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Bridging the Literature on Education Migration

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Synthesis Report for the Population Change and Lifecourse Strategic Knowledge Cluster

Bridging the literature on education migration

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Key Messages

There has been a burgeoning body of literature on international student mobility over the past 15 years and major changes in Canadian policies. This research synthesis examines key themes and findings from the academic and grey literature on international students and education migrants in Canada.

- Push and pull models are the dominant framework for explaining international student mobility to Canada, and the key motivation for studying in Canada is the quality of education. Newly emerging pull factors are Canada's multicultural environment, safety and security, and visa-related issues.
- There exist differences in motivation by subgroups within the international student population, namely by type of education institution (College versus University), education/degree level (primary/secondary versus undergraduate versus graduate), region, and social class.
- National and provincial governments, national level non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, including local school boards, and the international student services sector, are key players in shaping internationalization. These stakeholders shape the asymmetric patterns and compositions of student flows.
- There was a paradigmatic shift in Canada's rationale for international education from social development to economic development. Currently, the federal government's focus lies at the nexus of international education and human resource development, and the benefits of international students to Canada are clearly framed in terms of their labour and economic benefits to Canada.
- The international student experience is a transformational one, and students have both positive and negative experiences in the classroom, institution and local community. Academic, social and psychological experiences are shaped by language, pedagogy, learning styles, power dynamics in classrooms, acculturation, social interactions/exclusion, and institutional support services.
- Many students have contact with "Canadians" but express the desire for more interaction. The lack of interaction is perceived to be the result of racial micro-aggressions, and cultural and language barriers.
- Students develop a range of coping strategies to deal with academic issues, social situations and culture shock.
- Approximately half of students intend to stay in Canada. Intentions are influenced by initial plans formed prior to arrival but they can also change after spending time in Canada. The decision to stay is an interplay of considerations that relates to career opportunities and working conditions, family relationships with parents and siblings, romantic relationships, friendships in host societies, perceptions of safety and political environments, and expected quality of life.
- Students who return to countries of origin have high regard for Canada, and have the potential to enhance Canada's soft power.
- The most important factor for transitions to permanent residence is economic opportunity. Students who stay in Canada and have built social capital during their studies have a better chance at finding employment after graduation. Many still struggle to gain access to jobs and positive workplace experiences.
- The key policy implication is that the focus of international education should be on the quality of education and quality of life rather than on numbers and growth.
- Future work must extend the spatial and temporal elements of international student mobility research within a Canadian context.

Executive summary

Summary

This research synthesis examines key themes and findings on international students and education migrants in Canada. Our review focuses on research related to the first wave of international student mobility (ISM), and we define the literature broadly to include studies on international students, foreign students, visa students, study abroad students, sojourning students, unaccompanied minors for educational purposes, and education migrants at all educational levels and legal statuses. ISM to Canada can be divided into roughly two periods, pre-1990 and post-1990. Studies are drawn from across the social sciences with a focus on literature from the perspectives of sociology, geography, economics, education, psychology, and demography, to bring into focus the various structural, social, and cultural contexts that shape international student mobility. We also draw from reports published by public, private and third sector agencies. The aim of the synthesis is to highlight the main findings in this body of work, uncover gaps in research, and discuss policy implications particular to the Canadian context.

Key themes

The main themes that emerged in this review include: the causes of international student mobility; experiences of international students; future intentions; and post-international student transitions.

Background

International students have been garnering increasing attention globally among researchers and policymakers as a unique migrant group in the international “war for talent.” The federal government has set a target of recruiting 450,000 international students by 2022, nearly doubling the 2011 inflow. The issues surrounding mobile students speak simultaneously to the opening tendencies of globalization on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to the closing of borders by nation states to protect themselves from undesirable migrants.

International student mobility (ISM) is a nascent but internationally growing field of research with published English-language papers beginning to appear about 50 years ago, and research on Canada is reflective of the wider trend; the area has been largely understudied until the last 15 years. Given the recent surge in research and the major changes in policies over the same period, it is important to take stock of the current state of knowledge for moving forward.

Main findings

1. Causes of International Student Mobility

Causes of international student mobility can be examined from two perspectives: demand-side and supply-side. Demand-side focuses on the factors that shape the motivations and the decision to study abroad for primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education. In a push-pull model of ISM, parents are identified as a key push factor (from home), and the educational systems in home and host countries and English language learning are the strongest push and pull factors for families with primary and secondary school-aged children. For tertiary education, home country push factors included economic, political, ethnic or linguistic tensions and the lack of educational and economic opportunities. Pull factors toward destinations were academic quality and reputation, academic benefits and employment experience and the prestige and value of an overseas education in the home country, and for some, the

possibility of permanent migration was an added incentive. However, there exist differences in motivation by subgroups within the international student population, namely by type of education institution (College versus University), degree level (undergraduate versus graduate), region, and social class.

While the demand-side drivers of mobility have stayed relatively constant over time, the motivations and operations of stakeholders on the supply-side of this process have shifted. National governments, national level non-governmental organizations, and academic institutions are key players in shaping internationalization. Historically, on a national scale, ISM has been located within the context of development cooperation and international aid, and social development and leadership. However, the mandate and motivation for that engagement has shifted to the current position of economic advancement in response to globalization. The federal government has taken a role that lies at the nexus of international education and human resource development.

As a final point, it is important to point out that the flows of international students are influenced by both the policies of one destination country, as well as the changing policy landscapes of sending and other 'receiving' countries. Hence, changes in flows of ISM are also a reflection of the 'demand-side' adapting to the flux within the 'supply-side' of the ISM equation.

2. Experiences

There is some disjuncture between the 'imagined' experience of studying abroad and the reality. International students showed similar experiences and profiles to recent immigrants. Overall, there are both positive and negative experiences and that students often act (or practice avoidance) to achieve the former. These experiences can be divided into three key categories: academic outcomes, social dimensions and psycho-social well-being and adaptation.

The quality of education, and personal and professional development, are often foremost in students' minds in terms of their goals for studying abroad. However, the quality of education system did not always translate into successful learning, particularly in language learning. Experiences of social exclusion and discrimination leading to invisibility in the classroom, and lack of knowledge and interest demonstrated by classroom and teachers was related to the students' learning outcomes. In addition to the needs identified in areas of language and academic skills, students also required services beyond those directly related to educational outcomes. Such academic experiences and services were not only important for the overall international student experience, they were also linked to academic outcomes.

International students (and spouses) tend to rely on other international students or co-nationals and co-ethnic communities for friendship and support. They struggled to befriend 'Canadians', and felt socially excluded. Approximately a third of students reported experiencing discrimination through subtle forms of racism such as exclusion, avoidance, rendering invisible, taunting accents and cultural stereotypes. Such experiences of exclusion have reconfigured international students' identities and objectives by leading to greater cohesiveness with co-nationals and less interaction with English-speaking Canadians. With regards to the students' well-being, positive acculturation experiences and students' on-going identity transformations have led to feelings of in-betweenness, ambivalence, and hybridity, and as well, a reformulation of international education objectives and psychological well-being.

3. Future intentions

Where students intend to go, and where they actually go upon completion of their studies are key policy questions. An interplay of considerations shapes the future intentions and particularly the decisions to settle in Canada. These factors relate to career opportunities and working conditions, family

relationships with parents and siblings, romantic relationships, friendships in host societies, perceptions of safety and political environments, and expected quality of life.

4. Post-international student transitions

One of Canada's declared motivations for encouraging migration through the international student stream is to have a pool of potential citizens with Canadian education who would have thus acquired Canadian cultural capital. Hence, transition from temporary migrant as student to another migrant category is encouraged. These transitions in migrant status are linked closely to transitions to work and there are two aspects that need to be examined: access to labour markets and labour market experiences. For those who stay, it is assumed that the international student experience would eradicate, or at minimum, reduce that barrier to entry into the labour market, subsequently allowing these highly skilled migrants to secure jobs commensurate with their skills and education. The reality, of course is different. Many students are struggling to gain access to jobs and positive workplace experiences. For students who remain in Canada, they often face discrimination and lack of employers' trust as they transition into the labour market. (Un)successful experiences of the labour market subsequently affect longer-term plans to stay. Decisions to stay or return home are influenced by the same interplay of factors as decisions to migrate for education, including career and employment opportunities, family, experiences of discrimination and familiarity.

5. Policy implications and future research

We need to shift the focus from numbers of international students recruited to quality of education and quality of life for education migrants arriving in Canada, and those who stay. We identify three areas of consideration:

- **Re-affirm and prioritize social development and intercultural understanding as a goal for international and domestic education**
- **Match practice to policy on a high quality Canadian education**
- **Match practice to policy on pathways to permanent residence**

We identify questions for future research at the macro, meso, and micro levels. We also identify methodological issues and recommend that future studies are designed with spatial and temporal considerations. Spatial considerations may include a pan-Canadian perspective through a multi-sited approach. Incorporating a temporal dimension by using longitudinal allows for examination of past and future mobility trajectories.

Conclusion

The drive for greater numbers of international students at all educational levels necessitates greater consultation and coordination across all levels of government, education, and sectors. The focus is on growth and expansion, and on attracting future citizens, yet there is little in the strategic plan that supports the improvement of the international education and settlement experiences within. Enhancing the quality of education would attract greater numbers of students, it would attract stronger students, and it would encourage a greater proportion of existing students, and their families, to transition to permanent residence. Subsequently, improvements in the quality of the international education experience would facilitate the achievement of international education goals.

Bridging the literature on education migration

Introduction

Canada's increasing interest and actions toward recruitment and retention of international students represents the convergence of three main policy threads – education, the economy and immigration. As outlined in the, government report by Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada (2012b) *International Education: A Key Driver of Canada's Future Prosperity*, internationalization of the education sector is believed to enhance domestic skills and innovation, and to promote the development of global citizens. The report argues that internationalization aligns with economic goals such as job creation, increased revenues, and export and trade opportunities, as well as goals related to the permanent migration program in terms of desirable and qualified immigrants.

The advisory panel responsible for the report identified the goal of doubling the number of international students within a 10-year period. Even before this official call for expansion, international students have been garnering increasing attention globally among researchers and policymakers as a unique migrant group in what Gattoo and Gattoo (2013, 129) refer to as the international “war for talent.”¹ Issues surrounding mobile students speak simultaneously to the opening tendencies of globalization on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to the closing of borders by nation states to protect themselves from undesirable migrants. Straddling temporary and permanent migration through their ‘two-step’ pathway to Canadian citizenship, international students represent a particular group of migrants who experience unique and diverse life course trajectories.

International student mobility is a nascent but internationally growing field of research with published English-language papers beginning to appear about 50 years ago. As a testament to intensifying interest on the topic, the burgeoning field supports three peer-reviewed periodicals, and special journal issues. Two periodicals published by *Sage Journals* include the *Journal of Studies in International Education* (JSIE), which began circulation in 1997, and the younger *Journal of Research in International Education* (JRIE), which began in 2002. A third, the *Journal of International Students*, launched in 2011. These periodicals are complemented by special issues in other specialized academic venues such as *Population, Space and Place* (Volume 19, Issue 2, 2013), and the *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* (Volume 22, Issue 4, 2013). Research on Canada is reflective of the wider trend; the area has been largely understudied until the recent period. Given the surge in research over the past 15 years and the major changes in policies over the same period, it is important to take stock of the current state of knowledge for moving forward.

This research synthesis examines key themes and findings from the academic and grey literature on international students and education migrants in Canada. The main themes that emerged in this review include the causes of international student mobility, experiences of international students, future intentions, and post-international student transitions. Studies are drawn from across the social sciences with a focus on literature from the perspectives of sociology, geography, economics, education, psychology, and demography, to bring into focus the various structural, social, and cultural contexts that shape international student mobility. We also draw from reports published by public, private and third sector agencies. The aim of the synthesis is to highlight the main findings in this body of work, uncover gaps in research, and discuss policy implications particular to the Canadian context.

¹ ‘War for Talent’ is the title of a 2001 book (Harvard Business Press) by McKinsey and Company consultants, Ed Michaels, Helen Handfield-Jones, Beth Axelrod. The term refers to the competition for the recruitment and retention of highly skilled employees but Gattoo and Gattoo (2013) apply it to international students.

The parameters of the literature collection on Canada: As at August 2014

The internationalization of education, or international education, is a broad concept that encompasses three “waves”: first, international students who travel abroad to study; the second wave refers to the phenomenon of institutions establishing a presence in other countries through “twinning,” or institutional partners; and the third is characterized by branch campuses and online courses (Mazzarol, Soutar, and Seng, 2003). Our review focuses on research related to the first wave, and we define the international student mobility (ISM) literature broadly to include studies on international students, foreign students, visa students, study abroad students, sojourning students, unaccompanied minors for educational purposes, and education migrants at all educational levels and legal statuses. These terms are also the keywords used in database searches.

We strived for exhaustiveness and gathered 170 journal articles, books and reports on Canada for this review using standard academic databases and indices including Web of Knowledge, Scopus, Sociological Abstracts, Public Affairs Information Service (PAIS), EconLit, PsycInfo, and Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) along with Google Scholar, and bibliographies from materials in our collection. Additionally, we searched the York library system for books, reports, and government documents not available online. We retrieved journal articles that met the following conditions:

1. It appeared in a peer-reviewed and scholarly journal;
2. It contained original/primary research and/or the use of secondary data;
3. It included current or former international students (broadly defined) from an educational institution in Canada;
4. It was written in the English-language;
5. It was available either online at no cost or via the York library system in full-text;
6. It was published in August 2014 or earlier.

Of the sources identified and included in this review, about 26 percent of the references were reports, research and policy briefings and statistical data from governmental and non-governmental agencies, and 74 percent represented academic scholarship from peer-reviewed journals and books. The rapidly growing research interest in the topic of international students over the past 15 years is readily discernible;

- 16.6 percent of the literature was published prior to 1990;
- 6 percent from 1990 to 1999;
- 34.4 percent from 2000 to 2009; and
- 43 percent from 2010 to August 2014.

While we may have missed some English-language publications (e.g. older articles and reports, articles published in more specialized journals, book chapters in edited collections not ostensibly on the topic of international students), the overall pattern of growth is not likely to be noticeably different. We are confident we have covered the major themes found in the body of knowledge on international students in Canada. Regretfully, we were unable to include French-language – and other language – materials, and this is a significant limitation of the review; our discussion thus underrepresents studies on international students in francophone environments across Canada as well as other studies published in non-English language journals, most likely on the subjects of returnees and brain drain.

The following discussion is organized into four main sections. First, we briefly trace the history of international student migration to Canada to provide some background on their growing numbers over time and on the importance of this topic. The next section discusses our findings by theme from the

literature, followed by policy implications. The paper concludes with a review of research gaps and avenues for future research.

International student mobility to Canada

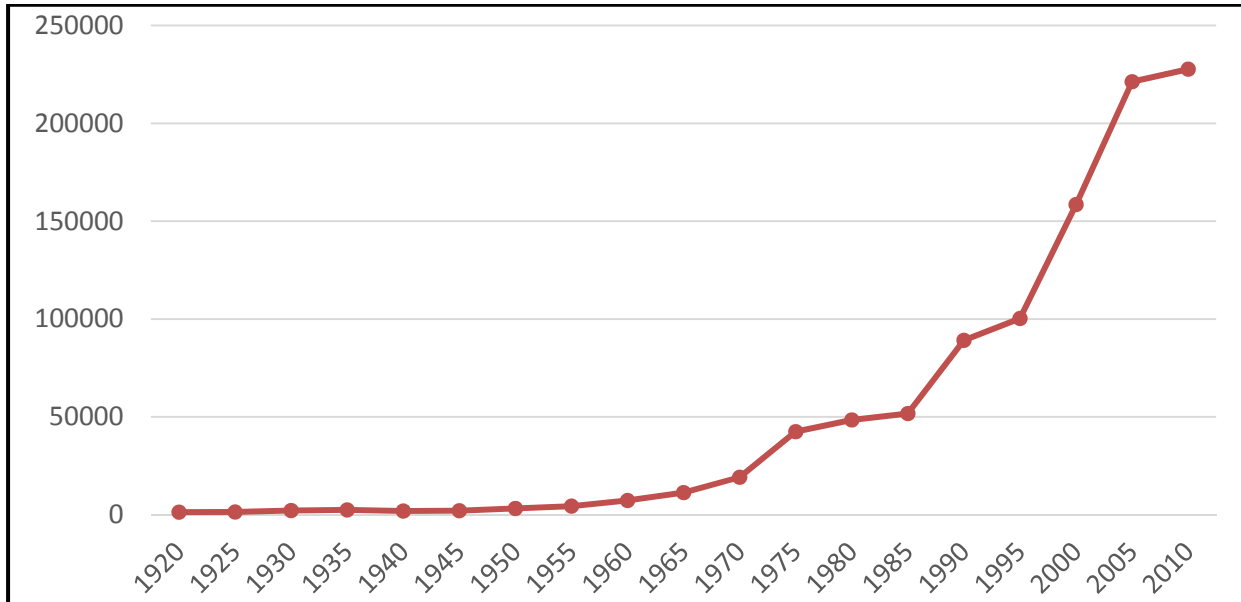
The practice of receiving migrants in Canada's educational institutions (primary, secondary and tertiary) has been shown to start as early as the 1920s (Statistics Canada 1987), although there are reports of it occurring earlier (Cameron 2006; Yoo 2002). International student migration to Canada can be divided into roughly two periods, pre-1990 and post-1990. Figure 1 shows the total numbers of international students from 1920 to 2010.

The late 1970s was a key point of change in immigration policy as it was at this point that Canada moved from an explicitly whites-only immigration and settlement policy to a skills-based migration system referred to as the Points System. This moment also represented a shift in the role of immigration in relation to foreign policy and created a classification system of 'migrant' categories. Prior to the Immigration Act of 1976, a potential student could enter Canada as a visitor and then apply for enrolment at an educational institution, and then apply for resident status. Bhatt and Iyer (2013) describe such procedures being undertaken by youth from India, who first arrived in the Pacific Northwest region of US and Western Canada as visitors, and then pursued their education at a university.

After the implementation of the Immigration Act of 1976, international students who had received or hoped to receive a permit to study at a specific institution were required to produce documentation which guaranteed payment of fees and transportation to and from Canada (Mickle 1985). Furthermore, under the Act, foreign students were ineligible to work; and hence needed to show that they had enough money to support themselves during their stay in Canada. This restriction on the work permit was modified in June 2014; students are now permitted to work up to 20 hours per week without the need to secure a separate visa. Prior to that, students were required to apply for a work permit to work off-campus, and they had to wait six months before they were eligible to apply.

From the late 1970s onwards, changes in the flows of international students and source countries reflect a shift in Canada's foreign policy (Trilokekar and Kizilbash 2013). For instance, while in the late 1970s and early 1980s there was concern over the increase of student flows from non-Western countries (Mickle 1985), there are now active campaigns to recruit students from China, India, and Saudi Arabia (Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada 2014). In fact the only 'Western' country amongst the top 5 sending countries is France, who are likely to go to Quebec over other places in Canada. The growth in international students over the last 40 years is dramatic and this has led to a burgeoning body of multidisciplinary literature in this area.

Figure 1: Total International Students in Canada, 1920-2010



Source: Statistics Canada 1920-1970; Citizenship and Immigration Canada 1975-2010

Findings

We organize the literature review section below according to four broad themes: causes of international student migration; experiences of international students in Canada; future intentions and plans; and post-international student transitions.

1. Causes of international student migration

Following Findlay's (2011) framing of the two strands of theories of international student mobility, this section reviews research that is driven by demand-side or supply-side perspectives. Explanations of the geography of international student migration flows that focus on demand-side perspectives address the motivations of students and their parents as well as the influence of social capital and class. On the other hand, studies that emphasized supply-side practices highlight practices that represent the financial interests of states and institutions.

Demand side explanations: Choice and social class, push and pull

Studies that emphasized the demand among students for a cross-border education carried an underlying assumption that students, and their parents, make choices about where to go for an international education. Some studies conceptualized this behavioural model within a framework of social class and capital (Findlay 2011). Under the demand approach, which is commonly used in studies of other types of migration, push and pull motivations explain geographic patterns of mobility, and the international student and her/his family tend to be the subject of investigation.

The motivations of students to study in Canada do not appear to have shifted over time. There were a range of factors that shaped individual decisions to go to university abroad and they included individual characteristics, and social, cultural, institutional, economic and political factors. In research studies published before 1990 that asked students about their motivations for tertiary level study in Canada (Chandras 1974; Glaser and Habers, 1974; Holdaway, Bryan, and Allan, 1988; Neice 1977), the findings were similar to those of their successors.

Push and pull factors relate to the home country as well as to the host. Home push factors included political, ethnic or linguistic tensions (Glaser and Habers, 1974; Mickle 1985) as well as the lack of economic (Chandras 1974) and educational opportunities (Mickle 1985; Neice 1977). Home pull factors included separation from family and friends and financial considerations (Glaser and Habers 1974). A push factor away from destination countries was students' apprehensiveness of educational programs, which reflected language concerns (Glaser and Habers 1974). Finally, pull factors toward destinations were academic quality and reputation (Holdaway, Bryan and Allan, 1988; Neice 1977), academic benefits and employment experience and the prestige and value of an overseas education in the home country (Chandras 1974; Glaser and Habers 1974; Neice 1977) and for some, the possibility of permanent migration was an added incentive (Glaser and Habers 1974).

There is evidence that there exist differences in motivation by subgroups within the international student population, namely by degree level (undergraduate versus graduate), region, and social class. Holdaway, Bryan and Allan (1988) found that undergraduate students considered the relative costs of the University of Alberta to other universities and the proximity of friends and family. Graduate students, on the other hand, focused more on research facilities and faculty reputation. Chandras (1974) emphasized differences by social class background and noted that the East Indian international students in his national sample who came from upper class backgrounds were driven by the opportunity to obtain an advanced degree whereas lower and middle class students were pushed more by the lack of economic opportunities and pulled by financial support (77 percent of lower class students from India received a scholarship, assistantship, fellowship or grant compared to 67 percent of upper class students).

Studies that were more recent pointed to similar push and pull factors (Canadian Bureau of International Education 2009; Chen 2006, 2007; Chira, Barber, and Belkhodja 2013; Li, DiPetta, and Woloshyn 2012; Madgett and Belanger 2008; Massey and Burrow 2012). An additional push factor not acknowledged in earlier studies was the influence of parents who pushed their children to attend universities across borders, which appeared in Li et al.'s (2012) study of female Chinese MA students at an undisclosed university in Ontario. Additional pull factors to Canada were multiculturalism and Canada's openness to international students (Chen 2006, 2007; Li, DiPetta, and Woloshyn 2012; Madgett and Belanger 2008; Massey and Burrow 2012), the environment (Li et al. 2012), safety and security (Canadian Bureau of International Education 2009; Li et al. 2012; Madgett and Belanger 2008; Massey and Burrow 2012), professional development and career-related reasons (Canadian Bureau of International Education 2009; Liu 2007; Massey and Burrow 2012), and language-related reasons (Canadian Bureau of International Education 2009; Massey and Burrow 2012). Also highlighted were visa-related motivations such as ease and speed of approval, and work permits for self and spouses

(Canadian Bureau of International Education 2009; Chira, Barber, Belkhdja 2013; Li et al. 2012; Madgett and Belanger 2008). The issue of visa approvals was particularly salient for students whose first choice of destination was not Canada (Chen 2006; 2007), although border policies as well as institution-side decisions regarding admissions would be more suited conceptually within a supply-side perspective, which we discuss in the following section.

We also learn that there is a hierarchy of motivations, or a “decision hierarchy” (Neice 1977) and that, consistent with Holdaway, Bryan and Allan (1988), priorities in the more recent period are also likely to vary by level and type of study (Canadian Bureau of International Education, 2009; Chen 2006, 2007; Madgett and Belanger 2008; Massey and Burrow 2012) as well as by region (Canadian Bureau of International Education 2009). In her study of East Asian graduate students at the University of Toronto and York University in 2003-2004, Chen (2006, 2007) identified the primary importance of academic and program reasons followed by institution and country factors, and multicultural diversity and a safe environment. Consistent with Chen, Madgett and Belanger (2008), based on their online survey across Canada, found that the academic environment and schooling costs were important considerations more for graduate students relative to undergraduate. For incoming study abroad students at an undisclosed medium-sized university in Ontario, however, students valued the cross-cultural dimension followed by the academic (Massey and Burrow 2012).

In addition, there were differences between college and university students as well as by region (Canadian Bureau of International Education 2009) although these factors were likely to be confounding. In any case, college students cited safety, quality of education, language-related reasons and work opportunities as very important for choosing Canada. University students most frequently cited quality of education, safety, language-related reasons and prestige. University students were also less likely than college to identify visa-related and immigration reasons. Across all regions, the quality of education was the most common reason for coming to Canada. For students coming from Africa, all parts of Asia and Central and South America, perceptions of safety was the second most common reason. For those from Europe, North America, and places like New Zealand and Australia, the availability of programs offered in English/French was another top-rated reason, likely indicating that students from these regions are prioritizing places not linguistically different from their own, much like Canadian students who tend to prefer study abroad to the UK, Australia, France, Germany and the US (Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada, 2014).

The foregoing studies included only tertiary level students in their analyses and very few researchers examined the motivations of younger students, and their families, for coming to Canada. Among published research on primary and elementary level students, which centred on Chinese, Taiwanese or Korean transnational families and/or unaccompanied youth, and often used parent samples, there was a slightly different emphasis on the push and pull factors, although, like their tertiary level counterparts, many motivations were shared.

The educational systems in home and host countries and English language learning were the strongest push and pull factors for families with primary and secondary school-aged children who migrate to Canada as temporary residents (Chiang 2008; Irving, Benjamin, and Tsang 1999; Kim, Yun, Park, and Noh 2013; Shin 2013, 2014; Waters 2003a, 2003b) – although some arrive with permanent status or transition to permanent status during their stay making this population somewhat difficult to demarcate. In this body of work, researchers point to the social class basis for education migration and the perceived value of a Western education, which enables youth to circumvent the limitations and fears of failure in a highly competitive educational system. The transnational family strategy – where one parent stays with children or children remain alone to attend schools in destination settings – permits children’s accumulation of cultural capital that is expected to expand opportunities for higher education, and to be transferable in the highly-skilled labour market in places of origin (Kim et al. 2013; Shin 2013, 2014; Waters 2003a, 2003b, 2006, 2009). In this way, families have the best chance at

reproducing class positionalities as children engaged in this strategy often begin at the higher end of the socioeconomic hierarchy in terms of wealth and parents' education, much like their older counterparts (Irving et al. 1999; Kim et al. 2013; Lu, Zong and Schissel 2009).

Regardless of the educational level of the students, the strategy for social mobility through international education is not without its problems, pitfalls, and contradictions as we see in the discussion of experiences below. In addition, as Chiang (2008) argues, transnational family migration is more than a strategy to ensure class reproduction, social factors are also at play. In addition to education-related reasons, mothers alluded to health reasons, the Taiwanese military conscription, the lack of employment opportunities for spouses in Canada, and the ages of children for shaping their migration decisions. Irving et al. (1999) also found the importance of family linkages in Canada for pulling families. They, and others, point to the importance of understanding migration decisions as complex, nuanced and irreducible to a single explanation (Chiang 2008; Irving et al. 1999; Kim et al. 2013; Ghosh and Wang 2003). Rather, in some cases, students contemplated migration decisions over a longer period and multiple life stages (Beck 2009; Ghosh and Wang 2003).

Contextualizing the micro-level push/pull model of international student mobility are the macro conditions that influence the demand for education abroad, namely the unmet need for higher education in domestic educational systems (Gattoo & Gattoo 2013; Mickle 1985), decolonization (Cameron 2006), the Cold War (Picard and Mills 2009), and the growth of middle classes in new industrializing economies, particularly in Asia (Kim 2015). Such broader conditions that shape the demand for higher education are important considerations in demand-side perspectives. We now turn to supply-side explanations.

Supply side explanations: Globalization and the internationalization of education

It is interesting, but perhaps not surprising, to learn that some newly emerging pull factors, according to international students and their families, are Canada's multicultural environment and safety and security, which are reflective of the global Canadian international education narrative. The mission statement of the *Imagine Education au/in Canada* brand states "Canada's educational institutions are committed to providing a wide range of world-class programs and an academic environment that is welcoming, stimulating and safe and in which tolerance and celebration of cultural and educational diversity are paramount."² Launched in 2007, the brand is a marketing tool to recruit international students (Trilokekar and Kizilbash 2011).

The reality that students also point to the ease of obtaining visas as one of the top reasons to come to Canada shows the fuzziness and the limitations of the push/pull model. While policies and practices at both state and institutional levels may be perceived as driving students' "choices," decision-making power is restrained by forces clearly out of their control. National governments, national level non-governmental organizations, and academic institutions are key players in shaping internationalization (Knight 2004). Such supply-side perspectives that relate to governments and institutions, Findlay (2011) argues, have not received sufficient attention in the literature. The literature on Canada, however, demonstrates this is not so, with numerous journal articles, reports and a 2009 edited collection that investigates supply-side questions. We cannot understate the importance of this aspect of international student migration for shaping the asymmetric patterns and compositions of student flows. The current engagement with internationalization is a collaborative effort on the parts of the federal, provincial and municipal levels of government, non-governmental agencies such as Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE), the Association of Universities and Colleges of

² <http://imagine.cmed.ca/en/>. Retrieved 4 March 2015.

Canada (AUCC), and the Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan, formerly Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC), and the educational institutions, including local school boards.

The literature that speaks to supply-side issues focuses on three areas: national government/sector policies and programs; provincial governments and educational institutions; and international education services firms, or the export education industry. National government policy goals and actual flow volumes of international student migration were often provided as rationales or context for research. Although there were very few research materials published on international students in Canada prior to 1990, there has been a noticeable shift in what is highlighted as international student policy goals from the earlier to the later period.

National governments and shifting priorities

Cameron (2006), Gue and Holdaway (1973), Trilokekar and Kizilbash (2013) and Zelmer and Johnson (1988), point to the context of development cooperation and international aid, and social development and leadership in an earlier system. Although Cameron (2006) and Yoo (YEAR) show that the connection between international students and development began well before the 1950s, Trilokekar and Kizilbash (2013) identify the 1950s as the key period of official interest. This period ended with budget cuts to the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA, now DFATD (Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development)) in the 1970s, which shifted policy attention to fee-paying international students. Cameron (2006) noted this shift as well with an increasing number of overseas students (versus the sponsored students) beginning in the mid-1970s, which coincided with the implementation of differential tuition fees for international students in Ontario and Alberta in 1977.

A section on international students in a 1986 report entitled, *Independence and Internationalism: Report of the Special Joint Committee on Canada's International Relations*, was situated in the chapter on international development (as opposed to the chapter on trade). In the section, the committee explained the cause of declining numbers of international students in the mid-1980s; differential fees. It also noted that differential fees, established in seven provinces at the time, were for the purpose of cost recovery due to the increase in foreign student numbers from the mid-1970s coupled with the lack of increases in per capita educational transfers from the federal government. This practice of differential fees for international students was the most extreme in Ontario and Québec with the highest fees, but it was absent in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland (Special Joint Committee on Canada's International Relations, 1986). The committee also recognized Canada's role in educating students from developing countries and the need for those countries to develop higher education institutions internally (97). In this period, the benefits of international students were framed in terms of trade opportunities, cultural contacts and foreign policy (96) and as a means of exercising Canada's soft power on a global scale (Trilokekar 2009).

However, the mandate and motivation for that engagement has shifted from a political and cultural rationale to the current position of economic advancement in response to globalization. Still, there remain remnants of these earlier values today and Lehr (2008) argues that we now have mixed messages and conflicting goals in the contemporary Canadian international education system. On the one hand, Canada offers developmental assistance and capacity-building in developing contexts primarily through CIDA scholarships while also promoting a nation-building agenda through an increasingly market driven international education system and through facilitating the permanent migration of international students. The term "global citizenship," often tossed around as a laudable benefit of international education, may be consistent with both goals but according to Lehr, it misses an important dimension. What it fails to ask is, global citizenship to what end? In her view, Canada presently follows the paradigm of global citizenship for capital markets whereas the alternative approach – she uses Cuba as an example – is global citizenship for social justice (Lehr 2008).

This paradigm of international education for capital markets is evident in recent government reports and in the increasingly and paradoxically inward focus of Canada's internationalization goals. In current documents, the benefits of international students to Canada were clearly framed in economic terms making reference to a study that determined 265,000 international students spent \$8.4 billion in 2012, they helped to sustain 86,570 jobs, and generated \$455 million in federal and provincial tax revenues (Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada 2014).

Despite the shift in paradigms and the call to expand internationalization efforts, the decentralization of Canada's educational system challenges the federal government's ability to establish a national policy on international education (Trilokekar 2009). Where the federal government has found a role to play lies in the nexus between international education and human resource development (Trilokekar 2009). This can be observed in the reference to a looming crisis of skilled labour shortage, which has been contested as a social construction (Barnetson and Foster 2013) and as a mismatch (McQuillan 2013). Yet, in accordance with the human resource approach to internationalization, scholars have pointed to changes to immigration policy with respect to international students, who were previously expected to leave after their studies but are now given options to stay.

International student mobility can be a form of highly skilled migration and a pathway to skilled migration (Tremblay, 2005) but national governments vary in how they manage student migration and opportunities to enter the labour market (She and Wotherspoon 2013; Tremblay, 2005). In her comparative study of seven countries, Tremblay explored the degree to which their respective immigration policies gave international students special consideration for permanent residence. She found a tendency among countries to move toward immigration policies with specific schemes favouring former students. Interestingly, a separate scheme for international students did not exist in Canada at the time of her writing, but it exists now through the Canadian Experience Class program. She and Wotherspoon (2013) also compared Canada with the US and UK and found that all three countries attempted to achieve a balance between open borders and controlling long-term settlement. They argued that with Canada's historic pattern of nation-building through selective migration, there is presently a high degree of openness to the entry of international students and a low degree of control over their settlement, which includes opportunities to work. These studies point to national level policy frameworks that shape student mobilities.

But international student mobility, much like other forms of migration, are also shaped by the policies of other countries within their migration system (Castles and Miller, 2009 age of migration). She and Wotherspoon (2013) as well as Mueller (2009) explain that the demand for a Canadian education is influenced by the border policies of the US. Mueller (2009) illustrated this linkage using data on students from predominantly Muslim countries entering Canada and the US, post 9/11. He found that after the events of 9/11, the numbers of students from predominantly Muslim countries going to the US fell while the numbers of students from other countries stabilized. In contrast, students going to Canada from other countries slightly decreased, while those from predominantly Muslim countries increased. Chen's (2014) study described above on Chinese students whose first choice was the US but "chose" Canada due to visa issues provides further evidence of this linkage. Costs and the availability of work permits and avenues to permanent residence were also considerations for many international students (Chira et al. 2013; Holdaway, Bryan and Allan 1988; Li et al. 2012; Madgett and Belanger 2008) further showing the nature of an international student mobility system.

Regional governments and educational institutions

Another important gatekeeper in the supply-side of the equation are the provincial governments and the educational institutions. Provincial governments, who have jurisdictional authority over education, shape international student mobility through their respective internationalization strategies, policies

and regulations (Leyton-Brown, 2008), including those related to immigration through the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) (She and Wotherspoon 2013). Chira and Belkhodja (2012) explored the settlement services and practices of organizations for international students in the Atlantic region and found that with the exception of New Brunswick, the three other Atlantic provincial governments, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador, offered recent graduates a pathway to permanent settlement through their PNPs, particularly for those with offers of employment. However, a more recent study showed that at least two of these PNPs were discontinued, highlighting issues of duplication with federal immigration programs such as the Canadian Experience Class (Chira, Barber and Belkhodja, 2013).

Beyond immigration and settlement, provinces also support and regulate internationalization activities and this is characterized by varied histories and target populations. Manitoba's involvement began in 1999 and focused primarily on postsecondary students, while Alberta's involvement began earlier with the primary and secondary student populations but has now shifted to postsecondary students (Savage 2009). Quebec also has a longer history with international students, and appears to focus on the postsecondary population (Picard and Mills 2009). In general, provinces' internationalization activities include strategic planning, funding, scholarships and programming (e.g. off-shore schools, study abroad programs), the setting of fees, promotional and marketing activities, and coordination. It is clear that provinces vary in the roles they play in the supply-side of international education, however, like the federal government, they also need the participation and engagement of educational institutions, including universities, community colleges, and local school boards for any degree of international education activity.

The umbrella organization for universities and university degree-level colleges, AUCC, periodically conducts surveys of its membership. The 2014 survey covered a range of internationalization activities: institutional planning; institutional partnerships and activities abroad; student mobility; teaching, learning and faculty engagement; and international collaboration and research (Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada 2014). The Association found that more than 95 percent of responding universities reported their planning includes internationalization, with nearly half of them engaged at a high or very high level, and the focus was on undergraduate student recruitment from China, followed by India, the US, Saudi Arabia, Brazil and Nigeria.

The report also showed that most universities actively engaged in recruitment activities for both undergraduate and graduate students using websites, printed promotional materials, recruitment fairs, visits to overseas schools and overseas recruiters or agents. A large percentage of universities offered scholarships, financial aid, and stipends or tuition waivers, the latter two at the graduate level. And the push for expansion is noticeable. Total international full-time undergraduate and graduate enrolments have increased since 2000 with 11 percent of full-time undergraduates and 28 percent of graduate students (Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada 2014). Students came from 200 countries but were concentrated with the top five countries (China, France, the US, India, Saudi Arabia) representing over half of all international students in Canada.

Universities' reasons for internationalizing were expressed less in economic terms than the federal government although revenue generation was often found among the top five reasons. Universities hoped to prepare internationally and interculturally competent graduates and to increase enrolment in specific programs as well as build strategic alliances and partnerships with institutions abroad, promote an internationalized campus and increase the institution's global profile (Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada 2014). In terms of funding internationalization activities, international students on campus appeared to receive very little support from the overall budget although many universities offered orientation programs, individualized academic support and advising, on-going counselling and settlement services, and language support and mentoring programs. Very few offered immigration assistance and even fewer offered support for dependents.

The AUCC survey is nationally representative and the most comprehensive study in examining the goals and practices of universities. Their findings support other studies of higher education institutions, which reported similar results in terms of overall support for internationalization (Knight 1997), the ranges of activities (Taylor 2004) including social media (Belanger, Bali and Longden 2014), and the reasons for internationalizing such as revenues (Burnett and Huisman 2010; Cudmore 2005; Knight 1997), and preparing graduates (Knight 1997). The shifting of the lens inward is also apparent among universities as a common rationale among educational institutions in a past collaborative study cited social change in Canada and abroad as a top rationale (Knight 1997), but this was not identified in more recent studies.

One of the shortcomings of the AUCC report, however, is that it did not explain the variation in internationalization practices across institutions. For example, Burnett and Huisman (2010) studied four universities to understand how university cultures may be important for shaping their responses to globalization. They found that an enterprising university, one with an explicit mission and planning for the global dimension, a supportive organizational culture, administrative and financial supports and strong commitment to the university community, tended to be strategic and initiated more responses to opportunities. The AUCC report also neglected the question of the impact of internationalization on universities and local communities and we know that internationalization can have an impact on the university and the local community through the student body and the International Student Centre, and through attracting future permanent migrants (Walton-Roberts 2011). This latter study about Kitchener-Waterloo is of particular interest because smaller cities which receive fewer immigrants may seek to attract more students through their local educational institutions as a way of achieving economic goals and social and cultural diversity.

The international education services sector

Adding to the initiatives of the federal and provincial governments, and universities and colleges, is a much wider field that encompasses many different kinds of institutions. This field includes local school boards, which often have their own internationalization initiatives (Kwak 2013; Waters 2006), employers (Knight 1997; Schell 1986), and participants in the international education services sector, or export education industry (Kwak, 2004, 2013). The international education economy participants include education/migration agents, recruiters, and brokers, travel agencies, tutoring/ESL schools, immigration lawyers, employers, and food and accommodation services (e.g. homestays) and by way of the regulated and unregulated work of these participants in the education industry, Kwak and Hiebert (2010) argue that internationalization takes shape also from the bottom up. We can see the importance of the local international education services sector and the local economy for broader internationalization efforts in the official reactions to attacks on Asian female international students in Vancouver in the early 2000s. Local officials engaged in damage control to contain the potential harm to Asian investments in the city (Park 2010).

2. Experiences of international students in Canada

There is some disjuncture between the 'imagined' experience of studying abroad and the reality. Most research on international students investigate the thematic realm of experience to understand students' lived realities and they give us some sense of the extent to which international education is "working," and in which ways it may be "broken." Taken together, the literature in this area covers various dimensions of student/migrant life, including academic goals, interactions with key sites and social groups, and social and psychological well-being. These various dimensions are also often examined within a single study attesting to the multiple layers and systems structuring students' lives and

experiences. Results show that there are both positive and negative experiences and that students often act (or practice avoidance) to achieve the former.

Academic outcomes

The quality of education, and personal and professional development, are often foremost in students' minds in terms of their goals for studying abroad. Studies that examined integration into the academic environment focused on language, pedagogy, learning styles and skills, grades, and institutional support services.

Studies that focused on the issue of language in the academic setting (the link between language and social exclusion is considered below) revealed the degree to which students felt their experiences in the classroom and on campus were shaped by their English language proficiency and this was often tied to culture. Interestingly, with the exception of one, all of the papers on this issue only consisted of samples of East Asian international students, Chinese, South Korean and Japanese. These studies speak to the barriers and facilitators to learning, in general, and learning English, in particular.

As Ranta and Meckelborg (2013) point out, exposure to and immersion in an English-language setting did not translate directly into language learning. Rather, language learning depended on the quality of the exposure and the degree of interaction. Barriers to learning in general, and to learning English, in particular, included difficulty with listening comprehension and other important academic skills (Cheng, Myles and Curtis 2004; Morita 2009; Popadiuk and Marshall 2011; Ranta and Meckelborg 2013), the lack of constructive feedback on assignments (Popadiuk and Marshall, 2011), the poor quality of some language programs (Li 2004), the differences in pedagogical and learning styles and strategies from students' home countries (Li 2004; Liu 2011; Ranta and Meckelborg 2013), and students' feelings of invisibility in the classroom which was attributed to being ignored by teachers (Popadiuk and Marshall 2011) and to the lack of classmates' knowledge about students' home country contexts (Morita 2009; Zhou, Knoke and Sakamoto 2005). Many of these studies attributed students' challenges with language to cultural differences related to their countries of origin and it was common for scholars, with the exception of one, to interrogate only the culture of the country of origin as opposed to questioning dominant cultural norms and practices. In two studies to comprehensively explore the cultural forces in classrooms that encourage the silence of international (East Asian) students, they found that the cultural background of students and their language proficiency interacted with reciprocal cultural familiarity and classroom power dynamics (Zhou et al. 2005) along with gender (Morita 2009). That is, silence was situational and students felt silenced in contexts where classmates and professors/teachers lacked knowledge and interest about students' homes.

Despite these barriers, many students found ways to overcome them to achieve some level of English proficiency (Li et al. 2012; Matsumura 2001). Such students recognized the importance of autonomous language learning and engaged in a variety of strategies (Brunette, Lariviere, Schinke, Xing, and Pickard 2011; Cheng et al. 2004; Li 2004; Liu 2011; Morita 2009; Popadiuk and Marshall 2011). These included finding paid work, making and conversing with "Canadian" friends and classmates, volunteering, improving study habits, forcing oneself to do presentations, participating in sports and leisure activities, living with people of a different ethnic background, and engaging in selective accommodation by adapting to some cultural features but not others.

A number of studies pointed to the need for institutions to provide support services to international (and all) students suggesting that services should not discriminate according to status (Chira et al. 2013; Guo and Chase 2011). While some of the identified needs were in the areas of language and academic skills, it is clear that students required services beyond those directly related to educational outcomes. Studies identified problems related to housing, shopping, counselling, visa/work permit assistance, the lack of awareness of services, and at times ineffective services (Chira et al. 2013;

Holdaway et al. 1988; Madgett and Belanger 2008). Such academic experiences and services were not only important for the overall international student experience, they were also linked to academic outcomes, namely grades.

Chirkov and his colleagues examined the factors associated with academic outcomes, among other outcomes such as well-being and socio-cultural adjustment (2007, 2008). Although their focus was on the effect of various dimensions of motivations, they also explored the effect of social support, which problematically grouped support from university instructors and administration among other forms of support, and cultural competence. Measured in this way, social support did not emerge as a significant predictor of academic success, but this was not the case for cultural competence, a measure of knowledge of Canadian language, values and norms. Not surprisingly, the positive effect of language proficiency on grades was also found elsewhere (Gue and Holdaway 1973). The motivation for studying abroad (a measure of push and pull factors), length of time in Canada and year of study, country of origin, social and cultural capital were also important for shaping academic experiences (Chirkov et al. 2007, 2008; Grayson 2011).

The inclusion of academic support in the Chirkov and colleagues' general measure of social support is problematic for understanding the independent effect of academic support and academic outcomes. Other studies have demonstrated the positive academic impact of programs such as peer-matching and mentorship (Preston, Ogenchuk and Nsiah 2014; Westwood and Barker 1990) and the in-class experience (Grayson 2008). Beyond the general importance of these factors, an important question is whether and how the academic experience of international students differs from domestic students. Grayson (2008) compared international students with domestic students in his study of first year undergraduate students at Dalhousie University, McGill University, the University of British Columbia and York University, and found both similarities and differences. The class experiences between international and domestic students were similar and over 80 percent were satisfied with professors' teaching technique, level of knowledge, and responsiveness. However, a smaller percentage of international students (69 percent) were satisfied overall with their instructors compared to domestic students (78 percent), and fewer international students had help from instructors (and from classmates) even though they had a higher frequency of contact with instructors outside of the classroom (Grayson 2008). A higher percentage of international students (74 percent) than domestic students (65 percent) also indicated having difficulty with their studies and they spent more time studying. Finally, in terms of academic outcomes, international students reported lower levels of satisfaction with academic programs (70 versus 75 percent), intellectual development (61 versus 74 percent), and increased knowledge (78 versus 88 percent), and international students received lower grades (roughly 4 percentage points). Interestingly, about half of each group indicated they felt they achieved their educational goals (Grayson 2008). That more than half of international students were generally satisfied with their academic programs is consistent with the 2009 nation-wide survey conducted by CBIE that found most international students had at least some success in various academic-related activities and nearly half reported lots of success.

Social dimensions

The social integration of international students occurs in the context of the institutional setting as well as the local community at-large. Friendships with "Canadians" and other international student contacts, extra-curricular activities on- and off-campus such as paid work, living conditions, family and romantic relationships, and discrimination were the major themes that emerged in studies of international students' social lives.

Starting with spaces of interactions within the boundaries of the educational institution, a major issue for international students is contact with "Canadians." Although the 2009 CBIE survey showed

more than 70 percent of international students had some or lots of success with making "Canadian" friends, numerous other quantitative and qualitative studies have shown international students have struggled to befriend "Canadians," have felt socially excluded, and often wished for a greater degree of interaction (Chira et al. 2013; Holdaway et al. 1988; Li et al. 2012; Shin 2014; Zelmer and Johnson 1988; Zheng and Berry 1991). Although the term, "Canadian," was used in these studies, it is not clear what meaning this had to survey students and whether they would have imagined the term to refer only to a particular racial and linguistic segment of the Canadian population.

A resolution to the ambiguity of the term, "Canadian," was offered by Grayson (2008). The survey asked students about friendships with white Canadians and visible minority Canadians, and found that international students' social circles included other international students, for the most part, followed by visible minority Canadians, and white Canadians. These results were consistent with other studies that found international students (and spouses) tend to rely on other international students or co-nationals and co-ethnic communities for friendship and support (Brunette et al. 2011; Cameron 2006; Canadian Bureau for International Education 2009; Chira et al. 2013; Ghosh and Wang 2003; Houshmand, Spanierman, and Tafarodi 2014; Irving et al. 1999; Kenway and Bullen 2003; Liu 2007; Martens and Grant 2008; Moores and Popadiuk 2011).

Clearly, there will be variation across individuals, and likely across national origin groups and regions as well, in terms of the composition and quality of personal social networks and friendships with Canadians. But an important underlying question regarding contact with Canadians, due to the high value placed on such social capital by international students, has to do with the factors that contribute to developing such contacts. Some of the factors that identified were the perception of cultural differences and size of the co-national group at the institution (Chapdelaine and Alexitch 2004). For their sample of male graduate students in the West, Chapdelaine and Alexitch (2004) found that the greater the perception of cultural difference and the larger the size of the co-national group at the institution, the less international students interacted with Canadians.

International students' social lives included other activities at school and in the outside community. Many of these activities were seen as a positive strategy for social integration and English language acquisition as described above. Studies have shown that international students were actively involved in extra-curricular activities (Brunette et al. 2011; Grayson 2008; Popadiuk 2010). Another activity was part-time paid work, which was highlighted as an integrating and language learning strategy by some students as well as a strategy to address financial insecurity (Chira et al. 2013; Glaser 1974; Holdaway et al. 1988; Lui 2007). However, it seems less than half of international students, have participated in the on- or off-campus labour market (Canadian Bureau for International Education 2009). It is not known to what extent students may participate in the local informal labour market given they have issues with obtaining work visas (Chira et al. 2013; Holdaway et al. 1988; Houshmand et al. 2014).

Very few studies examined the financial and housing insecurity experienced by international students although some students raised these issues in interviews (Madgett and Belanger 2008). Given the various programs, funding packages, and tuition structures under which international students are recruited and admitted, and variations in family wealth and currencies of origin, not all students face the same level of expenses and financial burden. Nevertheless, many students acknowledged the financial adjustments they had to make (Li 2004; Zelmer and Johnson 1988) and the sacrifice by parents and reliance on savings (Canadian Bureau for International Education 2009; Li 2004; Liu 2007). Approximately a third of university students received some form of institutional support from a scholarship, the host country government or, for very few students, the Canadian government (Canadian Bureau for International Education 2009). College students were not as fortunate and relied mostly on family and personal savings.

International student migration, like international migration, is often a family decision and involves spouses/partners and parents who, if they have accompanied students to Canada, have their

own integration issues (Martens and Grant 2008; Waters 2002). Although the literature on parents of international students tends to focus on younger students, studies of university students also recognized the significance of students' relationships with their parents (Waters 2002). For the younger students, issues of role reversal and the increasing independence of students were prominent themes defining relationships and interactions with parents (Alaggia, Chau and Tsang 2001; Irving et al. 1999). For older students, however, attachment and closeness of relationships manifested as advice about all aspects of the education migration decision, including about romantic relationships (Lu, Zong and Schissel 2009; Popadiuk 2008; Sondhi 2013b). In a small qualitative study on romantic relationships, Popadiuk (2008) explored several problematic heterosexual relationships and found that there were relational interaction issues regarding trust, mutuality, and abuse, issues with respect to daily living such as cultural scripts that defined acceptable behaviour and partner choices, and gender roles, and homesickness. The quality of these relationships affected students' ability to deal with other stressors.

In many different types of studies, the experiences of social exclusion and discrimination was a common theme (Chirkov et al. 2007, 2008; Houshmand et al. 2014; Shin 2013, 2014; Madgett and Belanger 2008; Zheng and Berry 1991). Although it does not appear to characterize all students' experiences in Canada, approximately a third of students reported experiencing discrimination (Canadian Bureau for International Education 2009), not a negligible percentage. The sources of discrimination were varied but included mostly what Houshmand et al. (2014) refer to as racial micro-aggressions, or subtle forms of racism such as exclusion, avoidance, rendering invisible, and taunting accents. Racism in the form of cultural stereotypes (i.e. the cultural inferiority of Asian women) in local media was also found (Park 2010). Such experiences of exclusion have reconfigured international students' identities and objectives by leading to greater cohesiveness with co-nationals and less interaction with English-speaking Canadians, and occasionally, to the reformulation of international education objectives (Houshmand et al. 2014; Shin 2014). At the same time, positive acculturation experiences and students' on-going identity transformations have led to feelings of in-betweenness, ambivalence, and hybridity, and as well, a reformulation of international education objectives and psychological well-being (Ghosh and Wang 2003; Tsang, Irving, Alaggia, Chau and Benjamin 2003; Wang 2012; Waters 2003; Yang and Noels 2013).

Psycho-social well-being and adaptation

For the most part, international students adapt well to life, study, and work in Canada. However, given some of the challenging experiences described above, it can be difficult to adjust to a new environment and its norms very quickly. In a 1985 working paper, Mickle reviewed the handful of studies that have been conducted in the 1970s on the process of adaptation of international students in Canada and raised attention to the limited work conducted on the issue despite the numerous problems they experienced. Although there are now numerous studies on psychological adaptation, what has not changed for international students (and other migrants), are the issues. Experiences of culture shock (Chapdelaine and Alexitch 2004; Glaser 1974; Kenyon, Frohard-Dourlent, and Roth 2012; Liu 2007; Zelmer and Johnson 1988), homesickness and loneliness (Irving et al. 1999; Li 2004; Popadiuk 2008; Zheng and Berry 1991), and acculturative stress (Dyal and Chan 1985; Kuo and Roysicar 2006; Zheng and Berry 1991) persist.

Research studies have now tested some of the factors that are associated with psychological well-being and socio-cultural adjustment for international students. Among university students, motivational characteristics related to the influence of others, namely parents, were found to be important (Chirkov et al 2007, 2008). The link between an independent decision-maker and well-being and adaptation was consistent in other studies as well that examined self-identity or self-construal (Yang, Noels, and Saumure 2006) and parental autonomy (i.e. having parents who guide and give choice with respect to

culture rather than use an authoritative approach) (Downie, Chua, Koestner, Barrios, Rip, and M'Birkou 2007). Not surprisingly, English language confidence was also positively associated with psychological well-being and socio-cultural adjustment (Yang et al. 2006). Interestingly, for younger international students, their interpersonal relationships and interpersonal competence appeared to matter more (Popasiuk 2010; Kuo and Roysircar 2006).

The culture shock, and stress and distress, felt by students were dealt with in a number of positive ways, and they used the same coping strategies as those used to manage the social issues described above. In addition, researchers described a tendency toward more internal strategies such as positive thinking (Zheng and Berry 1991), increasing self-understanding, confidence, independence and tolerance of others (Wang 2012; Yang et al. 2006), and in the case of an awkward social situation, wait and do nothing (Wong-Reiger 1984).

3. Future intentions of international students

The status of a student is a temporary one, and most international students are on temporary permits. Where students intend to go, and where they actually go upon completion of their studies is a key policy question. Studies that respond to these questions can be organized into three types, those that ask about intentions, those that investigate transitions to the labour market or to permanent resident status in host societies, and those that address the experience of leavers or returnees. This section and the next explore these issues.

In several of the studies previously discussed, the option of permanent residence in Canada was cited as an attractive feature to many international students. Many of these same studies, along with others, explored students' future intentions and the motivations behind decisions to remain in Canada or leave after their studies. The 2009 CBIE report showed that students had a range of plans after completion of their current program. For those who wished to stay in Canada, which comprised at least one third of respondents, their future plans included continuing with their studies, working temporarily before leaving, and/or applying for permanent residence. Results varied by institutional level with a significantly higher percentage of college students, over half, intending to stay. The remaining participants were either undecided or were intending to return. Some were required to return, which is often a condition of some funding packages.

Numerous studies have asked international students about their plans and there is wide disparity across studies, which differ in many ways. Chen (2006) found about 25 percent of the mostly East Asian graduate students in her Ontario sample intended to stay, whereas Chira et al. (2013) found approximately 77 percent indicated the same intention in her small sample from the Atlantic region. Siddiq, Nethercote, Lye and Baroni (2012), also referring to a survey of international students in the Atlantic region, found 40 percent were planning to stay. Holdaway et al. (1988), in their study of undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Alberta, found 11 percent of their sample, and Zheng and Berry (1991) found somewhere between 40 to 68 percent of international students and visiting scholars from China at Queen's University intending to stay. Finally, rather than asking directly about their intentions, Lu et al. (2009) asked mainland Chinese undergraduate students at the University of Saskatchewan to rate the intensity of intentions. They found approximately 87 percent had moderate to strong intentions to remain in Canada.

In examining the above studies that were able to quantify the extent to which their samples planned to stay in Canada, we can see there is wide variation across samples due to level of study, location, and country of origin. With the exception of the study by Lu et al. (2009), none of the studies explored any potential predictors. From Lu et al.'s study of mainland Chinese undergraduate students we learn that the intention to settle in Canada was positively associated with intentions prior to coming to Canada yet many of those who were considering immigration had no original plan to do so but

changed after spending time in Canada. Like Glaser (1974), these authors point to the positive link between initial motivations and future settlement but that time in Canada may alter plans. In contrast to Lu et al., most of the women in Li et al.'s (2012) study, expected to return to China as they felt they would have better employment opportunities there relative to Canada. Other factors shaping decisions about settlement in Canada were parental attitudes and interest in finding off-campus work (Lu et al. 2009). While there were no gender differences in terms of intentions to stay, there were gender differences in the predictors of intentions. For females, having many close Chinese friends and not being homesick were significant predictors, and for men, English language proficiency, higher academic standing in China, and having close Canadian friends and parents with lower levels of education were significant.

There is a complexity to the question about settlement plans and it is evident that when students complete or are nearing completion of their studies, decisions about staying are not so straightforward. Several studies examined the nuances of the factors that shape decisions to settle and it was clear there was an interplay of considerations that relate to career opportunities and working conditions, family relationships with parents and siblings, romantic relationships, friendships in host societies, perceptions of safety and political environments, and expected quality of life, in general, but also in terms of being family friendly (Arthur and Flynn 2011; Geddie 2013; Glaser 1974; Popadiuk and Arthur 2014; Sondhi 2013b). Geddie (2013) also found students faced gendered expectations with respect to parents and partners. To be sure, students felt pulled in multiple directions (Geddie 2013; Glaser 1974), and perceptions of the various factors were often compared to conditions at home (Arthur and Flynn 2011).

4. Post-international student transitions

Stayers, switchers, and pathways to permanence

Transitions to permanent status may not be very high but are likely to vary by region (Chira et al. 2013) With regard to transitions to work, there are two aspects that need to be examined: access to labour markets and labour market experiences. As described earlier, one of Canada's declared motivations for encouraging migration through the international student stream is to have a pool of potential citizens with Canadian education who would have thus acquired Canadian cultural capital. In other words, upon completion of their studies in a Canadian institution, international students will possess Canadian experience – the lack of which has been a barrier to labour market entry for highly skilled newcomers to Canada. It is thus assumed that the international student experience, which also allows students to engage in paid work on- and off-campus, would eradicate, or at minimum, reduce that barrier for those who stay ensuring that these highly skilled migrants are able to secure jobs commensurate with their skills and education.

There are few studies that have examined these questions and assumptions. Limited knowledge in this field means that we only have glimpses into the reality of temporary to permanent transitions for students as they relate to employment. The handful of studies we have to date, however, indicate that many students are still struggling to gain access to jobs and positive workplace experiences. What the studies show is that for students who remain in Canada, transitions are often marked by experiences in the labour market, which subsequently affect longer-term plans to stay.

In three qualitative studies of international students in the West who had completed or who were nearing completion of their studies, Arthur and her colleagues examined students' experiences as they were moving into the labour force (Arthur and Flynn 2011; Nunes and Arthur 2013; Popadiuk and Arthur 2014). The first of these studies identified barriers that can be classified into three areas: job-related and job search barriers; cultural barriers; and status issues (Arthur and Flynn 2011). Job-related

and job search barriers included a lack of experience and difficulties with the application process as well as the lack of social capital and networking skills. Cultural barriers referred to concern about employers' perceptions of international students as being less desirable than Canadians, and concern about English language proficiency, which affected their level of confidence. Finally, there were concerns about how one's status as a temporary resident, and the lack of permanent residence or Canadian citizenship would affect employment prospects (Arthur and Flynn 2011). In relation to this, students in the study and others did not seem to know how to go about applying for a work permit or permanent residence.

Many of these same themes – discrimination, lack of social capital, lack of knowledge of the permanent resident application process – have emerged in other studies as well (Chira et al. 2013; Nunes and Arthur, 2013). In a second study in the West, Nunes and Arthur (2013) found one quarter of their sample of 16 in an employed position, with only one respondent indicating it was what s/he had expected (Nunes and Arthur, 2013). Another quarter were still students at the time, and the remaining eight were unable to obtain employment and expressed disappointment in Canada's job prospects. As a result, the group of diverse participants in terms of gender, level of study, countries of origin, and length of time in Canada, had mixed feelings about their longer-term plans to stay.

The third study took a different approach and asked those who felt successful in the labour market about the kinds of relationships that supported transitions to work. Along with social and family relationships, former students highlighted the value of connections with supervisors, mentors and former international students as well as wider networks built in the department, the university, and in previous workplaces (Popadiuk and Arthur 2014). In addition to relationships, local programs and cross-sector partnerships that are designed to help international students access and integrate into local labour markets proved effective (Chira and Belkhodja 2012). Based on these studies, it is clear that both relationships and programs are relevant for gaining entry into the labour market and they underscore the importance of relationships and services in host societies for determining settlement plans. To date, there have been very few studies to examine actual labour market experiences of former international students. This is partly due to the difficulty in distinguishing former international students once they transition to permanent residence since they become part of the general immigrant population. However, the few studies we have to date point to experiences of discrimination (Chira et al. 2013; Glaser 1974) and lack of employers' trust (Chira et al. 2013).

Returnees, leavers, and re-entry

Decisions to stay or return home are influenced by the same interplay of factors as decisions to migrate for education, including career and employment opportunities, family, experiences of discrimination and familiarity (Glaser 1974). In some cases, international students are required by their home countries or their funding conditions to return to their countries of origin. Given the difficulty of locating past graduates, it is difficult to assess to what extent an international Canadian education has helped them to achieve their goals and to understand their experiences of re-entry. One study to examine this question surveyed CIDA graduates who attended the University of Alberta between 1972 and 1984. Researchers found 20 out of 28 graduates returned to former employers, and half of them had been promoted (Zelmer and Johnson 1988). The returnees in their sample identified a number of positive benefits to studying in Canada that related to personal and professional development such as broadened knowledge, occupational mobility, teaching skills, self-confidence, professional attitudes, and intercultural understanding.

Adding to these benefits to individuals, Han and Zweig (2010) found that mainland Chinese returnees from Canada, compared to returnees from Japan and middle-class Chinese nationals, viewed Canada most favourably relative to other countries. Returnees also had greater support for free trade and cooperative internationalism, or the willingness to help other countries, suggesting international

students to Canada who return have the potential to enhance Canada's soft power with students' countries of origin (Han and Zweig 2010). At the same time, returnees have also expressed issues related to re-adjustment in home countries. The reverse culture shock experienced by returnees affected their identities and social interactions, views about working conditions and colleagues, and living standards (Westwood, Lawrence and Paul 1986; Zelmer and Johnson 1988).

Returnees tend to experience some degree of ambivalence and uncertainty with respect to their identities and to their social connections. Younger returnees in Kanno's (2000) study of Japanese secondary school students who returned to Japan for university found they yearned to belong and felt that they did not fit in to Japanese society. Among older returnees who graduated from a university in British Columbia, Westwood et al. (1986) found that they, too, faced challenges in terms of renewing former acquaintances and establishing new friendships. Returnees expressed feeling lost, isolated, bored, and as if they were strangers.

In addition, returnees had to re-adapt to work environments and work cultures in their home countries, particularly with respect to work facilities and the attitudes of colleagues and supervisors (Westwood et al. 1986; Zelmer and Johnson 1988). Local social, political, and economic conditions were also important dimensions that exacerbated feelings of difference requiring returnees to re-adjust to changes in living standards (Glaser 1974; Westwood et al. 1986; Zelmer and Johnson 1988). It is clear that re-entry and re-adjustment occurs in multiple spheres, psychological, social, and economic, and these studies speak to the transformational nature of the international student experience.

Policy implications

The reading of this extensive body of work on the first wave of international education points to a clear policy message, that we need to be concerned about a rapid expansion of international student mobility to Canada and to shift our lens from numbers to the quality of education and quality of life for those who come and for those who stay. We identify three areas for consideration.

1. Re-affirm and prioritize social development and intercultural understanding as a goal for international and domestic education

Canada is globally promoted and perceived as being a safe, secure, and multicultural country and is thus attractive to students from a wide array of places. The majority of international students to Canada also report (*of those who report*) being satisfied with their decision. As roughly a quarter to half of students are likely to return to countries of origin, there are benefits to Canada in having former alumni in multiple places. Beyond the obvious economic benefits of potential trade relations, former international students are likely to favour Canada relative to other countries and to support cooperative internationalism (Han and Zweig 2010). They have also become more openminded and have developed their cultural learning and understanding (Moore and Popadiuk 2011; Zelmer and Johnson 1988). An international education is transformative for participants and can reshape students' attitudes and approaches to social and equity issues (Wang 2012). By re-affirming and prioritizing Canada's commitment to social development through international education and the education of domestic residents at both the tertiary and younger levels, there is the potential for Canada and its graduates, or "student ambassadors," to become soft power leaders in shifting thinking from one of global competition to one of global cooperation. It also recognizes that we do not have a separate educational system for international students. Educating Canadian students, from a young age through to college and university, to appreciate global interdependencies and to acquire knowledge about other countries and languages will enhance the learning environment for all students.

To have a wider impact, however, greater support for the movement and education of students from the lower range of socioeconomic classes and countries is needed, particularly in light of increasing tuition fees. The issue of rising tuition fees, and differential fees, at all educational levels is likely to be an effective barrier for many high caliber students and to meeting international growth targets.

2. Match practice to policy on a high quality Canadian education

The drive for greater numbers of international students at all educational levels necessitates greater consultation and coordination across all levels of government, education, and sectors. Government reports have highlighted this need and it has been repeated in other reports and academic papers. In recent strategic plans, there appears to be efforts toward greater coordination in the areas of identifying markets, setting targets, marketing and recruitment, delivering Canadian educational services abroad and facilitating partnerships with international institutions (waves 2 and 3 in Mazzarol, Soutar, and Seng, 2003). The focus is on growth and expansion, and on attracting future citizens, yet there is little in the strategic plan that supports the improvement of the international education and settlement experiences within. A coordinated action plan to establish standards of excellence in international education would be welcome along with the resources to meet the standards through increasing educational transfer payments.

It is clear that improvements in the quality of the international education experience would facilitate the achievement of international education goals. Enhancing the quality of education would attract greater numbers of students, it would attract stronger students, and it would encourage a greater proportion of existing students, and their families, to transition to permanent residence. To be sure, the key motivation for studying in Canada specifically, is the quality of education. In the longer term, ensuring Canada's educational institutions maintain high standards of education (and the reputation of a high quality education) is an ideal strategy. Although Australia's numbers seem impressive, scholars have shown that Australia's institutions have the reputation of being less so (Madgett and Belanger 2008; Trilokekar and Kizilbash 2013).

In achieving policy goals through practice, a thorough discussion of the meaning of a high quality education is needed along with the understanding that the academic experience does not take place in isolation from the social experience. Institutions could learn from existing programs such as peer mentoring that includes Canadians and former international students, and such programs may be expanded or modified. Strategies to enhance positive informal and spontaneous interactions and connections in and out of classrooms at all educational levels are also highly recommended.

3. Match practice to policy on pathways to permanent residence

Although the connection between education and immigration is long-standing, the explicit policy linking of this pathway to permanent residence is relatively recent. The first step to moving forward in this policy arena is to recognize that there is a debate in the literature on the rationale of a labour shortage to justify migration programs and targets, and this warrants a collaborative and comprehensive study on the issue to examine the policy options and ways to address labour issues.

Regardless of whether there is an explicit government policy offering a direct avenue to permanent residence for international students, international students will continue to settle permanently in Canada. Given this undeniable fact, and if the aim of Canadian education is to promote integration into local labour markets and into local communities, greater efforts are needed to encourage the hiring of international students among potential employers and to facilitate access to settlement services. In other words, we should be internationalizing our domestic institutions and institutional staff. The research on stayers demonstrates the strong emphasis of future residents on jobs

and career opportunities, and concomitant social and cultural capital acquisition, and on the significance of professional networks and personal relationships. It also demonstrates that the actual pathway to permanence is not always clear to students, and often their families. Although international student centres provide some form of orientation and settlement assistance, access to support services (such as housing, health, employment, immigration) in the local community would ensure students and their families receive the necessary services to facilitate their transition from student to worker to permanent resident to citizen (Arthur and Flynn 2010; Lowe 2011).

Knowledge gaps and future research

The rapid growth of literature on the topic of international students in Canada over the past 15 years has informed our understanding of international student mobility in many areas. However, as the policy and geo-political landscapes are undergoing constant change, new questions are raised adding to existing ones. At the macro, meso, and micro levels, we add our questions to those already raised in the literature for further investigation.

Macro level questions

- A thorough historical account of international student mobility that traces changes in policies, international student definitions, and flows over time;
- The effect of (differential) tuition fees on enrolment at all educational levels and on migration flows and emerging international student markets such as Asia;
- The contribution of former international students to the social and economic development of their countries;
- An analysis of international student migration systems. To what extent are Canada's international student flows dependent on policies of sending countries and those of other receiving countries (e.g. the US)? To what extent do they rely on Canada's bilateral relations? To what extent is it linked to other forms of migration and other cross-border activities such as trade?
- What is the role of the NGO sector in influencing international education policy?
- What is the effect of different educational policies across provinces on international student mobility and students' experiences?

Meso level questions

- How does the expansion of international student numbers to Canada affect the admissions process and enrolment in local schools, colleges and universities? How does it affect the classroom from the faculty's perspective?
- How does the presence of international students change the culture of schools/campuses? How do schools/campuses adapt? What barriers exist for international students in terms of programs and services?
- Does the size of the institution and the local setting matter for student outcomes and settlement?
- What is the role of International Students Centres and international offices in local school boards for student orientation and settlement? How do they facilitate integration? What services are lacking and how can existing ones be improved?

- For which jobs are employers hiring international students? What are their working conditions? What is the understanding of employers with respect to the rules in hiring international students? How receptive are employers to hiring international students?

Micro level questions

- It would be helpful to know for what reasons some students choose to go elsewhere to study and not Canada, particularly for those who are accepted into a Canadian institution.
- For what reasons do students leave their programs early? Are these students most likely to have experienced social exclusion?
- For those who leave after completion of their programs, who returns home and who goes to a third country? In which sectors are they working? Are they more likely to engage in particular occupations and sectors? How have their Canadian credentials been received?
- For those who remain after completion of their program, what are the factors that lead to different integration trajectories and pathways? What is their long-term impacts in terms of social and economic outcomes? How are they different from other classes of migrants?
- In terms of the international student experience, what is the effect of legal status on various outcomes such as health, social services, funding, employment, discrimination, and life course trajectories? There are a number of additional independent variables to be considered in understanding the variation in international student outcomes such as the level of development of the country of origin, funding sources, international students who pay differential fees versus those who do not, level of education (primary, secondary, college, university), country of origin, gender, class, and race. The lack of research that speaks to these issues underscores the need to engage with intersecting social locations which locate people in differential positions of power.
- How do Canadian students view international students and the expansion of international education? What is their degree of inter-cultural sensitivity and understanding? Grayson (2008) found about 10 percent of Canadian students befriended international students which raises the question of the open-mindedness of Canadians.

Methodological issues in research on international students

A wide range of research techniques, from auto-ethnographies to nation-wide surveys, was applied in the research on international students reviewed here. However, most of the qualitative and quantitative research on the experiences of international students was limited to a specific group(s), institution(s), city or region, using small, non-probability samples, which affects the generalizability of results. Until August 2014, there were no pan-Canadian, nationally representative, studies to be found beyond the ones based on descriptive surveys conducted periodically by CBIE.

A pan-Canadian study has been missing, and there is, to our best knowledge, no published work that compared experiences of students from multiple backgrounds across provinces and territories – although the data are available. To close some of this gap, a multi-sited approach is recommended with the use of the CBIE national survey or with the use of secondary data (e.g. government statistics on transitions, Statistics Canada surveys, institutional administrative data). These data will capture the different experiences of living and studying in the dominant and key attractor cities, as well as in second tier cities, and other smaller communities. It will also make the research spatially sensitive.

Another gap to bridge is a temporal one. International student mobility is perceived to be a ‘transitory’ state on the path to permanence in Canada. And as the discussion above highlights, very little is known about the transition to the labour market and the experiences of various pathways for international students. This limitation can be overcome using longitudinal research. The added

advantage of applying such an approach is that it can simultaneously bridge both the spatial and temporal gap; as it will allow for examination of past and future mobility trajectories of international students and education migrants.

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