigrate. The confidence of the previous cohort was all but gone amongst this group.

5.2.2.1. Financial Dilemmas: Tuition Consultations And The New ‘Good Jobs’

Immigration avenues were one of many aspects of international students’ lives that became moving targets after 2009. Other important items included tuition and differential fees, that increased significantly across the region after 2010, and in some cases saw overall upsurges of as much as seven percent per annum. The changes were especially impactful as they affected international students mid-degree. Neal, a student from South Asia, explained how documents sent by his university in Canada proved overall misleading and were not binding regarding tuition amounts his family was expected to pay throughout his degree:

The thing was also that the university sent us a letter saying I was accepted and then on a separate page they said ‘this is the tuition’, but in one place it was ‘thesis based’ and in

another place it was with no thesis, but we didn't know what really applied to me... Anyway, so we decided to go with the higher amount just to be safe, but when I got here I found out these amounts were approximate, not the actual thing... So then [the following year] my tuition was even a couple of thousand higher... so the [initial] document the university sent was not exact. For me, we managed to take another loan from the bank, but for my friends, their families had to borrow from relatives, you name it... so in the second year, I had to get a part-time job.

In light of the overall financial vulnerability of international students and the prevalence of loans taken out in home countries to fund education abroad, Neal's worries were shared by 50 percent of students in this study.

As Neal points out, tuition increases were yet another factor that drove students to seek employment during their degrees, other factors including the ongoing effects of the financial crisis on families back home, the growing price of living expenses, especially food, in Canada, as well as the importance of gaining Canadian work experience as discussed in previous chapters.

Consequently, students in this cohort reported significant hardships in finding local jobs, both on and off campus. Sara, the participant from the Middle East in her early 20s, describes her search "I applied for [over fifty] jobs... [I searched for jobs] on [the university] websites". Facing similar challenges across the Atlantic region, participants suspected discrimination towards racially diverse newcomers had something to do with not getting work. John, who spoke in Chapter Three about how he chose his Anglo name pre-departure, explained how the name also changed his job prospects at his university in Canada:

You know... they have emails about student [jobs]? I always reply to those emails, but nobody reply to me. Then I used my English name and people replied and I started work. It's like that research, with changing the names from different countries on the same CV and people reply only to Caucasian [names], so I think maybe I will remove my Chinese name from applications.

Tracy, from South Asia, had the idea to ask for help from the Career Center at her university, but received little support. ‘I had to apply for the work permit, but even just to get work is hard enough. I went to the career center and they just said to look online’.

As straightforward ways of searching for jobs proved increasingly futile, students became more creative in their search for part-time work. Zara, also from the Middle East, decided to network within the local ethnic community to find work. She describes how this unfolded:

There was nothing for me on campus... I did apply, but nobody got back to me... One day I met this [co-national], who was working [in retail]. [S/he was] one of my friend’s friends... an immigrant. [S/he] told me I have to make a resume and then just walk it to every store and give it to the manager. I did that. Out of more than 20 stores, nobody even answered or got back to me at all. In the end, I found a job at the same store that the [co-national] worked at. The manager there was very nice... but... not from here [Atlantic Canada]. [S/he] was from [major metropolitan center in Canada] and ... told me ‘all my life I lived in [metropolitan center] and I know multiculturalism’ so hired me, made me feel welcome.

Zara was grateful for the job and although she was mainly motivated to do it because of economic hardships, she highlighted its positive aspects, aligning her actions with ongoing processes of cultural capital accumulation. She explained that in this job, ‘I have a great consumer service skill, that is good for my English, like I talk to them and improve my accent and even learn new words’. Similarly, Doris, a participant from China, who was also contemplating a job in retail after she found the costs of living in Canada higher than anticipated, explains her interest in that type of work as follows ‘I would like to work there and sell clothes, because you get discount and buy more stuff’.

Zara’s and Doris’s explanations echo the themes encountered by students from the earlier cohort, who also presented part-time jobs as opportunities to expand on activities relevant to their class reproduction and mobility projects. On a similar note, Neal explains how some of his friends present the emerging field of fast food campus

employment as vague ‘campus jobs’ to avoid the stigma associated with migrant deskilling in the Global North.

I work at fast food [restaurant]. I started by wiping tables and then I fry in the kitchen and then later I was [promoted]. You know, in [home country] these kinds of jobs are considered shameful, so lots of my [co-national] friends [who also work there] never told parents what they were doing... I decided to tell them. I think I don’t have a problem and I make my money. My mom said ‘oh no, why are you washing dishes’, so she had a problem with it, but I need the money [because of unexpected tuition costs in Canada].

As these students point out, class identities remain a strong component of students’ part-time work in Canada, even as economic challenges intensify.

Moreover, despite mounting hardships, participants in this cohort, like their predecessors, strive to maintain some standards regarding acceptable employment. Four participants explained they quit their jobs or brought complaints to managers about inadequate employment situations they encountered on the job, their concerns varying from physical labor or time demands that were higher than agreed upon with employers, to racist incidents from co-workers that made them feel uncomfortable. As such, students in this cohort, as the previous one, tried to refrain from compromising certain aspects of their work conditions, even in the face of mounting financial constraints.

5.2.2.2. Life On Campus: Internationalization In Progress

Like their counterparts in the previous cohort, students who arrived in Atlantic Canada starting in 2009, reported similar impacts of lower language competency levels on their academics and social life. Pointing to the persistent lack of ESL support on campus, Sara, who arrived in Canada in 2011, describes what was available to her in terms of language skills development at the same university that Rachel had attended a few years back:

It was very hard overall, because my English was not perfect... even though I got a good score on the IELTS [International English Language Testing System]. [I went to the International Students' Center] about my English. There was an ESL class [on campus] and I went there, but it was mostly people who could not even pronounce the words...not a blame on them, but my English was much much better than them, so I left the class.

The reality of service shortages on university campuses in the region has most recently been recorded in a 2014 report. This report highlights ESL as a major contributor to academic and social challenges for current cohorts of international students (Phillpot & Kennedy, 2014).

As such studies continue to set the agenda for students' needs, recent evidence suggests that universities have been significantly diversifying support through their International Student Centers. While Rachel was pointing out that before 2008, at her university, support came mostly in the form of lectures, the cohort that followed reported much closer relationships to advisors at these centers. Holly, a student from South Asia who arrived after 2009, highlights the importance of such relationships:

For international students, it's really important to have somebody close in that position [international student adviser] because I needed help in so many ways. For visa issues for example... and international students fall through the cracks of the system in so many ways. We don't qualify for the same scholarships as everybody else, we are restricted in different ways with work and grades and studying, we are left behind on holidays and breaks. My friend jokes I found mother figures everywhere I went. The logistical procedure international students have to go through, everything you do, something may come up. It's so important to have good connections with students and admin.

Inspired by the challenges they have faced and the dedicated advisors they encountered along the way, many international students in this cohort, as their predecessors, also took to volunteering. Close to 30 percent of the cohort had dedicated volunteering time to a cause inspired or relevant to international students at their university, some creating innovative programs for their campuses. For example, Hagi, a participant from China in his mid-20s, explains his contribution to ESL programming:

We started [a student-led class]... for Canadian students to practice Chinese and for

Chinese students to practice English...members are Chinese and Canadian. [We think] Canadians want to learn Chinese and are curious about Chinese culture.

Similarly, Nuo explains her intentions to bridge campus ethnic divides:

We have a Chinese society [on campus] for 20 years, but for 20 years we have no connections with [Canadian students' organizations]... I want to get involved with [students' organizations on campus] and international center... I want to improve Chinese image and can improve international relations at [my university]. I am not saying that is bad now, but I want to improve, to do something meaningful for them.

Meanwhile, Sara, from the Middle East, explains the outreach of the growing students' ethnic community on campus to the local, established ethnic community in the city. 'We started a program to get together, to build some connections. I came up with the idea of having a culture club for all [co-nationals]. It was a small activity'.

Certainly Sara, Nuo and Hagi's ideas for social outreach point to international students' agency in the face of campus challenges encountered. However, they also point to communities on and off campus that remain divided along ethnic and racial lines. Zara, from the Middle East, elaborates on how she experienced ethnic divisions on and off campus:

When I first came here, I tried to not be involved too much with [my ethnic] community, to try and find Canadian communities. But I found that when I was with them [Canadians], they still asked all the time about my background, where I am from, how is my country. So you [as an immigrant] cannot be only Canadian, you cannot deny that [you are foreign] and put it aside. So I guess you can have that multiple belonging, you can be [Middle Eastern]-Canadian maybe.

John, a participant from China, shares how difficult it can be to balance this fractured social landscape:

[At the beginning] it was hard to make the Canadian friends when I had the Chinese circle. I did not want to leave that circle, to let people think I am different from them... I was afraid. But in the second year I feel less pressure, because I had less class with Chinese, so I could make new friends... [But] I feel [Canadian] people do not talk to me like they speak to a Caucasian person. You know that movie *Ratatouille*? That movie is about not being judged by your background and I believe in that. I try to speak like local Canadians and do what they do. But people here see me first and talk to me second, so I think they do not understand.

Tracy, a participant from South Asia, explains the racial profiling she encounters:

People assume I am really good at math... or act surprised like, 'Oh, why is your English so good?' I must admit I have an accent. What it is, is actually a mesh of all the accent I've heard over the years, so it's a bit of everything that comes out when I speak. But sometimes people comment about it and I cannot help it, so that makes me shut up because given a choice, I do not want to be the foreign person. I would like to be completely assimilated... In Vancouver, apparently being Asian is not a big deal, because you look around and there are other Asians, but here there is very little exposure.

At this stage of their migration, these students begin to realize the downside of being internationally unique in Atlantic Canada, a feature previously revealed in Chapter Four as positively interpreted by incoming students. In their imaginations of life in Canada outlined there, being uniquely international amongst Canadian students was often associated with expectations of more contact and eventual friendship with Canadian counterparts. Instead, they find friendships with Canadians problematically elusive, a reality also captured in recent survey data from the CBIE, which indicated that:

“one-third of international students in Canada find it difficult to get to know Canadian students. Furthermore, 56% of students reported that they do not count Canadian students among their friends in Canada, and one in every two students finds it difficult to meet Canadians outside of their university/college context” (2014b, p. 40).

In addition, international students in my sample find they have to navigate the challenges of standing out as international within the wider communities, as well as dealing with the realities of life in a very small community of co-nationals and co-ethnics, which often amount to increased surveillance and scrutiny of their actions abroad.

This theme emerges from interviews with students of diverse ethnic backgrounds, including students from the Caribbean, the Middle East and South America, but was most prevalent in interviews with students from China. On this theme, a total of 17 participants

explained the notion of *play* amongst Chinese students abroad. The concept refers to a party lifestyle, which mainly includes going clubbing, although it also has negative connotations. The students who *play* are suspected of promiscuity, excessive consumerist behavior, and lack of interest in their studies in Canada. Doris explains:

Play is kind of sick situation. Before I used to think [urban center in Atlantic Canada] is good because it's small. More quiet, less Chinese. But, because it's small all people know each other, not like Vancouver, when people don't know. And Chinese people care a lot about reputation. But you know, most of us do not go to club in China, and here we all go and when you go there you feel happy, but the next day you don't feel very happy because you think what you did there... [Playing is] bad for the value of the girl. For the value of the boy, it's their car. We know who has money because of their car. But for girl, it's very bad.

All but one of the students from China underlined that they are not interested in such behaviors while in Canada, and the male student who shared he sometimes goes out clubbing underlined he only does so with Canadian friends, to sustain those friendships. With this exception, all other students emphasized that they do not share in the spirit of *play*. For example, Luann, a student in her early 20s from China, connects play to academic achievement as follows 'I don't play, I work very hard and I want people [professors and peers] to see how hard I've been working and what potential this student has'. Nuo connects the concept to traditional gendered roles:

In China, we are very traditional... So female needs to stay at home... That's what female means in our society for thousands of years, female like this. Yes, but modern world girls are equal with guys and guys can play at bars and do what they want. But for me, my parents teach me that kind of place is for bad people... So what I am doing is I want to fulfill both Chinese culture stuff and Canadian culture stuff [because]... I will stay in Canada if I get good job and live here, or if I don't get good job, I go back and that's it.

Meanwhile Doris connects play to social class, underlining that it is a lifestyle reserved for the privileged and carefree:

Some have a lot of money and come here to play and spend money and don't care to study. But for us we want the diploma and work hard to do well...if somebody is very rich, they do not care about score [grades]... So I had to realize this is life, I am on my path and I have to accept that and not try other lifestyle that's not for me. I think it's more

important to graduate than to just spend money.

In this way, students speak back to connotations of consumerism that they perceive from Canadian counterparts, adding an important layer of complexity to ongoing discourses that depict international students as *education and services consumers* in Canada, as previously outlined in this chapter. Moreover, as the data indicates, international students' socialization in Canada is also scrutinized based on intricate matrices of class, gender and race, once again pointing to the conclusion that these factors contribute to the formation of student streams with extensively divergent international study experiences.

5.2.2.3. *Side Tracked: Growing Concerns For Narrowing Immigration Routes*

In her discussion of *play*, Nuo additionally foreshadows an important theme emerging strongly from interviews with students from this cohort, namely their feelings of uncertainty about their futures in Canada. While students in the previous cohort spoke with some confidence about feeling wanted and welcome as immigrants to Canada, students in this cohort seemed much more uncertain about whether a path towards immigration would be at all possible. Participants expressed feeling discouraged from applying for permanent status, for various reasons. Some felt the amount of scrutiny at borders indicated a distrust of international students. This was the case for Larisa, in her mid-20s and a graduate student in a STEM field from South America. She explains:

I also feel I may not be able to get it at all [permanent residence]... I don't know how to explain it. It somehow stays in my mind that I am from [South America] and they [the Canadian government] may not like that... I feel there may be stigma from the [Canadian] government because I am [my nationality], because before leaving [country of origin] you are asked about all this stuff [for your visa]... I don't think they would think I get the immigration papers and then start selling drugs, but I don't know how to explain it. I really think that I am afraid to apply, in case I don't get it. I just don't know what their standards are.

Tracy, a student from South Asia, shares a similar state of anxiety, in this case likely brought about by the confusing rhetoric of students both as desirable settlers and as ‘disingenuous’ for wanting to immigrate after their studies, as introduced in Chapter Two. Although Tracy did not make specific mention of any policies or debates, she felt that, if she showed interest in immigration pathways too early, she may be required to leave Canada:

I was actually looking on the CIC website. I am actually really nervous... I cannot do it [apply to immigrate] now because, if they deny my application and ask me to leave, I am not done my education yet... I have a fear of the government here. It may be an irrational fear, but they may come one of these days and may say ‘you cannot live here anymore, you have to leave’ and I’d be powerless, because I am not a citizen.

The uncertainty regarding students’ settlement opportunities was also shown to influence potential employers during these years of rapid policy shifts. Parker, a student from the Caribbean whose graduation was delayed by a few semesters due to fluctuating exchange rates and tuition costs, was amongst few students who started with the previous cohort, but graduated after the policy changes took effect. He articulates the aftermath of the policy changes as follows:

Unfortunately, I already expired one full year off my work permit. I applied easily to over 80 jobs... All my experience before graduation, with work terms and visa applications, were so easy that they may have worked to my detriment, because I was too confident, expecting it to be easy, but it was much harder... I would like to think it was all competition, but many companies ask specifically if you are on a work permit and I know they are not supposed to, but they will find out anyway. I guess they don’t want to invest all that training and money into someone who may not be there in two, three years. I can’t blame them...

Parker was offered a job in a different province shortly after graduation, but having built a life in Atlantic Canada, he wanted to wait and see if anything would turn up locally. He managed to find a job in his highly skilled STEM field in the Atlantic region almost a year into his post-graduation work permit. At the time of his follow-up interview, he was worried he had made the wrong decision in waiting to find a job locally, because the

decision jeopardized meeting the challenging immigration timeline ahead. Parker's account is very similar to Mario's situation. Also a graduate of a STEM degree, Mario shared in the introduction to this chapter that, although he held a job in his field for more than a year, he was still in jeopardy of losing his status in Canada, due to the many recent policy changes.

Like Parker and Mario, about 61 percent of the sample noted they were interested to immigrate in Canada, and 27 percent of students were interested to settle in their Atlantic province of graduation. Amongst those who wanted to immigrate, most were not interested to move near relatives they modeled their migrations on. Instead, the vast majority of students, across genders and cultural backgrounds, wanted to continue their journeys on their own terms, and this attitude actually encouraged some to try and make it in Atlantic Canada, as opposed to joining relatives who generally lived in larger metropolitan areas of Canada. John, whose relatives live in a different province in Canada, explains his view on this:

I would prefer [current city in Atlantic Canada] first... My [relative] lives in [other province] but I do not contact him very much. My mother is not happy about that. She said 'that is your network, why don't you use it?' But I want to try by myself first, see what I can do by myself, what is my limitation. Also, I feel like Chinese immigrants that are here 20 years, surely they are successful, more successful than us the newcomers, but I feel like they also behave like 'oh, I settle here, I know everything, you must do what I say, I must be right' and that's hard.

Sara, a student from the Middle East, also spoke of her pride at getting established independently:

Friends of mine [who relocated] told me 'you know, there are always jobs in Toronto'... I always feel like [city in Atlantic Canada] is like a second home for me, it's something that I built by myself, independently, I made friends, I built connections, I worked here.

However, despite the dire demographic challenges in the region, students who wanted to settle locally generally felt this was a much harder task than that of relocating to larger

urban centers in Canada. Like Parker, both Sara and John had spent over six months looking for jobs locally, with limited success.

In her follow-up interview in 2015, Sara explained she was disappointed to find that despite her Canadian graduate degree and her years of work and volunteer experiences in Atlantic Canada, local employers still asked her to deskill and take jobs below her training. She explains:

I almost got a job here but it was not in my field and it would not help me with my permanent residency... I met with the manager and s/he told me 'oh I know you have a Masters from [local university] but it would be an over-qualification for what we need so don't expect us to pay you for that level... You have to start from entry-level job'... I already worked entry-level jobs in offices, in the community, I am not new to the Canadian job market so it's kind of bothersome because I have [less than two years] to apply [for permanent residence] so I need a full-time permanent job.

Sara's experience is almost identical to Franca's, a student from Europe and also a recent graduate of a university in the Atlantic region. Much like Sara, Franca also shared the hardships of finding a job locally in her follow-up interview in 2015.

I went to all these [career development workshops at my university] and I knew I had to start applying really early, so I applied for quite a lot of positions I knew I was qualified for. I have two degrees from [Canada and country in the Global North], I speak [both official] languages, so I thought I should be able to find something, at least an interview, but no, just does not happen... I knew what I was doing in terms of writing a nice cover letter, a good resume... and I volunteered a lot, I knew the importance of volunteering so I tried to do that a lot, so I really did a lot of things. But, you know, I volunteered at these places and then I would apply for positions there and again, not even a call back, even when I knew I met exactly all the criteria... I am happy to volunteer regardless of my own [struggles], but I also try to volunteer strategically, I try to meet up with all the people in my field and build relationships, and they were fantastic, so helpful. But it's just really hard... it's exhausting, when I count all the [volunteer work] hours. And I understand it's probably how it works in Canada, but who pays for that?

At face value, these students' notes on the challenges of finding permanence, both in terms of careers and in terms of immigration statuses, speak to the currently volatile landscape of immigration policies and work opportunities available to international students in Canada. These testimonies come at a time of renewed economic challenges

for Canada brought on by the depression of oil prices on a global scale. In this depressed economic environment, companies that would have probably provided employment to Parker, Sara or Franca in the past are now facing funding cuts, thus affecting students' employment prospects. Connected to these trends, Canada's reframing of immigration pathways as tied to employment security further adds to students' challenges.

However, beyond these immediate struggles, these testimonies also reveal deeper identity contentions international students grapple with. After decades spent preparing to study abroad, decades marked by family sacrifices and scripts designed to encourage social mobility in the Global North, encountering renewed demands to deskill, this time with Canadian degrees in hand, is a particularly disheartening reality for international students. Moreover, after years spent building immigrant lives independently, making connections and building career and personal networks locally through volunteering and work, the continued demand to volunteering post-graduation, now for potential employers, can also be interpreted as a sign that roots did not set in Atlantic Canada, a reminder to students of the unstable nature of their status in the region.

5.3. Conclusion: Canadian Dreams Amid Uncertain Canadian Realities

International students' statuses in Atlantic Canada have been integrated into various scales of priorities, ranging from national perspectives that emphasize recruitment and increasingly govern international education as a growing export sector, to regional and local agendas that connect incoming students to dire demographic challenges, turning them into desirable settlers. On their own, these agendas are often at odds with each other, and through their imperfect overlap, have created a volatile

landscape of opportunities and challenges for international students who study, work and try to settle in Atlantic Canada. Adding additional complexity are international students' own views, goals and identities, which direct this population of migrants to interpret and respond to the realities encountered upon arrival in Canada. This latter perspective has been underexplored and has thus remains largely external to national, regional and local agenda setting processes and considerations. In consequence, the system designed to attract and potentially retain international students in Canada, and the Atlantic region, has developed in ways that potentially undermine its ultimate goals.

In a depressed global economy, local universities struggle with funding and increase differential fees international students, although these students are affected by the same economic pressures, and thus their academic futures in Canada become jeopardized. In an academic structure primarily driven by enrollment numbers, strategic support on and off campus has struggled to catch up with the growing demand, leaving students vulnerable to academic and social marginalization. And in a localized recessed economy, increasingly sustained through entry level, part time and volunteer work, employers' demands of flexibility and free work, demands potentially made of many recent graduates, conflict with immigration systems that require job security to allow status permanence for international students.

In turn, students interpret their disjointed Canadian realities in light of class identities that largely motivate every step of their journeys as students and migrants. They are most disappointed by the distance they feel from Canadian peers, as these were the relationships they thought would be most open. However, they build their own networks of international and co-national students, and through local ethnic communities. Students

also pursue their ambitions to start successful professional careers in Canada and are eager to work hard and remain independent through this process.

In the face of mounting financial demands, students remained resilient, hoping to find a way out on their own, without further burdening family at home and reluctant to voice concerns at universities in Canada. Instead, most are dedicated to stretch limited budgets, find creative ways to stay afloat, and even solve emerging challenges together, through volunteer work. Participants were generally not interested in engaging in job sectors below their training or classed aspirations of work in the Global North, cautious not to suffer the fate of deskilling, that previous generations of migrants warned them about. And unlike these previous generations, international students graduate with Canadian degrees that they see as continued opportunities to seek success commensurate with sacrifices made. When things do not work in Atlantic Canada, the contingency plan, foreshadowed in this Chapter and explored in more detail in Chapter Six, is to continue moving forward, on to other academic or career opportunities, to new cities, provinces or countries, on continuing journeys further empowered through belonging to the migration category of *international student* and its embedded forms of capital.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

In the spring of 2012, I was in the field, conducting my first interviews, a few short months after then-Immigration minister Jason Kenney had called international students ‘the future of Canadian immigration’ (Keung, 2011, para. 11). Amongst the first participants I spoke to was Doris, in her early 20s, originating from China. As quoted in the introduction of this dissertation, she articulated her choice to migrate as an international student to Canada as follows:

There are [a] few ways you can immigrate to Canada... For us [international students], we can graduate university and find work and then you can immigrate, but it’s better because we pay tuition and get degree and then we get better job and can stay here [in Canada] better... To get a permanent citizenship and be a real Canadian it’s better to study here, you learn the Canadian culture.

As I progressed through my fieldwork, recording the views of a growing sample of international students across the Atlantic region, it became increasingly clear that Doris’s words capture the motivations of a generation of international students new to Canada, a generation who, unlike the demographic described in Waters’s (2006) earlier work, is interested in a new form of cultural capital embedded within the education migration category in this national context, that of obtaining legal status and a way towards equitable participation in Canada’s society and labour market post-graduation. Doris’s hope to become *a real Canadian* opened this dissertation dedicated to exploring the motivations and forms of capital invested in education migration, as well as the complex processes through which migrants attempt to validate these forms post-arrival in Canada, amongst volatile systems of education and immigration policy and social constructions of belonging and marginalization.

Yet in her interview, Doris continues to reflect on the ultimate permanence of her migration journey, with the remark:

I am not convinced [if I will settle here]. If I find a reasonable, well paying job, yes. And also for women, it depends also what kind of boyfriend you find. If I find Canadian man and I marry him, then I stay here. But if I marry Chinese man and we find our future in China, then I will go back with him. I don't have boyfriend now, so I am not sure, but I want to work here at least two years. For my parents, they are [middle aged], so they have about ten more years before retirement, so when I marry, they follow where I settle. If I settle here, they will come.

Doris's settlement is thus revealed as importantly contingent on the gendered nuances of the capital accumulated and invested through studying in Canada.

Two years later, in the spring of 2014, and amidst a shifting immigration context that saw vital paths out of precarious statuses for international students in Canada significantly narrow, I was asked to chair a community discussion entitled 'International students: Opportunities and recommendations', as part of the Atlantic Immigration Research Symposium that took place that year at a university in Halifax. The roundtable hosted over fifty participants. Attendees consisted of academics and university administrators, regional and federal immigration officers, settlement agency workers, funding organization representatives and some international students. After several hours of animated discussion, I reported our conclusions in the plenary session, before almost one hundred attendees. Upon delivering my summation, which highlighted the closing immigration streams and signaled a shared hope for their reinstatement, an audience member raised a hand, wanting to know how many international students were in attendance at the event. In response, all those who identified as international students were asked to raise their hand.

Amongst the panelists at the front of the room, myself, and a few other faculty and university administrators raised their hand. More and more people followed suit in

the expanding hall before us. Participants of all ages, ethnic and racial backgrounds, and attending the event as representatives of different national, regional and local organizations – including university presidents, deans, NGO workers, government representatives, undergraduates and graduate students – raised their hands, filling the room with the momentous energy associated with being international students together, in Atlantic Canada. By the end of this exercise, almost a third of those in attendance had raised their hands in the hall before me, reminding all present of the important contributions international students have made and continue to make to our universities and communities throughout the Atlantic region, in Canada and beyond.

That moment also made clear the lasting cultural capital embedded within this shared identity, which remains for those who become part of it through the decades, striving for ideals that surpass the immediacy of campus concerns, immigration pathways or visa statuses, potentially giving hope to those who were facing uncertain futures in our region. However, while those with their hands up may have together shared in the cultural capital embedded within this migration category, their education and migration experiences and settlement opportunities also denote a world of differences. In that moment, the contingency for settlement was an opportunity to belong.

A year later, in the spring of 2015, Canadian media waves were rife with news stories about an upcoming deadline imposed by the federal government on tens of thousands of temporary foreign workers in the country's low skilled sectors, effectively terminating their stay in Canada. Under headlines such as "Temporary Foreign Workers Prepare to Leave the Country" (CBC News, 2015), articles depicted tragic stories of food processing, tourism and fast food industry workers leaving established lives in Canada.

Many of their employers and sympathetic citizens' groups were lobbying the government to prevent imminent departures (Global News Edmonton, 2015). Some such pleas presented workers' economic impacts, while others pointed to the humanitarian implications of sending working migrants home to countries that had suffered environmental disasters, such as Nepal (CBC News Calgary, 2015), or in light of health issues accrued while on the job in Canada (Sinnema, 2015).

The media coverage was unfolding as I was meeting some participants to catch up on their updates in the years that followed their original interviews in 2012 and 2013. Most of these students had graduated and were now holding temporary work permits for varying durations in Canada, highlighting the important policy links between skilled worker streams and international student streams in the Canadian context. However, for the participants, these links were perceived in complicated ways, reflecting students' complex in and out-group relationships of belonging to diverse populations of migrants they encounter in Canada, described in Chapters Four and Five to include co-national and co-ethnic communities, campus organizations and the like.

For Mario, a graduate from South Asia, who was grappling with the policy changes as described in Chapter Five and holding a work permit about to expire soon, the news stories seemed ominous reminders of the temporary nature of his own status in Canada. He explains:

Basically they give you the temporary work permit just once for three years and if you do not upgrade it to permanent residence in that time, basically you have to go. It's what's happening now with the temporary foreign workers being sent to their home countries. You've been reading the news, right? They passed their limit, so it's a condition on the visa that basically doesn't give you [a second chance]. So if I am out of a visa, I am out of here... But if that happens, I will probably take a break and it may be possible to ask for a company transfer to [another country in the Global North], these are all possibilities... I want this [settlement in Atlantic Canada] to work... I feel at home here. I would say I belong here in a way... Because, when I read reports here like this recent

report that came out in the news [about demographic challenges in the region], when I read this, I feel very sad, to think that can happen. I am concerned about this [region], probably in a way that makes me Canadian... There are a lot of choices for me... [but Atlantic Canada] fits our situation best... It depends what lifestyle you are looking for. If you are the type who wants to also work harder, US and Canada fits that personality better than Europe.

Even as he already felt Canadian, Mario's ability to stay in Canada was still contingent on the unfolding immigration policy changes, and thus the overlap between student status and temporary skilled migrant groups resonated strongly with him.

On the other hand, Zack, from Europe, who by 2015 had obtained permanent status in Canada, viewed the news stories with dismay, but saw few links between the temporary nature of the skilled workers depicted in the news and the status of international graduates in Canada. He explains:

For me, that work visa, and when I got my job, it was like a next step [towards citizenship in Canada]. People always told me growing up 'If you go there [to Global North] and study well and work hard, they won't let you go! They'll keep you there!' and I feel, for me, I wanted to stay [in Canada] and they [Canada] wanted to keep me. It was never about coming in to do a short-term job or something like that. I think temporary foreign workers come with visas tied to their employment, so that does not apply [to students]. For me, I came to study and had the freedom to find any work and I liked that work and made a life here, so I stayed. If not [if immigration was not an option], I would have finished my degree and worked anywhere else, like [other country in Global North]...

Zack's and Mario's perspectives on settlement in Canada and the Atlantic region were thus primarily contingent on the different avenues available for them to invest and further grow acceded academic and professional capitals embedded in their Canadian degrees, avenues impacted by the temporal unfolding of their migration projects in Canada. Zack, who had arrived some years before Mario, had benefitted from a policy landscape favorable to students' transitions to permanent statuses, but as described in Chapter Five, that had changed for Mario's cohort. However, feelings of vulnerability seemed to also fold along ethnic and racial identities. The news stories mostly spoke of migrants from

diverse South Asian countries, a reality that must have resonated on a deeper level with Mario, who was also from that region.

Another year passed, and in the spring of 2016, Canada's new Immigration minister, John McCallum, referred to international students as "the cream of the crop, in terms of potential future Canadians" (Mas, 2016, para. 3). While this statement gave renewed hope about ongoing reconfigurations to the Canadian immigration system in terms of students' access to permanent status, developments in this matter continue to signal significant vulnerabilities.

As Minister McCallum paints an optimistic picture, a group of international students from India are preparing for a class-action lawsuit in Ontario, about to challenge the requirements for cultural capital accrued through migration that is currently sanctioned by immigration policies as prerequisite to remaining in Canada post-graduation. These students are challenging the federal decision that those who take online courses and do not study in Canada for a set amount of time should not receive the right to work post-graduation and should instead leave the country (Keung, 2016). Meanwhile, the financial capital requirement for permanent status has also significantly increased. Currently, those who qualify to apply for permanent statuses are struggling with a significantly more expensive and cumbersome system under the Express Entry, which asks graduates of Canadian institutions to pass – and pay for – another round of ESL exams, amongst other requirements.

In the Atlantic region, debates about raising post-secondary tuition for all students, and especially those who are international, are rife (Woodford, 2016; The Guardian Charlottetown, 2016; CBC NL, 2015; CBC NS, 2015), while in Halifax, recent

reports of food insecurity (Sponagle, 2015) and precarious housing for this growing population are also making headlines (Luke, 2016). In 2016, the contingency to settlement seems to be resilience until such a time when tuition rates and living solutions stabilize, and when policies changes to facilitate students' access to permanent status pathways change once again.

6.1. Capital And Contingencies: Continuing Journeys

These vignettes, and the policy landscapes that frame them, open the concluding chapter of this study, and were chosen to point to the diverse and changing contingencies that the growing population of international students encounters in their quest to overcome precarious statuses in Canada. These vignettes were chosen as they speak to institutional policies and social realities that position *some* students as successful, while making *others* more vulnerable. As such, this chapter aims to refocus Bourdieu's forms of capital to explore the way various contingencies appear and are negotiated within continuing journeys for the students and graduates in the study.

Thus far, their journeys have been shown to be significantly impacted by intergenerational familial and institutional demands and further nuanced by cultural parameters of gender, race and ethnicity, stemming both from home country cultures, and encountered upon arrival in Canada. Such nuances are shown to give rise to student streams, which are organized both in line with history – as different generations of migrants encounter different social and policy landscapes that mark their settlement opportunities – and in terms of the political, social and economic contexts encountered in

Canada post-migration. Together, these factors narrowly define currently relevant and longitudinally accrued and transferable cultural, social and financial forms of capital.

Therefore, participants can cope with emerging contingencies and continue their capital accumulations and leverages differently. Accrued and transferable forms of capital have been revealed throughout participants' journeys as instrumental in determining students' ability to navigate their unique migration projects, and thus, this final chapter once again employs this framework to review students' achieved and imagined onward steps. In this quest, I am motivated by Erel's (2010) observation that:

“Bourdieu has rarely explored how forms of capital are activated for resistant purposes, yet he argues ‘A capital does not exist and function except in relation to a field... As a space of potential and active forces, the field is also a field of struggles aimed at preserving or transforming the configuration of these forces’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2007: 101)... I am concerned with how actors can get into the field, not only to increase their capital but ‘to transform, partially or completely, the imminent rules of the game’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2007: 99). I explore how migrant women challenge and transform existing classificatory systems of cultural validation, in the process constituting and contesting what I term migration-specific cultural capital. There is an intimate relation between the formation of specific forms of capital and of fields: ‘People are at once founded and legitimized to enter the field by their possessing a definite configuration of properties. One of the goals of research is to identify (...) these forms of specific capital’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2007: 108, emphasis in original)” (p. 647).

As I apply Erel's research direction to my data, Bourdieu's forms of capital are shown to influence students' perceptions of encountered limitations, in some cases perceiving them as freeing, while in others they become binding. As such, I theorize the pursuit of international education in Canada as a nexus for classed forms of capital. Students' power and resilience in navigating the social, political and economic landscapes they encounter post-migration is informed by the habitus and capitals they developed before and through migration.

The same family scripts that spurred international education dreams and prepared students for a life of hard work, but not one of deskilling, and created expectations of gender empowerment and of multicultural harmony in Canada, become central in students' ultimate evaluations of next steps on their international journeys. This generation's results, to be further unpacked in this chapter, point that emerging streams of students, to which all students are vulnerable, relegate those most vulnerable – determined through complex class, gender and race identities matrices – to less desirable positions.

6.1.1. Building Global Futures: Class Identities And Gendered Mobilities

Beyond reflecting the immediate policy changes affecting international graduates in their respective cohorts, as discussed in some depth in Chapter Five, both Mario's and Zack's accounts point to a shared perception that their journeys as international students are not ultimately limited by visa statuses or immigration avenues. Instead, despite modest beginnings, both students share an understanding of the cultural capital accrued through study abroad and the career opportunities available to them based on this capital.

Both men love their lives in Canada and emphasize their achieved and potential contributions to Atlantic Canada, as part of the motivation to stay. For them, visa processes and outcomes become recast as indicators of whether they are *needed* by the country and region or should move on to other opportunities, even as constructions of need in Canadian media appear racialized. In the emerging problematic context, they highlight the mobility of the cultural capital embedded within Canadian degrees, capital

they are confident can be translated into lucrative career prospects throughout the Global North.

Through assertions of global outlook and confidence in the mobile fluency of skills and credentials in the Global North, both Zack and Mario ultimately claim belonging to the ‘transnational corporate capital class’ theorized by those monitoring global city flows (Sassen, 2013; Castles, 2002). They have worked hard to belong to this class through having attained scholarship-funded highly skilled degrees in STEM fields from Canadian universities, and seem to share in this group’s bird-eye view of mobility and career prospects, that go beyond the immediacy of visa concerns. Mario and Zack’s realities point to the negotiated processes through which forms of capital become available to *some* through migration, as well as the potential of international education to elevate intergenerational class statuses.

As such, while the literature documenting the existence of the ‘transnational capital class’ has broadly defined its members in terms of skills and credentials, significant research in this field has also pointed to the classed, gendered and racialized disparities of belonging (Raghuram & Kofman, 2010; Kofman, 2007; Barber, 2000). As illustrated through the chapters of this dissertation, at different stages of students’ journeys, transnational education mobility proved more accessible to migrant men. The deployment of Salaff et al.’s family scripts concept has revealed the habitus of education migration to be significantly gendered. As such, from the inception of their journeys, young men were perceived by familial and institutional gatekeepers as better prepared and qualified to take on such journeys. Young women, on the other hand, in many cases had to *gain* the family’s support, often times through building independent forms of

cultural and social capitals useful in migration. A similar conclusion emerges out of Bass's (2012) work with international students from India studying in Australia. Bass find that:

“the successful, globally active, transnationally mobile Indian is on the whole still imagined as a male concept. Because of the way he is represented in the media and the way he features in everyday stories amongst middle class families, he is in essence a he... The independent kind of living that comes with a global lifestyle is, in Indian terms at least, primarily something men do” (p. 179).

Pointing to the broader cross-cultural applicability of Bass's conclusion in my sample, both Mario's and Zack's accounts share a similarly masculine empowered perspective, that helps them easily recognize their migrant cultural capital as valuable.

Moreover, the similarities between these two graduates in my sample do not stop at their degrees and jobs in STEM fields, also pointing to other important aspects of support embedded in what is required to *make it* in the transnational corporate class. Both these students have been supported in their migration by highly educated partners, themselves transnationally mobile, yet willing to relocate to follow these graduates' unfolding careers, especially in light of dissatisfaction with personal opportunities available to newcomers and particularly international students' partners in the Atlantic region. The gendered nature of opportunity, especially for the spouses' demographic referenced here, has been more extensively explored in the Atlantic region in studies that consistently point to similar conclusions as to its acute limitations (Previ, 2014; Knutson, 2011). In this vein, both men are thus confident they may spearhead onward family moves, especially as both have previously led their families' migrations broadly on their own terms – in ways similar to those described in Chapter Four – creating a precedent of initiating mobility within the family unit.

Equally as important, both students had managed to leverage academic capital towards obtaining scholarships in Canada and therefore had not accrued significant financial debt while studying. Therefore, they were financially independent at the end of their degrees. Such factors seem to significantly add to the emerging matrix of considerations defining global mobility outlooks.

Other participants, even other male graduates working in STEM fields, but who had made binding financial arrangements to fund education programs in Canada, as described in Chapter Four – including taking out loans to pay for tuition and living expenses – saw themselves as primarily responsible for those commitments and thus more concerned with visa matters and less flexible in terms of mobility post-graduation. One such student was Parker, also a graduate of a STEM program. This is the conversation we had in his follow up interview in 2015:

As graduation was approaching, were you thinking you need to stay in Canada or were you thinking you can go anywhere in the world?

Oh definitely I always knew I have to stay. Because if I go back home, with all the exchange rates and loan and all that, I feel like I would have no life. [And also] because a couple of my friends I know who went to school in North America and went back home are doing the same thing they were doing before they went to school. I know this [friend, they] did the same advanced level British high school as me, and then went on to do [STEM degree in Global North]. Before [studying abroad program], [they held job] in [home country] and now after graduation [they] went back to that same job. Maybe [they] got a pay bump, but why would you invest all that time and money to then do the exact same thing? I don't think I want to do that, that's definitely not an option. After all the sacrifices, I want to stay in Canada.

Parker's outlook points to a number of important themes that frame participants' opportunities post-graduation. Parker is determined to stay in Canada and the Atlantic region. His reasons stem from a combination of the perceived vulnerability of his current visa status, financial pressures, duty to family and personal aspirations. In this case, financial commitments impose a sense of urgency in establishing a clear career path and

securing permanent legal status in Canada, so as to avoid the risks of defaulting on the education loan, a risk Parker shares with family back home. If permanent status is not achieved in the three years post-graduation, Parker fears he would likely have to return to his home country and attempt immigration from there, losing all that he has built so far in Canada in the process. As such, for Parker, settlement in Canada becomes a way to fulfill pressing duties towards family and self.

However, on a personal level, Parker also describes settlement in Canada as a way of self-actualization, as the most straightforward way of fulfilling his personal potential, through a challenging and worthwhile career, commensurate with the cultural capital tied within his competitive degree, and the investments that went towards its achievement. The emphasis on self-actualization was of course echoed at different moments throughout this thesis, including in James's note that opened this dissertation, powerfully stating that the choice to migrate as a student stemmed for his family's belief that:

[E]verybody should do something according to their capacity, not just leaving for the sake of leaving, but that you should do something with your life.

Participating in international education is thus revealed for Zack, James and others, as a high expense, high risk endeavor, as international students and their families hope for high rewards at the end of the process, rewards that significantly include avoiding the downward social mobility experienced by previous migrant generations that shared in similarly modest class backgrounds.

6.1.2. Giving Back: Binding Capitals in Transnational Families

Participants' impetus to *give back* significantly points to the binding nature of Bourdieu's (1986) capitals (Trandafiroiu, 2013; Barber & Lem, 2012; Zloniski, 2006;

Barber, 2000; Coleman, 1988), as strings attached to earlier investments introduce new challenges in figuring out post-graduation futures. Like Parker, students whose families had leveraged savings and important assets, including family homes, to make international dreams possible, often defined responsibility in terms of limiting financial vulnerability for families who initially helped. Amongst this group, it was a common occurrence to provide financial support through remittances once careers were established in Canada. In some cases, this also implied pressure to establish such careers and start the remittance flows as fast as possible. Elizabeth, whose family members all contributed to figuring out how to pay for her education abroad as described in Chapter Four, explains her post-graduation outlook:

I wanted to send some money over [even as a student], but I was working part-time so it wasn't a lot... [Now I have a full time job and] I am in the process of getting my PR. Like I said, I always knew that I'd be working here for a number of years before going back home, if I ever go back home... As soon as I started working, I sent [money] every month... for my loan... and for my family, to support them with their day-to-day expenses... But that's the expectation, right? When you grow up in that culture, you just do it. I wonder if it's love more than responsibility. You don't want to be the [migrant] who goes, gets the opportunity and is living the high life while their family is struggling.

About 15 percent of participants were anticipating or already engaged in remitting to parents or relatives in their home countries. These students originated from China, South Asia, South America and the Caribbean. Some were working to replay loans taken out for their studies, while others were expected to help their family's upward social mobility in home countries. Graduate Bao-Yu, for example, spoke about how her savings will help buy a better family home and improve her partners' lifestyle:

At this time, my family is purchasing a home, so I am saving some money for them, to help. I will send some money home... Several weeks ago, we talked about our new house, and my parents mentioned they need some money, so I felt I need to meet a target... it is an estimated number... I think I will give them [more than C\$10,000]. That includes all my savings, but they need them.

Students were not only expected to support the social mobility of family members

though remittance, but also through aiding in the fulfillment of further immigration plans. Twenty percent of participants, originating from China, the US, the Middle East, Europe, and South America, indicated they were engaged in facilitating the migrations of younger relatives – most often siblings and cousins – most through international education pathways similar to their own. Quin, a participant from China, explains how this impacted his post-graduation planning:

[As graduation is approaching] I am looking at Masters programs. I don't know if I can stay in [current city in Atlantic Canada]. I like the city... but my parents want me to go to [another city in North America] because my [relative] is starting university there and she is very young, so my family want me to go and take care of my [relative]...I would really like to go back to China. I have my parents and grandparents and I would prefer to be together with my family.

At this stage in their migration journeys, international graduates take on new roles in intergenerational processes of social reproduction, similar to those that helped them establish their own journeys early on. An additional 20 percent of participants indicated their parents were considering joining them full time in Canada.

While for most, undertaking international education projects bound students to attempt settlement in the Global North post-graduation, some graduates conversely felt compelled to return to home countries after completing their degrees. Fifteen percent of students framed such potential returns in terms of making intellectual contributions to their home country in light of new skills gained abroad. For example, in evaluating his next steps, Mario includes the possibility of return as follows:

I had met a lot of people who did study outside [my country of origin], like in the US or UK and returned to [my home country]. It's a service thing, you know. And these individuals really inspired me, because they had the opportunity to be economically better, well off, but they chose to come back and give back and it really opened my eyes to another possibility. They were teaching, they were training the new generation of students, of scientists for our country and they were well qualified. So in that way this sense of service I would say was instilled in me and I would say I still have it to this day actually.

Such assertions were especially common amongst students who had been funded by home-country governments and were mandated to return post-graduation for a number of years. However, like Mario, many also independently envisioned futures of civic service based on skills developed in the Global North. For example, Ramona, from South America, notes:

[From the beginning] I wanted to return [to home country] after my PhD, because I know they need more people in science in my country, and because I love my country.

The students who noted the possibility of return to *serve* their countries originated from various nations in the Middle East, Europe and China, but were predominantly from South America, where, according to my respondents, governments have been investing strategically in developing higher education programming, especially in STEM fields. Following international education programs similar to Brazil's Ciências sem Fronteiras (the 'Science Without Borders' Scholarship Program, described in Chapter Four) for example, these students anticipated that new positions were being created in their home countries to reap the benefits of such programs and expected preference would be given to those with foreign degrees in filling the new positions.

As outlined in Chapters Two and Three of this dissertation, the framing of returns in terms of service to country has an important place in the history of international education (Power et al., 2016). In line with the colonial underpinnings of this history, international education programs have often been integrated within strategic geo-political development projects, from *training for empire* as part of educating colonial administrations in the 18th century, to *education for democracy* during the Cold War. Such program iterations continued into the latter part of the 20th century through development programs and continue to be evident in current internationalization

initiatives (Chira, 2008; Sidhu, 2006).

In the current study, participants' emphasis of the value of skills and expertise gleaned through international education also reveals had an important component of agency. By highlighting return as an option, participants emphasize awareness of the array of opportunities open to them across transnational geographies. As such, most participants – even those bound by scholarships to return – framed *giving back* was a self-determined choice, emphasizing that returns could be avoided with some perseverance, while underlining their dedication to return anyway and the many contributions they were determined to make through returning.

6.1.3. Duty To Self: Actualization And Its Gendered Personal Costs

As evident from the data reviewed thus far, gender plays a significant role in framing the post-graduation outlook of education migration journeys. From Doris's note on her parents' expectation that a husband she has not yet met will decide the family's future settlement, to Quin's family's expectation that he will step up as a guardian to a younger relative, gender appears as a defining factor in establishing next steps. Overall, male graduates were more likely to stay in the Global North and also enjoyed more freedom from family in establishing a course of action acceptable to them.

Meanwhile, international graduates who were women tended to be encouraged – or in some cases expected – by family, to return to home countries at the end of their study programs. Penelope, a student in her mid-20s from South America explains:

We are super close to our families... You meet a lot of people that are immigrants and have families here and to me it's super weird that they do not have grandparents around and aunts and uncles and other cousins. For me the ideal is to have a kid and they have the rest of the family around, to have a big happy family barbeque... and if I stay here I

will not be able to have that. But coming here, my career has improved... [I hope] I can have a good career [at home, after I return]. So coming here was certainly good for my career [in home country].

Expected returns were also in line family scripts of migration reviewed in Chapter Three, as parents' generations anticipated students' returns as natural conclusions of to education journeys. Sara explains:

[In my father's time, people] came to the [Global North to study, but] it was that you came here, studied and then returned home. It was not common that you would stay here. Even my uncle who stayed [in country in Global North], graduated, came home and then immigrated later. When my father sent me here, he sent me with this idea that I will come back in a couple of years, after I graduated.

However, the expectation to return disproportionately affected women. Of the twelve students who indicated they were going back to home countries due to family commitments, only four were men. Those decided to return originated from South Asia, China, Central Europe and South America.

Nonetheless, the social and cultural capital gathered through migration can give graduates the power to leverage a newfound independence from family pressures, testimony that although women may start their journeys as repositories of family capital (Huppaz, 2009; McCall, 1992), they develop their own strategies of capital accumulation and deployment through migration. Holly, a student from South Asia, explains her family's process of adapting to her personal growth and development through the years she spent as an international student:

From [my father's] generation, most people, like all of my aunts and uncles and most of his friends, left our country for university, but then came back and had kids and settled back home... The thing that I think parents don't realize when they send children abroad is that they [children] get a life of their own, that they [parents] may not necessarily like... My education [in the Global North] played such an important part in becoming an adult... When I finished undergraduate, I went home... that's when I sat my dad down ... One of the things that I told him that I really think made a difference was 'You want me to be an independent woman, you want me to be financially self-sufficient, to have my own opinions, and that's so important to me too. But how can I learn to have my own opinions if you shut them down when they are different from yours, when there is no

space for disagreements in this relationship, what do I do with my mind that you have trained. You sent me to this university, you wanted me to think for myself but what do I do now when you tell me I can't.' And that hit home... I remind him there has to be space for disagreements.

Despite her family's initial expectations of return, Holly was intent on making her migration a permanent one. She articulates her decision to live in the Global North as follows:

[It was like] coming to terms with the fact that I have multiple identities, you know, that the Holly in traditional dress and the Holly wearing a tank top is still the same Holly and I do not have to choose between them. But at home I still will not wear a tank top... And these subtle things have so much meaning and so many implications.

In her follow up interview in 2015, Sara revealed she too had decided not to return to her home country post graduation, but at that time, Canada's volatile pathways to permanence for international students made her plans uncertain, as described in Chapter Five. Sara spoke to the implications of her *impermanent* status for her identity as a student, independent migrant woman and ultimately, potential returnee to her country of origin:

[International] students are definitely different [than other migrants]... As a student, you come here by yourself, so one part of your mind is always back home, at least in my case, so emotionally that's different... And it's different also in terms of... policy. You are always like a traveler, not like a citizen or a person with residence.... When you come here as an immigrant with your family, you have the idea that this is your home, your family is here. [Coming as a student] I find that traditionally and culturally I am still in between. I don't know if Canada will be my home or not, what traditions to hold on to... and that is hard.

Juxtaposed to Zack and Mario's accounts that opened this chapter, Holly and Sara's outlooks complete a scale of mobility defining international education journeys unfolding in my study. All four students are aware of the cultural capital potentially embedded within their Canadian degrees, yet accessing that capital to develop the opportunities that lay before them rests upon navigating a matrix of personal pressures, career outlooks and policy frames in ways shaped by conflicting identities. In the end, all four are *in-between*,

as Sara puts it, belonging and simultaneously not belonging to various imagined spaces of the Global North, personally settled and unsettled, on the emerging gradient of mobility that defines all aspects of their lives.

Sara's powerful articulation of what sets international students apart from other migration categories is a fitting conclusion to my documentation of international students' migration saga. Beyond departures and arrivals, beyond courses, campus struggles and daily lives, beyond visa statuses and passports, what remains is the uncertainty of provisional permanence of all migrants, uniquely accompanied in the case of international students by the struggle to gain one's own independence, using cultural capital bound within youth, skill and a Canadian degree and step up to fulfill duty, responsibility and caring bonds for those left behind.

6.2. Key Lessons Learned: International Education and Class Leverage

Setting out to explore *international students* at the beginning of this project, I was hoping to contribute to an underdeveloped field of study in Canada, but one that poses increasingly relevant questions about the consolidating links between Canada's immigration and education systems, and the effects of these links on social reproduction processes unfolding around the world. Both these sectors of interest – skilled migration and post-secondary education – have been amply documented in academic literature as breeding sites for inequalities of opportunity based on class, gender and race. As such, prominent migration research has uncovered the classed, gendered and racialized nature of skill desirability amongst mobile workers in Canada (Barber & Lem, 2012; Goldring & Landolt, 2011; Dobrowolsky, 2011; Simmons, 2010; Boyd & Grieco, 2003), and

wider, in the Global North (Kofman & Raghuram 2015; Paul, 2015; Ryan, Erel & D'Angelo, 2015). As well, education has long been shown to act as a site of social reproduction, reinforcing the unequal distribution of opportunities along the socially constructed categories of class, gender and race (Morrice, 2014; Gilmour et al. 2012; James, 2012; Park, 2010; Bourdieu, 1989).

Moreover, the pursuit of education opportunities on the international arena has also been revealed as a significant site of social inequalities (Bass, 2012; Madge, C., Raghuram, P. & Noxolo, P., 2009b; Marginson, 2008), albeit in a more unsystematic manner. For example, prominent studies have documented the rise of Anglo-American education as hegemonic sites of academic capital (Marginson, 2008), as part of colonial and imperial legacies (Madge, C., Raghuram, P. & Noxolo, P., 2009b), and in terms of imbalanced global neoliberal shifts (Sidhu, 2006).

In this vein, the particular case of international education within the classed migration projects of contemporary migrants, and especially its location within the family and intergenerational strategies of capital accumulation, has also become a growing area of research within international education (Fong, 2011; Waters, 2006; Ong, 1999). This perspective has also significantly revealed the many ways in which international education – defined as the provision of education opportunities abroad to young family members – has become nestled within various forms of family migration. Often coinciding with important stages in the family life cycle, these have included early coordinated family migrations for the education of young children in the Anglo-American education system (Shirin, 2014; Ley, 2010; Waters, 2008, 2006), as well as the

migration of younger generations through established translational family networks (Salaff et al. 2010; Olwig, 2007).

In turn, Bourdieu's theory of practice (1990, 1986) has served as strong connector between many of these research perspectives. Within wider analyses of education migration, Bourdieu's concept of social fields has proven useful to focus particular migration phenomena under the umbrella of international education and observe within them emerging hierarchies of opportunity for the mobile students (Marginson, 2008). For studies applying a finer grained analysis of Bourdieu's model, individuals' abilities to access international education through complex leverages of class capitals has been observed (Bilecen, 2014; Brooks & Waters, 2011; Waters, 2008). While the scope and results of these studies have varied, in a recent review of the international education research field as revealed through the employment of Bourdieu's theories, Waters (2012) concludes that:

“[S]tudies have generally pointed to the fact that internationally mobile students: are financially secure; have the support (emotional and material) of family and friends (i.e. ‘social capital’); have been raised in an environment that places great value on formal education and credentials; have highly educated parents; and have experienced overseas travel as a child (p. 128)... Mobility, of course, does not stop at the passage overseas, but for most international and migrant students includes the return trip also. This is significant, as it is on bringing their ‘international’ qualifications home that their full value is often realized” (p. 130).

My work pursues these themes and complicates these findings in the Canadian context. I illustrate that, in this national context, recent policy shifts in both the education and immigration sectors – currently oriented towards neoliberal spending optimization – have positioned international education as a viable step towards permanent settlement opportunities.

6.2.1. From Settlement to Non-Return: The Capital Value of Permanent Status

My study contributes an important addition to previous models of selecting education destination in the Global North – namely the possibility to gain permanent legal status from Canadian degrees. In my data, this form of capital is seen to rival the symbolic capital of academic excellence tied to elite universities elsewhere in the Global North. The majority of students sampled reported above average academic standing in their countries of origin and 33 percent of students sampled came from very strong academic backgrounds in their home countries – based on such indicators as ratings of previous university attended, results at national and international examinations, as well as international awards and academic recognitions. However, this group did not attend Super-Ivy schools, many prioritizing long-term settlement prospects in Canada.

The opportunity for legal status is taken up by families around the world, who use similar strategies of family orchestrated migration, but in the Canadian case give rise to migration projects that seem intent on independence and settlement, and thus non-return. In my sample, over 70 percent of students indicated they did not wish to return to their countries of origin after their study period. The possibility of international students' non-return has been previously documented in this field of research, most recently and extensively by Bass (2012) for the Australian case. The opportunity of permanent settlement is also particularly salient in the Canadian context. Unlike other national settings, where skilled migration has been more directly tied to employment opportunities (like Australia and the UK), international students in Canada had the possibility to immigrate based on the cultural capital embedded in their Canadian diplomas, although there has been a recent policy revision in this respect, the effects of which have not yet

fully settled. Further research is needed to explore both the many nuances of difference between the Canadian case and other national contexts, as well as to document the unfolding of new policies in the Canadian case, which are bound to recalibrate the leverages of capital available to students in this national context.

However, regardless of immediate policy shifts, my work reveals that families plan for students' migrations from an early age, and strategically invest in education opportunities preparatory for international education in ways that both draw on and are meant to overcome the cultural capital embedded within a family's history. Thusly, I find, similar to Fong (2011), that investments in elite and international education has allowed for greater flexibility in terms of the requirements of class privilege.

Media waves and social fields facilitate a growing awareness amongst parents of different class statuses, that prioritizing international education investments positions new generations to significantly evaluate a family's class status. As such, even as the majority of participants attended educational programs they deemed specifically preparatory for education migration, 26 percent of their parents did not have post-secondary education, some never finishing high school. These parents held working class jobs – taxi drivers, postmen, factory workers or were farmers. However, families compensate for deficits in capitals through leveraging the forms of capital available to them, such as encouraging students' outstanding dedication and ability in an academic field, seeking out budget-friendly ways to prepare children for study abroad, or instrumentalizing social networks to facilitate information about successful education paths and scholarship programs. These early leverages of capital, undertaken by dedicated parents from all walks of life, are shown to have long lasting effect for students, who develop increasingly creative

methods to circumvent financial limitations through seeking ingenious combinations of academic programs or ways to access funding internationally.

Nonetheless, they also open students to significant vulnerabilities. A deficit in cultural capital means that discerning between available programs is a challenging task, and choosing the wrong program can undermine work and settlement opportunities post-graduation. This reality is what the cohort of Indian students, who are considering suing the federal government over work permits after graduating degrees with online components in Ontario, is up against (Keung, 2016).

As well, limited financial capital at the start of the journey leaves students financially vulnerable to any expense increases once in Canada, including currency shifts or tuition fluctuations. These vulnerabilities are increasingly obvious in the Canadian context, where tuition escalations have been estimated at over 86 percent in the last decade (CBIE, 2009, p. 1). Research and media coverage on international students in Canada have come to routinely report on such issues as students' limited food security, precarious living arrangement and the like (Luke, 2016; Sponagle, 2015; Stewin, 2013).

The vulnerabilities encountered are faced stoically by the participants in this study, whose class identities, both actual and aspirational, make seeking support a hard endeavor. As well, despite the growing financial precarity students face in the Canadian context, I do not encounter the proliferation of grey market work that Bass (2012) records in the Australian context. Participants in this study underlined their reluctance to engage in any flexible interpretations of work hours sanctioned by off-campus work permits. Rather, my findings are closer to Fong's (2011), who describes international students as averse to any rule-bending activities abroad, because "transnational students in my

sample feared becoming like undocumented Chinese immigrants, they met abroad, who seemed likely to remain indefinitely in low-paying fields in the Chinese dominated restaurant and sweatshop sectors” (p. 138). Similar to Fong (2011), I theorize that participants’ reluctance to bend the study and work permit rules is linked to the cultural capital they see as tied to their Canadian degrees. These programs are meant to give international students a real chance to build middle-class careers in Canada post-graduation, and so these expected rewards, together with the years of sacrifices and struggles that went into making study abroad possible, make risking it all for short-term economic survival unappealing.

6.2.2. Family Migrations: Networks and Nuances

The data also present more complicated means of accessing the social capital at students’ disposal through transnational family or social networks. As such, while family histories – taken to account habitus, following Salaff et al.’s (2010) concept of family scripts – significantly empower participants to migrate in general, and as students in particular, the vast majority participants do not join relatives abroad, even as over 60 percent of them had relatives living abroad in the Global North. These participants’ perspectives point to the needed nuance of complexities in explorations of transnational migrations through family networks. As such, building on literature in this field (Salaff et al., 2010; Olwig, 2007; Waters, 2006), my data also indicates that such modes of migration correspond to stages in the life cycle that see generations of migrants engage in transnational moves. However, testimony to the diverse nature of migrants’ aspirations, which often correspond with the life stage they are in, the young participants in this study

are keen to carve out migration projects that are independent from the pressures often embedded within family networks.

Thus, while students underline that they owe a debt of gratitude to previous generations of migrants in their families, they tend to avoid over-reliance on such networks during migration. Moreover, participants are also initially hesitant to reach out to established co-national or co-ethnic communities at their eventual destinations in Canada, even as they also learn for these previous migrant generations.

Instead, this generation overwhelmingly strives to migrate independently. While further research will be tasked with exploring this theme in more depth, I propose two possible reasons here. On the one hand, the quest for independence can be contextualized to reflect problematic policy constructions of international students as quintessentially mobile and unattached (Brooks, 2015; Fong, 2011; Park, 2010). In this view, students' independence is anticipated to make them more desirable as long-term settlers in the Canadian space, presenting themselves without the potential burdens of less desirable dependents. On the other hand, independence is often sought by participants as a means to overcome culturally-bound limitations to the cultural capital embedded in familial, ethnic and national identities, which appear in this study as particularly limiting to young people more generally, and to young women, in particular.

6.2.3. Bringing Gender In

In response to imperative calls to *bring gender into* international education (Kenway and Bullen, 2003; Pessar & Mahler, 2003), this study oversamples women, who make up 60 percent of the overall sample. My results underline that a particular focus on

women is especially warranted in the field of international education studies, as it arguably remains in all migration work, because, following arguments made by Kofman and Raghuram (2015), Piper (2013), Tastsoglou and Dobrowolsky (2006) and Pessar and Mahler (2003), migration research has historically situated women in the shadow of migrating men, and continues to do so in intricate ways. My findings show that education migration journeys, and the process of accumulating and leveraging class capitals, are profoundly gendered experiences across cultures, even as emerging adversities and challenges shift in line with the particular cultural contexts and the accumulations and employment of capital defining the situations of individual participants. Overall, the experiences of women and men from all regions represented in this study attest to the reality that students live, time, and evaluate their migration journeys differently. At the early stages of preparation, across cultures, many programs deemed prerequisites for education abroad were depicted as diverging from traditional modes of educating children, and especially girls and young women. Participating in international schools, for example, was repeatedly described by students as a way to overcome localized gendered barriers.

Later in the migration process, as students began negotiating the possibility and timing of education departures with family members and institutional actors, women were often initially discouraged from migration, and subsequently required to adjust their timelines, either to expedite or to delay departures so that study periods would not interfere with marriage and child bearing expectations. Ultimately, international graduates who were women were also more likely to be expected to return to home countries post-graduation, and also more likely to depict settlement plans as tied to

romantic partners' or parents' decisions. These realities point to the gendered limitations of class capital. Institutional actors, such as border and immigration agents, also contributed to the emerging gender-based differentiation of students, echoing Kofman's (2007) conclusion that women's migrations are shaped by localized constructions of classed femininity, but also by intricacies of immigration policies that enforce gendered hierarchies of migrant desirability.

Similar hierarchies also emerge along racialized lines of national and ethnic belonging. Students in this study depart home countries with the strong sense that Canada is a quintessentially multicultural country, and so their integration in this society may be seamless. Moreover, they initially circumvent relationships with the co-ethnic communities they encounter at their Canadian destinations, on the one hand because they associate these previous generations of migrants with the social and economic ethnic marginalization trends they are poised to avoid, and on the other hand, because they hope to form Canadian social networks at their new locations. However, upon arrival in Canada, most encounter social marginalization on campus and some report requests to deskill from Canadian employers, similar to these they sought to avoid by pursuing Canadian degrees. Faced with such realities, many students eventually connect to, and find renewed strength in, co-ethnic communities, who provide solutions to the newcomers' challenges. These results additionally point to the limitations of cultural capital embedded within Canadian degrees for international students, in this case along the lines of race and ethnicity.

As such, pursuing international education in Canada has become a nexus for classed forms of capital, creating student streams that propagate inequality. I hope my

study highlights the continued need for monitoring incoming students and work to address emerging inequalities and vulnerabilities for this demographic in Canada.

6.3. End Notes: International Students, In A Class Of Their Own

Participants in this study, together with their families, planned, sacrificed and invested significant resources towards international education journeys designed to ensure class reproduction and upward mobility transnationally. Ancestral family scripts were infused with more recent experiences of migration, shared by migrant returnees and successful relatives in the Global North, as well as framed by policies emerging in the Global North and in Canada in particular, that were especially favorable to the attraction and retention of international students and highly educated migrants to this geo-political space.

This set-up gave rise to normative conceptualizations of migration pathways. Amidst stories of immigration success due to social, cultural and symbolic capitals, and immigration systems that reward education credentials and high skills, international youth learned to recognize education migration as a worthwhile endeavor. Final goals of migration projects emerged in a constant state of being contingent and reevaluated. However, ultimate aspirations for these protracted investments centered on obtaining degrees and skills that would ensure successful careers, primarily in the Global North, but also in countries of origin, thus offering a more favorable outlook in a world plagued by economic volatility, uncertainty and inequality.

In Canada, policies encouraging the attraction and retention of incoming students have been largely framed through an increased neoliberalization of both higher education

and immigrations systems, as these sectors continue to be reconfigured so as to minimize their economic input and maximize their cost recovery abilities. In this dynamic landscape, Atlantic Canada, a region historically affected by economic and demographic challenges, became a favorable location for incoming students, who welcomed both the possibility of short-term lower costs of education and life in Canada, and the potential long-term settlement in a region in dire need of young people. However, the continued global economic depression challenged both those aspirations. With the Canadian government tightening immigration pathways for all immigrants, including students, and accelerated international recruitment at local universities committed to make up for accruing financial deficits through increasing all tuition rates – but especially international differential fees – academic and daily life became harder for the students in this study, as did figuring out opportunities for immigration and settlement post-graduation.

In the increasingly volatile policy landscape, subsequent cohorts of students reported different outcomes to their migration projects, with those arriving before 2009 more likely to obtain legal status and settle in Canada and those arriving after this date, less able to do so. However, regardless of cohort, visa status or settlement prospects, the outlook of participants' journeys was mostly defined along actual and aspirational class identities and further complicated through shifting transnational pressures along lines of gender, ethnicity and race.

Participants who considered themselves most independent at the end of their study sojourns saw a world of opportunity opening before them. They were overwhelmingly men, whose families in countries of origin supported ongoing migration

project and whose accompanying partners were willing to follow their lead transnationally. They were also financially independent, either because families had paid for their education abroad, or because they had been able to exchange outstanding academic achievement for full scholarships in Canada. After graduation, some chose to settle in Canada and the Atlantic region, dedicated to address the skill and demographic shortages encountered here. Others were evaluating international possibilities as members of the elite transnational corporate capital class, with their Canadian degrees, overwhelmingly in STEM fields, serving as membership.

Meanwhile, an array of factors differentiated participants' post-graduation outlooks. Some felt countries of origin offered more opportunities than those encountered in Canada, while others felt their ethnic and national origins would translated into harder paths to belonging abroad. As well, participants whose degrees implied financial burdens post-graduation were additionally bound to the repayment of these commitments and thus presented a less mobile outlook.

Completing a developing spectrum of mobility, women international students generally saw themselves as less mobile overall. They tended to frame their post-graduation outlooks as unfolding either in Canada or their home country, with obligations to fulfill familial care roles and the need to reach life milestones such as getting married and bearing children beginning to weigh harder. Some asserted a newfound spirit of independence and continued their journeys on their own terms. Others longed for the comforts of home and decided to return. For most men and women in this study, classed projects of reproduction and upward mobility were arguably successful, with participants

anticipating or securing lucrative careers and transnational outlooks at the end of their degrees.

Through it all, participants spoke of becoming more independent, more assertive, more skilled, but also more aware, dedicated and responsible towards local and global issues. Canada was the cherished background for such personal transformations and became, for many, a place in the world that is entirely their own, a sanctuary of independence, community, personal actualization and efficacy. As always, I will let participants explain:

I call Canada 'my other place'. When I go to [home country], I think 'oh, I'm going home', but when I come back here [to Atlantic Canada], I think I am kind of coming home... I still don't have family ties here [in Atlantic Canada]... [but] I have community ties.

- *Elizabeth, Caribbean*

[In Canada] I feel like I fit in... People sometimes ask me 'Where are you from?' and I ask why and they say 'Oh, because you have an accent.' And I tell them 'You too!'... [Atlantic Canada] is a less multicultural environment than Montreal and Toronto, but it's slowly changing. People from... lots of places, who are very open-minded culturally... are staying and I like that.

- *Fred, South America*

The truth is that even with all the hard situations, if I had to choose, I'd still come here [to Atlantic Canada]... There are lots of good stuff. As an international student, I am happy to be here... These experiences I had here made me mature and independent...

- *Zara, Middle East*

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APPENDIX

Image 1: Minister Kenney welcomes Canada's 10,000th permanent resident through the Canadian Experience Class (CEC) – Ottawa – November 2, 2011



Photo credit: Citizenship and Immigration Canada

Image 2: Minister Kenney welcomes Canada's 20,000th permanent resident through the Canadian Experience Class (CEC) – Ottawa – September 14, 2012



Photo credit: Citizenship and Immigration Canada

Image 3: Imagine Education in/au Canada, Canada’s International Education Brand launched in 2008 (Council of Ministers of Education, Canada 2015)



Official version
Available in PMS, CMYK and RGB versions



Official reverse version
Available in PMS version



Black and white version
Available in PMS, CMYK and RGB versions



Black and white reverse version
Available in PMS version

Image 4: Imagine Education in/au Canada, Canada’s International Education Brand as re-launched in 2016 (Council of Ministers of Education, Canada 2016)

EduCanada: New International Education in Canada Brand

