The Secondary Schooling Transnational Nexus: Student and Educator Reflections Beyond and Within the Nation

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctorate of Philosophy
Leadership, Higher & Adult Education - Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto

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Abstract

This dissertation qualitatively examines how Greater Toronto Area (GTA) secondary schools are responding to the ongoing ties (transnational connections) some students and their families maintain to their place(s) of origin. Interview participants comprised transnational recent graduates of GTA secondary schools and educators, encompassing both teachers and administrators. “Transnationalism” was defined in terms of both behavioural and attitudinal characteristics. Interviewees were located in the public and private school systems, and included migrants with and without papers. Social class was conceived of and explored as a critical and decisive mediating factor (as well as a lens for analysis) in experiences of transnationalism in the GTA. The data were organized to elucidate themes at the levels of individuals and families, schools and institutions, and in terms of policy implications. Key findings include: that when students travel to their sending societies for ongoing periods there are disconnections at school that some teachers consider a threat while others see as an opportunity; that as families are increasingly transnationally reconfigured and some students’ parents or family members travel continually to their home country there can be difficulties in supervision at home which have reverberations at school; and finally, that when there are ongoing direct contacts with the home country, including both travel and new modes of communication, this may create knowledge and
vivid experiences for transnational youth, leading to more difficult adjustment problems in secondary schools than has been typical for immigrant youth in the past. As well, the data suggest that within the GTA, there is a tension between the extent to which schools can and should accommodate transnational students and their families, and the extent to which transnational students and families ought to assimilate to the pre-existing (but changeable) assumptions and requirements embedded within the secondary schooling system as it stands.
Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my late mother, Leah Cohen, who first taught me the value of research as a vehicle for social change. She was, is, and always will be the inspiration behind my work.
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# Table of Contents

Dedication .......................................................................................................................... iv  
Acknowledgments ................................................................................................................ v  
Table of Contents .................................................................................................................. vi  
List of Appendices ................................................................................................................ x  

## 1 Introducing the Secondary Schooling Transnational Nexus................................. 1  
  1.1 Introduction and Rationale ....................................................................................... 1  
  1.2 The Intertwined Evolutions of (Im)Migration and Education in Canada .............. 4  
  1.3 Defining Transnationalism ...................................................................................... 8  
  1.4 Positioning Transnationalism as a Historical Phenomenon .................................. 10  
  1.5 The Origins of the Term “Transnational” ............................................................... 12  
  1.6 Identifying Gaps within Current Research ............................................................. 14  
  1.7 Methodology .......................................................................................................... 17  
  1.7.1 Research Design ................................................................................................. 17  
  1.7.2 Research Setting ................................................................................................. 18  
  1.7.3 Recruitment ...................................................................................................... 19  
  1.7.4 Sample Selection ............................................................................................... 20  
  1.7.5 Data Collection and Analysis ............................................................................ 22  
  1.8 Ethical Considerations ............................................................................................ 24  
  1.9 Limitations .............................................................................................................. 24  
  1.10 Forthcoming chapters ............................................................................................ 25  

## 2 From “Transient” to “Transilient” Transnational Migrants: Applying the Lens of Social Class ................................................................................................................................. 28  
  2.1 Introduction .............................................................................................................. 28  
  2.2 Existing Literature Connecting Socioeconomic Status, Transnationalism and Education .......................................................................................................................... 30  
  2.3 Conceptualizing a Spectrum of Transnational Migrants .......................................... 34  
  2.4 Case Studies ........................................................................................................... 38  
    Case Study #1: The Prototypical Transnational Hong Kong Elite ............................ 39  
    Case Study #2: The GTA Roma Refugee Claimants: Transnationality Due to Status Precarity ...................................................................................................................................................... 43
4.4 Transient Transnationals Are (Slowly) Reshaping Public Opinion of “Immigrants” in GTA Schools................................................................. 59

2.6 Summary ....................................................................................................................... 62

3 Performing A Balancing Act: Behavioural and Attitudinal Enactments of Transnationalism at the Level of Individuals and Families ........................................ 63

3.1 Introduction .................................................................................................................... 63

3.2 Case Studies .................................................................................................................. 67

Case Study #3: Visa Students in GTA Private Schools: A Nigerian Woman’s Negotiations of her Transnational Lifecycle...................................................................................... 67

Case Study #4: Stuck in the “legal-illegal migration binary” .............................................. 72

3.3 Themes Within the Interviews ..................................................................................... 75

Theme 1: Behavioural Forms of Transnationalism ................................................................. 75

Theme 2: Attitudinal Forms of Transnationalism ................................................................. 89

3.4 Summary ....................................................................................................................... 102

4 “Here” Versus “There”: Transnationalism at the Level of Schools and Institutions 103

4.1 Introduction .................................................................................................................. 103

4.2 Case Studies .................................................................................................................. 105

Case Study #5: Disputing Global North School Superiority: The GTA Versus the Azores .... 106

Case Study #6: Catholic Schools and Students with Transnational Ties: An Educator Perspective .................................................................................................................. 110

4.3 Relevant Scholarly Research ......................................................................................... 113

4.4 Themes Within the Interviews ...................................................................................... 116

4.4.1 GTA Schools Are “Easy” ........................................................................................... 116

4.4.2 Questioning the Applicability of Louie’s Transnational Theory .............................. 124

4.4.3 Questioning The (Ir)Relevance of Multicultural Frameworks Within GTA Schools ... 129

4.4.4 Differing Valuations of Public and Private Schools in the GTA and Abroad .......... 137
4.5 Summary ................................................................................................................................…………142

5 Transnational Migration and Secondary Education Beyond and Within the Nation: Implications for Policy .................................................................................................................................144
  5.1 Introduction ........................................................................................................................................144
  5.2 Expanding Understanding of the Transnational Phenomenon ............................................................145
    5.2.1 Transnational Ties in the GTA: A Transilient and a Transient Phenomenon..........................146
    5.2.2 Unpacking Academic and Public Discourse on Transnationals .............................................150
    5.2.3 Transnationalism and Integration: A Bidirectional Vector .......................................................155
    5.2.4 Methodological Concerns about Transnationalism in an Era of an “Attack” on Data ........160
  5.3 Tying Transnationalism and Education .............................................................................................163
    5.3.1 Education as a Specific Asset to Transnationals ........................................................................164
    5.3.2 The Transnational Transformation of (GTA) Schooling ............................................................167
    5.3.3 Competing Demands for the Universal and the Particular in GTA Curriculum ................171
  5.4 Summary ...........................................................................................................................................177

6 Conclusions ..............................................................................................................................................178
  6.1 There is No One Prototypical Transnational Student ........................................................................179
  6.2 Transnationals Constitute a Subset of the Broader (Im)Migrant Population ..................................180
  6.3 Transnational Students Exhibit Unique Classroom Behaviours ......................................................182
  6.4 Schools and Teachers Largely Do Not Recognize the Existence of Transnational Students ........................................... .................................................................................................................185
  6.5 Tensions Exist Between Accommodation and Assimilation for Transnational Secondary Students ........................................................................................................................................187

Works Cited ...........................................................................................................................................194

7 Appendices .............................................................................................................................................217
  Appendix A – Participant Recruitment Flyers .........................................................................................217
    **Recruitment Flyer for Transnational Former Secondary School Students (GROUP A)** .........217
    **Recruitment Flyer for Educators (GROUP B)** ..............................................................................218
  Appendix B – Sample Interview Guides ..............................................................................................219
    **Sample Interview Guide for Transnational Former Secondary School Students (GROUP A)** .....219
    **Sample Interview Guide for Educators (GROUP B)** .................................................................221
  Appendix C – Information Letter for Research Participants and Interview Consent Form .............223
Appendix D – Detailed Breakdown of Interview Participants .......................................................... 227
List of Appendices

Appendix A – Participant Recruitment Flyers

Appendix B – Sample Interview Guides

Appendix C – Information Letter for Research Participants and Interview Consent Form

Appendix D – Detailed Breakdown of Interview Participants
1 Introducing the Secondary Schooling Transnational Nexus

1.1 Introduction and Rationale

“The discovery of diverse nationalistic feelings among our great alien population has come to most people as an intense shock. It has brought out the unpleasant inconsistencies of our traditional beliefs” (Bourne, 1916, 86).

In the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), secondary school students increasingly come from diverse backgrounds, and some of these students maintain strong and enduring links (termed “transnational connections”) to their place(s) of origin (Lightman 2015). Such students and their families often experience multiple, fluctuating and/or divided loyalties as they travel back and forth, emotionally and physically, between the GTA and their homeland(s). Currently there is very limited research exploring the implications of these transnational connections within the realm of education; significantly, it remains unclear if or how such ties generally assist or hinder the academic success\(^1\) and social integration\(^2\) of youth in GTA schools.

Broadly, this dissertation examines how GTA schools are responding to the ongoing ties some students and their families maintain to their place(s) of origin. For a breadth of perspectives, two key groups of interview participants were chosen: the first group consisted of recent graduates of GTA secondary schools who maintain both physical and emotional transnational connections. These individuals encompassed recent immigrants to Canada, second-generation Canadian citizens, migrants to Canada awaiting permanent residency, and “visa students” who had come to the GTA specifically for schooling purposes. The second group of interview participants comprised educators, both teachers and administrators, currently working in a range of highly diverse GTA secondary schools.

\(^1\) Building on the work of Nusche (2009) “academic success” is defined herein in terms of access to schooling, participation and engagement in the classroom, and scholastic performance (6).

\(^2\) Ager and Strang (2008) provide a useful conceptual framework for understanding and measuring the “successful integration” of refugee populations. Their framework encompasses achievement and access in the sectors of employment, health, housing and education, as well as transparent practices regarding citizenship and human rights. This dissertation builds off of Ager and Strang’s 2008 framework and applies it to the case of transnational migrants in the GTA. While not presuming that all transnational migrants necessarily seek to integrate into the mainstream society, the analysis does accept the authors’ premise that social policies and public institutions that respectfully facilitate and encourage the integration of all migrants lead to healthier and more inclusive societies.
As transnational individuals vary considerably in regards to status, social capital, reception, and integration in their new place(s) of residence (Kasinitz et al. 2002, Louie 2006b), study participants included individuals in both the public and private\(^3\) school systems in the GTA, and both “status” and “non-status” migrants. This was in order to gain insight into the perspectives of both elite transnationals and those in lower socioeconomic strata.

This rationale behind this dissertation lies in the concrete ways that students with transnational ties are affecting the status quo in highly diverse GTA secondary schools. Transnational students exhibit unique classroom behaviours and lead to both concerns and spaces of opportunity which policymakers, school administrators and secondary school teachers may wish to address. Generally, the data suggest that direct experiences with the home country create issues for students that might not exist if the knowledge of the home country were less immediate and concrete. Yet given current macro economic and immigration trends, it is likely that transnationalism will be an increasingly relevant component of future dialogues about accommodation, diversity and difference within schools and within GTA society more broadly.

Specifically, some of the key impacts and consequences of having students with transnational ties in the classroom that were identified in this research include the following: that when students travel to their sending societies for ongoing periods there are disconnections at school that some teachers consider a threat while others see as an opportunity, that as families are increasingly transnationally reconfigured and some students’ parents or family members travel continually to their home country there can be difficulties in supervision at home which have reverberations at school, and finally, that when there are ongoing direct contacts with the home country, including both travel and new modes of communication, this may create knowledge and vivid experiences for transnational youth, leading to more difficult adjustment problems in secondary schools than has been typical for immigrant youth in the past. As well, the data suggest that within the GTA, there is a tension between the extent to which schools can and should accommodate transnational students and their families, and the extent to which transnational students and families ought to assimilate to the pre-existing (but changeable) assumptions and requirements embedded within the secondary schooling system as it stands.

\(^3\)Within the GTA, the term “private school” encompasses any school that charges tuition fees and is operated by individuals and groups outside of the public education system (Applying to Private Schools, 2013).
For this dissertation, social class was conceived of and explored as a critical and decisive mediating factor (as well as a lens for analysis) in experiences of transnationalism in the GTA. The data were subsequently organized to elucidate themes at the levels of individuals and families, in terms of the impact of transnational ties on individuals’ schooling expectations and behaviours; schools and institutions, where transnationalism was identified as having tangible consequences in classroom experiences for teachers, administrators and students; and in terms of policy implications, emphasizing the influence of the macro-economic and immigration systems and trends and specifically, exploring how and if GTA schools are responding or should respond to the increasingly transnational student milieu.

Within migration literature, the term “transnational” has been used to describe a wide range of scenarios and individuals with sustained ties to more than one nation. Recent advancements in technology have made transnational ties both easier to maintain over the long-term and has increased their visibility and media presence (see Batliwala and Brown 2006, Mano and Willems 2010, Panagakos and Horst 2006, Vertovec 2009). In some cases, “transnationalism” has been used to convey a theoretical research lens, offering an epistemological perspective on migration research away from unidirectional and nationally-bound perceptions of movement and place (Robertson 2013, Vertovec 2009). Yet in other scenarios, transnationalism has been used as a descriptor of various social practices of migrants, including behaviours, actions, and the migrants themselves, documenting individuals and communities as they maintain enduring connections to their sending societies and thus become part of “transnational communities” (Foner 2001, Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt 1999, Voigt-Graf 2005) or “transnational social fields” (Gargano 2009, Levitt 2001, Levitt and Schiller 2004).

This introductory chapter lays the groundwork for this dissertation and delineates how it contributes to current scholarship connecting immigration, transnationalism and education in the Canadian context. The chapter begins by providing a brief background on the development of immigration and education policies in Canada and positioning transnationalism in a historical context. It then proceeds to trace the origins of the word “transnational,” and identifies how the transnational young people recruited for this study were distinguished from the broader population of immigrant youth. The chapter then introduces the idea of the Secondary Schooling Transnational Nexus, which provides a framework for identifying and filling gaps within the existing research connecting transnationalism and education. Next, the chapter outlines the
questions to be addressed in this dissertation and provides a discussion of the methodology used and its limitations. The chapter then concludes by providing an overview of the subsequent chapters and the structure of the argument that is presented.

1.2 The Intertwined Evolutions of (Im)Migration and Education in Canada

Canada is a decentralized federal state, with a mix of federal, provincial, and local governments funding public education. The provinces oversee curriculum. From its inception, public education in Canada was part of a deliberate strategy to both instill appropriate modes of thought and behaviour into children and to forge a unifying identity. Egerton Ryerson, a pioneer in Canadian curriculum development, emphasized that a main goal of state-controlled schooling in English-speaking Canada was to assimilate “alien” elements into the broader Anglo-dominant society and to mitigate the tumultuous impact of foreigners (Hawkins 1988, Palmer 1976). Education and Anglo-conformity were seen as part and parcel of the assimilating process for the mass of European immigrants who poured into Canada after the turn of the last century. Schools were perceived to be essential socializing environments for immigrant children, allowing them to achieve the necessary degree of assimilation into the dominant society (Goode, Schneider and Blanc 1992, Troper 1978).

Following the First World War, the formative Canadian national consciousness became associated with hostility to “hyphenated Canadianism” and the numbers of immigrants allowed to enter the country was strictly curtailed. Nonetheless, at this time, urban schools began to encounter increasing numbers of immigrant Jews, Italians, Macedonians, Ukrainians, and Finns. Teachers, gatekeepers of the “Canadian way”, promoted a common language, heritage, values, knowledge of institutions, and modes of appropriate behaviour to the young, while working actively to banish any ongoing ethnic identity that characterized these groups (Harney 1978, Palmer 1976, Troper 1978). For many immigrant children, school required walking a tightrope between parental values and those of the education system. Troper (1978) argues that during this time immigrant youth, “especially the urban immigrant child, learned to balance the degree of

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4 Troper (1978) states that in the case of non-European immigrant groups, considered “lower on the evolutionary ladder,” it was acknowledged that the path to assimilation would likely be a lengthier process.
conformity necessary for successful integration into the school environment against the degree of adherence to Old World ways necessary for stability in the home” (21).

After the Second World War, Canada entered a period of sustained economic growth along with acute labour shortages in the key sectors of agriculture, mining, lumbering and manufacturing. Markets for Canadian products grew exponentially, leading to an uptake in immigration. Yet resistance to opening up immigration to individuals and families from “non-traditional” source countries remained strong. According to Palmer (1976), “Prime Minister Mackenzie King probably spoke for the majority of Canadians in his 1947 speech outlining the federal government’s postwar immigration policy when he stated that immigration should be limited to those groups that could be ‘absorbed,’” (511). Troper (1993) is even more unequivocal about the racist forces at play during the immediate postwar period, stating that “immigration officials, who could not see beyond their hierarchy of ethnic preferences, asked what would be gained from filling a short-term labour gap if it meant a permanent infusion of Jews and Slavs” (259).

Nonetheless, over time, Canada “backed into” a non-racist immigration policy, and racial and ethnic discrimination in the processing of independent immigrants gradually ended. Reimers and Troper (1992) argue that declining prejudice, foreign policy considerations and the lobbying of ethnic groups as a potential “third force” were all influential in this development. However, in some ways this change was observed more at the level of rhetoric than in implementation, as, for several years, immigration resources continued to be disproportionately allocated to recruiting “traditional” source country groups. As well, until well into the 1960s, ethnic discrimination continued in the case of family reunification immigration (Troper 1993).

In 1976 Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau introduced a new Immigration Act, which was a critical step towards opening up Canadian immigration to populations from outside of Western Europe. The Act, which became law in 1978, confirmed the emphasis in Canadian immigration on prioritizing highly skilled immigrants and marked “the beginning of a new, more liberal, and more co-operative era in Canadian immigration” (Hawkins 1988:xv). Three classes of immigrants were defined: family class, refugees, and a selection system, known as the “points system”, for independent economic immigrants. “Education and training”, “personal qualities” and “occupational demand” became the primary criteria for immigrant selection. With Canada’s door increasingly open to those outside of Western Europe, the ethnic composition of Canada’s
immigrants shifted to include much higher numbers of so-called “visible minorities”, with rates of non-white immigrants rising from 10.2 percent in the late 1960s, to nearly 75 percent by the 1990s, to 78 percent as of 2011 (Reitz and Banerjee 2007, Statistics Canada 2014, Whitaker 1987).

In 1982, multiculturalism was recognized in section 27 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Multiculturalism became (among other things) a federal mechanism to help define and promote a cohesive Canadian identity in the post-Imperial era. Initially, education was not the primary focus of the policy, as schools lay within provincial jurisdiction. However, as the affirmation of ethnicity was increasingly embraced as a public good, some provinces took steps to introduce more ethnic content into school curricula, often of a “celebratory” type, highlighting the food, dress, and music of minority cultures. Yet Troper (1978) argues that the school system struggled to adjust to this new era of multiculturalism, stating that “working so long within an Anglo-conformist framework, certain that remaking the immigrant child was not simply a duty but a sacred trust, the school system must now re-examine past assumptions and design curricula to conform to multicultural imagery” (25). Before long, however, public schools became “the primary arena where multiculturalism [was] implemented as the new conception of identity formation” (Bruno-Jofre and Henley 2000:38).

By 1992, amid the sharpest economic downturn since the Depression of the 1930s, public opinion showed some hardening of attitudes towards immigration, as well as a slight retraction against multiculturalism nationwide (Barry 2002, Dasko 2005). At this time, the federal government introduced a package of major revisions to the Immigration Act, further shifting the focus from refugees and family reunification to entrepreneurs and independent migrants. A decade later, in 2002, the federal government, under Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, introduced the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) to replace refugee and other provisions of the 1976 Immigration Act. IRPA increased the emphasis for economic migrants on levels of education and official language proficiency. As a result, most immigrants currently coming to

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5 This stood in contrast to the Richard Nixon administration in the United States, which passed an Ethnic Heritage Studies Program Act in 1972. The Act had an annual budget of $15 million, which was directed primarily towards supporting educational projects (Palmer 1976).

6 For example, a 1993 national public opinion poll found that almost 75 percent of respondents rejected the idea that Canada was a “multicultural nation” (Barry 2002:293).
Canada arrive with much higher levels of education and social capital than in the past. As well, many of these immigrants have greater confidence in their right to assert their ethnic identity and reject an assimilatory discourse (Alba and Nee 1997, Gans 1997, Reitz and Somerville 2004). Combined, these changes to immigration policy have contributed to a national context that is more positively predisposed to immigrants who assert their transnational connections than in the past (Erdal and Oeppen 2013, Kobayashi and Preston 2007, Wayland 2006).

Basu (2004) argues that in Ontario, the “Common Sense Revolution” proclaimed by the Mike Harris government (1995-2002) constructed and utilized rhetoric of a “failing and inefficient public education system” to galvanize public opinion in support of neoliberal restructuring efforts during the late 1990s. A 1997 shift in education-funding mechanisms in Ontario led to cuts of nearly $1.2 billion from the province’s K-12 education system, along with greater centralization of decision-making and reduced power for school boards, principals and vice principals, along with fewer trustees. The Harris government also created a legislative framework in 2001 (later modified in 2003) which introduced and increased tax credits available to parents with students in independent private schools, leading to concerns about “two tiered” education (Davidson-Harden and Majhanovich 2004).

Reflecting global economic trends, the current fiscal environment in Canada has also led to an increasingly conservative institutional context. Globalization, in tandem with the spread of neoliberal ideals, has created a shift in both Canadian immigration and education policies (to be

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7 Davidson-Harden and Majhanovich (2004) define neoliberalism “as a set of social and economic policy imperatives which have stressed the increasing employment and shift toward the use of market mechanisms as modes of governance in capitalist societies” (269). Other authors suggest that neoliberalism is an “elusive and contested notion” that “is often invoked without clear referent” (Wacquant, 2009:306). This dissertation follows Good Gingrich (forthcoming) and uses the term “with intention to refer to an evolving ideological, political, and economic paradigm that consolidates and normalizes free-market imperatives in everyday social interactions and institutions” (8).

8 For immigrants and refugees awaiting citizenship status, the reduction of school board trustees was especially disadvantageous. School boards represent the interests of all voters in their ward regardless of citizenship status and trustees are locally elected.

9 In Ontario, private schools are generally understood to be for-profit organizations, while independent schools are often not-for-profit and are accountable to a board of trustees, which operates at arm’s length from the administration.

10 Ritzer (2010) defines globalization as “a transplanetary process or set of processes involving increasing liquidity and the growing multidirectional flows of people, objects, places and information as well as the structures they encounter and create that are barriers to, or expedite, those flows” (2). This definition recognizes that in some cases greater integration is an inevitable part of globalization (e.g. with the free flow of goods through trade agreements), while in other cases it can lead to a reduction in levels of integration (e.g. when structures are erected to successfully block flows, such as occurs when states reduce immigration levels).
further explored in subsequent chapters of this dissertation), along with a stronger emphasis on privatization and individual choice. There is a growing clamor that the student population requires a mobile, skill-based education that will transcend markets and borders. At the same time, there has been increasing assertion and recognition of the transnational ties maintained by some immigrants and minorities, leading to an explosion of research internationally on both the potential benefits and drawbacks of such connections in the realms of social policy (e.g. Chambon et al. 2013, Good Gingrich 2003, Guarnizo and Smith 1998, Mitchell 2003, Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt 1999, Thai 2014, Vertovec 2004, Vertovec 2009). It is within this context of reform, and of conservative and conserving immigration and educational policies in Canada, that this research study is situated.

1.3 Defining Transnationalism

In the scholarly literature defining “transnationalism” the phenomenon is conceptualized in ways that are wildly divergent. Some definitions utilize more stringent requirements, such as an individual having ongoing economic or political roles in their country/ies of origin or the continuous sending of remittances (e.g. Ley 2013, Portes and József 1989). Yet other definitions focus more on feelings of connectedness to multiple locations or concerns about dual loyalties (see, for example, Baron 2009, Levitt and Schiller 2004, Weinfeld 2011). In some cases, transnationalism solely focuses on a diaspora and the place of origin, while in other cases definitions include multisite connections, focusing on the relationships between and among multiple diasporas where friends and relatives have (re)settled (Patel 2006, Schoenfeld, Shaffir and Weinfeld 2006).

Perhaps because of this inconsistency, there is a lack of consensus as to whether transnationals are a unique population of interest. Some scholars suggest that transnationalism is simply a new name for the enduring phenomenon of immigration or diaspora, plain and simple, whereby individuals and families travel to new locations in search of upward mobility, security, or political and cultural freedom (Ang 2003, Curtin 1984, Foner 2001, Safran 1991, Tsagarousianou

11 The oldest use of the word “diaspora” is usually traced to the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Torah made over two thousand years ago. While the term is now used widely in academic circles, the most common dictionary definitions of diaspora continue to refer to the dispersal of the Jews from the time of the Babylonian exile before the destruction of the Second Temple to the present (Shoenfeld et. al. 2006:294).
2004). However, others identify something unique about those who identify as, or are today categorized as, specifically “transnational” (Featherstone 1990, Harney 2002, Kasinitz et al. 2002).

This dissertation posits that the majority of immigrants likely do retain some feelings of connectedness to their places of origin upon resettlement. Thus, certain elements of transnationalism may be the norm within most immigrant communities and a binary distinction between “traditional immigrants” and transnationals may be less useful than a more fluid and contextually-based differentiation. However, the majority of immigrants, specifically in the GTA, likely do integrate into the mainstream population over time (at varying speeds and to varying degrees). Most immigrants come to Canada intending permanent resettlement, and actively seek to find their place within the broader community. Thus, an assumption is typically made that over time immigrants’ ties to their sending society/ies will diminish and these ties will continue to fade with each successive generation (Baas 2009, Ley 2013, Vertovec 2009).

Yet some migrants are not interested in “integration”, either due to choice or due to lack of ability or interest (Boyd 2002, Li and Li 2013, Wong and Tézli 2013). Consequently, in some cases, individuals and populations categorized as “transnational” are identified due to their different motivations for entry into Canada (e.g. for short-term gain or to benefit from an additional, complementary place of residence on top of their sending society/ies). More significant, however, is that in the case of transnationals there is often no assumption that their connections to their sending societies will lessen over time (Siemiatycki and Preston 2007, Vathi 2013).

For certain individuals and communities, transnational connections are largely at the level of actions and behaviours, which can be measured and categorized. Yet in other cases, these transnational ties are largely at the level of feelings and emotions (or perhaps these function in a self-perpetuating feedback loop). And for many transnationals, there is priority placed on intergenerational continuity of the homeland connection. Migrants’ ties, or transnational connections, may go through cyclical waves, receding and increasing over generations or the lifecycle due to economic, political, or other internal or external factors, or may be consciously fostered and maintained over the long-term for personal, financial, ideological or other reasons.
1.4 Positioning Transnationalism as a Historical Phenomenon

Before delving into the specific research questions explored herein, it is first necessary to consider how and why transnationalism has entered the public imagination. In recent decades, a major scholarly debate has centered on whether transnationalism is a new or old phenomenon. Among those who perceive transnationalism as socially and culturally novel, typically, the suggestion is made that today’s social relations and cultural connections are qualitatively different than they were for previous migrants, refugees and sojourners. This line of reasoning often focuses on a few key arguments: that technological changes have reduced the cost and time entailed in communication and travel; that the shift to multiculturalism has legitimated the expression of and organization around sending-country loyalties; that the nationalization of sending societies has increased the salience of the national identities with which immigrants arrive; and that the advent of a new international human rights regime has diminished the differences between nations. Such a viewpoint generally cites examples of continued involvement or real-time communication in everyday family decisions occurring in multiple places; new infrastructure for active, instantaneous monitoring of global businesses and political developments; and the transnational rearing of children (e.g. Cangiano 2014, Erdal and Oeppen 2013, Foner 2001, Kasinitz et al. 2002, Parreñas 2005, Parreñas 2007, Vertovec 2009).

Yet those who suggest that transnationalism is an enduring historical phenomenon, and one that has existed as long as there has been labour migration, make a more convincing case overall. There is considerable evidence that return migration and periodic visits to sending communities have always occurred among free labour migrants. Trade diasporas, or communities of traveling merchants, have throughout history settled in foreign lands for commercial purposes, while self-consciously preserving their distinct identities, cultivating business networks across space, and travelling back and forth in pursuit of profits, all the while sustaining ongoing familial and geopolitical contacts (Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt 1999).

Examples of European historical trade diasporas include the foreign enclaves in Medieval Europe established by Venetian, Jewish, Genoese and Hanse merchants, the international activities of Genoese bankers under the protection of their Spanish Habsburg allies, and the enclaves of commercial representatives established by the Portuguese, Dutch and English in successive stages of the European colonization of Africa and the Americas (Bayly et al. 2006,
Curtin 1984, Fouron and Glick Schiller 2001). Similar transnational patterns are also identified within Armenian, Persian, Chinese and South Asian mercantile diasporas (Aslanian 2004, Gernet 1996). Additionally, members of historical political diasporas were often forced to resettle in different countries and maintained regular contact with their sending societies, as with the Russian Jews escaping the tsarist Pale of Settlement at the turn of the twentieth century (Howe 1976).

The Italian community, in particular, is often presented as an example of an early transnational group in Canada.\textsuperscript{12} The first migrants from Italy arrived in Canada in the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century, with many fully intending to return home once they accumulated sufficient funds. Primarily male, these migrants left their homes in order to fill positions in Canada’s labour and mining industries and supported families that were split between the county of origin and destination, all the while maintaining strong emotional ties. Over time, long-distance networks were created and maintained by the community, facilitating chain migration. Ongoing communication between migrants and families in Italy was sustained through letters, remittances to hometowns used for both consumption and investment, and migrant associations, which sometimes collected money to send for projects in the hometown. Some of these early migrants were able to maintain businesses in both their hometowns and Canada, linked through imports and exports, and many sustained political interests in Italy through organizing political rallies, lobbying and proving funding for political parties (Foner 2001, Harney and Troper 1975, Harney 1978).\textsuperscript{13}

Overall, the central point of contention within the debate surrounding the historical roots of transnationalism appears to focus on whether new practices and capacities for maintaining connections with the sending country ultimately affect the content and impact of the transnational phenomenon and therefore transform it into something categorically different.\textsuperscript{14} As well, it is suggested that the kinds of connections sustained by migrants today may differ from those in the past primarily because they are forged within a cultural context at least nominally

\textsuperscript{12} In the United States, early Italian migrants were sometimes referred to as “birds of passage” to denote their frequent return trips to Italy (Piore 1979).
\textsuperscript{13} Ayukawa (2008) finds many similar examples of transnational activities and perspectives in her analysis of immigrants from the Hiroshima prefecture in Japan who came to Canada before the Second World War.
\textsuperscript{14} This argument may run the risk of relying on “technological determinism”, whereby transnationalism is conceived of as solely consisting of cheap, real-time communication and transportation (rather than these being indicators of a larger phenomenon) (Smith and Marx 1994).

Smith (2003) takes the perspective that transnationalism provides an original perspective for research and that this, in itself, makes the phenomenon new. He writes that, “if transnational life existed in the past but was not seen as such, then the transnational lens does new analytical work by providing a way of seeing what was there that could not be seen before,” (275). A similar conclusion is provided by Bayly et. al. (2006), writing about the evolving focus of historians:

> For many years, immigration history—whether free or forced—focused on the impact of migration on either the destination or origin. Introducing this transnational dimension has led historians to examine the impact and reasons for migration at both the point of departure *and* that of arrival. Furthermore, these studies have usefully addressed factors behind the previously under-recognized return of many migrants to their land of origin. Transnational history thus implies a comparison between the contemporary movement of groups, goods, technology, or people across national borders and the transit of similar or related objects or people in an earlier time (1443).

Thus, it may ultimately be that transnationalism has only recently been considered a relevant and exciting area of study and policy development, while earlier immigration studies focused primarily on the perspectives of the host country (Alba and Nee 1997). Undoubtedly, the recent proliferation of studies related to transnationalism have increased the presence and debate surrounding this phenomenon, and new communication technologies have increased the number of migrants who are able to and prefer to maintain ties to their sending societies in an ongoing manner. Nonetheless, this dissertation suggests that the historical roots of the transnational phenomenon, whether referring to it using this specific terminology or not, are important to both recognize and inform present-day migration research.

### 1.5 The Origins of the Term “Transnational”

American leftist intellectual Randolph Bourne presented what is arguably the first use of the term “transnational” in the July 1916 issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*. He stated that “America is coming to be, not a nationality but a trans-nationality, a weaving back and forth, with the other lands, of many threads of all sizes and colors,” (96). In this article, it is significant that Bourne addresses many of the key issues that remain prevalent in today’s debates about immigration, integration and sustained connections to place(s) of origin. In reading his views on assimilation, on concerns about “new” immigrant groups, dual citizenship and “multiple loyalties”, as well as
on the integral role of the education system, one can easily wonder what change, if any, has occurred over the past century in public debates on diversity and difference.

According to Bourne, after the First World War the Anglo-Protestant majority in America experienced shock that among Germans, Scandinavians, Bohemians, Jews and Poles there was a tendency “for the national clusters of immigrants, as they became more and more firmly established and more and more prosperous, to cultivate more and more assiduously the literatures and cultural traditions of their homelands” (86). Yet the lesson from the War, in Bourne’s opinion, was not to emulate European-style nationalism or emphasize the “melting pot”. Instead, he urged Americans to forge something new and improved and rely on a two-way process of integration whereby both the immigrant and the native-born were changed. Dual citizenship would be one component of this enlightened foreign policy, Bourne suggested, as he expressed fear that the “crusade against ‘hyphenates’ will only inflame the partial patriotism of transnationals, and cause them to assert their European traditions in strident and unwholesome ways” (96).

Notably, Bourne predicted that the back-and-forth movement between place(s) of origin and America would become a component of the new world order, stating that “we shall have to accept, I think, that free and mobile passage of the immigrant between America and his native land which now arouses so much prejudice among us… To stigmatize the alien who works in American for a few years and returns to his own land, only perhaps to seek American fortune again, is to think in narrow nationalistic terms” (95). Bourne subsequently emphasized the positive impacts of remittances and technical skills that would accrue both in the places of origin and in the United States.

Echoing the current rhetoric on “new” (primarily non-white, or “visible minority”) immigrant groups in Canada, Bourne wrote the following about non-Anglo Protestant European-origin immigrant groups (many of whom were not considered “white” at the time): “To think of earlier nationalities as culturally assimilated to America, while we picture the later as a sodden and resistive mass, makes only for bitterness and misunderstanding. There may be a difference between these earlier and these later stocks, but it lies neither in motive for coming nor in strength of cultural allegiance to the homeland,” (88). Bourne also stated that schools, specifically, with their emphasis on cooperation among groups, would facilitate Anglo-Saxons
and acclimatized foreigners in studying and working together as citizens of a “larger world” (93-94).

Ultimately, Bourne ended his 1916 polemic with a resounding plea. He wrote: “let us make something of this trans-national spirit instead of outlawing it” (97). Approximately a hundred years later, one sees that immigrant-receiving societies have to varying degrees both embraced this transnational “spirit” and actively opposed it. Certainly, the issues raised by Bourne in 1916 continue to dominate transnational discourse today.

1.6 Identifying Gaps within Current Research

Since at least the beginning of the 20th century, some within transnational communities have sent their children back to the place(s) of origin for education that is deemed more appropriate or to assist with cultural maintenance, finances, transportation and practical considerations permitting. Today, the decision to send a child to the sending society for schooling can be based on a variety of rationales: a belief that schooling back “home” will protect youth from racism and exclusion in the host country, will engage children with the language, culture and tradition of the homeland, will shield them from the corrupting influences of an amoral Western society, will allow them to attend more prestigious schools due to the greater purchasing power of Western currency, will assist them with finding an appropriate marriage partner from the same ethno-religious background, or will act as a form of compensation to grandparents in exchange for their children leaving the country. Considerable sacrifices may be required to afford the passage and other accommodations necessary for this pursuit (Hagan 1994, Kasinitz et al. 2002).

Ayukawa (2008) provides a historical example of such an occurrence. She finds that, finances permitting, prior to the Second World War the eldest son in Japanese families in Canada was often sent back to Japan for education and language retention purposes. Similarly, Hagan (1994) documents how the members of the Maya, an indigenous group from Guatemala who live and work in Houston, sometimes send their children back home to be raised by grandparents or relatives in what is considered a “morally purer” environment. The parents, meanwhile, work full-time and send remittances that pay for the children to attend private schools in Guatemala.

In light of this phenomenon of an enduring connection between education and transnational connections, this dissertation builds on Robertson’s (2013) conceptualization of an “education-
migration nexus”. It situates Robertson’s idea within the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) secondary schooling context, with a specific emphasis on those individuals who sustain physical and emotional transnational connections and *have experiences attending more than one secondary school*, both in their place(s) of origin and in the GTA. Writing in the Australian context, Robertson (2013) suggests that nexus policies tend to involve systems of immigration control that focus on attracting elite migrants as international students, while concurrently, individual migrants utilize “personal agency and broader assemblages of power in processes of transmigration” (76). This dissertation similarly attempts to document the vast range of experiences and narratives that young people and their families encounter whilst navigating multiple systems of secondary schooling during their ongoing migration trajectories.

Specifically, utilizing the lens of social class as a means to filter divergent experiences of transnationalism, the importance of socioeconomic status within the Secondary Schooling Transnational Nexus is emphasized. Transnationalism is viewed as an active set of choices made by individuals in their life strategies and planning, whilst acknowledging how the macro-level border-crossing practices that define states and markets (or “transnationalism from above”’) lead to barriers and limitations to individuals and their families in performing and conveying their transnational ties on an ongoing basis (Al-Ali and Koser 2012, Mahler 1998, Robertson 2013).

The articulation and development of the Secondary Schooling Transnational Nexus is a means through which this dissertation attempts to fill some major research gaps. These were identified upon a thorough review of the limited existing literature connecting transnationalism and education in Canada. Four main areas where there is currently a lack of understanding and knowledge provide the basis and justification for this study:

1. There is conflicting evidence as to whether transnational ties are maintained by generations other than the adult immigrants who first relocate to a new place of residence (Kasinitz et al. 2002, Lee 2004, Rendall and Torr 2008, Somerville 2008, Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004, Wessendorf 2007). This dissertation explores how and if young people sustain transnational ties, both first and second generation Canadians and migrants, as well as those who travel abroad as visa students, in a secondary schooling context.

2. The majority of scholarly literature exploring connections between transnationalism and education in Canada are situated in the West Coast (e.g. Ley 2010, Mitchell 1999, Waters...
Comparatively, the GTA has been a relatively ignored site for research, despite its prominence as Canada’s largest and most diverse city. This study attempts to expand present knowledge about how transnational ties are experienced and/or viewed by minority and majority groups in the GTA, drawing on the locale’s specific, diverse demographic and immigration profile.

3. A focus on the socio-economically elite (and specifically East Asian) transnational populations is evidenced within the limited case studies connecting transnationalism to education in Canada (e.g. Kobayashi and Preston 2007, Ley 2010, Mitchell 1999, Waters 2003, Waters 2005, Waters 2006a). Importantly, many of these studies include little or no analysis of the importance of social class. This study aims to add to existing comprehension of the educational experiences of less privileged, more transient transnationals, diversifying popular understanding of who is considered transnational to include individuals with precarious immigration statuses and lower levels of socioeconomic privilege.

4. Teachers and other educators have rarely been questioned about their perspectives on the role of schools in facilitating, preventing or acknowledging students’ and families’ transnational ties in Canadian research, in favour of a focus on the first-hand insights of students and parents (e.g. Goldstein 2003, Mitchell 2001, Waters 2005). While such perspectives are undoubtedly important, this research seeks to broaden the population of interest to include educators, as well as recent GTA secondary school graduates.

Broadly, the aim of this dissertation is to determine the reality, relevance and importance of the Secondary Schooling Transnational Nexus within the GTA. The principal research question that this study attempts to answer is the following:

- How do transnational ties shape secondary school students’ school and classroom experiences?

In addition to this primary question, the major secondary research questions include:

- How is transnationalism evidenced in the lives of secondary students?
• What are the potential effects (both positive and negative) of having students with transnational ties within GTA secondary schools?

• Do transnational ties assist or hinder secondary students’ academic success and/or social integration processes within the GTA context?

• How does socioeconomic class impact the way that transnational ties are viewed and experienced within GTA classrooms?

• Does transnationalism fit within the broader multicultural framework in schools?

• How do educators identify and respond to transnationalism in GTA classrooms?

• How do students with transnational connections assess their GTA schooling as compared to the education they have received in their country/ies of origin?

1.7 Methodology

This dissertation relied on a qualitative methodology, employing in-depth semi-structured interviewing with 43 individuals as the primary data collection technique. Just over half of my interviews (22 individuals) were composed of recent GTA high school graduates with transnational ties (Group A). The other 21 individuals I spoke with consisted of current secondary school educators (both teachers and administrators) in diverse schools across the GTA (Group B). Through the interviews, I aimed to convey the participants’ diverse backgrounds and to create an opportunity to explore and deconstruct their schooling experiences and perspectives as related to transnationalism. The purpose was to unearth some of the deeper beliefs, values, and motivations that underpinned their deliberations and to highlight key influential dynamics in their educational and life trajectories (Ali 2012).

1.7.1 Research Design

A qualitative methodology was chosen for this research in order to uncover the participants’ lived experiences. A qualitative research design was appropriate because the goal was to understand “how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (Merriam 2009:5). A strength of qualitative research is that it awards a “local groundedness” (Miles and Huberman 1994:10), or a unique proximity to
the research issue, and has the potential to reveal complexities that may be more difficult to grasp using a conceptual or quantitative methodology (Ali 2012).

The interview questions generally focused on experiences and behaviours, opinions and values, and feelings about the subject matter, as well as background/demographic questions (Merriam 2009). It was important that these interviews delved into the complexities of experiences and feelings the participants had, both in regards to their (or their students’) connections to their countries of origin and in regards to their pedagogical and classroom involvement. For the transnational former secondary school students, the interview questions covered their migration experiences, their secondary schooling experiences and the role of multiculturalism in their GTA schools. For the educators, the interview questions covered their teaching background, experiences they had had with students with ongoing connections to their places of origin, and the relevance and role of multiculturalism in their GTA schools (see Appendix B).

1.7.2 Research Setting

The GTA was chosen as the site for the research as it is a highly diverse region and has higher percentages of poor refugees and South Asian and Middle Eastern immigrants than the rest of Canada (Basu 2002, Ley 2007, Statistics Canada 2014). The GTA consequently provided a context that is more diverse, both socioeconomically and ethnically, than the affluent regions of the West Coast described in the majority of the existing Canadian literature connecting transnationalism and secondary schooling (e.g. Kobayashi and Preston 2007, Mitchell 1999, Mitchell 2001, Waters 2006a).

The GTA includes Toronto and the municipal regions of Peel, York, and Durham. According to the 2011 voluntary National Household Survey (NHS), immigrants make up 46% of the Toronto census metropolitan area’s total population. 2011 NHS data also indicates that visible minorities account for 72.3% of the population of Markham, 66.4% of the population in Brampton, 53.7% of the Mississauga population, and 49.1% of the population of the city of Toronto (Statistics Canada 2014).

Secondary schools were selected as the focus of analysis for this dissertation based on the following rationale provided by Sacramento (2015):
Schools can act as catalysts for positive social transformations and mutually beneficial cooperation, or they can further reproduce destructive patterns of social interaction. This makes the school a key locus, where the application of appropriate policies and good practices can effectively help the integration of immigrants (1).

The goal was to expand the body of existing research connecting education and transnationalism, which to-date largely focuses on tertiary education (e.g. Abada and Tenkorang 2009, Arvast 2006, Gargano 2009). An assumption was made that elementary school students would not be old enough to fully articulate their transnational ties; this assumption was supported by a disappointing pilot interview done with a Grade 2 teacher that was subsequently excluded from the analysis, as there was not sufficient relevant data collected. However, high school is often a time when young people have an increased ability to think for themselves, along with growing agency to make important decisions about their personal lives and futures, while balancing academic and familial expectations (Ali 2012, Goldstein 2003, Strassberg et al. 2013, Yeh et al. 2008). I thus felt that the secondary school context would be a fruitful focus of analysis, and that the findings would have important societal considerations.

The primary research for this dissertation occurred between September 2011 and December 2012. Interviews were conducted at a time and place convenient for the participant and that guaranteed minimal distractions. I met participants wherever they chose, in a place they felt comfortable and safe. Locations for interviews included a coffee shop, a public library, secondary school classrooms, and the participant’s dwelling.

1.7.3 Recruitment

To locate participants, I used purposeful, snowball sampling. After each interview, I inquired whether the individual could refer me to someone who would be similarly eligible to participate in my study (Atkinson and Flint 2001). Subsequently, this strategy led to about half of my interview participants. As a result of this recruitment technique, the individuals selected for my sample were not random or representative. However, they were purposefully chosen in order to provide insights into the research questions identified above (see Appendix D for a detailed breakdown of research participants). While there was no pretense of selecting a random sample from which I could draw inferences, in selecting study participants, I did deliberately seek to maximize diversity in order to gain insights into a wide range of lived experiences (Anderson and Hughes 2010).
To recruit former secondary school students (Group A) I posted my recruitment flyer (see Appendix A) on list-serves through the Department of Theory and Policy Studies at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), the Refugee Research Network at York University, the YMCA Employment Centre, and on Facebook and Twitter. This led to numerous referrals both from people known to me as well as from strangers. All participants were initially contacted via email when I sent them my information letter and consent form (see Appendix C) to explain my research goals and the type of individuals I was seeking.

To identify interested teachers (Group B), I initially contacted the Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation for assistance with disseminating my recruitment flyer electronically (see Appendix A). I also contacted administrators in several GTA secondary schools to set up interviews and aimed to get referrals for appropriate teachers in their schools. While these efforts resulted in four educator interviews, ultimately, I largely relied on suggestions for educator participants from personal contacts I gained through past work at the Ontario government, during my graduate coursework at OISE, and through other professional connections.

1.7.4 Sample Selection

Given the considerable heterogeneity within the immigrant and transnational populations in the GTA, stringent requirements for sample section were necessary. For my transnational former secondary school student research participants (Group A), the criteria for selection was as follows:

1. Each individual had attended secondary schooling both in their country of origin and in the GTA;

2. During their interview each individual spoke of or alluded to having a minimum of one physical tie to their place of origin (e.g. sending remittances) and one emotional tie (e.g. feeling a strong sense of connectedness to their “home”); and

3. Each participant had attended secondary schooling 5-10 years prior to the interview.

During the course of the interviews, it transpired that five individuals did not meet my selection criteria for Group A. Consequently I did not include these interviews in my data analysis.
Among those who were included in my sample, in Group A, fourteen of the research participants were female and eight were male. Eight of the participants were international visa students, seven had come to Canada as economic immigrants, four were refugees, and three were second generation, Canadian-born. By having such a diverse research population, the goal was to explore a broad spectrum of migration experiences. The participants also came from a wide array of countries including: Argentina, Bosnia, China, Colombia, Ethiopia, Germany, Hong Kong, Iraq, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Portugal, Russia, Trinidad and the United Arab Emirates. These individuals were approximately equally divided between those that had attended public secondary school in the GTA (including both secular and Catholic institutions) and those that had attended private secondary school (including both secular and religious institutions). While completion of a high school diploma did not factor in my recruitment criteria, it transpired that all of my participants had done so.

Within Group A, I chose to include individuals who had attended secondary schooling 5-10 years prior to the interview for several reasons. Most importantly, I hoped that in revisiting their previous (but relatively recent) schooling experiences, the participants could reflect on how past experiences with secondary schooling had informed their future experiences and practices of transnationalism (Sefton-Green 2015). I thought that such individuals would bring a maturity and wisdom, as well as the power of hindsight, to the interviews, which might not have been possible if I had spoken with present-day secondary school students (Hoechsmann and Lightman 2015). This also allowed me to consider if the participants’ transnational ties had endured after their high school years. Additionally, interviews with individuals in their 20s and early 30s avoided the pragmatic concerns and complexities inherent in interviewing under-age participants, where there may have been problems with gaining informed consent.

The criteria for selecting my educator research participants (Group B) were as follows:

1. Each individual worked in a secondary school with a highly diverse student population and a significant number of students who were foreign-born; and

2. Each of the educators had been employed, or was looking for employment, in a GTA secondary school for a minimum of three years.
Within my educator sample, 57 percent (twelve individuals) were female and 43 percent (nine individuals) were male. The majority of the interviewees in Group B were white and middle-class, reflecting the current demographic reality of GTA teaching staff (Ryan, Pollock and Antonelli 2009, Solomona et al. 2005). The goal was to provide a breadth of educator perspectives on the impact of having a growing proportion of students with transnational ties.

Roughly half of the educator participants (ten individuals) were working in (or associated with) a secondary school in the inner city of the GTA, three worked in North York (the north end of the GTA), four were in Scarborough (the east end of the GTA) and four worked in Etobicoke (the western side of the GTA). The majority (eleven individuals) were working in the secular public system, five worked in the Catholic system and the final five worked in the private school system, at both accredited independent institutions and schools without such qualifications. Five of the educators worked in gender-segregated institutions (both Catholic and private), and one worked in a religious Muslim private school. The teachers taught a wide range of subjects in their schools, including English, geography, drama, businesses, and mathematics, for grades ranging from 9-12.

1.7.5 Data Collection and Analysis

Once I had the participants’ contact emails I forwarded them my information letter and consent form (see Appendix C) and set up a time for the interview. All interviews were conducted in English. More and less structured questions were used during the interviews, and the questions were devised to be open-ended, neutral and clearly worded, based on the suggestions of McNamara (2009). There was no predetermined wording or order and no one overarching hypothesis guided the research from the onset (see Appendix B for sample research questions). However, my interview questions were intended to gain insights into my principal and secondary research questions. No interview participants were under the age of consent and each interview lasted between 30 and 90 minutes.

I had the opportunity to pilot my study with three educators as an assignment for one of my graduate courses at OISE. Through these pilot interviews, I found that semi-structured data collection provided sufficient structure for the discussion, while allowing the participant to highlight topics and ideas I had not considered previously. During the interviews I referred to my interview guide questions (see Appendix B) to facilitate the interview. Though I did not share the
specific questions with the participants beforehand, I shared with them the general topics we would be discussing to give them a chance to prepare if they so desired. The interview questions were intended to provide a platform for them to share their thoughts and feelings, as well as to probe contextual factors, ideological underpinnings, contradictions, and personal histories. With the permission of the interviewees, I recorded each interview with a digital recorder, made interview notes during each interview and took field notes after each interview.

The process of data analysis was iterative, ongoing, and reflexive. I relied on the principles of grounded theory to interpret the data (Glazer 1992, Martin and Turner 1986). I chose a grounded theory approach for its emphasis on human experience. Conrad (1978) defines grounded theory as “theory generated from data systematically obtained and analyzed through the constant comparative method” (102). To best grasp and compare the emerging themes, I structured my data analysis in a specific manner. When I returned home from each interview I made field notes that included a lengthy account of my thoughts. The exposition included information such as a description of the overall interview process, my personal observations, anything that I found to be interesting or surprising, regrets relating to issues I wished I had probed further, questions, and any emergent themes that became apparent during the course of the conversation. Along with writing up the field notes, I also listened to the audio recording of the interview and transcribed it within one week after the interview had occurred. Listening to the audio recordings allowed me to hone my interview skills and to consider how to improve my next interview. As the interviews progressed, I reframed some of the questions in order to better elucidate some of the emerging themes, and specifically those related to the importance of socioeconomic position in impacting students’ transnational practices and behaviours.

The questions to the interviewees generally focused on experiences and behaviours, opinions and values, and feelings about the subject matter, as well as background/demographic questions. The data analysis relied on the “constant comparative method” emphasizing generation of theory from data in the process of conducting research (Glazer 1992, Martin and Turner 1986). As a result, the data was analyzed in an inductive manner and coded into themes using the software program Dedoose. The goal was for the themes to be responsive to the purpose of the research, exhaustive, and mutually exclusive (Merriam 2009:185). The interviews were subsequently presented in a manner that privileges direct quotations from the interviews, preferring to let the participants speak for themselves rather than always paraphrasing their comments.
1.8 Ethical Considerations

The University of Toronto Ethics Board approved all research methodology. In completing the ethical protocol, I outlined the worthiness of the project, my competence in pursuing this research, the methods through which I would gain informed consent, the benefits and risks to my participants, and how I would maintain the highest degree of confidentiality for my research participants. While conducting my research I did not encounter any unforeseen ethical issues. All of my research participants felt comfortable with the interview questions or chose not to answer any question they found unclear or uncomfortable. The participants understood that everything they said would be anonymised.

1.9 Limitations

The findings from this research study must be tempered by an explicit acknowledgement of the significant limitations. As an in-depth qualitative research study, this dissertation makes no claim to have constructed a representative, let alone definitive or random, sample.\(^{15}\) Notably, there are potential strengths and drawbacks to each group of interview participants selected. For Group A, the recent GTA secondary school graduates, all research participants were over 18 years of age (the age of consent). Thus, they were only able to speak of past experiences in secondary schools, both in the GTA and abroad, and there may be concerns about accuracy in the current context. However, these individuals did have the benefit of being able to provide a first-hand perspective on their educational trajectories and/or their current experiences negotiating their evolving transnational ties, both inside and outside the classroom.

Within Group B, teachers are not necessarily representative of their schools, only of their own experiences. Thus, there is a concern that interviewing teachers created an indirect line of inquiry when questions focused on their perspectives on the transnational experiences of their students. However, teachers do hold an important intermediary (and possibly more objective) subject position between policymakers and administrators and transnational students and their families and communities and thus they have a valuable voice to contribute in analyses of the education

\(^{15}\) For example, Canadian government and media concern of late has focused on youth – mostly Islamic – who have found their way into Jihadist groups and even gone to fight overseas. This may be an important component of transnational behaviour and identity among young people in Canadian schools, but largely lies beyond the scope of this study.
system (Feuerverger 1998). Secondary school administrators, for their part, provided knowledge about the school-level practices in place that affect transnational students. They were also often able to indicate what they foresaw in terms of future trends in schooling policy related to multiculturalism and transnationalism. However, these administrators also often had less knowledge than teachers and former students of what was actually going on in classrooms.

Acknowledging these limitations, it is nonetheless hoped that this dissertation can constructively contribute to current understanding and knowledge of the Secondary Schooling Transnational Nexus within the GTA.

1.10 Forthcoming chapters

This introductory chapter has laid out the context for this dissertation as well as identifying the main research questions and the interview population. The following five chapters will build on this foundation, providing additional reviews of relevant research fields across a variety of disciplines, case studies of emblematic research participants, as well as detailing crucial themes identified within the data. The subsequent chapters are presented in the following order:

Chapter two focuses on the importance of socioeconomic status and social class as a key mediating factor and a lens for analysis in experiences of transnationalism by individuals and families. Presenting a spectrum of “transilient” to “transient” transnationals, social class maintenance and upward mobility are identified as a primary motivation for voluntary migration within my sample. Notably, research participants suggested that relative social position is continuously evaluated during ongoing processes of transnational migration. A case study of an elite transnational from Hong Kong is juxtapositioned with analysis of an educator working with the undocumented Roma community in the GTA.

Chapter three examines the Secondary Schooling Transnational Nexus at the level of individuals and families, exploring both behavioural and attitudinal enactments of transnationalism. Specifically, this chapter examines how and why students and their families express their transnational ties in the GTA, and the repercussions (both positive and negative) of these ties in regards to their schooling, as identified by both former secondary school students themselves and GTA educators. Here, the contrasting case studies include the experience of an elite visa student
from Nigeria who came to a private GTA school during her teens, and a young man from Mexico who arrived at a GTA public secondary school as an undocumented refugee.

Chapter four progresses the analysis of the Secondary Schooling Transnational Nexus to the level of schools and institutions, and explores respondents’ reflections on homeland/newland secondary schooling comparisons in terms of their respective organization, orientation and pedagogical focus. Following the selected case studies that exemplify both a student and a educator experience of negotiating and analyzing schooling experiences “here” and “there”, themes related to a perception of ease in GTA schools, as well as an examination of the (ir)relevance of the multicultural framework in schools and the differing valuations of public and private schools in the GTA and abroad, are examined.

Chapter five provides an analysis of the policy implications of the Secondary Schooling Transnational Nexus by considering the larger picture, focusing on the macro issues related to transnationalism and education that are raised by this research. This chapter critically analyses recent reforms to immigration policy in Canada, and explores how this research contributes to identifying and illuminating current understanding of the transnational phenomenon, as well as furthering understanding about the connections between transnationalism and secondary schooling.

Finally, Chapter six provides overall conclusions and implications for practice. The chapter revisits the key findings within this study and then focuses on the resultant recommendations and potential barriers to implementation. It is suggested that the growing population of individuals with transnational ties within the GTA (due, in part, to high rates of Global South immigration and increased access to new forms of long-distance communication technologies), do exhibit unique classroom behaviours, which may or may not be different than those of “traditional” immigrants. It is suggested that transnational secondary students present an important and pressing challenge for the broader educational community.

Ultimately, while a small-scale qualitative study such as this one can only be viewed as one piece of the larger story of an increasing and diverse transnational population within GTA schools, it is suggested that the findings within this dissertation are pertinent and relevant to present-day discussions about reforms and improvements to GTA secondary education and may
be useful to students with transnational ties, teachers, school administrators and educational policymakers.
2 From “Transient” to “Transilient” Transnational Migrants: Applying the Lens of Social Class

2.1 Introduction

“Class analysis does not provide a complete framework for social analysis, but this does not mean that it must be abandoned” (Scott 2002:23).

This chapter provides the theoretical lens for this dissertation, and focuses on the influence of socioeconomic status\(^{16}\) within the Secondary Schooling Transnational Nexus. In this study, the lived experiences of individuals with transnational ties covered a multitude of scenarios, encompassing persons with considerable wealth, those who continuously struggled financially, and myriad positions between these extremes. Each circumstance appeared to shape the educational experiences, school performance and broader social inclusion of youth with transnational ties. However, limited existing research connecting transnationalism and education acknowledges or focuses specifically on the importance of social class (Hamann 2001, Robertson 2013, Waters 2006b, Zúñiga and Hamann 2009). Thus, it is within this lacuna that the conceptual framing of this research is situated.

Through deconstructing the migration experiences of the transnational individuals interviewed for this study, the analysis attempts to incorporate and merge aspects of the analytical concept of social class (e.g. those in the Marxist and Weberian traditions) with the more empirical traditions emphasizing the use of quantitative measures of socioeconomic status without necessarily implying a particular theory of social structure (e.g. those definitions used in reports by many international bodies such as the United Nations, the European Union, etc.). However, the focus of analysis on social class is not intended to diminish or replace other, equally important, levels of analysis identified in previous studies on transnationalism, such as ethnicity, religion and gender (and the important intersectionalities among these) (Chun, Lipsitz and Shin 2013, Duffy 2005, Lightman and Good Gingrich 2012, Simien 2007).

\(^{16}\) The American Psychological Association defines socioeconomic status as “an intersecting and dynamic measurement of education, occupation and income, which determines the social position or class of an individual or group” (Saegert et al. 2007).
Race, in particular, is also a salient lens of analysis when examining minority student outcomes and experiences (Dei and Rummens 2010, Egbo 2012, Ryan, Pollock and Antonelli 2009). The transnational former secondary school student research participants in this study overwhelming came from “non-traditional” (i.e. non-white, non-Western European) source countries, and considerable research has documented important intersectionalities between class and race for both immigrants and the Canadian-born in the labour market, the education system, and in society more generally (e.g. Chun, Lipsitz and Shin 2013, Joshee 2004, Simien 2007). In analyzing the comments and opinions of the research participants, the realities of racism and discrimination were often evidenced in their worldviews and in the anecdotes they shared. Thus, while it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to unpack the full implications of race on the Secondary Schooling Transnational Nexus, in this study socioeconomic status and race are viewed as understudied but major causal factors in transnationals’ educational and migration trajectories, and as facets that are complementary to other analytical frameworks in examining levels of social structures in society (Embong 2000, Scott 2002).

Specifically, this dissertation posits socioeconomic status (also henceforth termed without distinction “social class” and “social position”) as a critical and decisive mediating factor in the experiences of transnationalism held by former GTA secondary school students. Thus, it is suggested that an inquiry into the influence of the socioeconomic disparities between study participants in the Secondary Schooling Transnational Nexus is essential to a fulsome analysis. As well, numerous factors related to the motivation and reception of migrants in the sending and receiving countries were found to interact with this dynamic between social class and schooling for youth with transnational ties.

This chapter initially presents a critical analysis of some key sources in the literature that specifically connect social class to transnationalism and education. This is followed by a suggestion that transnationals can be conceptualized along a socioeconomic spectrum, ranging from “transilient” to “transient” migrants. Following this, the stories of two communities with transnational ties are used as typifying case studies, to exemplify how social class mediates the Secondary Schooling Transnational Nexus. And finally, data is presented supporting four overarching themes related to socioeconomic status that were identified in the interviews, each of them intimately tied to experiences linking transnationalism and education. These themes encompass the following: class maintenance or upward mobility was found to be a primary
motivation for voluntary transnational migration to and from the GTA; socioeconomic divides were found to manifest in terms of divergent migrant statuses and community connections for transnational migrants; relative social position was found to be continuously evaluated through comparisons (about financial status and schooling) between the country/ies of origin and the GTA; and, elite/transilient transnationals suggested that through their presence in GTA classrooms they are (slowly) reshaping who and what the majority population in Canada considers an “immigrant”.

2.2 Existing Literature Connecting Socioeconomic Status, Transnationalism and Education

“The transnational capitalist class is the characteristic institutional form of political transnational practices in the global capitalist system” (Sklair 1997:521).

Several well-known theorists posit frameworks that are useful in considering how social position mediates experiences and actions related to transnationalism and schooling today – both for those transnationals with financial security and formal immigration status and for those lacking both of these assets. Sklair (1991, 1997, 2001) pioneered the study of transnational class relations. His work focuses on the shifting dynamics of socioeconomic relations in the post-cold war era, taking class analysis beyond the confines of national boundaries and arguing that social class formation is progressively less tied to territoriality. Amidst the global integration of financial markets, Sklair convincingly argues that with “the compression of time and space aspects of social relations” due to globalization (Embong 2000:991), class relations have been reconfigured and must be re-conceptualized transnationally (Robinson & Harris, 2000; Robinson, 2001).

An effect of this transnational realignment of class relations (according to Sklair and others) has been the creation of a new elite in the top echelons of the socioeconomic spectrum. Sklair (1991, 1997) identifies them as the “transnational capitalist class” (TCC), while Cox (1994, 1996, 2004) terms these individuals the “transnational managerial class”. Sklair (1997, 2001, 2005) goes on to detail the membership of the TCC, which includes executives in transnational corporations, globalizing bureaucrats, capitalist-inspired politicians and the professional and consumerist elite. He states that the diverse members of the TCC are united by their desire to maintain the current
social system. Thus, the TCC eschew national interests in favour of the preservation of the global capitalist elite.

Sklair’s pioneering studies of transnational class relations largely focus on the TCC. He only mentions the opposite end of the socioeconomic spectrum in passing. According to Sklair, they constitute “subordinate groups” which may encompass the “new middle class” or the “new working class”. Embong (2000), however, takes Sklair’s ideas one step further and argues that these subordinate groups may, in fact, not be transnational at all. Embong suggests that in general, such marginal groups operate primarily within the context of a single country. Even if they do become part of the massive migrant flows from the Global South to the Global North, Embong argues that unlike the TCC they generally do not share the same language or lifestyle and they often do not identify with one another. Thus, they lack the organization and class-consciousness of the TCC. Cox (1996), for his part, refers to the “marginals and migrants” who are the domestic class involved in production within the formal and informal sectors of the global workforce. Thus, both Sklair and Cox focus primarily on the wealthiest and most powerful within society, adding to a widespread perception that transnationalism is largely the purview of the socioeconomic elite (Guarnizo and Smith 1998, Waters 2006a).

Yet not all scholars agree. Within a more explicitly educational context, Ogbu (1993) considers the different reasons migrants have for coming to the United States using a “cultural-ecological” framework. Ogbu classifies minorities in America with regards to their educational outcomes and perspectives. He distinguishes between “voluntary (immigrant) minorities”, a second group encompassing “refugees, migrants, guest workers, undocumented workers, and binational’s”, and, a third group, comprising “involuntary (non-immigrant) minorities”.

According to Ogbu’s typology, voluntary (immigrant) minorities encompass all minority groups that move to the United States for better opportunities (defined as economic advancement or political and religious freedom) than they had in their sending countries. These voluntary (immigrant) minorities differ from the majority in terms of race/ethnicity/religion and/or language. However, as these families have come due to personal choice and with the hope of a better future, their children do not experience long-lasting school performance difficulties, despite any initial problems due to discriminatory educational policies and practices and language and cultural differences. Ogbu (1993) states that voluntary minority communities are
strongly committed to their children succeeding in school and have high academic expectations that contribute to their strong school performance.

While Ogbu’s major focus of concern surrounds involuntary (non-immigrant) minorities17 (those who have been conquered, colonized or enslaved by the majority population), it is Ogbu’s third category of refugees, migrants, guest workers, undocumented workers, and binationals which, despite being far less developed, stands most relevant to this dissertation. Ogbu implicitly assumes that these migrants have precarious immigration statuses (and perhaps low socioeconomic status). As they do not have the option of settling permanently in the United States, they are transitory by definition. Ogbu and Simmons (1998) state that refugees in America share important attitudes and behaviours with voluntary (immigrant) minorities that lead to success in school. Both groups come with a “tourist attitude” toward the culture and language in America; to accomplish their goals of immigration and integration both groups must learn the ways of the majority. Voluntary minorities and refugees both understand that they may have to compromise their own cultural language and identity retention as part of the integration process.

Migrant/guest workers are conceived of differently than refugees within Ogbu’s (1993) framework. For migrants and guest workers, school credentials may not seem necessary or a priority during their temporary stay in the United States. Yet Ogbu also mentions “binationals” who may “maintain economic and other ties with their places of origin” (65) and have a different sociocultural adaptation than “immigrants” according to his framework. Such individuals may be uncertain where they are preparing their children to live in future; it may be in the United States or it may be elsewhere. Ogbu implies that this uncertainty may reduce binationals’ emphasis on schooling and academic success. However, in today’s context, the opposite argument could be made about transnationals. For such groups, no matter where they will reside in future, education

17 Ogbu (1993) states that involuntary minorities are in American society permanently against their will. The examples Ogbu provides of such involuntary minorities are American Indians and Black Americans who came originally as slaves. According to Ogbu, these groups do less well in school, as they do not possess a “tourist” attitude to learning how to behave and talk like white Americans. They feel that such acculturation is being imposed upon them, thus creating an oppositional identity. For these groups, adapting to the ways of the majority is a subtractive or replacement process, threatening their minority identity, and thus it is resisted. Such involuntary minorities evaluate their inner-city schools negatively compared to white suburban schools and are consequently more critical of curriculum and mistrustful of teachers. Ogbu and Simons (1998) state that involuntary minorities view themselves as receiving inferior education than the mainstream (white) population due to discrimination.
likely remains one of the most highly valued forms of largely geographically transferable capital and it thus may be doubly emphasized within families and communities where there is uncertainty about impending place(s) of residence.

In an article entitled “Complicating the Immigrant/Involuntary Minority Typology,” Gibson (1997) argues that Ogbu’s framework generally fits well in the Canadian context. She emphasizes that most immigrant students perform as well or better than the dominant Anglo-Canadian group, while First Nations and Francophones, both categorized as “involuntary minorities”, perform less well. However, Gibson also points to Portuguese and Spanish-speaking students who are immigrant minorities but overall perform poorly in school, similar to African-Canadian students who share attributes with both immigrant and involuntary minority groups. Here it seems that Gibson has added the helpful suggestion that, in the Canadian context, some minority groups may simultaneously share attributes from both voluntary and involuntary minority groups, regardless of their motivation for migration.

Gibson (1988) also states that Ogbu’s typology of immigrants solely applies to economic migrants in Canada who enter with the intent of acquiring the full political rights of permanent residence. She terms economic migrants’ integration processes as “accommodation and acculturation without assimilation”. However, Gibson states that refugees and guest workers (and presumably “binationalis”) do not know if they will stay in Canada indefinitely, and therefore have less incentive to integrate or prioritize Canadian schooling for their children. The nature of their children’s schooling is also influenced by whether the host country wishes them to settle permanently and the comparisons refugees, guest workers and binationalis inevitably make to their sending society(ies).

Gibson’s 1997 article includes some analysis of social position, unlike Ogbu. She argues that immigrants often view formal education in their new country as more accessible, less expensive and of higher academic quality than the schooling that would be available to members of their social class in their sending nation(s). Importantly, Gibson also critiques Ogbu’s idea of additive versus reductive views on cultural retention in schooling. She suggests that evidence shows that minorities may resist acculturation and maintain their identity within an accommodation framework (1988, 1997). Thus, according to Gibson, minorities may excel at school while resisting assimilation.
Overall, these theorists provide several important ideas that resonate in the current GTA transnational context. From Sklair and Cox one notes that the current capitalist class system works outside and beyond national boundaries and has a major impact on experiences of ongoing migration. A divide may be evidenced when considering that members of the transnational socioeconomic elite (e.g. the TCC) often share more with one another than they share with individuals of the same nationality or ethnic or religious background who are among the “subordinate groups”. As well, it is posited that transnationals among the lower echelons of the socioeconomic spectrum may not feel a similar unifying class-consciousness, and thus may cling to their national or ethno-religious identity more strongly than those in the TCC.

From Obgu and Gibson one can appreciate the analysis of the factors motivating migration or movement from the sending nation(s) as a key component determining community, familial and individual schooling success. Ogbu (1993) specifically notes that his classification scheme is not determined by race or ethnicity. Perhaps, in the GTA context, it is largely determined by socioeconomic status. Ogbu states that his theory is presented only as a means to explain the continuum of differing beliefs and behaviours of minorities and how they contribute to success or failure in school. Yet he lacks an explicit acknowledgement of the ways that socioeconomic status intersects and interacts with motivations for migration. Thus, it is likely that his model, while instructive to some degree, works better as a probability variable than as a precise predictor of cause and effect in the case of transnational migration. As well, in the current scenario of mass global migration, perhaps many more groups should be considered “involuntary minorities” and may fall within Ogbu’s underdeveloped middle group of “refugees/migrant workers and binationals”. For individuals within this categorization, depending on the social and economic resources of their families and communities both in the sending and receiving nations, it is equally possible that educational success is regarded as more important than for the majority population (rather than less so, as Ogbu suggests), as these groups may lack explicit knowledge of where they will reside in future and see Canadian education as a relatively transferable asset.

2.3 Conceptualizing a Spectrum of Transnational Migrants

“Transients will be the agents of the post-industrial revolution, responsible for mobilizing the Canadian economy and transforming its social system to meet the needs of a population, which itself will become increasingly mobile” (Richmond 1969:23).
Transnational research tends to emphasize two typologies of migrants differentiated by socioeconomic class: there are those who are very rich and mobile by choice and those who are very poor and mobile by default.\(^{18}\) Ritzer (2010), for example, makes a distinction between what he terms, “tourists” and “vagabonds”. According to Ritzer, tourists have few or no barriers to movement and travel because they wish to, staying in each place as long as their visas or chequebooks allow. By contrast, vagabonds are sometimes unable to move at all, and when they are it is likely because they are compelled to move (e.g. forced migrants due to war, poverty, or discrimination).

Generally, history suggests that the poorest strataums of society do not voluntarily migrate; movement necessarily involves costs of transportation and the abandonment of many of the few possessions the poorest may have. Thus, most immigrants who end up in North America arrive with some social capital in terms of region or socioeconomic status in their place(s) of origin (Guarnizo and Smith 1998, Skeldon 2002). However, migration may accentuate subjective feelings of being poor (Nussbaum 2003, Sen 1992, Sen 2000, Whiteford and Pereira 2012), and this, in turn, may spur further migration in order to satisfy heightened aspirations. Regardless of actual fortunes in the new place(s) of residence, transnational migrants may project an image of having “made it” in their new place of residence before contacting friends, family and/or business acquaintances in the place(s) of origin. This may be done through return visits during which transnationals display their wealth conspicuously, though remittances, and/or by self-judging their new life as better in comparison to the “old culture”. In cases where migration to the GTA is largely a matter of choice, migrants may be lured back to their sending nation(s) due to its improving economic fortunes or a perception that economic opportunities are on the decline in Canada (Siemiatycki and Preston 2007, Todd 2013, Vertovec 2009). Such movement is often framed in the literature in terms of the “push” and “pull” factors motivating migration flows (Hare 1999, Mazzarol and Soutar 2002).

Building on the existing transnational literary cannon, this dissertation posits that transnational migrants can be conceptualized along a socioeconomic continuum, spanning those who are “transilients” to those who are identified as “transients”. It is also suggested that such

\(^{18}\) In fewer cases, transnational migrants are also differentiated by their frequency of movement or by comparing rural-to-urban to urban-to-urban migration (Levitt 2001, Trueba 1999, Wu & Wang 2014).
distinctions have important effects within the Secondary Schooling Transnational Nexus. Anthony H. Richmond first documented a trend of wealthy transnationals arriving in Canada in 1969, terming them “transilient” migrants. Richmond (1969) described how these transilients had arrived after the Second World War, were primarily from Western and Northern Europe, and consisted mainly of professional, clerical and skilled manual workers. These migrants were notable for their high levels of education, cosmopolitan outlook and lack of permanency in any one country or place. Richmond detailed how transilients had a high rate of return to their former countries and did not constitute a net gain to the Canadian population “not because of dissatisfaction or failure to adjust economically or socially to Canada, but because they are part of a growing labour force of internationally mobile persons with readily saleable skills and qualifications” (10).

Thus, transilients combine high rates of geographical movement with career mobility and involvement in a network of social relationships with similarly qualified people throughout the world. Richmond emphasized that, although at the time of writing these migrants constituted a minority of Canada’s immigrants, they would likely grow in numbers over time, due to the emphasis on educational and occupational qualifications in Canadian immigration policy. Foreshadowing current concerns about the “strategic” use of Canadian citizenship by some wealthy migrants, Richmond (1969) stated the following:

By their very nature these immigrants are neither ‘assimilable’ nor will they be ‘integrated’ in the usual sense. Instead, they will be the agents of the post-industrial revolution, responsible for mobilizing the Canadian economy and transforming its social system to meet the needs of a population, which itself will become increasingly mobile (23).

Today, Richmond’s predictions resonate strongly and are reflected in the current literature on the elite high-tech and business transnational migrants who are often favoured and actively courted by receiving country governments. However, rather than primarily coming from European nations, transilients in Canada (and elsewhere) today often come from the Global South. Saxenian (2006) terms a component of this population “the new Argonauts”, who constitute communities of technologically skilled immigrants with work experience in Silicon Valley who often come from countries such as China, India, Israel and Taiwan. These transnationals learn the complexities of the high-tech world, build relationships with both fellow countrypersons and expatriate entrepreneurs from other countries, and transfer knowledge back to their country of
origin. Thus their movement can be conceived of as a “brain gain/circulation” rather than the traditional “brain drain” where human capital transfers in a unidirectional manner from poorer to richer countries (Castles 2003, Room 1999, Saxenian 2006, Skeldon 2002).

The majority of the Canadian literature on migrants who can be termed “transilients” documents the international migration and professional networks of the socio-economically elite, East Asian populations living on the West Coast (e.g. Kobayashi and Preston 2007, Ley 2010, Mitchell 1999, Waters 2003, Waters 2005, Waters 2006a). However, specifically within GTA schools, transilient migrants are often either the offspring of business or economic immigrants who have come with considerable financial resources, or are “visa students” who pay large sums of money to attend secondary school in the GTA (Goldstein 2003, Lightman 2015).

In stark contrast to these mobile, resourced populations, at the opposite end of the socioeconomic spectrum lies the second prototypical transnational group, consisting of poor, transient migrants. While there is considerably less research being done on poor transnationals in Canada (as compared to transilients), Reid-Musson (2014) traces the historical roots of “transient” migrant workers in Ontario in the 1960s and 1970s. Such workers came from Quebec and Atlantic Canada on a provisional basis, in search of temporary employment in the tobacco industry. Reid-Musson suggests that such workers were distinguished by their seasonal, poorly paid, difficult and often-dangerous employment. Today, transient transnational migrants in Ontario’s farming industries largely originate from Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean and South-East Asia. Such migrants typically arrive through the Agricultural Stream and Low-Skill Occupation sub-streams of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program in Canada. They may return to their sending societies for extended periods during the winter each year, practicing a form of circular migration.

Transient transnationals as a whole are conceptualized as “at the interstices of precarious employment and precarious citizenship” (Reid-Musson 2014:162). In the American context, there is considerable concern about transient migrants due to the on-going border crossings of large populations of undocumented Mexican and Latino migrants who lack English language proficiency, work in dangerous and seasonal industries, and have limited education or social capital (Boehm 2012, Dwyer 2013, Hamann, Zúñiga and Garcia 2010, Hamann and Zúñiga 2011). In Canada, the comparable discussion generally centres on individuals with temporary
work visas, such as the above-mentioned fieldworkers, as well as live-in caregivers, fast-food employees, and “mail order” brides, who often lack protections or coverage for social services. Transient transnationals may also include refugees or others migrants who arrive with professional skills but are unable to recertify or gain Canadian work experience upon their settlement. These transient transnationals are frequently unemployed or underemployed and work multiple jobs that are temporary, part-time, unregulated and low-wage (Bakan and Stasiulis 1994, Block 2010, Goldring and Landolt 2011, Good Gingrich 2003, Langevin and Belleau 2000, Polanco Sorto 2013, Vosko, Zukewich and Cranford 2003). They may maintain ongoing connections to their sending societies out of necessity or due to choice, oftentimes sending remittances to family members from the limited wages they accrue in Canada (Anderson 2010, Goldring and Landolt 2011, Good Gingrich 2010, Vosko 2009).

Although the Temporary Foreign Worker Program provides a significant component of the transient transnationals in Canada, very few are able to bring their family with them at their time of entry. Thus, within GTA schools, transient transnational students largely encompass a combination of refugees and the offspring of the un/underemployed immigrants who, though admitted on their human capital, often endure adverse labour market experiences in Canada (Block, Galabuzi and Weiss 2014, Goldring and Joly 2014, Javdani and Pendakur 2014).

Ultimately, while most transnational migrants in the GTA today likely lie between the extremes of “transilient” and “transient” in terms of the social and economic capital that they hold, the data from this dissertation reinforces an assumption that social position is a critical factor within the Secondary Schooling Transnational Nexus. The transilient/transient spectrum is thus intended largely as a way to conceptualize the stark differences between students with transnational ties and their families in regards to their varied socioeconomic statuses.

### 2.4 Case Studies

This section presents two contrasting case studies that exemplify the huge disparity of experiences and social positions encompassed by the term “transnational”. **Case Study #1** focuses on a transilient transnational who came to the GTA during secondary school and whose family has currently relocated to Hong Kong in order to increase their wealth. **Case Study #2** provides the reflections of a Roma educator and activist who works within this transient transnational community, which experiences many barriers in achieving academic success.
Together, these narratives provide a snapshot of some of the implications of social class for the schooling of youth with transnational ties in the GTA.

Case Study #1: The Prototypical Transnational Hong Kong Elite

2.4.1.1 Background

Hong Kong migrants are perhaps the most profiled transnational community in Canada. Within the literature, they are often framed as holding no allegiance to any single nation. Instead, they are depicted as forming an “ungrounded empire” of successful businesspeople and professionals (Ong and Nonini 1997, Ong 1999). The Hong Kong migrant community is thought to enjoy far greater societal influence than many other immigrant groups in Canada due to their economic clout, cultural savvy and network capital (DeMont and Fennell 1989, Ley 2010).

From 1987 to 1997 the British colony of Hong Kong represented the single largest source “country” of newcomers to Canada. Most of these migrants were spurred by uncertainties surrounding the transfer of Hong Kong from British to Chinese rule. However, these individuals were also lured to Canada by the promise of easy access to citizenship, the country’s reputation for embracing multiculturalism, Canada’s continued links to Britain under the umbrella of the British commonwealth and an enhanced quality of life. In addition to geopolitical concerns, emigration from Hong Kong to Canada was and is motivated by educational opportunities for migrants and/or for their children. Overseas Western tertiary education is highly valued in Hong Kong and is often regarded as instrumental to the reproduction of a family’s middle and upper-class affluence and status (Brooks, Fuller and Waters 2012, Siemiatycki and Preston 2007, Waters 2005). Acquiring Canadian citizenship is often seen as the cheaper option for families facing the prospect of financing multiple university educations abroad; as Canadian citizens, Hong Kong migrants are eligible to pay lower resident tuition fees, as compared to more costly international student fees (Ley 2010, Li and Li 2008, Waters 2005).

During the 1990s, the Canadian government aggressively recruited wealthy Hong Kong migrants through its Business Immigration Program, creating what Siemiatycki and Preston (2007) term “a highly commodified regime of immigration and citizenship” (26). In exchange for one of the quickest citizenship acquisitions in the world, it was suggested that these prosperous Hong Kong migrants would stimulate the Canadian economy and create employment, without requiring
social assistance or invoking public concern over the arrival of needy newcomers (Siemiatycki
and Preston 2007).

Yet beginning in the late-1990s, the economy in Hong Kong began expanding rapidly and widespread return migration to Hong Kong occurred within the community in Canada. According to some estimates, there are currently 32,000 fewer Hong Kong-born residents in Canada than there were in 1996 and Hong Kong is now home to more than 350,000 residents holding Canadian citizenship. The number of Canadian passport-holders in Hong Kong is well in excess of 200,000 individuals, which is four times the number of Canadians living in the United Kingdom (Todd 2013, Zhang and DeGolyer 2011). Yet, while the Canadian economy has benefited from the considerable money invested by these Hong Kong arrivals, this large scale return migration has led to concerns by the majority population about their “strategic” use of Canadian citizenship and there have been claims that Hong Kong migrants are “using” Canada for the safety and insurance provided by a Canadian passport (Todd 2013, Yang 2003).

2.4.1.2 “A Mass Exodus and a Mass Return”

P. is a 30 years old male who works for the Ontario government. His communal and personal history of traversing borders and cultures for schooling exemplifies how his family’s pursuit of financial success is interrelated with the maintenance of transnational ties and an emphasis on educational opportunities. His is an example of a transnational family that arrived in Canada from situations of relative security, as compared to more transient migration experiences.

P.’s parents were both born in Hong Kong. They moved to Canada in the 1960s at the cutting edge of a wave of Chinese immigrants in pursuit of “a better life”. They came with friends and family and settled in Toronto where P. was born. Staying connected to an ethno-religious community was essential to their cultural integration in Canada, as they came with minimal funds but quickly established themselves and prospered in professional fields:

From what I understand when they moved here there were very few Chinese people, so I think for them it was quite difficult. But they managed to find a Chinese community and converted to Christianity, which gave them a tight knit Chinese Christian community to belong to.

P. lived in Toronto with his family until he was twelve years old. Then, in the mid 1990s, his family returned to Hong Kong, joining the wave of Chinese immigrants resettling in their place
of origin. As P. sees it, the lesser economic opportunities that were available in Canada as compared to Hong Kong were fundamental to his family’s decision to move back:

I have a huge family on my mom’s side. All of my mom’s sisters moved back to Hong Kong in the mid-1980s. We were the last in the family to follow. My parents are still there. They moved to Canada originally for economic opportunity and then they also moved back [to Hong Kong] because of economics. There was a big recession here [in Canada] in the 1990s and the economy in Hong Kong was booming. So we all moved back.

P. emphasized that his family was financially secure in the GTA, but that their perception was that there were greater economic opportunities in Asia:

We were middle-class Canadians, so it’s not like anything was bad there. But I think the opportunity of making money in Hong Kong was a driving factor in the return. Hong Kong had become such an economic powerhouse that it became a huge draw for them, as well as seeing the rest of our family really flourish when they returned.

When P. arrived in Hong Kong he barely spoke Cantonese. Until he was 16, P. attended a secondary school in Hong Kong that was based on the British educational system. Then, like many members of his extended family before him, he moved back to Toronto on his own to finish high school. P.’s parents arranged for him to rent an apartment in an upmarket Toronto neighbourhood where the public school in the catchment area had a good reputation. His parents paid the rent and sent him monthly cheques for groceries and other necessities. He attended high school in Toronto for grades 12 and OAC.

P. described high school as “completely different” in Hong Kong than in Canada. Academics were strongly emphasized in Hong Kong. As P. recalled, “the math was beyond difficult in Hong Kong”. While P. was eager to return to Canada to complete his secondary schooling he found the transition back challenging socially:

I lived alone so I could slack off as much as possible. Socially, I had to completely readjust. I’d gone to a school with all Chinese kids, guys only, and all of the sudden I was in a school with girls and with white people. I was like, ‘Where am I?’

However P. also found that after Hong Kong, Canadian society seemed much less class stratified, something he regards as positive. He said that this difference is especially evident to him when he returns to Hong Kong on regular visits:
You definitely have cliques in school, but in Canada it's a lot more multicultural, especially in the GTA. It was a huge difference from Hong Kong. I think the difference is that Hong Kong has a very defined class system and you felt it between English speakers and people that only spoke Chinese. You were the elite. On the streets they had random ID checks and if you're a kid and you're bad, you get your ID checked all the time. But I would always get out of trouble because the cop would come up and I'd just start speaking English and that would be the end of the check. In stores, the second you spoke English they'd rush over to help you, assuming you're part of that elite culture. Coming here, it feels like there's no class system, like everybody's exactly the same. It feels like a much more egalitarian society.

Currently P. resides in Toronto. The rest of his immediate and extended family lives in Hong Kong. He travels back and forth at least once a year to visit his parents and siblings and said the possibility of moving back is never completely off of his mind:

Initially, I definitely thought I’d go back [permanently]. I got into the honours economics program at York University and I totally thought I’d become a businessperson and go back to Hong Kong and make lots of money and work for my uncle because he has a big investment firm there. That was my plan. My parents certainly thought I would be a lawyer or a doctor or an accountant and return to Hong Kong.

While P. said he has grown accustomed to the slower pace of life in Toronto, he knows that were he to move back to Hong Kong his family’s connections would make it easier for him to find a lucrative job than in the GTA:

All of my cousins are there. Even the cousins that decided they wanted to stay in North America are there now. The job market is great and my extended family is very well established in Hong Kong. None of the kids really have to worry about what they’re going to do there [professionally]. Some of them moved back in a way that was supposed to be temporary, to take care of their parents. But when you’re taking care of family you ultimately end up just staying there. So I guess there’s a chance that I will ultimately end up back there too.

P.’s experience may be common for many within the more economically secure components of the Chinese Canadian community. And, as such, P exemplifies a transilient, elite transnational experience in the GTA. Economic profit has undergirded his family’s on-going decisions about education, migration and (re)settlement.
Case Study #2: The GTA Roma Refugee Claimants: Transnationality Due to Status Precarity

2.4.1.3 Background

It is estimated that there are more than 80,000 Roma residing in Canada today, most within the GTA. The majority arrives fleeing persecution, discrimination and targeted economic deprivation in their countries of origin or most recent residence. In the past fifteen years, there has been a dramatic increase in xenophobia and physical attacks against Roma in Central and Eastern Europe. This had led to an upswing in Roma fleeing their countries of origin or residence to claim refugee status abroad. While limited data is available, most Roma arrive in Canada from Hungary and the Czech Republic with minimal education, skills, and social capital, and many fear the consequences of returning to their sending nations (Norman and Streiner 2008, Tóth 2010, Walsh and Krieg 2007).

The Roma have significant internal heterogeneity and there is considerable debate as to their degree of shared consciousness (Fosztó 2003, Tóth 2010, Walsh and Krieg 2007). Traditionally, they are not conceived of as a “transnational” community. However, the GTA Roma overwhelmingly come as refugee claimants and experience high levels of rejection at the status determination board. Thus, their precarious status necessarily suggests a non-linear settlement path. As well, as they come from communities in Europe where they are targets of discrimination and abuse, after moving to Canada they remain concerned for family and friends still at risk. As a result, Roma individuals and families frequently rely on news and other social media to stay current on political events in their place(s) of origin. The Roma use Skype and other accessible means of communication to stay continuously connected to family members and friends who have yet to leave their sending nations (Trandafoiu 2006, Tsagarousianou 2004).

2.4.1.4 Safety Before Study: A Roma Educator Perspective

G. works as a substitute teacher in inner-city Toronto public schools as well as being an informal educator and Roma community activist. G. suggested that the Roma are transnational by necessity, despite the fact that they may not be migrating from one country to another on a continuing basis. Her experiences as a Roma educator working with Roma youth in GTA secondary schools evidences the important connections between social position, immigrant status, education and transnationalism in this community:
Everyone is speaking to his or her family and friends back home on Skype. Even families that came here a generation ago still do that. They’re following the news back home because it's very relevant. They have to watch to see who's getting attacked, who's safe. It's always being on this state of defensiveness and nervousness. The amount of information sharing is quite remarkable. The amount of Facebook groups in the Roma community is really amazing.

G. described the continuing influx of Roma refugee claimants coming to the GTA and emphasized how this state of refugee status precarity impacts youths’ ability to concentrate in schools:

It makes a big difference. They’re stressed out, these kids. A lot of them are going through post-traumatic stress syndrome. A lot of them have had really bad experiences with physical, psychological or verbal abuse before they came here. They’re used to being spit on and beat up and taunted and sitting in the back of the class, not allowed to participate in extra-curricular activities. I remember a few years ago when the kids came from Czech Republic and Hungary they would say, ‘I don't want to have to go back and worry every night if my house is going to get burned down and we're going to be killed.’ That stuff trumps going to school and learning French or science.

G. emphasized that even within the Roma refugee community there are significant differences between those that enter Canada with legal status, as government assisted or privately sponsored refugees, and the many within the Roma community who come as refugee claimants. In the past, the latter often waited several years for a refugee board hearing that determined if they would or would not be deported and sent back to from where they had come. The federal government has recently taken steps to stem the flow of Roma refugee claimants, but it remains to be seen how effective they will be.

G. also noted that there are important internal differences related to socioeconomic status within the Roma community. She said there are disparities between individuals coming from cities in Europe, who often have had slightly more formal education, and those who come from remote rural communities where they may have been denied proper schooling:

19 G.’s analysis of barriers in the Roma community in the GTA echoes the widespread debate about a divisive case that occurred in 2013 in France. There, a fifteen-year-old Roma girl named Leonarda Dibrani was arrested in front of her classmates on a school bus and subsequently deported with her family back to Kosovo due to their illegal immigration status. While by most polls the majority of French citizens supported the decision to repatriate the family, there were widespread protests supporting the young woman’s right to finish schooling in France (Stille 2013).
Educational success often depends on where they come from. Sometimes in Hungary, whether they come from a larger city or whether they come from a village makes a big difference. People that have come from a village, often their experiences with marginalization and exclusion from society is much more profound. So they find it more difficult to navigate through this large city and this society here. And a part of that is the school system. In Roma settlements in Hungary and Czech Republic sometimes the only school they could attend were kilometres and kilometres away to walk to and sometimes it was a segregated school. We’ve had kids who’ve been subjected to segregation. They were only allowed into a certain part of the same school as non-Roma kids. That’s more pervasive the more rural you go, outside of the main cities. So in the smaller cities and towns you find that much more prevalent. Often these families just decided not to send their kids to school at all, they just sort of give up.

As well, G. stated that Roma who have family members already established in the GTA when they arrive often do better in school. Having this communal support to rely on for advice makes it easier to navigate the oftentimes-complicated GTA educational system. Consequently, community connections are very important for the Roma:

Those that do have family that had come perhaps in the late 1990s or early 2000s that were accepted as refugees and hence were later given their permanent residency papers, those people that have family connections here already or close friends, have done tremendously better than those that have had no family or friends. Some students do really well. It just really depends on having assistance inside or outside of the community. Many without such connections end up withdrawing their refugee claims because they just don't have the support. And kids that have family here already often do better in school as well. Sometimes those family members have already gone through the school system here and have graduated from college or university. Those things make a big difference.

For many Roma, education remains secondary to personal safety as the instigating factor behind coming to Canada. While G. finds that many Roma parents are happy about the educational opportunities available to their children in the GTA, family financial insecurities often require their children to contribute to the family income even at a young age. This leads to high dropout rates within the Roma community:

Some of them do very well and a number of them don't. I’ve seen a lot of them drop out when they get to an age where they can do so legally and I’ve seen others that have stayed and finished. I’ve seen the kids tell me so many times that they can't concentrate on school, they just cannot concentrate, the teenage ones, because they feel like they need to work. They need to earn money to help the family because, contrary to the government believing that you can actually become wealthy off of welfare, it's really not enough to pay your rent. So they feel like they have an obligation to go and work. And that's a cultural thing as well. Everyone, somehow, is contributing to the family [in the Roma community]. The older you get the more that is a norm.
G. mentioned that in cases where a Roma youth’s refugee claim is rejected and he/she is forced to return to Europe, many have difficulties in getting their Canadian education recognized in their sending society. Even within GTA schools, G. has serious concerns about Roma young people being assigned to classrooms below their actual grade level. She feels there are serious problems in this regard due to anti-Roma discrimination and a lack of appropriate English as a Second Language (ESL) assistance:

The Hungarian and many other European education systems don't recognize Canadian educational credentials. So if they were in grade four when they came, and they are here for three or four years, because that's generally how long it takes to get through the refugee system, and then they get deported, now they're the age of grade eight but in Hungary they're moved back down to grade three. We have enough problems when it comes to getting our community educated. When this happens, they often just never go back to school… But even in Canada, going down a grade has been a huge problem. The older Roma youth get put back into grade nine ESL or something like that when they arrive. A big problem with that is the first language testing, and actually finding out where they are at academically when they arrive. And then sometimes you need to look at who is doing the first language testing. 99.9 percent of all the translators in Toronto that have certification or these types of things are non-Roma and the tensions that exist between Roma and non-Roma in some communities is significant enough to impact how they would do on these tests or how somebody's story is being told at the immigration and refugee board or being transcribed on paper.

Overall, G. suggested that education is essential to Roma upward mobility and improved socioeconomic standing. However, serious educational barriers remain for Roma individuals, families and communities both in their countries of origin and in the GTA. Issues of impermanency and insecure refugee status further aggravate this. Such difficulties often take precedence for the Roma over fostering community connections with GTA schools, and ultimately, their children’s academic achievement.

### 2.5 Themes Within the Interviews

This final section of Chapter 2 aims to ground and link the preceding review of scholarly literature and case studies with the empirical realities connecting socioeconomic status to transnationalism and education, as experienced and identified by the study participants. After sifting through the content of the interviews, four major trends were distinguished that tie social class, on-going connections to the places of origin, and schooling: divides related to socioeconomic status were evident in the reasons interview participants provided for why they were attending school in the GTA; upon migration to the GTA, differences in social class were
associated with disparities in immigrant status and the “institutional completeness” (Breton, 1964) of the diasporic community; socioeconomic status was tied to shifting perceptions of upward and downward mobility through international migration; and, finally, in part due to the current influx of more financially secure transilient transnationals, interview participants hinted at a changing dynamic in terms of who and what the majority population in schools and beyond consider “immigrants”. Each of these trends is developed below in greater detail.

2.5.1 Class Maintenance or Upward Mobility: The Primary Motivation for Voluntary Migration

In the twenty-two interviews with recent GTA secondary school graduates with transnational ties, the reasons behind their migration to the GTA were a frequent topic of conversation; there was a suggestion that transnational ties are best understood and dissected within this context. While Ogbu’s (1993) framework lumps all immigrants into a single category of “voluntary minorities” regardless of the primary motivation behind their emigration from the sending society, the interviewees suggested that there is need for a more nuanced analysis of divergent reasons leading to their relocation. They also implied (or specifically stated) that why transnational individuals and families relocate has important educational consequences. There was often a keen awareness that wealth and prosperity for themselves and/or their families was a main reason behind their migration; ten of these participants had come to the GTA because their parents had determined that economic prospects would be better in North America than in their countries of origin, at least in the short term. In these cases, the move was, in large part, a choice or calculated economic risk. Western education was often perceived to be an essential component for the maintenance or improvement of social status through migration, and at times was the single main reason identified for emigration. However, for those individuals who had not come to the GTA to improve their financial fortunes, the decision often was based on a hope of political freedom or security of person. In these cases, education was usually a distant second as a motivational factor for migration or not even a component of the decision-making process. Regardless of socioeconomic status, however, positive associations with “multiculturalism” and a perception that Canada is a more inclusive, less racist society than the Unites States or Europe were also often offered as an important contributing factor in the decision to come to the GTA. The educator study participants, for their part, also often identified differences in socioeconomic
status as a key or sole explanatory factor behind why their students came to the GTA to attend school.

Some of the former GTA secondary school student research participants stated that they migrated to the GTA specifically for educational opportunities, sometimes with their family and sometimes on their own. Those that came as part of a familial unit often immigrated in a gradual fashion. Other families made a deliberate calculation as to which family members were best suited to immigrate to Canada and which were better off visiting regularly while continuing to live and work in the country of origin. The same was also true in several cases of reverse migration where participants and/or their families returned to the sending society. U., who came to the GTA from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) during high school, said that his family felt strongly that he should get a Western education to improve his and his family’s future financial prospects. While his family initially applied to immigrate to the United States and the United Kingdom, as well as to Canada, U. said that in the post-9/11 era his parents thought that Canada would be less anti-Muslim. Other interview participants (and specifically all four who identified as Arab or Muslim) echoed this sentiment. Their families had decided to relocate to the GTA in part due to a perception that Canada was less racist than other Western countries. Yet within U.’s family, there was also a strategic assessment of the economic prospects of resettlement for each individual family member. Consequently, U.’s father remained in Dubai, while U. and his siblings came to Toronto. During his high school years, U.’s mother spent half of the year in Toronto and the other half in Dubai:

My parents had always had the idea of sending us for further education somewhere else. We came through a special company in Dubai that does immigration processing…Mom used to live six months in each country. My dad has spent time in Canada over the years, but he never physically lived here on a permanent basis. It wasn't that he wasn't interested in living in Canada, but he wasn't going to get the same job, nor was he going to have the same prestige and authority. Keep in mind that in Canada, whenever you're looking for a job, the first thing they ask you is ‘What's your Canadian experience and educational background?’ His education is from India in the 1970s. It would be worth nothing here. So education was the main reason we came here, but then we kind of assessed where the best place is to have a good life. I’m still in Toronto, but my brother moved back three years ago for economic reasons and he's doing well. He's happy there. There's more money there. He's a businessperson and he definitely does better there.

M., however, provided an almost entirely reverse scenario from that detailed by U. She came with her family from China in 1993 after her father got a job in the GTA but ended up returning
to China after she finished law school in Ontario. In the current context, she said she makes more money in China than in Canada, largely due to the cachet of her Western education and her fluency in English. Her parents, however, have stayed in Canada because they feel that they are too old to adapt to the changed economy in their country of origin:

Initially we came when my dad got a postdoctoral position here. It was a big honour. But now, my parents were excited when I went back, because it's an expanding market in China. Because by this time my parents did want to go back to China, once they had enough money to not go back with nothing, they found that they'd already been outdated. They weren't part of the growth and development of China so they're not up-to-date with their skills and knowledge. So they became the obsolete generation in China. When they go back they're treated just as foreigners are. But for me to go back and make a really high salary they were really excited and impressed.

As key players within the evolving transformation of schooling in the GTA to target wealthy students from abroad (analysed in greater detail in ensuing chapters), the visa students in this study also had important contributions to the analysis of the role of social class in the Secondary Schooling Transnational Nexus. Yet the reasons most of the visa students provided for why they had decided to study in Canada were not dissimilar to those of economic migrants. Academic advancement or financial opportunities were also the primary motivation in almost all cases (although two out of the seven visa students also stated that they had come in order to escape familial or interpersonal problems in their sending country). However, visa students tended to state that their parents strongly supported the decision to come, believing that students who attended secondary school in the GTA would have an easier time gaining admission to North America universities and would improve their English skills, a valuable financial asset. O., who came from Ethiopia by herself and attended a boarding school that targets international students, said that in Ethiopia she simply did research on the internet about schools in Toronto and chose one that sounded like a good fit:

I came to Canada in July 2004 when I was in Grade 11. My parents thought I could get a better education here. There was no other reason I came, only for education. I came by myself. I was 18. I came to Toronto for boarding school and my aunt lived here. It was a spontaneous decision. Out of nowhere. I don't know why I said Canada but I said it and it just happened. Honestly. I was going to a very good school in Ethiopia. I went to an international school (I did the International Baccalaureate program) so my credits were all transferred. Actually, my grade ten courses became my grade eleven courses here. They gave me half credits because the courses in Ethiopia were at a higher level than what they were doing here. We just Googled the school and my aunt went to the school and did interviews and then I registered.
In other cases, fears about the political situation in the country of origin trumped any desire to go to school in Canada or any particular familial emphasis on academic achievement when it came to migrating. This complements Gibson’s suggestion that Ogbu’s framework for voluntary minorities is most applicable in the case of economic migrants. When there was an immediate fear of danger or war, schooling was at best a distance second factor motivating the migration of study participants.

T’s experience exemplified this scenario. T. emigrated with his family from Pakistan when he was in high school. He emphasized that his father sacrificed his professional career and economic position in coming to Canada because of the family’s perceived danger in Pakistan, as well as due to the benefits of fluency in English that would accrue to his children by living in the GTA:

Definitely, oh hell yes, definitely it was a big step down. My dad was the assistant vice-president of a bank and he just left all that, left all his career ambitions, and just said ‘We’re going to get out of here.’ And that’s something that he’s really drilled into us, too. At the end of the day, safety and health you can’t compromise on. Money’s made and money’s lost, but safety and health you can’t buy…Another thing my dad pointed out is that he’s grateful that we don’t have an accent in English. That’s something he was conscious about and it wasn’t until I got into linguistics and language acquisition and started thinking about how people talk and how they speak, that it kind of really hit me. We were young enough to come to Canada and learn and acquire that Canadian accent. A lot of doors close on you because of the way you speak sometimes. My dad says not having to deal with that is reason enough for the move.

R., whose family came as refugee claimants from Mexico, said that safety and economic opportunity were also major motivating factors for his family’s decision to relocate. Similar to T., R. said school had nothing at all to do with it:

I didn't really decide to come to Canada. It was more a matter of my mother deciding. Mexico City, where we lived, was in a huge economic depression. At that point, my parents decided to move to another place and my mother and I came to Canada. We came together, and then my father and my brother came afterwards. For Mexicans, the [United] States is a place in which, coming from Mexico, we already have knowledge that Mexicans are very stigmatized there, that we have a difficult time in terms of race and integration. Even though there's a lot of Mexicans there, I think my mother's reasoning, she was the one behind this whole thing, was that we should go to a place that we don't know too much about, but at least we don't know bad things about it. So Canada became that place. So for them it was not the school, because they wouldn't have known anything about how the school system was here. I think it was more that our country was going to hell so they wanted to change our location altogether.
The twenty-one educators who were interviewed proved well aware that students in GTA schools come from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds and that this is intimately tied to the reasons behind their migration, their continuing connections to their place(s) of origin, and ultimately, their schooling experience. NN., a guidance counselor at a Catholic high school, stated that differences in social class in large part explain the divide between visa students and other immigrant youth in his school, even for individuals originating from the same country:

We’re an area that sees the extremes. We see business and technical leaders coming in and working for companies and their kids driving fancy cars. And then we see the immigrant kids coming from poverty in Africa or Latin America. The group of Colombians we have as international students are very wealthy, where the group of Colombian students we have as immigrants are criminally poor. It’s pretty tense between them at times. I’ve had a number of kids in my office who will not tell me why they came to Canada. My guess is that for a couple of kids it’s because their family was tied to the drug cartels. For others they were fighting the drug cartels or they left because they were being targeted.

However, N., a public school geography teacher, wondered if schools might better help students to understand their processes of migration. She questioned if (at least at the time of their arrival) students really understand why it is they have moved here. N. said she relies on her own experience of moving to Canada as a child to help her understand and assist her students through the difficulties of resettlement:

For a lot of students there's a lack of understanding about ‘why did we move?’ There’s this vague notion of success or this vague notion of where we were living wasn’t good and war is dangerous. But as a kid you're often happy where you live. Not all the time, but overall you're with your friends and there's a naiveté that's helpful. How do you help parents and their kids better understand that decision about that move and is there a role for schools? I don't know. When I moved back here as a child I hated being here and I hated Toronto. I had a really hard time transitioning because my memory of Israel was so positive. In Israel, I could walk to school by myself when I was four. Here, all of a sudden I’m being walked to school.

Thus, in all these cases, the interviewees, both former students and educators, suggested that socioeconomic status cannot be disaggregated from the reasons students with transnational ties present for coming to secondary schools in the GTA. These reasons, and the resultant educational implications, also call into question the utility of Ogbu’s broad category of “voluntary minorities” in the current transnational context.
2.5.2 Divergent Migrant Statuses and Community Connections: A Mirror of Socioeconomic Divides

In order to examine the schooling experiences of transnational migrants across the socioeconomic continuum, the sample was specifically constructed to ensure that interview participants held very different social positions from one another in their countries of origin. However, analysis of the interview data identified that on arrival in the GTA, these differences were often closely tied to their formal immigrant status (or lack thereof) and the institutional completeness (Breton, 1964) of their diasporic community. Many interviewees identified commonalities (or perhaps hinted at a shared consciousness) with other migrants of the same socioeconomic status, reinforcing Sklair’s suggestion that the class system has been transnationally reconfigured. Some interviewees arrived in the GTA as visa students, others as economic immigrants, and yet others as refugees, both documented and undocumented. Some individuals recounted how they were forced to give up citizenship in their sending nation once they settled in Canada. Others stated that gaining Canadian citizenship was an important long-term safeguard in case of war or political upheaval in their place(s) of origin.

R. attended a GTA public high school for newcomer students when his family came from Mexico. He stated that the differences between immigration statuses were more evident than other socioeconomic differentials between students in his school. As a refugee claimant, he considered himself to be in the lowest rung of his school’s social group’s ladder:

I always felt less. Class was defined among my friends by who had the best status. It went the gamut from people who had citizenship to landed immigrants, to the refugees, to the illegals. I had friends who were landed immigrants and I thought they were much better than me and I always felt less then. People who were citizens were lucky. Throughout high school, because most of my friends were foreign born, that was a way of marking differences in my group.

U. stated that education was the primary reason he and his family came to Canada from the UAE. However, immigration status was also a consideration. Despite the fact that U. was born in Dubai, his parents, who emigrated from Tanzania to the UAE before he was born, are of Indian origin. Consequently they (and he) are ineligible to become citizens of the UAE and have only limited political rights. As a result, U. appreciated what he perceived to be the transparent Canadian process of acquiring permanent residency, and ultimately citizenship:
I never was ‘from’ there [the UAE]) because I never had a passport. I can't even say that about my own home country because I never lived in Tanzania either. But Western education was a key reason we had for moving. Not many people went to university in Dubai at that time. It wasn’t looked upon highly. In Canada we knew that it was only a matter of time until we could get citizenship. There was a clear process.

For interview participants who came to the GTA as refugees, without official documentation or as government-sponsored refugees, Canada was often seen as a “land of opportunity” or a “multicultural mecca”. This was true even for those refugee claimants who feared deportation to their sending country/ies or who struggled with acute poverty upon resettlement. Reinforcing Ogbu’s (1993) suggestion that refugees share a positive “touristic” attitude to Western cultural and society, these migrants were often eager to gain Canadian educational credentials. However, as G. mentioned in her description of youth in the GTA Roma community, the refugee claimant interviewees also often prioritized gaining permanent residency status for themselves and their families over educational achievement.

R. explained how his family awaited their refugee hearing for eight years. At age 21 he was deported. He subsequently married his girlfriend at the time, but still had to return back to Mexico for more than two years while his application was processed before he could reunite in Canada with his new wife. As a result of his unstable visa situation, R. did not attend university. R. said that because he was considered an “alien” he would have had to pay international tuition fees for post-secondary schooling which were prohibitively expensive. Instead, he had a much earlier entrance in the labour market than many of his peers. During high school, R. recounted how he felt his lack of permanency as well as a need to set aside his interest in his school’s artistic program so as not to threaten his family’s chances to gain permanent residency:

You check the mail every day to see if there's mail that will say something about your status. You have this feeling of ‘hopefully there's news’. But you're always scared also. If you break any law you know you're getting kicked out. And if you get kicked out, it creates a lot of problems for your family and they've struggled financially to get you here. So there was a lot of self-repression in a way. A lot of feeling that you can't, you can't do that, so you must just keep a low profile. As far as my brother and I went was getting Mohawks [in our hair]. We could have gone farther with the way we dressed and so on, but we knew if we were called to the immigration board for a hearing and you showed up with this whole look, that would be bad for the whole situation. In school as well, I always felt like I had to censor. I didn’t want to draw any negative attention. As an artist it was difficult, not rocking the boat.
The visa students had a very different experience. They often saw themselves as part of a booming global industry where Western schools (public and private) compete to attract wealthy foreign students who pay considerable fees for this “privilege”. These individuals had come to the GTA to get an education regarded as more prestigious or “easier” than that which they would have acquired in their sending society/ies. They also came to improve their English skills and/or to acculturate to “Western ways” before applying to universities in Canada or other Global North nations. Once they completed university, some of these recent GTA secondary school graduates ended up staying in the GTA, even as they maintained intimate connections to their place(s) of origin. Others returned home without feeling major connections or attachments to Canada.

L., who has been an ESL public school teacher for several decades, said she has witnessed many different waves of immigrants pass through her classroom. She identified her students’ immigration statuses as being closely tied to the socioeconomic position of their communities as well as to their individual challenges and strengths in her classroom:

When I first started teaching ESL there were ‘boat people’. Those were very, very hard times. The students often arrived from refugee camps and had experienced piracy, starvation and all kinds of dreadful things. So actually getting their mind around school was a difficult thing. In some ways it was lovely. They loved the safety, the continuity. They loved the warmth. But at the same time they were dealing with huge issues and didn’t even have residency here. Later on, when we got the kids from China, they were very rich kids who’d been sent because their parents didn’t know what would happen to their money [under the transition to a new government regime]. They were sending them here to be on their own and they often came very young, on their own, to live in Canada. They were much too young to live on their own. They were wild with drugs. They skipped school. Life was one big party and that was a different problem. So there’s no hard and fast rule, it always depended on what was going on in the world at the time for what we got and what we were doing.

OO., a private school administrator, also said that the source countries that her school deliberately targets for visa students have changed over time. She suggested that these changes are tied to shifting economic fortunes in the sending nations as compared to those in Canada, as well as the perceived academic level of the secondary schooling system in the sending society. OO., however, also allowed that an on-going stream of visa students is essential for the financial sustainability of her school:

Most of the boarders are from Asia. That’s where the money is now. We used to have many more from the Caribbean, but not as much now. I think it’s that people there [in the Caribbean] do not have the money that they used to and the schools there have gotten
much better. So people are staying there, completing their secondary education, and then coming to North America for university. For example, there is a Jamaican parent who lives there and his children came to our school. He used to live in Canada and went to public school for high school and to Waterloo for engineering. Then he went back to Jamaica. But he sent his two daughters to our school and then they went to university in Britain and New York. Now they are both living in New York. They’re all over the place.

In addition to the importance of students’ immigration status upon arrival, many interview participants also volunteered that their or their parents’ close connections to their religious or ethnic diasporic communities proved an asset in getting information and assistance, financial or otherwise, for their integration into the GTA. These connections also often facilitated access to and understanding of the secondary school system. However, other participants presented a contradictory viewpoint and instead emphasized that such connections could also lead to insularity in these communities or even suggested that their families preferred them not to associate with their co-nationals abroad, in some cases out of fear that this would have negative educational impacts. Thus, echoing Sklair’s suggestion of a Transnational Corporate Class, national allegiances sometimes came second to socioeconomic fidelities.

B. said that her parents decided she should attend secondary school in the GTA over England specifically because there was a smaller Nigerian expatriate community in Canada than in the United Kingdom. Her parents thought the Nigerian community in England would be a bad influence on B. and felt that Nigerian youth studying abroad on their own often got into trouble:

My parents are not really too fond of the [United] States because of everything going on there. They feel like Americans are very uptight and very racist and they feel like Canada is more open-minded. It was either Canada or England but they didn't really want England because most of the people who go to England from Nigeria had a bad reputation. Like me, they leave at a young age. They go to England and the things that go on there gets a really a bad reputation. They just go there and act like fools and waste their parents' money. So my parents didn't want me to be around that crowd. They thought that, because at that time there was a smaller Nigerian community in Toronto, that it would be easier for me. They didn't want me to be around Nigerians. They thought Canada would be better because it has a smaller Nigerian community than in England. The first thing my mom told me when I was leaving was ‘Do not hang out with Nigerians. Please, please stay away from them.’ Because when they leave their country, I think it's because they know they have no one watching over them, they do whatever. Drug dealing, all that kind of stuff. So my parents wanted me to stay away from that.

Conversely, for I., being part of a small, economically elite Muslim sect provided his family with the support necessary to integrate fairly easily into the life of that sect in the GTA when they
moved. As a result, his family was able to resist mainstream acculturation and maintain their ethno-religious identity. I. arrived in Toronto with close family and friends from Dubai already in the city. These contacts were useful in easing his family’s adjustment to life in the GTA. I.’s experience fits into Gibson’s idea of an “accommodation framework”. However, I. also stressed the importance of economic security and social position in facilitating his transition:

All I remember is that my dad had put a significant amount of money in a Canadian bank and that was essentially enough. It was around $100,000 I think. Our ability to become citizens was purely based on economic wealth. Mom only lived in Canada for four years. For her it was a pretty steady adjustment because she had her religious community. The beauty of the sect we are a part of is that it's very global. It's a Muslim sect called Bohri, and we are only 5 million in the world. We are very close knit and tied in the economic elite. It's all based on business and paying into the membership. My mom had a huge support network, so people knew she was coming here and she had friends from her childhood here when we moved. So I actually ended up moving here with about 20 of my friends.

However, S. critiqued what she regarded as the isolationist tendencies within certain diasporic communities. She said she was glad to move to a part of the GTA that wasn’t entirely Punjabi. She sees “ethnic enclaves” (Logan, Zhang and Alba 2002, Waldinger 1993, Wilson and Portes 1980) as destructive to immigrant integration:

Having a strong ethnic community is and isn’t important. It is important but I don’t want, when I have children, I don’t want them to grow up in a segregated area. I’ve seen the challenges of being around the community too much. The thing is, I think growing up in a white area benefited me because I learned how to associate with mainstream society and I also like to hang out with a lot of Indian people. But I still don’t only hang out with Indian people because I think it’s important to integrate. I also feel like there’s a lot of drama and gossip when it’s totally your community and you’re entirely living in that community. So I want to live in an area where there’s a balance between both.

Thus the interviewees identified myriad ways in which differences in social class among transnational migrants are related to divergences in immigration statuses and to perspectives about the utility of strong connections to the ethno-religious community in the GTA. All of these had potentially important implications for schooling and schools in the GTA.

2.5.3 Perceptions of Relative Social Position Fluctuate for GTA Transnational Students

The interviewees offered different perceptions of upward and downward mobility through migration to the GTA and the integral role of schooling in this ongoing dynamic. In doing so, it
was notable that transnational migrants subjectively assessed their own social class in a continuous manner. For some of the former GTA secondary school students, Canadian society was perceived to be much more egalitarian than their sending countries. Return visits to their countries of origin only served to reinforce this difference. Some interview participants even felt that they had to hide their more elite status and luxurious lifestyle in their countries of origin in order to adapt to the “Canadian” manners of their peers. Still others stated that moving to the GTA had led to a downward shift in their lifestyle. B. exemplified the former perspective in reflecting on the differences at her private school in the GTA as compared to her life and schooling in Nigeria:

I was shocked when I came to Canada and found out people don’t have maids. Nigeria is diverse but we don’t mix. Sometimes you meet different people through business, like how my mom met her Lebanese friend. But you don't just mix on the street. Here, nobody cares how much money you have. Over there, it's so different. Even in my school, the expats stuck together. I knew them, but we never hung out. We'd go to the same parties but we never talked. Over here you socialize with everyone in school. Over there, there are tribal divisions and class divisions. I'm still shocked by how multicultural it is here. Especially when you leave and come back you get shocked again.

For I., coming from the UAE, there was also a sense that Canada was more classless than his sending country. I. attended a public school in the GTA and had to adapt to a social circle which included some students of limited means who were financially unable to do things he was accustomed to doing without thought to cost. I. said he felt obliged to hide his economic privilege from classmates in Toronto as it appeared ostentatious or boastful by Canadian standards:

The transition was pretty hard. When we were younger, in Dubai, we started drinking when we were 12. We were clubbing, partying. I came here and everyone was like “let's go to Tim Horton’s and hang out in a parking lot.” For me that was a big culture shock. Everyone would go to the shopping mall, which I found extremely boring. Nobody wanted to get into cabs, which I was very accustomed to. I would just hop into a cab whenever I felt like it. But here everyone was like “No, let's walk for eight kilometers.” Really, there was a huge jump in the income class of my friends. My friends here were middle to lower class. As a result of that, certain privileges or things I liked to do they couldn't afford. You pick up group mentality, so I went through a strange transition where I became a rocker and I pretended I was poor. I was trying to fit in, I guess… At the time, nobody knew what Dubai was. If I ever talked about my lifestyle there people would think I was being pretentious or obnoxious or making things up.
R., coming from a middle class background in Mexico, appreciated the less rigid class structure in Canada. He said living in the GTA allowed him to date and socialize with people from backgrounds very different than his own, something that would not have been possible in Mexico City:

Here class was not a big issue. That's one of the reasons why I felt very relaxed. In Mexico, class divisions are really marked. Maybe it was also because most of the people I was around in Toronto were pretty much like me, immigrant kids. My best friends were from Serbia, Japan and so on. But at the same time, it wasn't clear exactly who was wealthier than whom else. I had a girlfriend from Forest Hill. And I knew that it was good that I could have a girlfriend from one of the wealthiest neighbourhoods and go to her house and be treated very respectfully.

T., however, mentioned that after coming to the GTA he became increasingly critical of the rigid class structure in Pakistan, shocking family members when he returned there to visit:

One thing is the servant structure. If you’re middle class or above, you have servants to do things for you in Pakistan. The treatment is that you don’t make eye contact or eat at the same table as them. All of his life, at least for my dad, he’s kind of challenged that idea, saying ‘That’s a kid, I’m a kid, why can’t we interact?’ That’s one thing he says that he really values about having moved. That sort of thinking is much more prevalent here. When I went back in 2001, I was playing with the servant lady’s kid and we got thirsty and I got water. We drank from the same cup and my aunt yelled ‘What are you doing, don’t drink from the same cup!’ So when we have family visit Toronto one thing my dad tries to instill in them is ‘Hey, it’s a different system here’. I mean, obviously we have other socio-economic barriers, but something so overt doesn’t exist here.

Other interviewees, however, felt pressured to live up to the unrealistic expectations of life in Canada held by friends and family in their sending societies. For CC., arriving with her family from Iraq as Kurdish refugees, there was a sharp decline in her family’s standard of living. In addition, she had to contend with false expectations by family members and friends still in Iraq that her and her family’s lives were much more prosperous in the West:

In Iraq there's an assumption that if you live in the West you must be wealthy. But when we moved here we were living in an immigrant house. My dad goes back and his brothers think we must be loaded. Meanwhile my dad is working in construction and his brothers back home are driving BMWs.

M. also spoke of her family’s economic struggles in Toronto and her parents’ desire to move back to China when the political situation stabilized and the market economy was less fettered.
However, they hesitated to return out of fear of being perceived as failures because they would not have come back with considerable conspicuous wealth:

> Every year there was a discussion about if we should go back. There were many times when it sounded like we would. But there was always that fear - so many people were trying to get out, we were able to come out, so is it smart to go back? The other issue was that people do go back, but only after they've made a lot of money in the West. We didn't have that much money, we were trying to make ends meet, so there was a concern about ‘What are people going to think, what are people going to say, what is our family going to say?’ We didn’t want people to think that we came to the west and came back empty handed.

Thus, socioeconomic status was subjectively (re)assessed by study participants themselves, as well as by others, in an on-going manner during the processes of migration. This continued throughout interviewees’ cyclical movement from sending to receiving nations and disputes simplistic assumptions of continuous upward or downward mobility upon migration, as well as Sklair’s polarizing distinction between “marginals” and a Transnational Corporate Class.

### 2.5.4 Transilient Transnationals Are (Slowly) Reshaping Public Opinion of “Immigrants” in GTA Schools

Today, Canadian-born students are more likely to have travelled than in the past, and migrants with transnational ties, overall, are more able to advocate for how they wish to be perceived in classrooms and what they wish to learn in school (Bruno-Jofre and Henley 2000, Chen and Cohen 2006, Mitchell 1999, Mitchell 2001). Interviewees appeared to feel more or less like a “traditional immigrant” depending on their family background and their socioeconomic status. Nonetheless, some participants stated that they felt stigmatized by popularly held false assumptions that they were poor and disenfranchised because they were born outside of North America.

C., who came from Argentina with her family during high school, had a Canadian passport prior to arriving because her father is a Canadian citizen. As a result, she stated that she didn’t feel like a typical “immigrant”. C. said that her move to the GTA was different than for other newly arrived migrants because her family’s relocation was not motivated by danger or disaster:

> My dad always felt like he wanted us to speak English and experience school in Canada. He felt like the public education system was better here and something we could benefit from. My father decided we were going to move because he had heard from somewhere
that after 12 you would never lose your accent in a language and I was turning 12. My siblings were in English schools, but I wasn’t. He decided we should go. We had a house because my Canadian grandparents passed away, which made it a lot easier. We had an easier immigrant experience because my dad was Canadian, and therefore I was Canadian too. So we were able to go to school right away, we were able to get healthcare. It wasn’t an issue. We were Canadian and I felt like I was Canadian because my dad didn’t have an accent. When I think about other immigrants I feel that it was different for us because we didn't move because of a crisis. I always went back [to Argentina] and it was a vacation for me so it was always wonderful.

B. suggested that there is an increasing realization that not all immigrants to the GTA are poor or fleeing political conflict, as well as rising recognition of the transnational businesses and financial connections held by some migrants. She thinks this is in part due to the shifting focus of Canada’s immigration policy away from the family reunification and refugee streams, as well as increasing media attention. But B. said she still felt marginalized for being a foreigner when she was in high school in the GTA:

I don't know if it's because of social media or people travel a lot in this generation but I feel like the stereotypes about poor, uneducated immigrants are changing. But in high school, people would ask me if I lived in a hut, if I had a lion, if I ate grass. I never corrected them because I didn't see the point. I just ignored it. People would ask me if I was a refugee. But I find that now it's different. All my friends are immigrants and most come from affluent backgrounds.

M., who came with her family from China, also coped with her fellow students’ ignorance about her sending society. She recalled how her peers at school assumed that because she came from a communist country that she had escaped deprivation in China or was fleeing destitution. Instead, M. said her family came because of her father’s professional opportunities in Canada, something most of her fellow students didn’t understand or accept:

People here assumed that in communist China we were playing in minefields. But really, you had all the essentials so you didn't feel poor. There was a greater emphasis on families and holidays. It was a very social, lively life. Where I first came it was -30 degrees and there were no people around. Getting to know people was very difficult because people are not so close in Canada, plus there was a language barrier. My first year of school, I cried and cried. I wasn't happy about the decision to move to Canada at all.

J. who teaches in Etobicoke, suggested that it is the role of educators to assist their classrooms with understanding that students who come from abroad are not a monolithic group:
It's important for the students to understand that not every immigrant that comes is coming from a third world country. Students do have this misconception because of the media and bias that's out there, with advertising and so on. So we have to make them aware of the diverse reasons why people come here. We did this assignment where the students had to interview a newcomer, and I think this really helped to raise their awareness.

Yet some educators who were interviewed said that the public schools where they work are increasingly targeting wealthy international students primarily to bring in tuition dollars. NN. explained how the public school board is currently pursuing affluent Asian students (echoing OO.’s comment about the private school context). He said that wealthy visa students come to the GTA to learn English, to assist them in subsequently gaining admission into North American universities, and to learn about the Western world. However, NN. continuously referred to the attempts by schools to attract visa students as a “money grab” and suggested that there are not proper supports in place to assist these transnational students with their integration. Additionally, NN. expressed ambivalence about students who regard going to school in the GTA solely as means to improve their access to Western universities rather than as a step towards permanent resettlement:

We have a program in the board where a lot of Korean and some Chinese students are able to pay their way into the school. They pay big bucks, $12-15,000 a year to attend high school and get an Ontario diploma. One piece [of why they come] is to get the English language. To be taught in English, so they can go into an English speaking university. A lot of it is to get connected in the broader world. I think it’s a money grab on our part. The people that are coming are the people that could afford to come anyway. ... I think it’s a money grab. I think the students do an OK job of integrating though. Whether that’s truly integrating or they just put up with us, our culture and traditions, I wonder about that. Maybe we’re just their ticket to university.

Overall, the interviewees suggested that the mainstream population in the GTA, and students in particular, have a significant ways to go in developing a more nuanced understanding of how and why transnational migrants come to Canada. However, the increasing presence of students with transnational ties, many of whom are transilients coming from positions of relative socioeconomic privilege in their sending societies (inclusive of Sklair’s TCC), may be slowly changing stereotypical or biased attitudes about immigrants in classrooms for students and teachers.
2.6 Summary

This chapter posited socioeconomic status as a key lens of analysis and a critical mediating factor in practices of transnationalism in Canada, with direct effects on experiences and perceptions of secondary schooling. A critical review of the limited literature connecting social class to transnationalism and education was presented, as well as the conceptual development of a socioeconomic continuum of transnational migrants, spanning “transilients” to “transients”.

Two case studies were presented to exemplify the disparities in socioeconomic status presented by the interviewees, one a transnational former secondary student from Hong Kong and the other a Roma educator. Notably, issues of social class repeatedly came up when interviewees discussed why they came to Canada, what their immigrant status and diasporic connections were upon arrival, how they perceived their upward or downward mobility, and how the mainstream population perceives “immigrants”. All of this had direct or indirect implications on their time in GTA secondary schools.

The following chapters will similarly explore framing scholarly literature, case studies, and an explication of key themes identified in the interviews. This will be developed in terms of the connections between schooling and transnationalism for individuals and families (Chapter 3), schools and institutions (Chapter 4), and at the level of policy implications (Chapter 5).

Throughout this ensuing analysis, socioeconomic status will continuously be considered an intermediary factor in the connections between transnationalism and secondary schooling in the GTA.
3 Performing A Balancing Act: Behavioural and Attitudinal Enactments of Transnationalism at the Level of Individuals and Families

3.1 Introduction

“Very few migrants have the capacity to undertake the to-and-fro physical and social mobility required to sustain a high-intensity transnational life, as imagined by early more-celebratory texts on transnationalism...Migrants have to balance the resource demands of transnational ties with those of negotiating membership in their [new] place of settlement” (Erdal and Oeppen 2013:879).

As noted in the introductory chapter, definitions of “transnationalism” abound. Often, an emphasis is made on “regular and sustained” connections between immigrants in their new place of residence and the friends, family, business and professional contacts that remain in their sending nations and hometowns (Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt 1999). The focus on physical ties between sending and receiving countries is thought to distinguish transnationalism from other routine aspects of the immigration/integration process. Yet other scholars utilize a less rigorous definition of transnationalism and also include feelings of identity and connectedness to multiple sites over the lifecycle: “both ways of being and ways of belonging” (Erdal and Oeppen 2013:871). Beyond physical cross-border contact, more expansive definitions encompassing a “transnational consciousness” (Robertson 2013) may include social networks within and across geopolitical borders, forms of virtual connectedness, or “imagined communities” (Anderson 1991, Koengeter and Schroeer 2013, Levitt and Schiller 2004, Ritzer 2010, Wayland 2004, Werbner 2002).

This chapter focuses on the Secondary Schooling Transnational Nexus at the level of individuals and families in order to explore how and if transnational ties assist or hinder with the academic success and social integration of youth in GTA schools. Specifically, themes explored within the data focus on identifying the wide range of behavioural and attitudinal/emotional enactments of transnationalism identified by the interview participants and, specifically, their connection to students’ and families’ GTA schooling expectations and behaviours.

Building on the formative work of Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004) who articulate a “transnational social field”, the definition of transnationalism utilized in this study encompasses
both behavioural characteristics (e.g. travel back and forth to the place(s) of origin or sending ongoing remittances) and attitudinal characteristics (e.g. a strong emotional connectedness to the place(s) of origin, “imagined mobility”, or an enduring historical/political/cultural orientation to the needs of another nation) (Baas 2009, Urry 2000). This definition recognizes that transnational ties are experienced at the individual level in a way that is both contextual and evolving over the lifecycle (Levitt 2002, Ley 2013). Specifically, the selection of a broader delineation of transnationalism is intended to address the tendency within the literature to privilege behavioural characteristics of transnationalism. This is likely because such physical actions are significantly easier to measure empirically than attitudinal/emotional transnational enactments which by definition are more amorphous (Fouron and Glick-Schiller 2002, Portes 2003).

Most of the relevant scholarly literature acknowledges that transnational engagement may vary over the lifespan. Moskal (2010) emphasizes that children may, in fact, be a primary source of ongoing ties to the place(s) origin for families, due to homesickness for youth born in the sending society, social exclusion in the receiving society, or because of a broader interest in exploring their national or ethnic identity. Thus, “parents may sustain ties ‘back home’ because their children ask for, or seek out, such connections” (42). However, in other cases the reverse scenario may be evidenced, as youth may have little or no interest in maintaining connections to their places of origin, separate from the desires of their parents (Kasinitz et al. 2002, Morawska 2004). It is suggested that immigrant youth (sometimes called the 1.5 generation\(^\text{20}\)) form developmentally in their birth country but continue their assimilation and socialization processes in the new country/ies. Thus, their identity becomes a complex amalgamation of sending and receiving society cultures and traditions (Corak 2011, Ellis and Goodwin-White 2006, Remennick 2003).

Conceptually, there are numerous ways that transnational ties, both behavioural and attitudinal, could provide benefits and/or challenges for students and educators in the schooling context. For

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\(^{20}\) The delineation of who encompasses the “1.5. generation” varies by author. Ellis (2006) defines the 1.5 generation as immigrants who arrive in their new place of residence under ten years of age (2). Remennick (2003), however, uses a broader definition, including anyone who moves to a new country before or during their early teens (41). Rumbaut (2002), for his part, includes all foreign-born individuals who arrive in the United States before the age of majority (49).
students, transnational ties may either present broader opportunity horizons and/or barriers to integration and academic success in schools (Hamann, Zúñiga and Garcia 2010, Moran 2002, Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004, Zúñiga and Hamann 2009). More specifically, transnational ties could lead to absences in school if students are (frequently or for extended periods) traveling back and forth to their/their parent(s)’ place(s) of origin (Hamann 2001); a lack of parental guidance if parent(s) are continuously working abroad (Rutter 2006); barriers/reluctance to partake in core classroom activities due to a continuing embrace of culturally-based, gender or religious norms from the country/ies of origin (Gibson 1988, Rolón 2000); less/greater appreciation for GTA schooling by students due to a comparative reference point in the place(s) of origin (Louie 2006a, Louie 2006b, Valenzuela 1999); students with a greater knowledge of and interest in the socio-political issues and history of their home country than Canada (e.g. more interest in the Arab Spring than in Canadian politics, or in the World Cup than the Stanley Cup) (Mitchell and Parker 2008); students with higher educational aspirations due to more and better role models or the reverse; students with a heightened sense of self, greater self-confidence and/or a way to mitigate the impacts of social exclusion in schools (Arat-Koc 2006, Castles 2003, Portes and Rumbaut 2001, Rumbaut 2002); students who engage in non-traditional activities (e.g. after-school religious instruction or Chinese heritage language supplementary schools) (Davies 2004); dual or multiple language proficiencies or English language difficulties (Briguglio 2000, Gans 1997, Goldstein 2003, Zúñiga and Hamann 2009); or a lack of (perceived or real) permanency in GTA if their families are continuously moving or considering moving, either to return to the place(s) of origin or to other locations for financial/professional reasons (Hamann and Zúñiga 2011, Rutter 2006).

Thus, to ground the ensuing analysis of themes identified in the data at the level of schools and institutions as well as the policy implications inherent in this discussion (see Chapters 4 and 5), this chapter examines how and why students and their families express their transnational ties in the GTA, and the repercussions of these in regards to their schooling as identified by both recent transnational GTA secondary school graduates as well as current GTA educators. The goal, as aptly stated by Erdal & Oeppen (2013), “is to understand migrants’ own strategies with regard to their lives in the countries of settlement, and in relation to sustaining transnational ties, by allowing their own reflections and perspectives to come across” (868).
This chapter is divided between participants’ observations about *behavioural* enactments of transnationalism, and their *feelings* of transnationalism or negotiations of multiple and evolving identities (e.g. as related to emotions of belonging/being at home), with several subthemes nested within each major theme (Risse 2010, Snel, Engbersen and Leerkes 2006). Following the case studies that encapsulate two lived experiences of transnationalism, each of the two major themes is explored more fully.

The first theme, exploring forms of behavioural transnationalism, covers travel between the country/ies of origin and the GTA, as the most obvious form of transnational activity, as well as the reality of transnational family constellations and living arrangements. Some study participants had been so-called “satellite kids”21, or youth living on their own in the GTA, and others had been part of “astronaut”22 families, living with one parent while a second parent worked in the county/ies of origin. The interviewees also identified technological and cultural transnational actions, and many of them emphasized that these actions had primarily positive impacts on their feelings of connectedness to their sending society/ies as well as their schooling outlooks.

The forms of attitudinal transnationalism (the second theme) identified by study participants included evolving ideas about “being Canadian”, and “post-nationalism”. Many of the educators suggested that strong emotional connections to countries of origin were sometimes related to a perceived lack of Canadian identity. As well, divided or shared loyalty and identity negotiations were common. However, while some educators questioned what they saw as the “strategic” use of Canadian citizenship to gain a Western education by some individuals and families with transnational ties, most of the study participants who were former GTA secondary school students felt that this conclusion was overly simplistic and suggested that their national loyalties are negotiated in an ongoing manner. Finally, complex notions about “home” and indeterminacy about future place(s) of residence were commonplace among the interviewees. There was often an emotional ambivalence towards their former “home” (Kivisto and Vecchia-Mikkola 2013,

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21 Waters (2005) defines “satellite kids” as immigrant children whose parents have returned to the country of origin to work (365).

22 Waters (2005) defines “astronaut” as the circumstance where a family immigrates and then the head of the household (usually the adult male) returns to the country of origin to continue working there. He will fly back and forth between “home” and the “new country” (373).
Tamaki (2011) and complexity surrounding the views educators and former GTA secondary students expressed in regards to “giving back” to their sending society and any “debt” they owed to their birth country (Wang 2013).

Altogether, this chapter aims to unpack a broad variety of actions and feelings related to transnationalism at the level of individuals and families. Rather than delving deeply into one specific scenario, this chapter is in an effort to provide an overview of the broader spectrum of transnational experiences among youth in the GTA today. As such, this chapter primarily provides descriptive details as well as analysis, in order to present a clearer picture of twenty-first century transnational behaviour and attitudes as described by the study participants.

3.2 Case Studies

The two case studies presented below provide the narratives of individuals who experience transnational ties, both as action and as feeling, and their reflections on what this means in the context of GTA schooling. Case Study #3 is an elite visa student, a transilient transnational woman from Nigeria. Case Study #4 is a more transient transnational, a young man who arrived in Toronto as an undocumented refugee from Mexico. Despite certain overlaps in their descriptions of the transnational connections they maintain, the gulf between them, vis-à-vis their socioeconomic status, leads to numerous divergences in their transnational practices. This is in line with existing evidence that there is no one prototypical way to be or feel transnational, as well as the suggestion in Chapter 2 that social class mediates many forms of transnational expression.

Case Study #3: Visa Students in GTA Private Schools: A Nigerian Woman’s Negotiations of her Transnational Lifecycle

3.2.1.1 Background

In the past two decades there has been a rapid increase in the number of private schooling institutions in Ontario (Miedema 2010). This reflects what some consider a move toward greater social stratification in access to secondary education (Davies 2004, Hayden 2011).

23 The Ontario Ministry of Education’s official website states that as of 2014 there were 971 private elementary and secondary schools in Ontario.
Proponents of private schooling suggest that this increase is due, in part, to a decline in the academic quality of the public system. For example, a 2010 report by the conservative think tank, *The Institute of Marriage and Family Canada*, states that between 2000 and 2005 enrolment in accredited independent schools in Ontario increased by 8.8 percent. During the same period Ontario public schools saw a decrease in enrolment by 1.1 percent. The report argues that in light of this discrepancy the provincial government ought to provide partial funding to these independent schools, following the examples of Alberta and British Columbia (Miedema 2010).

Yet concurrently with this increase in private schooling, there has been widespread media coverage warning of a lack of oversight in Ontario’s private secondary institutions. Ontario has one of the least regulated private school sectors in Canada. An annual report released by the Auditor-General in 2013 found that dozens of private high schools in Ontario may be handing out fraudulent graduation diplomas to students, awarding higher grades than earned, or providing credit for courses that were not attended (Howlett 2013, Lysyk 2013). In such scenarios a distinction is typically made between institutions that are members of the Canadian Accredited Independent Schools Association, and those that do not follow national standards and are often critiqued as being for-profit “credit mills” that target wealthy and potentially uninformed international visa students (Lysyk 2013).

Unlike other countries, Canada does not restrict the number of international study visas for students accepted into public or private schools. Provided the student satisfies the foreign student requirements of Immigration Canada, he/she should be granted a visa. According to the Canadian Bureau for International Education, in 2012 Canada ranked as the world’s 7th most popular destination for international students (both secondary and tertiary). Ontario alone captured 42 percent of these students. Students attending secondary and elementary schools made up about fifteen percent of the visa student population in Canada, and encompassed approximately 39,800 people. The top five countries of origin – China, India, Korea, Saudi Arabia and the United States – represented almost 60 percent of total international student enrolment in Canada (Ontario Ministry of Education 2013)
3.2.1.2 “I Cannot Restrict Myself to Canada. I Want My Path Open to Wherever.”

B. is a 24 year old female born in Nigeria. At the age of fifteen, she arrived in Toronto to finish her secondary schooling abroad and subsequently attended the University of Toronto. B. attended a private, for-profit academy in Toronto which targets international visa students for grades ten to twelve. B’s story exemplifies what it means to be part of a financially elite cadre in her country of origin, a group who can and do leave Nigeria to attend international schools during high school, who resultantly negotiate transnational family arrangements, and who continue to ponder where they wish to call “home”. While B. is clear that there are better opportunities for her financially and professionally in Nigeria due to her family’s elite connections, she remains unsure about where she will end up living permanently.

B’s father works for a large international organization. B. said her parents thought that she would get a better education in Canada than in Nigeria. In Nigeria, B. attended a private secondary school that followed the British curriculum. Many expatriates in Nigeria, as well as the financial elite in Abuja, the national capital, attended the school. At the time of her move, B.’s older sister was already living in Toronto, having arrived two years prior and stayed as an international boarder at the same high school B. attended. B. and her sister rented an apartment together while B. was in high school in Toronto.

B. remembers being extremely excited to come to Canada: “I thought 'Woo, new life, it's going to be fun!' But I was also scared how my sister and I would get along together, because we had had issues growing up.” However, B. said that going abroad to school was the norm among her circle of friends in Nigeria. This was due, in part, to perceptions of corruption within the Nigerian schooling system:

Eighty percent of my friends left Nigeria for high school and then ninety-nine percent of my friends went away for university. There's a lot of corruption and poverty there, so most parents who are rich or middle-class would rather send their children out of the country for school. We have good schools, but because of the corruption parents think their kids will do better in a school abroad.

During her time at a GTA secondary school, B. spoke to her family in Nigeria on a daily basis. B.’s mother did not have paid employment and travelled extensively back and forth between Toronto and Nigeria, visiting B. and her sister for two to three weeks every two months. B. said
that even though she missed her parents more than she originally expected, she found it extremely annoying to have her mother visiting so often during her teenage years:

She would come to school with me all day. It was so embarrassing because I still felt like an outsider in school because the other students had come in grade nine and I came halfway through grade ten. So it was hard, my mom would start asking questions and go to the principal's office and sit there, asking all these things about me. She was very, very involved in my schooling.

B. expressed ambivalent feelings about having left her parents and younger brother to go abroad to school on her own at such a young age. While she said the experience allowed her to deal with any culture shock or academic adjustments before seeking university admission, and assisted with her subsequent acceptance to a Canadian university as an international student, she also expressed regret about being at such a distance from her family so early on:

I think I learned a lot from being somewhere else for high school. But I have a younger brother, he's three years younger, and I missed seeing him grow up. I kind of think my sister and I shouldn't have left at such a young age, because now the family is so spread out. My sister's here, she already got married, I'm here, my brother moved to South Africa for university, so everyone is doing their own thing and we're never together. Even at Christmas my sister rarely shows up. I feel like you have such a limited time before work or school or new families get in the way, and it's a shame that we didn't spend our youth together... There's only so much you can say over Skype. I feel like we missed so much in our lives together. So I don't think I'd do that to my [future] kids, because quality time with your family is special.

While she was in school, B. said her parents weren’t particularly concerned about her maintaining a Nigerian identity. However, she says that after a family vacation where she harmlessly chatted with an Italian young man, coupled with the subsequent marriage of her sister to a “Anglo”, her father began emphasizing their unique culture and Nigerian character:

Two years ago my dad began saying, 'Don't forget who you are, you're culture, etc.'... I was so surprised because growing up we never really had the culture. My mom is from a different tribe than my dad...I didn't really get exposed to the culture from my grandparents on either side, and my dad was always more focused on his business... Even my language, my dad never liked to speak in our language. He always wanted to speak English because he thinks your English needs to be perfect. Your native language, who cares about it? But now my dad's all about speaking our language, and I think it's because he wasn't expecting us to grow up so fast, so now he wants to impose our culture. But now it's too late.
During high school in Toronto, B. returned to Nigeria for short visits at Christmas, although she said her parents often preferred to travel and have family reunions in other destinations such as South Africa or Europe. During these trips, B. rarely missed more than a few days of school. However, after finishing university, B. returned to Nigeria for six months, due to familial pressure, and also to test out how she might fare if she moved back permanently. She described going back as partially “an act of desperation”:

I was here and I finished university in August and I didn't have a job and everywhere I tried it was a dead end. I was so tired of people asking me, 'Do you have a job? What do you do?' And I felt like I wasn't doing anything. I felt like if I went back home nobody would ask me what I was doing. My parents were calling every single day asking if I had a job and my dad was threatening to stop helping me out with my bills. So it was more to please him, because I knew he wanted me to go home. So I packed up my stuff. At first it was difficult, living with my parents again and adjusting to the life there…

B. said that when she first arrived in Canada she was not interested in Nigerian culture, but that over time she grew to appreciate it more. Her extended return visit after university facilitated this attachment. Currently living in the GTA, B. said she now listens to Nigerian music “all the time”, checks the Nigerian news on a daily basis, and eats Nigerian food most days. B. said she is presently unsure where she considers “home”. While she acknowledged her parents’ desire for her to return to Nigeria, and her improved financial and professional prospects there, she said she fears that in Nigeria it would be nepotism, not her own talents, that would be responsible for any job she would get:

I'm still debating where to live. My parents want me to come back; they pray every day. My dad keeps bribing me with different stuff, a car, a job, and so on. But I have a lot of friends here, and most of my friends left the country back in Nigeria. They will come back in the future, but not anytime soon. So I have only my family there, whereas here I have all my friends, my social group…But I have to think about my future and my career path. I could get a better job in Nigeria. But the problem is the corruption. I don't want to be a part of it. So for now, I'd rather just stay here and know that I’m being rewarded for the work I do and not just because someone knows my family.

B. feels certain that most of her cohort of Nigerian peers will ultimately return to their birth country. Many, she noted, come from well-connected families and are studying law or engineering in order to work in Nigeria’s lucrative petroleum industry. However, she said her ultimate goal is to return Nigeria and bring about positive change. “Working at UNICEF or the UN headquarters in Nigeria, that would be a dream come true.”
Case Study #4: Stuck in the “legal-illegal migration binary”

3.2.1.3 Background

During their tenure (2006-present), the Stephen Harper Conservative federal government has instituted various measures intended to reduce the flow into Canada of those individuals who are arguably the most marginalized and precarious in society today – refugees (Alboim and Cohl 2012). In 2012, Bill C-31 was passed, making numerous revisions to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA). The Bill led to a variety of concerns surrounding the discourse and treatment of refugee claimants in Canada and substantially decreased the timeline allocated to refugee claimants to prove their claims. Refused refugee claimants can no longer apply for humanitarian and compassionate consideration for one year following an Immigration and Refugee Board refusal (Canadian Council for Refugees 2012). Even in cases where refugees do gain permanent residency, their status can be revoked if the Board determines that they have re-availed themselves of protection from the home country. Thus, even a single family visitation to the sending country may imperil their permanent residency status in Canada (Alboim and Cohl, 2012).

2011-2012 saw a record-breaking number of refugee deportations from Canada (16,511 people according to some estimates) (Hussan 2012). There is also considerable documentation of the hardships that result from the multiple systemic exclusions now imposed on non-status individuals, particularly in relation to protective legislation, healthcare and citizenship claims (Anderson 2014, George 2006, Shakya 2012). Yet notably, the transnational and educational implications of such policy changes have not been a focus of media coverage or academic discourse.

3.2.1.4 Free Movement of Capital, Not of People

R. has had his primary residence in Toronto for exactly half of his life, despite ongoing uncertainty about his ability to gain Canadian citizenship. He was born in Mexico City and arrived in the GTA with his mother as a refugee claimant when he was fifteen years old. His younger brother and father followed a year later. R. attended public school in Mexico, which he describes as “entirely different, far stricter” than schooling in the GTA. In Toronto, he initially attended a public high school specifically designed to assist new immigrant high school aged
students gain fluency in English. He subsequently transferred to his neighbourhood catchment school.

Fleeing the economic depression in Mexico, R.’s family spent eight years waiting for their Canadian citizenship to be granted. R. said he was “totally cool” with coming to Canada as he had an idealized notion of life in the North America. Yet R. also said that he spent much of his teen years considering issues of transnational identity and connectedness (despite not using that precise term), even though he was not allowed to return to Mexico for a visit, due to his refugee claimant status and limited financial means. R. maintained his connections to Mexico by staying up-to-date on Mexican pop culture and though regular Skype conversations with his grandmother back home, during which she would update him on how his old neighbourhood was changing and the daily happenings of his family and friends. However, R. said that his parents were busy working and focused primarily on adjusting to their new lives in Toronto, and that they feared his close association with other Mexican youth. As a result, during his high school years, R. said he and his brother were not encouraged to maintain ties to Mexico:

My parents, when they came here, I think they kind of closed that door connecting them to Mexico. But for us, we were old enough that we were able to make decisions ourselves about keeping up with what was going on in Mexico… But my parents are very peculiar. For example, they usually would rather we don't have too many friends who are Mexican. They think that most Mexicans in Canada are in gangs. I never bought that, but my parents were concerned because of their fear of us getting into that lifestyle.

R. emphasized that both widespread North American media coverage of political events in Mexico and having Canadian friends who travelled there were integral to the maintenance, and even intensification, of his ties to his birth country while his physical ability to travel there was restricted:

In the early 90s there was a lot of political stuff going on in Mexico and gaining international attention. So people were coming up to my brother and I at school to ask us about that. So I thought, 'Oh, OK, I guess I should know more about this.' I wasn't resentful when people asked about political things. I found it annoying when it was very personal. Like, when you meet somebody and right away they want to know your whole history - that was annoying. But when people asked, ‘What's up with the Zapatista?’ and you would tell them, that was important, so that would be nice. And of course a lot of people here have travelled to Mexico so they're always asking you 'Have you been to this place?' So I sometimes feel that I've learned more about Mexico from people who've travelled and told me all these stories, then by actually travelling to these places, as I wasn't able to do so for so long and since as a child we didn’t travel the country much.
R. also said that in Toronto, he found that in some ways his identity shifted from being nationally-oriented to being regional, or Latino. He and his friends in high school started an organization for Latino artists in the GTA, in response to feeling excluded from entering the mainstream Toronto art scene:

Let's put it this way: when you're from Latin America the first thing you learn when you get here is that you're also Latino. Usually that becomes your culture, this umbrella term. So then it's not about your country exactly, it's about this idea of Latinos. For example, I was nineteen when I was one of the founders of a local Latino artists’ cooperative organization. We were right on. Knowing that we didn't have big numbers like in the United States, we had to make a space for ourselves. Because our aesthetics were so Latino that nobody gave a shit about them. So even today, I still work with organizations that are Latin American in new media, and we work in these teams because otherwise we never get opportunities.

In considering his personal feelings about the idea of “home”, R. said that now that he has Canadian citizenship he does not rule out living in Mexico in future and is particularly drawn to the art scene in Mexico. Currently, he travels to Mexico as often as he can afford. However, in some ways R. thinks he has a stronger Mexican identity in Toronto than he would have had if he had not left Mexico as a teenager:

In very practical terms, Toronto is my home. My family is here now, my brother is here. But a lot of my cultural references, my daily activities, and many other things still are from Mexico. I started to really value my connections there in a less superficial way and let it be part of me. In high school, I didn't think about going back, I was too in love with being here. Now I think about going back. Now I can put it in perspective because I have citizenship, I can balance it out.

Overall, R.’s story provides important insights into how it is possible to maintain strong ties to a sending nation even without traveling there on an ongoing basis. Due to a lack of Canadian citizenship and limited financial means, R.’s transnational behaviours and attitudinal characteristics were not dependent on his return travel to the sending society during his secondary schooling years.
3.3 Themes Within the Interviews

“The complexities of immigrants’ multilocal institutional incorporation, their intertwined social spaces criss-crossing the boundaries of nation-states, the formation of new cultural spaces which enable the development of non-unitary identities, and the structures and frames in which immigrants ground and secure their emergent identities, all of these cannot be analysed within a model of immigration that is linear and accumulative” (Caglar 2001:606).

This section delves into the broader themes identified in the interviews as related to individuals’ and families’ transnational connections and their relationship to schooling in the GTA. Notably, many of the examples provided in the preceding case studies are common to the experiences of other interviewees of similar socioeconomic status. The section first explores a variety of behavioural forms of transnationalism and the second section unpacks the attitudinal and emotional transnational enactments identified by research participants.

Theme 1: Behavioural Forms of Transnationalism

3.3.1.1 Ongoing Travel Between the Country/ies of Origin and Canada

Some research suggests that the relative ease of travel and the length of stays in the place(s) of origin are the most decisive factors related to the maintenance of transnational ties (Kasinitz et al. 2002, Rumbaut 2002). Certainly, the most obvious behavioural enactment of transnationalism is ongoing or sustained travel between the sending and receiving societies. Among the interviewees, every recent GTA secondary school graduate with transnational ties at least mentioned a desire to return to their sending country regularly, even if an actual trip was not possible for financial or other reasons.

Regarding the educational implications of extended trips to the place(s) of origin, there was a notable division among the more transient transnational students who had all attended schools in the public systems (either secular or Catholic) and the more transilients students, who most often had gone to school within the private systems (either secular or religiously-oriented), as well as the visa students. Specifically, the educators and former students who identified extended absences occurring during the school year were primarily located in the public school systems. For students in the private systems, including visa students, interviewees generally came (or gave the impression of coming) from upper and middle-class families, where educational attainment was often highly stressed. Private school teachers assumed that parents, especially because they are paying upwards of $25,000 per year for each child’s education, did not sanction protracted
absences from school that might come at the expense of high grades. Yet complicating this finding was the reality of the expense of such travel; some more transient study participants with lower socioeconomic status suggested that despite their strong transnational ties, their family could not afford the cost of regular travel to the sending nation, and they thus resorted to other behavioural or attitudinal enactments of their connections. As well, some of the more transient transnationals had gone to school in the public system, but also stated that their families had not sanctioned extended visits to their sending society during the school year.

P., who attended public school in the GTA as an international student from Hong Kong (see Case Study #1), said that he “never missed school, because I was here for education. So it wouldn't have made sense for me to miss school.” Similarly, Y., an administrator at an all-girls private school in the inner city, stated that visa students at her school often return to their place(s) of origin to visit parents and siblings at holiday times, as this is cheaper than the entire family coming to Canada for a visit. Yet, she said “very rarely do my students miss school…they may miss a few extra days at holidays for flight reasons perhaps, but no, they don’t really go home other than during the allotted times.”

However, for the majority of study participants who taught at public schools, extended absences from school by students who were travelling back to their place(s) of origin was and is a school reality. The length of time away from class generally ranged from several weeks to several months during the school year. In rare cases, some students returned to their birth country for a year or more during their secondary schooling. Study participants identified a variety of reasons for these trips. The most common was the celebration of special occasions (e.g. weddings or Christmas/New Years festivities) or visits to family members in the place(s) of origin, especially elderly family members who were sick or dying. These visits sometimes extended beyond allocated school vacation times. As well, several educators also stated that some female students return home to get engaged or married, usually as arranged by their parent(s).

In considering the reasons behind such school absences, X., who teaches at a Catholic school in Scarborough (see Case Study #6), stated that students tend to be absent from school for lengthy periods when they are returning to their country/ies of origin for extended mourning or extended celebration. However, he said that the cost of the flight was often also a determining decision for when families returned to the GTA: “These families are often really scraping by. Sometimes the
kids go back during traditional holiday times for us, like Christmas time, but they won’t come back in December, they’ll come in January when the flight is a little bit cheaper.”

For H., who moved to Toronto with her family from Trinidad, her family has remained strongly connected to their evangelic community church in Trinidad, which remains a primary motivation for their extended return visits:

We go back on Christmas to help out at the Church in any way we can. The Church is still very important to my family. My parents still go back for all of the important meetings and are still members, even though they don’t live there, and my bother and I would go with them.

Several public school teachers also noted the role of discipline as a motivational factor for return visits. Two of the educators had students whose parents threatened to send them back to their home country to get married if they did not improve their school grades. J., a teacher in a public school with a large number of immigrant Muslim students, said that her school has had cases where parents send their offspring home as a tactic to instil greater appreciation for Canadian education:

I’ve heard stories of parents at the school that send their kids back to Somalia to sort of smarten them up. Apparently they come back very obedient and ready to do whatever they need to do. I think they send them to the north part of Somalia, which is more stable, but it’s still very poor. So when they go and they see the differences, they realize how many opportunities they have here.

C. recalled how she returned to Argentina over the Christmas break in tenth grade and decided to stay an extra month so she could go to summer camp there with her friends. The result was that she ended up failing math and was required to take the course again in summer school:

Grade 10 was when I went back and stayed for an extra month. In my head I decided to stay. I hated high school and it didn't seem like such a big deal to miss a month. But it was not OK and I failed math. In high school [in the GTA] they were not understanding. I had to retake grade 10 math which was also embarrassing. I knew I wasn't dumb, I just couldn't apply myself academically and I was emotionally invested in my life and friends at home.

M. was sent back to China for educational purposes during her teens. She said she returned to live with her grandmother when she was fourteen because her parents thought the public school system in China was superior to that in the GTA. She described the experience as extremely difficult for her:
I didn't adjust very well. I couldn't read and write Chinese which was a huge issue. It's really hard ...I went there for a summer and took classes and found I just could not integrate or keep up. Also, my math skills just were not up to par. They are doing calculus in grade four or something. I guess my parents eventually realized it wouldn't work, so I was allowed to come back.

In instances such as those described above, where students were away for extended periods, the great majority of the teachers interviewed regarded these classroom absences as something that often came at the detriment of students’ academic success. AA., an ESL teacher at an inner-city public school, mentioned a student named Sam whose parents took him back to China for over a month and a half when school was in session. During that time he missed taking the mandatory standardized literacy test required for all ninth grade students in the province. Before leaving for this trip Sam had been doing well at school. After the visit he was no longer passing the course. AA. called the China visit “not a good move,” and emphasized that, as a teacher, she had no choice but to follow her school’s rules about absences and, consequently, students who return home for extended periods often suffer academically:

It becomes really problematic because these extended trips home are just like being absent. We used to excuse kids from all sorts of work when they were away, but this year, for example, when Sam went back to China and I approached the administration, and said ‘What do I do?’ they said that the parents had the choice to take him back in the summer and instead they chose to take him back now, during school time. So he essentially got zeros on all the work that was missed.

Most of the educators also stated that students who return home do not keep up with their assigned studies. L., who teaches ESL at a public school, was adamant: “The students would come to you with a letter from their parents saying they were going away, you’d give them work to do, and they wouldn’t do it. And that would be that.” K., a geography teacher in a public school, said that as a new teacher she finds it very difficult to provide the students with all the material they need to stay up-to-date on her class when they go away for protracted periods, especially when she is not given much advance notice by the student and/or their guardian(s):

It's frustrating because often they'll come to you the day before and say 'Miss, I’m leaving tomorrow, I’m gone for two months. What am I going to miss?' Especially as a new teacher, I should know exactly what they're going to be doing [but I don’t always know]. I could tell them what expectations they're going to miss. But in terms of, ‘Here's the content we're actually going to be covering, here's the chapters or the questions’, often I don't know that. I may be teaching the course for the first time; I’m teaching it on a week-to-week basis, sometimes a day-by-day basis. So it's a bit challenging to keep them up to speed. It's also challenging because even though their intentions might be good when
they leave, they usually come back not having done anything so they're really behind and in a difficult place to catch up. I had one student who came very, very close to failing because of this.

However, four of the educators stated that there is a procedure in their schools to try to address cases of extended absences from classes. Some schools have instituted a form for students that requires them to get the signatures of their guardian(s), as well as each of their teachers, with details about the work that will be required of them while they are away and sometimes requiring them to submit work via email. These forms outline how students must demonstrate that they have or will meet the curriculum expectations when they return. Such a form attempts to equalize the procedure for absences across the school, to limit the discretion of individual teachers who may have differing ideas about how to handle such absences. Yet L., an inner-city public school teacher, said that the students who are most at risk of failing are often the ones who do not fill out the form. They simply leave without notice. This suggests that the students who fall far behind from return visits are likely the same students who are already disengaged from school and at risk of doing poorly, or perhaps are those who have less familial assistance or pressure to excel academically. These factors, rather than the actual trips, may be at the root of the failure problem. As OO., a private school educator, put it: “usually students will fail because they’re not studying. They won’t fail because they’re absent going home.”

Nonetheless, there were two dissenting educators who argued that accommodations can and should be made for students who are absent from class due to extended trips to their place(s) of origin. Both teachers emphasized that there may be generational dynamics involved, with newer teachers more likely to take advantage of or feel comfortable using technological means to facilitate students’ long distance learning. As well, these teachers suggested that it is unfair to penalize students who are gone for extended periods. They said that students are travelling during school time because their parents insist on it.

S. said that in his Catholic school in Scarborough, he perceives there to be a digital divide among teachers in terms of their comfort with online learning, and their motivation to provide students with learning resources when they are away. He said that such extended absences are so common is his school that there have been staff meetings for the teachers to discuss the issue:

You see a division between the teachers that have been here for a long time and the teachers who are fairly new, let's say those who’ve come within the past ten years.
Because there's a different mentality - there are those see a shift towards online learning, and emailing assignments. But a lot of people are not on that yet, so you do see that dichotomy within their thought process. There are vocal staff members, a significant amount, enough to make noise, who are adamantly against this, adamantly against accommodating these students and they will do whatever they can in order to not support these students. I'm not making a judgement, I’m just giving the facts. Because really, in our contract, we don't have to give them extra work, and a lot of these teachers don’t feel comfortable putting their tests online.

X., who teaches drama and media studies also at a Catholic high school (see Case Study #6), made a similar point related to the different perspective of teachers in his school regarding student travel to the place(s) of origin. He said that he sees such trips as an opportunity and believes that students who are motivated will make up the work. He thinks that ongoing connections to a different country, and traveling frequently, can be a positive and broadening experience for youth. He said that in these instances he tries to give students work that helps capture their experiences abroad, and emphasized that it is unfair to punish students for what is likely their parents’ travel decisions:

I’m going to say something controversial. I think the younger people are more open to the idea [of students being away for extended periods] and the older people on the staff are more resistant. I don’t know why, but I suspect it’s some need to feel proprietary about their own curriculum and personal teaching needs. I look at travel as a learning experience unto itself so whenever kids come and say ‘I’m going away for 3 weeks, do you have any work for me?’ which is one of the things we ask them to do, to take some work with them, my usual answer is ‘Bring me back a magazine and a newspaper from your country because I want to learn more about it, and if you can, try to write a journal entry about what you thought was cool.’ I try to keep it super low-key because I want them to have a great time and I want them to suck in all that learning on another level… I would be horrified if a teacher failed a student because they went on a trip they don’t even have any control over. If the parents say ‘we’re going home’ then they’re going. The parents are not leaving their kids behind no matter what that drama teacher says.

Overall, rather than being educationally enriching or providing perspective on the benefits of Canadian schools, the vast majority of the educators who were interviewed regarded extended trips to the birth country during the school year as negatively impacting students’ educational progress. The teachers also felt somewhat constrained in their ability to help these students, due to the rules of their institution regarding student absences. However, this issue appeared to be primarily of concern to educators and former secondary students within the GTA public system as opposed to those in private schools or in the cases of more transient transnationals and/or visa students.
3.3.1.2 Transnational Family Constellations and Living Arrangements

A second, and perhaps increasingly common behavioural enactment of transnationalism identified by study participants was living in divided or unconventional family constellations while maintaining ties to the country/ies of origin. In some cases, one or both parent lived abroad or was consistently traveling back and forth between the sending and receiving countries, often for work-related reasons. In other cases, the former secondary students described living in the GTA on their own during high school, or with extended family members (e.g. an uncle or cousin). Other participants lived with a designated guardian or mentor in lieu of parents, or resided with other international students in a shared apartment. Such scenarios are often described as “satellite kids” or “astronaut” families in the transnational literature, and are most commonly identified with families originating from Asia (Ley 2010, Nora Chiang 2008, Tsang et al. 2003, Waters 2005). Yet interviewees in this study who lived in such constellations came from a variety of regions.

In analysing the implications of these transnational family arrangements, interview participants suggested that, while these arrangements are often a matter of economic necessity for families, they also often lead to difficulties in the educational arena. In cases where youth were living on their own, schools were sometimes aware of this arrangement. In other cases the schools were not. The former students who had lived in transnational family arrangements often spoke of the difficulties they faced due to the need to take on numerous household responsibilities that their parents would have done if they were present. While some educators simply described their initial surprise at such unconventional living arrangements, others appeared to view “satellite kids” as being rebellious and lacking proper supervision, which negatively impacted their schooling performance.

Study participants gave varied descriptions of how their families were organized and why, again suggesting that transnational family units react to and evaluate economic and other incentives in an ongoing and context-specific manner. For example, V., who came from Japan, said she lived in a variety of homestays during high school in the GTA, all with families who her parents paid to act as her official guardian(s). She described how some families were more laidback than others regarding house rules and her chores and responsibilities. This led to some confusion about appropriate behaviour:
I had three homestay families during high school, typical Canadian families. They were nice and treated me like a daughter and I tried not to be picky about everything. I was pretty appreciative. But the hardest thing was that my second homestay was pretty strict but my first homestay was a laidback, flexible, kind of family so there was a hard transition.

CC., who lived in an “astronaut” family scenario with her mom and brother said that her father returned to Iraq for extended periods after they moved to the GTA, often three or more times a year, primarily for political reasons. He would travel to Iraq to work on the campaigns of candidates he was supporting:

My dad has a PhD in English but works in Canada as labourer. My mom is a social worker, so she had an easier time finding a job here and getting her credentials. He [her dad] would go home to do work he is actually passionate about. He would work as an activist there for the Kurdish community. He was back for every election and active on many candidates’ campaigns.

Transnational recent secondary school graduates who had lived alone or without parents in the GTA during secondary school often emphasized the negative repercussions of these family arrangements. Many of the participants focused on the difficulties of budgeting and running a household without adult assistance, in addition to doing their schoolwork. U., who lived with his brother in an apartment during grades eleven and twelve, while his dad remained working in the UAE and his mother came for yearly visits, said he became responsible for caring for both himself and his younger brother. He described it as a unique learning experience, but one that was often difficult. He said he would advise others not to do the same thing:

We were pretty much on our own. I had to take on more responsibilities in the household too. We learned from our mistakes. My parents were supporting us fully for rent, but I had to take care of the bills and such. We ordered a lot of take-in. Initially it was hard. But it was an experience not many people can say they had, being left alone at 17. I don't know how many parents would leave you alone at 17.

P.’s parents in Hong Kong paid for him to live alone in an apartment while he went to high school. He too described difficulties budgeting; but he also recalled the social upside of being a teenager with almost no adult supervision:

I would just wait for money to show up in my bank account so I could pay rent. My parents sent money every few months and I would have to make it last for however long it needed to. At first I was really bad at budgeting it, there was definitely a month when I was going to peoples' parents' houses to eat because I ran out of money…I didn't go nuts with the freedom, but I did have a lot of parties. And you never have to buy booze when
you have your own place, because everybody has to store their booze somewhere at that age. So I had a full, full bar at 17 in a basement apartment. It was pretty fun.

P. said that his teachers were often concerned because they “just couldn’t comprehend” how a sixteen or seventeen year-old was living on his own and going to school. He also said that he realised it wasn’t technically legal for him to be without a formal guardian, so he avoided the police and any teachers who took “too much” of an interest in his living arrangement. However, he expressed some regret about being separated from his family, allowing “in retrospect, I kind of wish I had more of a parental influence. I have very little contact with my parents now [as a result]. Our conversations are pretty shallow.”

E. was a visa student from Korea. She lived with a young Korean woman who her parents paid to act as her mentor/guardian during her time in high school in the GTA. E. described it as a difficult living situation. She felt that the woman did not live up to the expectations of care that her parents had enlisted her for. But E. said she did not know how to do anything to address this problem:

> The lady that I lived with, my parents talked to her and said ‘I believe you, take care of my daughter’. But she wasn’t very good. I didn't hate her, but I couldn't relate to her. She was not strict, she liked to drink and go out. She said I'm going to cook for you, and clean.’ But then she got lazy.

KK., a teacher at an elite private all-male school in the inner city, described his initial surprise in discovering several of his international students from Korea were living together with a paid mentor who acted as all of their surrogate parents. The students’ biological parents would then come to Toronto once a year for two or three weeks to visit, during which time they would have a brief discussion with each of their children’s teachers:

> That took me a while to kind of clue into. This young woman kept coming into parent-interviews and I was like ‘What are you doing here?’ and she was like “Oh, I’m also the guardian of so and so.’ I asked her about it and she said, ‘It’s kind of a familial duty but I also get something (financial).’ She’s also Korean, looking for work, graduated from University of Toronto, about 24, and she’s the mentor for two or three kids. Her parents know their parents so there’s a familial connection. But it’s also an expectation she’ll do this because she’s been sent away to school so she has to help. Once a year or so the actual parents will come for a visit, and they’ll come with a translator. I think they come to make sure their child’s OK and to see the school, because, like anybody, they miss and love their kids...The rest of the time, my interaction is only with this mentor, or occasionally through an email with the parents that they will get translated.
However, many of the educators took a more hostile position in terms of the rebelliousness and poor academic performance of students living alone as “satellite kids” or with an informal guardian. L., an ESL public high school teacher, said that she did not approve of the wave of Chinese students who came to her school as international students doing homestays or living on their own. She saw it as leading to insubordinate behaviour and infringing on the students’ ability to succeed at school:

It was very common and it was not a good thing to do…these were very rich kids, their parents send them here to be on their own and they often came very young, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, one their own, living in Canada. They were much too young to live on their own, they were wild with drugs, they skipped school, life was one big party and that was a problem.

Yet, despite the negative views both former secondary school students and educator participants expressed about some transnational family constellations, there was general agreement that this is an increasingly common trend in the current globalized economy and one that can facilitate families’ financial stability in the GTA, as well as the maintenance of ties to the sending society/ies. Schools, while in theory requiring every student to have a formal guardian, at present do not always have the resources or inclination to ensure that this rule is uniformly followed. As well, educators, while understandably harbouring concerns about the educational implications of such living arrangements, felt that they had little to no authority to actually influence student and parent decision-making about this matter.

3.3.1.3 Technological and Cultural Transnational Actions

Considerable literature has documented how technological advances have led to real-time communication in everyday family decisions occurring in multiple locations; new infrastructure for active, instantaneous monitoring of global businesses and political developments; and the transnational rearing of children (Batliwala and Brown 2006, Foner 2001, Fouron and Glick Schiller 2001, Guarnizo and Smith 1998, Kasinitz et al. 2002, Kelly 2003, Mano and Willems 2010, Moskal 2010, Parreñas 2007). Robertson (2013) and others term such activities “mediated personal communication” to describe the maintenance of social relationships to friends and families in the sending societies via internet-based communication (Ghosh and Wang 2003, Kennedy et al. 2008).
Young people who migrate may be doubly impacted by these new technologies, as they often have greater technical skills and cultural capital available to them, as compared to their parent(s) or older generations of immigrants. This, in turn, may enable them to utilize transnational spaces to a greater degree, as their parent(s) may live in a transnational social field primarily limited to remittances, emails/letters and interactions with recently arrived migrants (Arat-Koc 2006, Castles 2003, McGinnis, Goodstein-Stolzenberg and Saliani 2008, Remennick 2003, Ueda 2002, Wayland 2006).

The interview participants in this study identified numerous behavioural enactments of transnationalism related to technology, media and culture and emphasized that these mechanisms mostly have positive impacts on their feelings of connectedness to their sending societies as well as their schooling outlooks.\(^{24}\) Instantaneous forms of communication and information exchange (e.g. Skype/texting/email/social media websites) allowed them to stay current on political and cultural happenings in their place(s) of origin, such as elections, new music, and film and sporting events, as well as facilitating the rapid transfer of funds/remittances for friends and family in need of financial assistance.

Specifically, many former GTA secondary school student participants spoke about utilizing texting, email, Skype or cheaper long distance telephone rates to talk to friends and family at home on a daily or weekly basis, regularly reading local newspapers online, closely following TV shows or listening to music from their place(s) of origin, watching sending nation sporting events in real-time, and reading literature and poetry in their native language. The participants also spoke about engaging in “local ethnic” media as well as “diasporic global” media networks (Cunningham 2004, Karim 1998). The reasons the interviewees provided for maintaining such constant contact were varied. Some said that it warded off feelings of homesickness. Others spoke of maintaining close familial relationships or properties or businesses back home. Still others mentioned that they feared for friends and family in their birth country due to unstable or

\(^{24}\) This stands in contrast to Robertson’s (2013) study of “student-migrants”. These individuals, who were largely older than the participants in this study (as they were enrolled in tertiary education), noted the limitations as well as the benefits of new communication technologies. These individuals sometimes emphasized that such media did not make up for a lack of authentic intimacy created by physical proximity and that over time long distance relationships often petered out even with all these technological means of staying connected. Thus, technologically mediated communication played an ambivalent role in their lives.
dangerous political climates. As well, some of the visa students mentioned that they had used internet and social media for initial research into schools in the GTA, to assess their credibility and international reputation before submitting a formal application.

Many of the former secondary school students with transnational ties emphasized how appreciative they are of having these new technologies to simplify their contact with friends and family in their sending nations. J., who originates from Mexico, stated the following:

I think we immigrated at a good time when technology is very helpful to stay connected. With Facebook and the iPhone, and Skype, we are far but we are still kind of close. We are helped by technology; at least we can see each other and know what's happening.

C. said that compulsively following the news in Argentina was something she had picked up during her childhood there. She felt that being up-to-date on news is much more culturally engrained in Argentina than in Canada. Due to her fears for her friends and family back home, she continued with her avid news watching after her family moved to Toronto when she was in high school, often talking to her mother about political affairs and watching daily news broadcasts to see if there was mention of Argentina:

My mom was always up-to-date on Argentinian politics. There, being involved in politics is part of your blood; it's the revolutionary spirit. It's very different here. In Argentina everyone's involved in politics. But I think I kept connected to Argentinian news when we moved because I was always worried. I think that's the difference of having a recent genocide in your country, people are always on the edge because it could absolutely happen again.

CC. also stated that she stayed current on the happenings in Iraq while attending a GTA public high school. She read, and continues to read, both general news as well as ethnic-specific press on a daily basis, facilitating the maintenance of her ties there. This is coupled with regular conversations with family members to get their perspectives on the lived realities of the political climate in Iraq:

Basically I daily read any kind of news that comes out of there and I talk to my family that's there a lot. At home we're basically Iraqis language-wise, in terms of food, culture, even relationships/dynamics, things like that, all of that is pretty Middle Eastern…. I read mainstream stuff, Foreign Policy, BBC, CNN when I can stomach it, but also Al-Jazeera, Al Akbar, and then there's some blogs that are more independent, that are specifically Kurdish and I get a lot of information from there. But most of my information comes from actually speaking to my grandparents and aunts and uncles on a weekly basis.
A., who has transnational ties to Portugal (see Case Study #5), was also emphatic that “the internet has changed everything, even in terms of finding out more about Portuguese history and what life was like under the dictatorship” for her and her family. She said that the Internet has allowed her to learn more about her country of origin, and understand things that even her parents didn’t know about, because of the closed political climate during their time in Portugal:

The internet had led to weird situations where I am learning about Portugal and then telling my parents about what life was like, which is funny because I never lived there at that time and my parents did. But there was such a strict censorship of state-regulated news. So they didn't even know what was going on. So I’m giving them this information and they're like 'No that's not possible' and I’m like 'It is. It was documented.' They didn't believe me; they're like ‘Salazar would never have done that’…The internet is really facilitating this process of rediscovering this culture for me.

T. said that he remembers how much harder it was to have family members visit from Pakistan before there was the ability to connect with Pakistani media and news instantaneously online:

When I was younger, my grandma, my dad’s mom, she came to Canada for a little bit and she lived with us after we have moved. She didn’t speak a lick of English and the whole time she was bored; this was back when she couldn’t read her newspaper online, there were no specialty ethnic channels on TV, and really she missed everything she left behind. And it wasn’t until after she passed away, my dad was like ‘Oh man, if my mom was here now she could just Skype and turn on the TV and do what your mother’s doing now and just talk about her shows’.

As well, due to the increased ability to remain plugged in on events at home, V. said she was more able to assist when there was a tsunami in Japan in 2011 and to stay current on how the relief efforts were unrolling in her birth country:

When the tsunami happened last year I was very happy to be in the community relief fundraising community. I’m happy to help out in the local Japanese community here, but really my main attachment, as I see it, is with Japan, not really with the Japanese community here.

Yet despite the many positive aspects of being able to stay connected to media and culture from the sending society/ies, some of the educators interviewed perceived that this may not make a huge difference for their students with transnational ties, or may even hinder their integration into the classroom. However, it was notable that this view was only shared by educators, and not by the transnational migrants themselves. For example, KK. said that in his private school, the instantaneous contact with family back home makes some international boarding students more
homesick. U., a guidance counsellor at a Catholic high school, suggested that students have always stayed connected to their countries of origin, and that recent technological developments may not be transformative. He also stated that having such frequent access to the sending society may, in fact, facilitate the maintenance of ties that do not necessarily serve the students well:

I think kids are getting caught between these two worlds a lot more than they used to because of technology. That draw back to the home country can be hard. I’ll talk to kids if they want to go back to Korea or Croatia and sometimes they say yes, sometimes no, sometimes they’re confused…I think there’s often intense family pressures to stay connected. And some of these cultures are just far more family-oriented than North American culture is.

In tandem with technology, other transnational behaviours that were identified by participants included attending nationally-based churches in Toronto and going to after-school ethno-specific schools for advanced academic help (e.g. Kumon) or for cultural or linguistic education (e.g. Chinese school).

In the academic literature on transnationalism, remittances are often stressed as a key behavioural enactment of this phenomenon, facilitated by new technology and streamlined banking procedures. Through remittances, it is suggested that members of diaspora(s) can influence the internal functioning in their place(s) of origin and/or ensure loyalty from family members, either political or otherwise. This is especially so if families back home are reliant on such funds. Remittances may be used for conspicuous consumption, as with house construction or the sponsoring of weddings, or for investment, for example to increase agricultural productivity or to pay for the education of the next generation. In addition, individuals in the sending communities who are dependent on remittances have an incentive to assure that those who have migrated continue to feel a connection to home (Hamann 2001, Levitt 2001, Mahler 1998, Skeldon 2002).

Yet some of the study participants emphasized that remittances are not necessary for their family in the sending society. Q. said “there's no need for us to send money back home to Colombia, the family has good employment, they're not in need.” And C. stated that her family in Canada actually received money from her wealthy family in Argentina, suggesting that the flow of funds is not always unidirectional from North to South. However, other participants said that their parent(s) did send remittances while they were in high school “all the time” and that on occasion this led to tight financial constraints for their families in the GTA. O. stated that she too sent
money to her family in Croatia from a part-time job during high school, and explained that as she gets older she worries more about her fiscal responsibilities to her family there:

I Skype with my aunt and I go 'Do you need anything?'. I'm very close with my aunts. They'll always tell me 'No, no,' because I'm younger. But I know they are in need. This summer was really the first summer I travelled without my parents to see my whole family there again. My parents didn't go at all. Everyone unleashed their problems on me, their financial, their marital problems. It was like I was an adult now.

Thus, collectively, these behavioural enactments of transnationalism (physical travel, dispersed family arrangements and the use of media and technology) contributed to interview participants maintaining strong ties to individuals and places in their sending societies. These behavioural enactments also had direct or indirect consequences in regards to the academic performance and integration of these young people into secondary schools in the GTA. In conjunction with these physical actions, the following section describes and evaluates the attitudinal forms of transnationalism that were identified by study participants in some detail.

Theme 2: Attitudinal Forms of Transnationalism

3.3.1.4 Evolving Ideas about “Being Canadian” and Post-Nationalism

While everyday school practice is associated with the construction of national identity (Carter 2011, Marsden 2000, Troper 1978), study participants suggested that certain students with transnational ties do not relate to the Canadian identity promoted in GTA schools. Other participants said that they partially embraced the “standard national identity”, but only as one portion or component of their hybrid selves. Finally, there were those who sought to embrace the national identity espoused by their new country's schools but felt excluded, perhaps because their relative incompetence with the behaviours and epistemologies, or “cultural models” associated with that identity, undercut their efforts to be included (Holland and Quinn 1987, Howarth 2004).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, many of the educators who were interviewed emphasized that their students with transnational ties maintained strong emotional connections to their/their parents’ place(s) of origin. While in the main the teachers viewed these connections positively, there was some concern that these connections came at the expense of a unifying Canadian identity. The educators felt that many of their students were more connected to issues in their home country or
even in the United States, as compared to Canada. AA., a teacher at an inner-city public high school, emphasized that her students were not interested in Canadian politics. Instead, they were up-to-date on issues of concern in their place(s)/region(s) of origin:

I don’t think many of them read a Canadian paper. I made them read articles to practice for the literacy class…but they’re not engaged…they probably know that there’s an election but they’re much more likely to hear if there was a huge accident or something. But most of them keep tabs of what goes on at home. They talk about it. And now, with the Internet, it’s so easy.

KK. suggested that an issue for students with transnational ties in the all-boys private school where he teaches is that the school does not do a very good job of promoting Canadian issues or politics as something that is interesting. S., a student with ties to India, seemed to embody this perspective when she said that she doesn’t “know what Canadian identity looks like. There’s no real strong Canadian identity.” Notably, this lack of uniform “Canadian-ness” is something that is often championed in the multicultural discourse as leaving room for more fluid senses of identity (Kymlicka 2010). Yet S., who teaches at a Catholic school in Scarborough, said that he finds that his transnational students are frustrated by their inability to grasp what Canadian identity is, even while they value their experiences in GTA schools:

I think they're really frustrated that Canada doesn't have an identity. They see the United States, they see Bolivia, Argentina, Italy - they see all these countries that have an identity and they see Canada and say 'What's our identity?’ and they question that. And I think that's what attracts them to their home country. But given that a lot of these are first generation immigrants, they still do find value in the Canadian system as they understand it.

Other study participants felt that their primary identity lay elsewhere than in Canada. I., originally from the UAE, said that he identifies as “Indian-Arabic-African”, because he thinks Canadian identity is both meaningless and taken as a given in many contexts in the GTA. He stated, “I don't even say I'm Canadian because there’s an expectation that you are.” CC., who came as a refugee from Iraq with her family, put it the following way:

When people ask me where I'm from I say first Kurdistan and then I specify that I'm from Iraq. While I'm a Canadian citizen now, I don't really feel Canadian culturally or identity-wise at all, to be honest. So I'd say I'm Iraqi and I live in Canada.

For many of the public school teachers, a continuing sense of bonding nationalism to the place(s) of origin characterized the student body, rather than a link to Canadian identity. This external
nationalism sometimes manifested in fighting between students from different countries, while at other times the teachers said it was primarily evident in terms of support for different sports teams. It may be that this heightened nationalism is a case of “reactive ethnicity” (or reactive nationalism) (Portes and Rumbaut 2001:148-9, Rumbaut 2008), occurring as a result of a hostile receiving context in their new host society and/or schools, but there may be other reasons for this nationalism as well.

J. said that in the public school she teaches at in Etobicoke students are often very nationalistic as regards their home country, and that she sees this played out primarily in terms of sports team loyalties, but also occasionally in terms of conflicts between groups in the schoolyard:

Yesterday and the day before there was an India-Pakistan cricket game, and half the kids were ‘excused’ from class and they were all in the auditorium, where they set up the projector and watched the game. That’s a really big deal, everyone was wearing their colours in the school. There is a strong sense of nationalism among the students. Sometimes there are fights with Somalis against the Pakistanis or the other day we had all these Somali girls attack an Afghani girl. I don’t know what their reasons are, but they definitely do divide into groups based on their heritage.

Q. provided the example of a planned activity in class where she asked her geography students to think about what it means to be Canadian. She said that she was disappointed to notice that to many students being Canadian appeared to be related to whiteness. She said she hopes that this will change as her students live in Canada for longer, but also questioned whether she had appropriately handled the situation:

I asked them, as sort of an experiment, to line themselves up from who's most to who’s least Canadian, without telling them what that meant, as an opportunity to sort of unpack the idea. I asked them, ‘Why did you line yourself up as you did? Why is he ‘very Canadian’ and you are ‘Not Canadian at all’? ’ It did come out that the white kids were at one end. The kids who played hockey, regardless of race, were at that end too. They looked also at how long they had been in Canada. I don't know if I did as good a job as I’d like to of debriefing the exercise, but it was interesting to get at what is ‘Canadian’.

An identity divide was again evident between educators in the public and private school systems. The private school teachers generally regarded their students with transnational ties as having more of a “post-national” identity, meaning the students appeared to have minimal attachment to Canada or to their home country. Instead, they saw their future locations and loyalties as being
dictated by wherever the best school or work opportunities would lie. Rather than being a safe haven, Canada was perceived as a jumping off point for these students’ future economic or social betterment.

KK., who teaches at a private boys’ school, said that some of his students have family who own property all over the world, and that many of his students from the Middle East have family businesses that they expect to run when they are older. However, KK. gave the example of a student from Kazakhstan who has decided, much to chagrin of his family, to study film in Toronto rather than return home to run his family business. This demonstrates that some transilient students, or those amongst the socioeconomic elite with transnational ties, stay in Canada for professional opportunities and/or deviate from the expectations of their families back home. S., who teaches at a private girls school, also provided the example of some of her Korean students who say that they will return to Korea after finishing their schooling or perhaps go to America for university:

There’s a sense that [after high school] they’ll go back to Korea for a while or go to the States and then go to Korea. Sometimes when I ask them why [they plan to return], they’ll say they find life in Canada a bit slow. Some of the Hong Kong girls say that too. Socially it is slow, business is too slow, opportunities are too slow. Some of them will say ‘Schooling in Canada, back to Korea for opportunities.’

KK. said that he finds it “interesting” that the boys at his private school want to leave Canada. Among his students with transnational ties, KK. said that many plan to travel to wherever they find the best opportunities in future. He thinks their identity and connectedness to Canada will shift during this process:

Nobody really thinks of themselves as Canadians. I don’t hear anybody yearning to stay in Toronto. They want to go to the U.S. and maybe they’ll go do research in Europe. They don’t seem to have the same rootedness to Canada…It’s perfectly normal [to these kids] to work in Singapore for five years and then work in Switzerland for five years, that’s kind of the world that they live in…

Many of the interview participants who were former secondary school students in private schools seemed to echo this view. Most reported seeing themselves as “citizens of the world”. Y., an

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25 Robertson (2013) describes the phenomenon of “serial international students” who travel to numerous countries for educational credentials on their path to permanent residency in Australia (5). These students may have a similar orientation as the “post-nationals” identified here.
administrator at an all-girls private school, suggested that her elite students form an “international family” who will visit each other throughout the world as well as providing valuable connections, again suggesting that solidarities and commonalities may lie within primarily socioeconomic, rather than national, terms for more transilient transnational migrants:

They want to have a completely different outlook, they want to see what a different culture is like. A lot of them use this school as a starting point to work on their English and then from here they will apply to Canada or the U.K. for university…The students always talk how they like having this big sisterhood, like an international family, because a lot of them will make friends and over March Break someone from Hong Kong will go to Mexico for a week and over the summer the girl from Mexico will go visit Hong Kong. So they make these connections that last a lifetime.

Thus, for the most part, all the public school educators who were interviewed said that their transnational students are strongly connected to their homeland(s) in an ongoing manner and the majority of the teachers voiced at least a passing concern that this was somehow related to a lack of connectedness to Canada. While to some degree the teachers did perceive it to be their role to instil a greater sense of Canadian identity in the student body, this dearth of “Canadian-ness” manifested itself differently in different contexts and was impacted by students’ familial and economic resources as well as their future aspirations. While many public school teachers felt that their more transient students with transnational ties felt nationalistic towards their home countries, the private school educators instead felt that a “post-national” identity more aptly described the outlook of their more transilient students.

3.3.1.5 “The Tragic Side of Transnationalism”: Divided or Shared Loyalty
Erdal and Oeppen (2013) identify what they term an “alarmist view”, a perspective by the majority society which suggests that functional or symbolic transnational ties lead to scenarios of divided or dual loyalty for migrants that challenge, or prevent, their integration into the majority culture in the place of (re)settlement. They emphasize that this alarmist view can become pronounced if there is perceived to be an ideological or actual conflict between the country of settlement and the country of origin (or the place where the ties are connected to), providing the examples of the “war on terror” and fears of “home-grown terrorists” (Berglez and Olausson 2011, Erdal and Oeppen 2013).
Such concerns about foreign allegiances and terrorism mark much of the negative publicity surrounding transnationalism (Arat-Koc 2006, Huntington 1993, Smith 2007, Weinfeld 2011). Waldinger and Fitzgerald (2004) argue that “the relationship among states affects the scope for multiple versus exclusive national loyalties”, again emphasizing that concerns about transnationalism are heightened when there are security concerns between sending and receiving states (1178). The authors state that civil society actors in both host and destination countries may work to actively subvert transnational ties by raising questions regarding the allegiance and political motives of individuals whose social identities are largely framed by their connections to more than one nation, especially if the policies in one nation are at odds with Canada.

In the schooling context, general fears of “dual loyalties” (Baron 2009, Cannon 1989, Kaplan 2003, Kymlicka 2003) appeared to be reflected in educator concerns that students and their families are only interested in gaining “instrumental [Canadian] citizenship”. Such interviewees suggested that some students and their families are aiming to acquire specific and transferable educational benefits in Canada (Ip, Inglis and Tong-Wu 1997, Waters 2003), rather than making a longer term investment in the country. However, the former secondary school student participants with transnational ties did not appear to share this perception of crisis, and, instead, spoke about a “shared loyalty” to more than one nation. H. stated that he prefers to think about the positive aspects of holding ties to more than one country, saying “I think you can be Canadian and your other background as well.” C. said that she feels loyal more to the specific people she is connected to in both Canada and Argentina, rather than to the countries themselves.

U., a Catholic school guidance counsellor, said he often finds that his students embrace a Canadian identity and loyalty, but that their parents are concerned about them retaining their birth country identity. This, in his perception, can cause them difficulties in fitting in at school, especially in the initial years after migration. Over time, NN. thinks that the negotiation of dual identities often becomes easier for students:

I think they try to feel Canadian but that causes problems for them because there’s still a lot of pull and input from home saying ‘You are not Canadian, you are Somali, Korean, etc.’… I think the dual identity is a burden at the beginning of high school at least. Later, it can become something they really draw on, being Portuguese-Canadian or whatever, owning that piece of history that they have. But in the early years they just want to fit in.
B. said that she feels divided not within two cultures, but within herself. She has found that within the Croatian-Canadian community she finds others who she can relate to best, individuals who share her conflicted notions of loyalty and identity:

When you come to Canada it's the idea that it's very multicultural and they'll accept anyone, but you're still not Canadian, you're not Anglophone or indigenous. I can't say I'm purely Canadian, I wasn't born here, I was a refugee and I immigrated. But when I go back to Croatia, they're like 'Oh, look at this Canadian girl'. So that's why in the Croatian-Canadian community we share that whole 'You're not one or the other, you're kind of both, but neither.' Wherever you go you have a nickname.

However, CC. identified the September 11th terrorist attacks as being a defining event that shifted her national loyalty. While before September 11th she had made a strong effort to fit in and “be Canadian”, afterwards, after encountering racism within her school towards Arabs, she has come to embrace a more Middle Eastern identity. This echoes what Rumbaut (2002; 2008) has termed “reactive identity”:

When I was a kid, because my parents placed so much emphasis on keeping our culture, I didn't want that, I wanted to fit in with the other kids at school. I even lied and said that I was Christian... And then, it's kind of almost a cliché now, but I think 9/11 happened and I was in 5th grade and the first thing I remember was they showed the news to us so we could know what was happening. They had a huge assembly and stopped all classes. Then, the first thing that I heard from one of my white friends when we went to recess the day later was she had heard from her dad that they wanted to wipe all Arabs off the face of the planet. That was her exact words. All I could think was my best friend was Arab, I'm from a mostly Arab country, and so I think that's when I first felt different from my Canadian friends and I didn't want to be Canadian and be that person that rejected my own culture. Since then that's shaped a lot of my loyalties. That's why I feel a lot more loyal to my Middle Eastern side then I do to my Western side.

T., a public secondary school teacher, admitted that she initially felt shocked when she learned that her ESL students were “using” the GTA education system and then planning to return home with their Western credentials. She said she felt troubled by some students’ apparent lack of loyalty to Canada and that she continues to struggle with this notion:

Some of my students did say 'I'm here, I'm going to finish high school and go to college or university here and then I'm going back home to be a, and whatever profession they happen to study here, and they will go to practice there. It took me off guard initially, like 'So you're using our school system to get ahead somewhere else'. So not all of them were like 'I'm so happy to be here, I’m staying in Canada forever'. I never got the sense they were going to go back and save their country it was just 'I came here to study because
your schools are good, I’m going to study engineering because we need more engineers, doctors, whatever in my home country and that's where I want to live and raise a family.'

Overall, interviewees suggested that language about the divided loyalties of migrants can quickly become inflammatory and/or racist. However, questioning of loyalty and negotiations of primary national identification and affiliation appeared to be an inevitable form of attitudinal transnationalism and one that both transnational former secondary school student and educator participants spoke about and questioned. Few saw any absolute “right” within this situation.

3.3.1.6 Complex Notions of Where and What is “Home”

In the transnational literature, there is evidence that return migration is not uncommon (Cassarino 2004, Parreñas 2005). There is documentation of young people who end up returning to their place(s) of origin when they finish schooling, either because of better economic opportunities there, specifically due to their English language proficiency, technical skills, or the cachet of a Western education (a “pull factor”), and/or because of a real or perceived lack of economic opportunities and amenities in the new place of residence (a “push factor”) (Hare 1999, Mazzarol and Soutar 2002). Taiwan, for example, has lured back better trained and more experienced personnel to Taiwanese research and development centres, many of whom previously left Taiwan for better opportunities abroad. However, this is a notable exception. In the majority of cases, Global North countries remain more attractive, financially and socially, to young people with transnational ties (Aydemir and Skuterud 2005, Kasinitz et al. 2002, Ritzer 2010).

The final attitudinal enactment of transnationalism that interview participants identified was being unsure (or continuously re-evaluating) their ideas about where and what their “home” is, along with indeterminacy about their future place(s) of residence. Many of the recent GTA secondary school graduates with transnational ties said that their feelings of impermanency in Canada had led to a lack of belonging and had repercussions in terms of their behaviour and investment in GTA schools. Some individuals, especially those who had come to Canada for economic or security reasons, said that they would likely end up staying in the GTA due to their improved financial and professional situations. Others felt precisely the opposite. They felt they would find better jobs or lifestyles if they returned and settled in their place(s) of origin. Finally, there was also complexity surrounding the views educators and former students expressed in
regards to “giving back” to their sending society and what if any “debt” they owed to their birth country.

BB. said that for many years after arriving in Canada as a refugee with his family from Croatia he still considered the Balkans to be his home. However, he said that realizing the greater educational opportunities that he has had in Canada helped him feel more like he belongs in the GTA:

Up until a couple of years ago, I always considered, Croatia, Serbia, the Balkans, home. I just feel so at home there. But when I started university I realized how blessed I am to be here versus my cousins who are going to school there and how many more opportunities I have here and how blessed I am to get an education here. This summer when I went back everyone was like 'How's Canada?' and for the first time I was like 'I love it.’

Many other study participants stated that they are not yet decided where (and if) they want to ultimately settle down. H. said that she ended up applying to medical schools both in Canada and in Trinidad and that she is still unsure which is her preference. On the one hand, H. said she does not want to end up alone in the GTA if her parents return to Trinidad. But on the other hand, she said she feels closest to the new friends she has made in Scarborough. H. said she worries that making decisions about her schooling will lead to her losing her connection to one place or the other:

I think I consider Trinidad, I guess, my permanent home and Canada my temporary home, but it might become my permanent home. My sister, when she moved to the States, she had every intention of going back to Trinidad. But then she met her husband and so now she’s living there and it’s her permanent home. I struggled with where I want to live a lot in high school, especially since my parents were considering going back... But I decided last year I wasn’t going to think about it too much and just focus on graduating and applying everywhere. So I applied to one school in Trinidad for med school and I’m going to apply to lots of schools in Canada as well, and I’ll see where that takes me. So there’s a high chance of me going back and a high chance of me staying here.

Yet some of the more transient study participants, especially those coming from poorer countries in the Global South, said that they will not or cannot return to their place(s) of origin on a permanent basis. For some, the reasons for this were financial. They felt they would be more able to make a living in the GTA. For others, it was because they felt their sending nation was corrupt or the political climate was unsafe, or it was related to valuing friends and family that have also relocated and are now living in the GTA. For the visa students interviewed, some said
that it was important to them to stay in Canada for at least a few years after their schooling in order to gain valuable work experience in the Canadian job market. In many of these instances, schooling and education were often important components of this evaluation of relative lifestyles in the homeland/newland.

While BB. said that initially he thought his family might go back to Croatia, he now thinks they “have changed too much” and “wouldn’t be comfortable living there”. However, D., who came from Russia by himself in high school and is currently enrolled in law school in the GTA, said that talking to friends in Russia has made him appreciate the transparency in the GTA schooling system. Russian friends have continually told him about their experiences with grades-for-sale and other corruption in Russian high schools and universities, and this has made him realise he will likely stay and practice law in Toronto:

> For me it was never really planned out, I just took it one thing at a time. It was almost assumed I would go to university in Canada. But whenever I would see my Russian friends they would tell me stories about school back home and I really did not like it. I didn't like the situation in Russia, so I didn't want to be there… There, if you're competing against someone in school and their parents have money, they'll buy them the grades, they'll get them the job. And that was a story that people consistently told me. People felt like, ‘Why should I work hard if someone else will just buy their way in?’ It's all through nepotism, through connections, through bribes. It's incredibly discouraging.

I. said that it has taken him twelve years to “come to terms” with the fact that he will likely make his primary residence in Toronto. He said that so long as he can vacation in the UAE on a yearly basis, he feels that he can maintain his strong links to his birth country. However, some study participants, such as CC., said that her parents often discuss her returning to her country of origin to get a job once she finishes school. However, she said that after fleeing Iraq as a refugee with her family when she was young, she still feels scared to move back there.

However, other study participants had precisely the opposite perspective. They felt that they likely would return to their place(s) of origin on a permanent basis. This was because they perceived better professional opportunities there, in some cases because of less competition for jobs, a booming economy, family connections, or because they felt their Western education would have more value abroad. Some of the visa students said that they plan to return home once their English is at a high enough level or when they complete a university degree in Canada.
C. said that she has returned to Argentina because she considers herself a better candidate in the job market there. A professional photographer, she said that Fine Arts degrees are not granted in Argentina, giving her a distinctive qualification. Her linguistic and cultural fluency in both English and Spanish are also marketable assets. C. described herself as uniquely qualified for the first job she got when she returned to Argentina, which was working with a non-profit agency that coordinated international volunteers:

I was appealing as a coordinator in an NGO because I was from Argentina, so I could speak Spanish without an accent as well as having [fluent] English. And then, in Argentina, I was appealing as a photographer because I had a degree that didn't even exist.

M. described the process she went through in deciding to return to live in China once she finished her law degree. She said she moved back after a visit to China, because she was amazed at how transformed the country was and how cosmopolitan the young people were in the urban centers. Through globalization and increased international travel, M. thinks that the differences between young professionals in China and the GTA have been much diminished:

After I finished law school in England I decided independently to go back. I went back first for a holiday. I took some Chinese lessons in Beijing, explored the city, partied, and I loved it. I didn't see my roots because China changed so much! It seems like all of Communism was washed away, there are skyscrapers everywhere; it's more metropolitan than Toronto, and also quite multicultural in many areas. It was also ultra hip, very posh, there's fashion, amazing bars and clubs. It was just the happening place. So I was like, ‘I'm moving here. I can see myself living there again.’ China has changed so much that the younger generation aren't that different than Canadians. They are more family-oriented. But otherwise we're the same. Even the poor ones have studied overseas.

O., who came from Ethiopia as an international or visa student during high school, said that many of her peers from Ethiopia are also considering returning there to live because they find it to be too competitive a job market in Toronto. She said she returned to Ethiopia for several months to do an internship at an NGO working on HIV/AIDS. She was surprised at how many other Western-educated Ethiopian young people like herself were there, exploring the job possibilities:

At school everybody wants to go home to Ethiopia. Especially people in their mid-20s are talking about going back home. There are better opportunities back home. They don't like the life here. In Toronto it's very difficult to get a job, you have to work so hard, prove yourself for so long to become who you want to be. Why work on that when you can go back home and have your own idea, have your own business? Sometimes you
waste time here and you might not be at the place that you want to be because of the competition. There are a lot of educated people. I find that that's how a lot of people explain to me their desire to go back home.

Many of educators who were interviewed also suggested that transient students from less wealthy countries or from families with limited means were more likely to stay in Canada. It was the elite post-nationals who were more inclined to move back to their sending nation and work in a family business or in the expanding economy (Sassen 2002, Sassen 2009, Tambini 2001). L., an ESL teacher at an inner-city public school, stated the following:

In terms of staying here permanently, I suppose it would depend where they were from and what there was for them back home. If they were from big business in Hong Kong the idea was that they’d go home and manage the business. Or initially it was the idea, but ideas often change. But if they were from the poorer countries they were here to stay.

Some of the other educators sensed a trend of students with transnational ties hoping to return to their sending nations in order to contribute, or make a difference. HH. an administrator in the Catholic school system, said that he sees many students who want to go back home and help:

Individuals will tell me quite openly and readily that ‘I'm here for a short period of time and I will go back, and they even say 'my country' 'my people' so there's a claim to that they have. They want to go back and make a difference. And you see it with professional athletes and entertainers that there is this sense of being able to communicate where they've come from and what they've experienced and their deep desire to go back and be supportive.

However, X., a Catholic school teacher, said that he thinks that while some students with transnational connections do want to give back to their birth country, they feel daunted by the prospect of how to actually tackle problems there. He said that schools should be a place to discuss these ideas about volunteerism and having multiple homes:

With the social justice clubs that I have in the school I hear that a lot, that aspiration of ‘I’d like to give back to my country’. It usually presents itself in discussions about a world problem or a world issue. But I’m curious to see if they do end up actually doing that and how much will they engage with their home country. My personal suspicion is it’ll be largely driven by family they have back home, and I think a lot of them will do what they can, which might be write a cheque, bring some goods, or help a local World Vision campaign. I don’t know how many will actually become a global human rights defending lawyer superstar, because I think that’s such an intimidating thing to try to tackle. But regardless, I do try to talk about these ideas in school.
T., whose family arrived from Pakistan when he was young said that he and his sister both feel they have a responsibility or “debt to pay” to their birth country. He spoke about his guilt at being part of the “brain drain”, as talented young people are increasingly leaving Global South nations and focusing their talents on the Global North:

I’ve done all this international travelling and work on volunteer projects but not really in Pakistan and I’ve always felt a void... My sister and I talk about this a lot, about maybe going back there and working there. But my mom is super against it. …There’s a book – The Reluctant Fundamentalist – and a passage in it describes this Pakistani guy post-9/11. There’s a passage where shit’s getting crazy in Pakistan, his family are leaving. All of the elders say ‘You have to get to safety,’ and they get him a plane ticket to the U.S. And as he’s looking around in the plane, it’s full of young people, full of energy and he’s like ‘In history, any time that there’s been an external pressure or safety has been jeopardized, it’s the youngest who fight and the elderly who move to safety. And it’s the exact opposite here, the old are staying behind to die, and we’re going to safety.’ And that passage really struck me. We learn about the brain-drain and globalization and taking out all of the smart and the young and energetic, but for whatever reason that passage really humanized it for me.

However, H. said she felt an aversion to the “Eurocentric development discourse” when she volunteered in a hospital in Trinidad the last time she visited. She said she doesn’t see her birth country as some place in need of her repair. Nor does she think she is especially qualified to help, as compared to her friends who grew up living in Trinidad:

There was always an aversion from me to go back because I know a lot of friends who do that and for some reason I could never do that, because they saw Trinidad as a developing country. It’s hard to explain, but I never wanted to go back to Trinidad with the attitude that I was better and had all of this knowledge. Because I know how smart Trinidadians are and I didn’t want to go back and act superior. Even places like Mexico where I lived for a while, I had an opportunity to go volunteer there, and I didn’t want to, not because I didn’t want to help, but because I didn’t want to go there and be superior.

Ultimately, considerations about home and where to live in future were on the minds of many of the former students with transnational ties, both the more transiient and the more transient individuals. Many struggled with questions about how and where they belong and thought about the role their ongoing connections to both the GTA and their place(s) of origin would have on their future education, travel and decision-making. There was little or no consensus about whether life would be easier or harder in the sending society, or if former students with transnational ties were in a unique position to provide assistance to the Global South.
3.4 Summary

This chapter explored themes identified within the data at the level of individuals and families, in terms of the wide range of behavioural and attitudinal/emotional enactments of transnationalism described by study participants. Specifically, the emphasis was on descriptions of these ongoing negotiations of connections to their place(s) of origin by both former GTA secondary school students and educators, and on how they impact schooling expectations, outcomes and behaviours. The chapter initially explored participants’ analyses of behavioural enactments of transnationalism, including ongoing travel to their birth country, transnational family constellations, and technological and other cultural enactments of these ties. The second theme within the data identified trends within attitudinal expressions of transnationalism, investigating negotiations of multiple and evolving identities, connectedness to a “Canadian” identity versus post-national identities, concerns about dual loyalties, and indeterminacy about future places of primary residence. All of these subthemes were found to provide both challenges and opportunities within the classroom, and many were still largely unrecognized or rarely debated within school settings.

The following chapter will provide addition case studies, as well as framing scholarly literature and an explication of key themes identified in the interviews, this time at the level of schools and institutions.
4  “Here” Versus “There”: Transnationalism at the Level of Schools and Institutions

4.1 Introduction

“Schools and educational systems in very different regions of the world are now enrolling new categories of transnational students, categories that in the past did not exist, were not visible, and/or were subsumed under other categories” (Zúñiga and Hamann 2009:4).

The previous chapter detailed interview respondents’ experiences and perceptions of transnationalism at the individual and family level. This chapter progresses to the next phase of inquiry and focuses on the Secondary Schooling Transnational Nexus at the level of schools and institutions. Analysis focuses on comparisons made by both former GTA secondary school students with transnational ties and educators about schooling “here” (in the GTA) as opposed to “there” (in the place(s) of origin).

Specifically, this chapter explores respondents’ reflections on homeland/newland secondary schooling comparisons in terms of their respective organization, orientation and pedagogical focus. In addition, the former GTA secondary school student interviewees reflected on how the experience of migrating during high school impacted their perceptions of the relative quality of the GTA education system and whether/to what extent this experience enhanced or diminished their academic orientation and scholastic success. As noted in Chapter 1, the interview respondents were educators at or had recently attended a variety of schooling institutions, both in the sending and receiving societies. The recent GTA secondary school graduate interviewees included individuals with transnational ties who had come to the GTA as refugees, both with formal status and those “sans papiers”, economic migrants who came with permanent status, second generation Canadians26, and individuals who had travelled to the GTA on their own with

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26 Existing empirical studies have left researchers divided in their conclusions about the transnational trends of generations beyond the first, adult immigrant cohort. Some find no evidence that transnationalism is important for the children of migrants (Kasinitz et al. 2002), while others stress that transnational trends may evolve over generations and/or be fostered as a reaction to external forms of social exclusion (Somerville 2008; Fouron & Glick-Schiller 2002). Yet for the second generation, there are often definitional ambiguities; it is unclear if “mixed families”, in which only one parent is an immigrant, ought to be included in analyses of the Canadian-born second generation. In a quantitative study of native born adults twenty-five and over in Canada in 1999, Hum and Simpson (2007), for example, find that children with two foreign-born parents have approximately double the educational advantage as compared to second generation adults with only one immigrant parent, whether mother or father. This suggests the importance of such distinctions for educational trajectories.
international student visas. Some interviewees, both educators and former students, had attended and worked at public secular secondary schools in the GTA. Others had experience with the Catholic school system, and still others with the private school system. Amongst those reflecting on their experiences studying or teaching in private schools, there were teachers and former student attendees at both for-profit and independent/non-profit schools, and schools that were both secular and religiously oriented.

In general, more transient transnational migrants, or those with fewer socioeconomic resources, enrolled in public schools in the GTA. The more elite transnational migrants in this study attended a variety of schools, both public and private. Each group, while heterogeneous in many respects, was viewed as holding a unique social location within the Secondary Schooling Transnational Nexus.

In the interviews, four broad themes bearing on transnationalism at the level of schools and institutions were identified. Within each of these themes, there was an evident divide between the responses of educators and those of the former GTA high school students with transnational ties. The former appeared, overall, to have a lack of understanding or means of identifying those students that held transnational ties. This was often due to a lack of knowledge by educators about their students’ life pathways and ties to their homeland(s) outside the classroom context, as well as due to teachers’ competing priorities.

This chapter begins by providing two case studies that exemplify the experience of both a student and an educator in negotiating and analyzing schooling “here” and “there”. This is followed by a review of relevant scholarly research examining educator perspectives on students with transnational ties. Subsequently, each of the four themes identified in the interviews is explored in some depth. The first theme relates to direct schooling comparisons made about the countries of origin and the GTA. A dominant trend within these comparisons was the perception that schooling in the GTA was less competitive and less academically rigorous (often termed “easier”) than schools in their place(s) of origin. A second theme is that the students did not appear to believe that their experiences in homeland and newland schools led them to work harder academically or eased their educational integration in the GTA, in contradiction to a 2006 case study by Vivian Louie.
The third theme explores respondents conflicted feelings about the (ir)relevance of the multicultural framework within GTA schools for transnational students. While some educators saw multiculturalism as helpful and inclusionary for students with ongoing connections to their sending societies, others, while generally supporting a multicultural discourse, argued for limits to the cultural/ethnic accommodation in schools as well as in society more broadly. Finally, the fourth theme connects to the emphasis on social class, as identified in Chapter 2, and analyses respondents’ differing valuations of public versus private schools in the GTA and abroad. Notably, interviewees expressed a wide range of opinions as to the worth of the GTA schooling system. In certain cases, largely for more transient transnationals, respondents praised the high academic quality and accessibility of the public school system in the GTA as compared to that of their sending societies. However, among GTA educators in the public school system, concerns focused on a rising tide of “credit mills”, or for-profit private schools, that were thought to be targeting visa students, while providing low quality education.

Overall, this chapter aims to probe the possible impacts of increasing numbers of students with transnational connections at the level of schools and institutions, as identified by both recent GTA secondary school graduates with transnational ties and educators. The discussion largely focuses on comparisons made between schools “here” versus “there”, and the ability of different schooling institutions to assist or hinder with the social integration and academic achievement of the increasingly transnational secondary student population.

4.2 Case Studies

The case studies selected for this chapter include a second-generation young woman, A., who attended high school both in Portugal and the GTA, as well as a male educator, X., who works within the Catholic school system in Scarborough in the east end of the GTA. A.’s story, in particular, details the family tensions that sometimes result from growing up in a “transnational social field” (Gargano 2009, Levitt and Schiller 2004). A. also demonstrates that, while transnational individuals may use their “dual frame of reference” (Louie 2006b) to evaluate the relative worth of their schooling experiences, in some cases this leads to a greater appreciation for their schooling in their place of origin rather than that in the GTA.

The sixth case study details the experiences of X., a teacher who has numerous students with transnational ties in his classroom, most of whom are not among the socioeconomic elite. X. is
presented as an example of educator who attempts to be culturally responsive and sensitive to the differing needs of his multiethnic classroom population (Agyeman and Erickson 2012, Dutro et al. 2008, Stairs 2007). While X. feels that GTA schools excel in their emphasis on leadership and critical thinking skills, it is not clear whether or not he perceives a difference between the general population of immigrant students in his classroom and those with transnational ties. Overall, X. does not think that his students who have experiences attending other international school systems have any particular increased motivation to succeed.

Case Study #5: Disputing Global North School Superiority: The GTA Versus the Azores

4.2.1.1 Background

While there is considerable evidence of the high academic achievement levels of many immigrant and minority groups in Canada (Areepattamannil and Freeman 2008, Boyd 2002), the case of Portuguese-Canadians has long stood out as an important exception. Beginning with the first inflow of Portuguese migrants to Canada in the 1950s, the Portuguese-Canadian community has consistently had the lowest education levels of any immigrant minority in the GTA. It is currently the fourth lowest of any ethno-racial minority, behind Aboriginals, Inuit and Métis. As recently as 2006, a report by the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) noted that Portuguese-speaking students had the highest proportion of secondary school dropouts in the city with rates that exceeded forty percent (Andrew-Gee 2012, Presley and Brown 2011).

Comprising part of what has been termed the “invisible minority” population (Fleras 1989) in the GTA, Portuguese-Canadian youth demonstrate disproportionate academic underachievement at the elementary, secondary and post-graduate schooling levels (Nunes 1999, Nunes 2003). This trend of low educational attainment does not appear to have been reversed amongst Canadian-born students of Portuguese descent; more than three quarters of Portuguese-speakers currently in the TDSB are second or third generation immigrants. This suggests a systematic reproduction of educational inequality, and, arguably, a failure to integrate (or be integrated) into the mainstream of Canadian society (Nunes 2008, Ornstein 2000).

The scholarly literature identifies several key reasons to explain why Portuguese-Canadian youth score below average in schools: systemic discrimination, unengaged parents, and pressure to enter the workforce at a young age. Currently, the government does not consider Portuguese
youth eligible for affirmative action in education or the job market. Perhaps introducing a transnational element to this issue, it is notable that the high-school dropout rate in Portugal is also very high at 37.1 percent – only Turkey and Mexico had higher dropout rates amongst member states of the OECD (Andrew-Gee 2012).

4.2.1.2 “I Thought School ‘There’ Would Be Easier. I Was Wrong.”

A. is a 27 year-old second-generation Portuguese female. She attended secondary schooling both in the GTA and in the Azores, Portugal. Her evaluation of the quality of education in the Azores as opposed to the GTA provides an interesting example of how her perceptions of the two schooling systems were greatly altered by her family’s transnational movement. Disputing Louie’s (2006) description of a “transnational perspective” on education, A. provided numerous examples of how her secondary schooling in Portugal was, in her opinion, more engaging and overall better than high school in the GTA.

A. and her two sisters were born in Canada. Her parents married in Portugal, but moved to Toronto in 1975 where they felt they could do better economically. A. grew up in a highly traditional home where the family spoke only Portuguese. Neither of her parents became fluent in English. A.’s family lived in a Portuguese neighbourhood in Toronto and she attended supplementary Portuguese language school every day after finishing at her local Catholic public school. A. said her parents were very strict while she was growing up and worried constantly that she was becoming too Canadian. “They would say ‘You're becoming wild because you're so Canadian.’”

During her childhood, A. and her family travelled to Portugal every second summer to visit extended family. A. said that her parents’ long-term goal was always to move back to Portugal permanently. Twice during her upbringing, A.’s family moved back to Portugal with the intention of staying. However, A. said that in both cases her family found it financially unsustainable living in Portugal and was forced back to Toronto. A. suggested that this repeated back and forth movement led to considerable instability for her as a youth:

In 1990, when I was five, [my parents] packed up everything we owned and put it all in a container ship and sent it to Portugal. They built a house there and put a lot of time and energy into decorating it and all of that. But then, a year later, they couldn’t hack it. My dad had started a business in Portugal, but the business was doing really badly. So we left
and came back here. That time they didn’t even bother decorating our house in Canada. I guess they just thought ‘We’ll make it back there at some point.’ And then we tried again [to move to Portugal] when I was thirteen for about a year. But pretty much the same thing happened.

A. recalled that the second time her family returned to Portugal she did not want to go. “I grew up in downtown Toronto and then we have to go back to farm living,” she said. However, A. stated that she grew to love her time in Portugal, and that this was in large part because of her positive experience with the education system there.

A. provided considerable comment on the relative merits of the schooling systems in the GTA versus the Azores. When she arrived back in Toronto with her family to start Grade 10, she said she was “really shocked” to discover that her school in Portugal was “way, way more advanced” than in the GTA. A. suggested that secondary schools in Portugal cover a lot more material and do so in earlier grades. While far fewer Portuguese secondary school students go on to higher education than in Canada, Portuguese secondary school graduates are, A. contends, better educated than those in the GTA:

In Canada we think that our diplomas are worth so much. But then I got to Portugal and the system was so different. We were learning about human evolution and doing quadratic equations in math, things you do in grade 10 or 11 in Toronto, and I was only thirteen… People don't generally go to university there, so I think they try and cram as much information as possible into the earlier years in order to make up for that fact.

A. gave numerous examples of how the school systems were different in the Azores as compared to in the GTA, including the structure of the school day and the amount of independence students are allowed:

In grade 8 it was basically like high school in the sense that you chose your classes. A lot of the times we would go to the beach and eat our lunch there… You'd start school at 8am, and sometimes we'd have a free period where we were just expected to go study somewhere. This is for kids that are as young as 10 or 11 - it was wild! You'd have a 2-hour lunch, then you'd come back and you'd finish school around 6pm. It was a really long day, but I loved the school.

A. said that when she returned to Toronto she was disappointed by how scholastically unchallenging her Catholic school was. In Portugal she had thrived academically, finding the curriculum more interesting and globally oriented than in the GTA:
I felt like school was way more engaging and I actually did really well in school there [in Portugal]. When I got back I was so bored in class. I was like, 'What is this? Why are we going back to this?'. Everything there was more advanced. We were reading Camões, the Portuguese equivalent of Shakespeare. The literature was more focused on Europe and the world in general, where here we're focused so much on Canada. We learned a lot more about geopolitics. I loved that.

A. said that her family’s move back to the GTA also made her appreciative of the stricter disciplinary environment in Portuguese schools. In Portugal, she said, it was common for weaker students to repeat a grade in elementary school. “Here if you fail it's a big scandal, because no one fails,” she said. A. thinks that the Portuguese system forced students to be more aware of the consequences of not keeping up with the curriculum in the classroom.

Neither of A.’s parents completed secondary schooling and they were unable to assist A. with schoolwork while she was growing up. A. described the difficulties her parents had in negotiating the GTA schooling system, as well as in understanding the different gender norms within Canadian society versus those in rural Portugal. A. said that during her teen years she had a very difficult relationship with her parents:

My mother was very sexist and she wanted us to be good, obedient wives…But on the other hand, my parents didn't want us to be labourers like they were. They want us to get jobs and be self-sufficient. But it's kind of a contradictory message. On one hand they think that because we’re women we're supposed to just be submissive. But on the other hand, they want us to have a good job and make a lot of money and buy our own houses. And they know that in order for anyone to succeed in this society you need a good education. So they supported that… I really do have a lot of compassion and empathy for them now, because I see how difficult it would have been to navigate a new culture with so little schooling and hanging on to old ways of being that aren't accepted in this community.

Currently, A. is working on completing her Bachelor’s Degree. Both of her sisters have completed post-secondary schooling. However, A. said that they are the only ones amongst their immediate and extended family who have done so. “Everyone else pretty much got streamlined to working construction or house cleaning or office jobs.”
Case Study #6: Catholic Schools and Students with Transnational Ties: An Educator Perspective

4.2.1.3 Background

In 1995, Lee and Holland, writing in the American context, published a formative book arguing that Catholic high schools produce higher than average academic achievement among students and that the grades are more equitably distributed among a variety of ethnic groups than within the public schooling system. The authors hypothesize that this is largely because Catholic schools place greater academic demands on students regardless of their background, and maintain more orderly and cohesive learning environments. More recently, Louie and Holdaway (2009) used survey data collected from 1998-2001 in the Immigrant Second Generation in Metropolitan New York Study and similarly found a benefit to Catholic schooling in terms of educational attainment for nearly all of the ethnic groups identified (Lee and Holland 1995, Louie and Holdaway 2009).

While much of these differences in educational attainment in the American context may ultimately be reflective of underlying socioeconomic differences, as Catholic schools in the United States are entirely privately funded, the GTA context is conspicuously different. Beginning with Confederation in the 19th century, funding for a Catholic separate school system was publicly provided in Ontario.27 The right to have a publicly funded separate denominational school system continues to be guaranteed to Catholics in Ontario by Section 93 of the 1982 Constitution Act.28

As of 2013, there were 31 Catholic secondary schools in Toronto that served 31,178 students (TCDSB 2013). Some research has explored how religious participation in or outside of schooling may affect educational attainment positively (Bagley and Mallick 1997, Sander 2000), and anecdotal evidence suggests that some immigrant parents favour Catholic schools due to a perception that they instill greater discipline and more conservative social values in students through mandatory uniforms and prayer (Walkom 2014). However, it remains unclear whether

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27 The issue of extending public funding to other religious schools dominated public debate during the Ontario general election of 2007. However no changes to the Constitution were ultimately made (Zinga 2008).
28 Ontario’s Catholic schools are currently grappling with a 2014 superior court ruling that allows students to opt out of all religious instruction (Walkom 2014).
Catholic schools are more, less or similarly able than public schools to accommodate students with transnational ties.  

4.2.1.4 “We Might be Assimilating Machines on our Worst Days. And Some Days I Think That’s Not a Bad Thing, Necessarily.”

X. is a male English and drama teacher at a Catholic secondary school in Scarborough. He has also been one of his school’s lay chaplains for the past four years. X.’s school is majority ethnic minority and immigrant students, with large populations of Filipino, South Asian and Chinese students, and has a substantial ESL program. X. said that, compared to many inner-city schools “the poverty here is hidden”. Yet he said that according to a recent school census, roughly a third of students at his school are living below the poverty line.

X. said that some parents at his school are very religious, while others are less observant (or not Catholic at all) and largely focused on the academics provided in classes. X. stated that many of his students do regularly return to their place(s) of origin for visits. He did not regard them as having greater appreciation for their schooling in the GTA as a result of their comparative reference point. X. said that both students and parents with ties to other countries sometimes question him about what they regard as the lack of both academic rigor and discipline in GTA schools. However, X. noted that when he explains his personal educational outlook, which stresses using interesting and engaging classroom material, parents are usually receptive to X.’s goals:

Relative to other school systems there is a perception that we are very lenient on our students. The immigrant parents sometimes ask us why we do certain things within the classroom structure: Why so much freedom? Why so many group projects? Why so many more choices for my son or daughter? And I’ve also had some students compare our schools to other lands. One student I remember in particular, she talked about the Dubai [private] school system. I think that there are some systems out there that really allow students who are high achievers to thrive. But they might not work so well for everyone else or for those that cannot afford it. This student, in particular, was a real high flyer and I think that we almost held her back for a couple of years because we said ‘You have to

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29 A 2010 report by Social Planning Toronto found that only one in seven Toronto Catholic schools would admit children of illegal migrants, despite the fact that the Ontario Education Act of 1990 states that all children, regardless of immigration status, must be admitted to Ontario schools. The report found that Catholic school administrative staffs were unaware of their own board policies or of their legal obligation to admit children lacking immigration status (Bejan and Sidhu 2010).
fit into the grade 10 model.’ She was probably capable of grade 12 work at that point. So I felt bad for her… But in general, when I explain [to parents] what I am trying to do with the students, which is make them independent and inclined towards leadership, the parents do appreciate it.

In considering the role that schools play in integrating students with ongoing ties to their sending society/ies, X. said that in his opinion, a framework of “assimilation” implies removing something of value from a student’s life – be it their language, traditions, or culture. However, X. said that instead of assimilation, he hopes that what schools provide is additive, in terms of creating a safe place to introduce new ideas and Canadian values. “I view it as, partake in a few things, take what you like, discard the rest,” X. said. While X. finds that much of his school’s engagement in multiculturalism is at a superficial level, largely focused on food, music, dance and costume, he doesn’t necessarily think this is negative. X. feels it is the job of teachers to build upon multicultural activities and provide a deeper analysis of diversity within the classroom:

[The depth of student engagement] is dependent upon the teacher. I really try and avoid works that are tokenistic. Having said that, in my drama class with the grade 9s we’re going to be tackling some First Nation stories because I feel we don’t do a lot of work around First Nations in our school…And February is traditionally Black History Month. But in the drama department we use it as a ‘Cultural History Month’ where we ask the students to bring in a part of their cultural history that we don’t know about.

X. stated that increasing numbers of his students are engaging with media in their native languages and cultures as their primary sources of entertainment. He gave the example of anime (Japanese animation), which is very popular amongst his students. X. said that he works to incorporate the students’ ties to their cultures or homelands into his curriculum:

I am quite often the last guy in the room to know about the newest movie and it’s not because it’s some underground American thing. It’s because it’s something in a different language and it’s anime. So as best as I can, I try to honor that. It doesn’t mean I’m necessarily going to watch the movie, but I’ll ask to see a clip or someone to send me the link. I teach a media studies course and if I want to them to produce a project, I want them to lean into the media they’re familiar with. So if they’re watching anime, I want them to do an anime project for me at some point. They’re interested in it, so they’ll be engaged in the work. So I’ve got to make my examples and my curriculum theory fit into an example they’re familiar with.

Thus, X. finds that students are most engaged with the curriculum when it reflects the realities of their lived experiences, which in his school are increasingly global and interconnected. Echoing
the ideas promoted through “culturally responsive” pedagogies (Dutro et al. 2008, Stairs 2007), X. emphasized that he tries to learn about the different backgrounds of students reflected in his classroom:

I don’t think it does anyone any good to continue to talk about the Irish potato famine in the 1800s unless I have a bunch of kids who have Irish heritage backgrounds. If that is not the case, then I think my time is much more valuable spent talking about something that happened in Sri Lanka if I’ve got a bunch of Sri Lankan kids. Even though I may not have all of the knowledge on that subject, I can certainly ask some questions that will provoke responses and investigation by students. But I have to be super sensitive to my limited knowledge and I have to recognize that and be humble and honest. I can’t pretend that I know everything. There’s no use in that.

While X. said his students are generally not interested in history or specifically Canadian subject matter, X. ultimately thinks that being a good “story teller” is the most valuable asset as a teacher: “A teacher who can tell a really good story can hook students into even the most boring information. So it is really about how well you sell the material.”

4.3 Relevant Scholarly Research

“National, public systems of education are currently under siege in many advanced industrial nations because of profound shifts in the social organization of the economy, and because of the altered spatial relationship of individual states to new global economic regimes” (Mitchell 2003:387).

It is noteworthy that there has been minimal research done on educators’ perceptions of the implications of transnationalism on Canadian schooling. This section builds on the preceding case studies and reviews the limited published research examining educators’ perceptions of the Secondary Schooling Transnational Nexus.

At the conceptual level, the transnational ties of students could impact the professional work of educators in numerous ways. In some cases, students with transnational ties might be invisible to teachers – for example, when students’ emotional or behavioural enactments of transnationalism are largely internalized or are not activated within the classroom context. It is also possible that educators may not know how to assist students with transnational ties, as they may have potentially different schooling needs than other immigrant or Canadian-born students. Or, educators might have negative or stereotypical views about transnational students’ prior schooling experiences in their sending societies. Conversely, it is also possible that educators
might view students’ ongoing connections to their place(s) of origin as providing an added benefit to the classroom experience both for the transnational students themselves and within the larger classroom environment (Hamann 2001, Zavala 2000, Zúñiga and Hamann 2009). As an added component, individual educators may or may not feel that it is the role of the school to accommodate the potentially differing needs of transnational students and families, viewing this as a burden and/or a benefit (Gehring 2001).

Moving to the empirical level, the majority of relevant studies of educators with transnational classroom populations have been done in the United States and Mexico. These studies typically centre on the attitudes of teachers working with poor, transient students from Mexico or Central American countries. These students are sometimes termed “sojourner students”30. Such studies often find that students with transnational ties are invisible to teachers, yet once the existence of these students is brought to teachers’ attention, some teachers do express interest in supporting them but are perplexed or unsure how to be supportive (Rendall and Torr 2008). However, in other cases, educators both in the United States and in the Global South are found to regard the transnational experiences of students as an academic disadvantage (Hamann 2001, Reyes 2000, Zavala 2000, Zúñiga and Hamann 2009).

Oftentimes, the literature suggests that it is unclear if teachers have an understanding of the ongoing ties to the homeland increasingly held by some of their student populations. In a case study in Georgia, for example, Hamann (2001) finds that many local teachers complained about the lengthy absences of newcomer Latino students, particularly around Christmas time when whole families return to Mexico. As well, Zúñiga and Hamann (2009) find that some Mexican teachers harbour misconceptions about American schools, often viewing them as overly

30 Hamann (2001) states that “sojourner students”’ defining characteristics are their vulnerability to dislocation and their transnational backgrounds: they are often poor, Latino/a, have limited English proficiency, and lack official documentation. Sojourner students often struggle with contradictions between their families’ survival strategies and the perspectives of their schools. In the case of families with precarious work schedules, such students often become known for their extended absences from school, which parallel their parents’ cycle of unemployment. The sojourner student likely experiences what Rutter (2006) terms “chaotic migrancy”, where young transnationals, characterized by irregular or time-limited migration, have little or no contact with welfare agencies and possess minimal education or cultural capital. Writing in the European context, Rutter suggests that chaotic migrancy is especially prevalent in certain migrant communities, particularly those primarily employed in seasonal work or living in smaller towns or in rural areas.
technology-oriented, anonymous and marked by antisocial behaviour and conflicts. These Mexican teachers claim that students with transnational connections are behind their native Mexican peers in language facility, as well as in knowledge of Mexican history and geography, and that they do not understand local schooling norms. Reyes (2000) and Zavala (2000), for their part, similarly find that Puerto Rican teachers stereotype, misunderstand and reject transnational students returning from the American mainland.

While these cases may have only limited applicability in the GTA context, Goldstein (2003) provides a rare Canadian case study of Toronto high school students who could be considered transnational. She finds that such students develop a form of linguistically-based peer social capital to further their academic success (e.g. asking other students who speak Cantonese to help with their homework). However, educators in the school did not support or sanction these actions due to concerns about creating further linguistic divisions in the classroom (Clampitt-Dunlap 2000, Goldstein 2003, Machado-Casas 2009).

It is likely inevitable that students with transnational ties who attend secondary schools in more than one country will form perceptions and opinions about the relative worth of their educational experience in both places and compare their relative strengths and weaknesses (Gibson 1988, Louie 2006b). Yet it must be noted that such comparisons run the risk of reinforcing stereotypes often embedded in notions of cultural determinism. Such determinism suggests that different societies have uniform pedagogical cultures, which, in turn, monolithically determine students’ academic and behavioural practices (Freire 1985, Nash 1990, Perlman and Gleason 2007). This perspective can be evidenced in longstanding debates surrounding the relative merits of Western modes of education versus “Confucian” styles of learning (Kennedy 2002, Park 1997, Tweed and Lehman 2002), which often rely on assumptions of rote-learning, memorization and passivity within schools in Asian countries, as well as similarly misleading ideas about Asians as a “model minority” group (Kao 1995, Lee 1996). In addition, suggestions of “Black cultural learning styles” are also sometimes used to explain academic achievement gaps, without acknowledgement of the realities of ongoing racism and pre-existing histories of racial oppression and marginalization (Dei 2002, Frisby 1993, Richardson 1993).

31 Cherng, Calarco and Kao (2013) similarly explore how adolescent friendships are an under-recognized source of social capital for American students.
Thus, in order to avoid the trappings of these kinds of stereotypical and deterministic thinking about different national education systems, for the purposes of this dissertation, the appraisals of schools in the GTA, as compared to those in respondents’ sending state(s), are presented only as individual opinions and perspectives and not as comprehensive assessments of broader cultural norms, unless specifically stated. Building on this review of the literature, the following section details the major themes identified within the data surrounding comparisons of schooling “here” and “there”.

4.4 Themes Within the Interviews

4.4.1 GTA Schools Are “Easy”

The interview participants provided numerous comparisons of their experiences (or impressions) of secondary schools in the GTA as compared to schools in their place(s) of origin. There was general agreement that there are major differences between schools, in terms of their organization, pedagogical or curricular focus, and in terms of the authority structure or degree of discipline enforced by classroom educators. As well, the majority of the transnational former GTA secondary school student respondents (19 out of 22) mentioned the overall lack of academic rigor or less explicitly competitive environment in schooling in the GTA (which they often termed “easy”). Such comparisons reflected both positively and negatively on GTA secondary schools.

Among the recent GTA secondary school graduates with transnational ties, several mentioned that the organization of the school day and/or school year was “entirely different” as compared to in their sending societies. These individuals suggested that they experienced some difficulty adjusting to these differences when they changed schools. F., who came from Colombia where she had attended a private high school for the children of employees of the national hydroelectric system, described her impression of the different structure in her GTA public school:

Back home school is only 11 years. And you have classes from 7am-2pm. But the school year is longer. It starts the first week of February, and you get a week off in March and not much else. When I moved, I found the school days unnecessarily long in Toronto. And in Colombia, at the end of the year you have a week of exams where they test you on everything you’ve learned over the whole year. If you don’t pass that test then you're not allowed to move to the next grade.
On the other hand, B. (see Case Study #3) found that the school day in Canada was shorter than what she had experienced in Nigeria. B. noted that in the GTA she was required to take far fewer classes than in her Nigerian secondary school, and that the level of competency necessary for passing was much lower in her for-profit private school located in the north of the GTA:

Here I only took four classes a semester. And you get to choose which ones to take. In Nigeria I took 23 classes in a semester. It was hard - each day was different classes. There were three kinds of math classes, and there were also food and nutrition classes, gardening, home economics… there was everything! School started at 7:45am and we had morning assemblies. Here you get long breaks. Over there you got no breaks.

Another difference between schools “here” and “there” noted by some interview participants was in terms of the earlier streaming of students “there” so as to place them with others with comparable skills or needs. H. explained that in her school in Trinidad, students were required to make decisions about their future careers much earlier than in the GTA:

In Trinidad there are a lot more standardized tests. After grade 8, you have to choose your stream of education – so you can either choose earth sciences or you can choose natural sciences… When I came here it was so different. People got to grade 12 and they still had no idea what they were doing. People were taking random courses. There were a few students that were focused and knew what they wanted to do, but I think the majority [of students] took courses that would be easier or that they just liked.

The greater resources that were available in GTA schools were also something noted by many of the more transient transnational migrants who had come to Canada from public schools in the Global South. In their sending societies, these individuals often had far fewer school supplies and higher teacher-student ratios. K., who came to the GTA as a economic migrant from Albania, was initially surprised at the copious amount of paper that was used in his GTA public high school for handouts and other classroom exercises:

I think most of what I liked about school here had to do with economics. We had so many resources: books, computers, and so on. I never saw a computer until I came to Canada. I had to learn at 16 how to copy and paste. And it was great having a gym with full equipment and to do different sports! And a chemistry lab to do experiments! You didn't just learn from books here…But I was amazed at how much paper we used. Handout, handout, handout. We wasted paper in every class. That was the biggest thing - I was used to writing very small and saving space.

In addition to the participants’ reflections on the different organization or structure of schools in the GTA versus that in their sending societies, many comparisons were also provided in regards
to the different pedagogical and curricular focus of schools. Many respondents emphasized the greater emphasis on critical thinking and humanities and arts in GTA schools, as well as the less overtly disciplinary orientation of teachers. Some participants also mentioned that they appreciated the strict separation of church and state in the public school system in the GTA, as well as the increased opportunities to partake in extra-curricular activities, or the opportunity for parents to interact with teachers and receive feedback at scheduled times. It was notable that in almost all cases, such comparisons suggested that the participants preferred the more open and creative atmosphere in GTA schools.

FF. stated that her secondary school in the GTA emphasized discussion and critical thinking far more than she had experienced in her school in Mexico and she found that there was much less social distance between teachers and students. FF. also said there was more of an emphasis on participation in the classroom:

When it comes to expressing your emotions and defending your ideas, I think the education system here is more oriented to humanities. Teachers do encourage debating and speaking out and participating, as opposed to in Mexico, where my impression is that it's a more traditional, authoritative way of teaching.

However, while K. echoed the same sentiment as FF., K. suggested that the foundations for the more collectivist learning style promoted in the GTA is established during elementary school. Consequently, K. said he found it hard to adjust to this different pedagogical style when he arrived in the GTA from Albania during his high school years:

Back home we have one way of teaching and one way of thinking because of economic restrictions. We were only used to thinking logically and less to thinking analytically. We didn't push ourselves to be creative. We just regurgitated a lot of what the teacher said. Teamwork isn't something that we learned much, it was much more individualistic. …But most of those critical thinking skills are built here in the elementary level. By high school, others have established them. I think when I came there wasn't enough time for me to build those skills because I was trying to get used to the new lifestyle here and build up my language skills. I barely did one presentation in high school and I never really addressed my public speaking skills. I managed to avoid facing my fears.

For D., the focus on humanities was something he greatly appreciated when he arrived from Russia and attended an elite private school in the GTA. “I was never a humanities person in Russia. But here I loved it and ended up studying philosophy in undergrad,” he said. V., who came from Japan during high school, said that, while she initially struggled with the English
writing requirements at her GTA private school, she too quickly came to appreciate what she perceived as the greater depth of personal understanding of the material encouraged by teachers:

The first thing I noticed was mathematics and sciences - they’re way harder in Japan. But for critical thinking, Canada’s way higher. The expectations for English and essay writing and how you communicate with other people were exponentially harder here. And I had a hard time getting used to it. Back in Japan, all I did was learn the material, memorize it, write exams three times a year, and then you forget everything afterwards. I think the amount of material that you learn over the course of the year is less in Canada, but we dig deep into everything.

Similarly, P., who came from Hong Kong during secondary school (see Case Study #1), enjoyed the less competitive atmosphere in his Toronto public school and said that this allowed him to focus more on his personal academic development as opposed to constantly comparing himself to others:

In Hong Kong, at the end of the year your report card shows your ranking for every subject compared to everyone else. And it shows your ranking in total compared to everyone else in the school. You're always made aware of how you're doing compared to everybody else in every way possible. …I’m not a very competitive person. But at the same time, I would always ask people 'What did you get?'. In North America people don't really care [about how you’re doing compared to others]. North American thinking is about the individual. It's about your experience and how you're doing compared to yourself. In Hong Kong it's very socio-centric. You have to compare yourself constantly to others.

One area where three former GTA secondary school students stated that they found weakness in the curriculum was related to the less universalistic orientation in GTA classrooms. One of these respondents mentioned that fewer languages were offered in her GTA public school than in Croatia. Another said that he never learned about European politics during his high school years in Canada. B. (see Case Study #3) said that she found that most of the history taught in her private school in Toronto focused on American subject matter. B. speculated that this was because many of the students at her school were hoping to later attend elite American universities and would consequently be required to take the SAT, the standardized test required as part of the American university application process. However, B. said she missed the more international orientation provided in her similarly exclusive private secondary school in Nigeria:

In Nigeria we had a class called ‘social studies’ where we talked about Nigeria, about the history and present day situations, as well as talking about the rest of the world, about issues in the Middle East and so on. I find that when I came to Canada it was more about
American history and WWI and WWII. I don't even know Canadian history, to be honest. The only thing I learned was about the aboriginal groups. I felt like Nigeria was better at telling its own history and situating itself in the world, giving an eye to different places and cultures.

Yet more than identifying differences in organization or curriculum between schools “here” as compared to “there”, the overriding theme the vast majority of the transnational former secondary school student participants mentioned related to finding schooling in the GTA to be significantly less academically rigorous than in their sending societies. Often, the word “easy” was used to reference their GTA classroom experience.

Despite the initial appearance of broad consensus as to the relative “ease” of schools in the GTA as compared to those in interviewees’ sending nations, in discussions it was evident that the study participants were often referencing widely divergent phenomenon under the term “easy”. Disaggregating this notion of relative “easiness” led to very different ideas of what it entailed, in part reflective of participants’ backgrounds, family expectations, and social location, as well as their professional aspirations for the future. For example, some individuals found school in the GTA “easy” because they were simply able to pass all their courses or take fewer exams, while others found they could slack off and still get As. Still others appeared to be referring to the different authority structure of schools in the GTA, a structure in which teachers tended to be more egalitarian and less impersonal authority figures. The study participants also suggested that teachers in the GTA were relatively more open to student feedback than in their homelands. In several cases, the more open teaching style practiced in the GTA was conflated with schools being overall “easier”.

U. said that schooling in the GTA was less challenging than in the UAE, but this, he suggested, was also likely due to the fact that he had fewer friends providing distractions. It took him some time to adjust socially when he moved. However, I., who also came from the UAE, said that schooling in the GTA was so much less difficult and strict than he was used to that he reacted by slacking off:

Academically it was much, much easier [in Toronto]. I did not feel challenged at all. I smoked a lot of drugs and I still got marks in the 80s and 90s. I didn't even go to school for a long, long time. And I was on the student council, but I never wore my uniform. I got away with everything because they weren't strict here. In Dubai I went to a Catholic
high school that was run by nuns who were very strict… Academically it was on another level there.

C., however, said that she was relieved to find how much less demanding her school was when she moved to Toronto. C. said that in Argentina she would not have been able to attend a top tier secondary school because of her low grades:

When I arrived to Canada in math they were seeing things in grade 9 that I had seen in grade 4… I was relieved, because I knew I wouldn't have to take the standardized test that is required in Argentina to get into high school. I was happy because I never would have been able to get into a good high school there.

Despite the initial English language difficulties encountered by some former secondary school students with transnational ties, most of them described being far ahead of classmates when they transferred to schools in the GTA, especially in math and science. Some students coming from elite international schools in their sending countries said that their credits were transferred to the GTA and they were allowed to skip a grade once they resettled. D. said that a major difference he found from his school in Russia was that in the GTA his fellow private school students were not randomly tested on their knowledge in front of their peers. As a result, D. found schooling in the GTA to be much less demanding:

When I was coming I was told, ‘You go to class and you sit there. And if you don't want to answer questions, if you don't want to be called to the board, you don't have to.’ And that was a shock. Back home, in any class they can just call you up to the board and ask you to answer a question or do a math problem and they grade you on that. So every single class you wonder 'Is this the class I’m going to get called? And am I going to make a fool of myself?' But here you just don't have to do any of that which was the release of a huge burden.

Yet not all the former secondary school students appreciated what they took to be the lower standards and greater flexibility within the GTA school system. This was the case for E., who came as a visa student from Korea. She said that she prefers the stricter style of instruction that she was used to in Korea:

My favourite teacher in high school in Toronto was the ESL teacher. I took French because she was a French teacher too and I wanted to study with her again. I think she is similar to Korean teachers. She was very strict and gave more homework than other teachers. She checked everything. She made me study. Other teachers didn't really care about if I did homework.
Among the educators who were interviewed, many were aware that students coming from other countries often compare GTA schools to those in their homelands. However, there was varying degrees of understanding about the ongoing ties to their sending societies that some students maintain. Some of the educators emphasized that they find that students from other countries have difficulty with the greater flexibility and the critical thinking skills promoted in the GTA curriculum as opposed to in their place(s) of origin. One teacher said that the less disciplinary teaching style in the GTA led some students to take advantage and slack off, at least for an initial period of time after arriving. KK., who teaches at a independent all-boys private school, echoed E.’s comment above and suggested that some visa students do not enjoy or thrive in the more critical learning environment provided at his school:

The kids that come from Korean tell me that they have a bit of a hard time here because the instruction in Korea is much more traditional. It’s 40-50 kids in a classroom, and you never talk back to the teacher. Whereas here, we tend to use a lot more reflection as part of the curriculum. Like asking ‘How did you feel about doing that piece?’ There’s a lot more challenging of the teacher by the student, which they sometimes find difficult. I like to be challenged in the classroom. But some of the students are uncomfortable with that [different authority structure].

In addition, the educators who were interviewed provided slightly different explanations as to why transnational students may regard schooling in the GTA as less demanding than schools in their sending countries. S., who teaches at a Catholic school in Scarborough, said that the complaints he receives from parents about the ease of schooling in Canada as compared to their home country is more reflective of the time period when they went to school than of national or regional differences. S. thinks that schools everywhere have gotten less rigorous in the past few decades and now have less of an emphasis on marks. He said parents are not up-to-date on curricular changes in their place(s) of origin or in the GTA:

Parents are comparing education systems all the time. They think 100 percent that it's easier here, regardless of where they come from. I’ve had that conversation tons of times. But I don't know if it's necessarily a culture thing…I tend to think that it's about when they went to school as opposed to where they went to school. I think the education system was more demanding twenty years ago. Now we can't give marks for attendance and participation, we can't give marks for if their homework is complete. It’s all about assignments and assessments and evaluation.

S., an inner city ESL teacher, said she finds there are varied responses to GTA schooling by students with transnational ties. She said that while some students find it easier in the GTA as
opposed to in their sending society/ies, others find it harder. S. suggested that this is dependent on where the students come from and their immigration status and socioeconomic background:

Some of the kids say 'Oh my god, this is so easy. It was so much harder in China, in Japan, wherever’. But other kids say 'This is so much work!' One kid I got who was a refugee, he had virtually no formal education before coming here. He was from the jungle in Africa. And so, you can only imagine all the issues and delays. So obviously in a case like that the kid’s not going to say 'Oh it's so much easier here.'

J., who teaches co-op at an east-end public school in the GTA, mentioned that the comparatively or seemingly less strict atmosphere in schools sometimes leads to awkward situations for teachers. She suggested this is because teachers in the GTA are more approachable, and do not demand students show total deference. J. provided an example of the different social norms related to showing respect to the teacher:

I had a student from India and I had a parent-teacher meeting with him and his father. His father was very upset that the student wasn’t showing respect to the teachers. At some point, the father told the student to kneel in front of me and kiss my shoes. I said, ‘No, no, no you don’t need to do that. We don’t do that in Canada.’ I had to explain to the student how to show respect, that it was enough just to apologize and change his work habits.

Thus, overall, both groups of interview respondents (recent secondary school graduates with transnational ties and educators) emphasized that comparisons between schools in the GTA and those in the sending society/ies are commonplace in the current era of transnational migration. There was consensus that schooling is organized and oriented very differently in different regions of the world, and that there are both positive and negative implications of these differences for students with transnational ties who attend high school in the GTA. While many of the educators emphasized that teachers in the GTA employ a less disciplinary instructional style than in other countries, the former GTA secondary student participants often commented on the less competitive classroom environment, and lower expectations in the areas of math and science. Consequently, there was a degree of disconnect between the educators’ and former secondary students’ perspectives on why there is a widespread perception among transnational students that schools in the GTA are comparatively “easy”. In certain cases, it was not clear if educators were aware of or differentiated between the general population of immigrant students in their classrooms and those with transnational connections. Yet within both groups of
interviewees there was some appreciation of the more flexible teaching style in the GTA and the stronger orientation towards humanities and social sciences than in many other countries.

4.4.2 Questioning the Applicability of Louie’s Transnational Theory

Vivian Louie (2006) developed a conceptual framework tying together schooling and the transnational orientation of some students in the United States. This framework provides an interesting comparison point for this research. Using a case study of college educated second-generation Dominicans who grew up in transnational social spaces in New York, Louie finds that her research participants expressed optimism about their American secondary schooling that drew strongly from their transnational perspective. The majority of her study participants spoke fluent Spanish and reported extensive engagement with ethnic media, as well as traveling to the Dominican Republic frequently to visit relatives. Several also mentioned that they had been sent to live in the Dominican Republic for an extended stay when they were younger. Overall, the Dominican participants in Louie’s study felt that their secondary schooling experience in New York was academically more rigorous and overall better than those of their peers in the Dominican Republic. These individuals stated that this had motivated them to work harder to succeed in American classrooms.

Drawing on this case study, Louie suggests that some children of immigrants who sustain regular connection to their or their parent(s)’ place(s) of origin will evaluate their lives in the United States favourably in comparison with the sending state(s). She emphasizes that “little attention has been paid to the implications of such a dual frame of reference for second-generation immigrants’ views on education and mobility” (538). Louie concludes that contact with and comparisons between nations will lead to increased appreciation for and academic achievement in American schools for students with transnational connections, as compared to students without these ongoing ties to their homeland(s):

Much as their immigrant parents (positively) compared themselves to Dominicans of their social strata in the homeland, so did the children. In fact, it was their having spent good amounts of time in the Dominican Republic that informed these views. From these experiences, my respondents spoke disparagingly of public schools in the Dominican Republic, which they referred to as being “garbage,” regular power outages, poverty, and a closed opportunity structure, as compared to the American system (560).
However, while some of the former GTA secondary school student interview respondents in this study echoed Louie’s finding, generally the data appear to dispute its overall applicability. While study participants came from a much wider range of geographic and socioeconomic backgrounds than Louie’s more uniform transnational respondents, comparisons between schools in the homeland versus newland were commonplace in both cases. However, few respondents in this study explicitly or implicitly stated that their dual frame of reference in the schooling arena led them to do better academically or assisted with their educational integration in the GTA. While some respondents did state that they appreciated their schooling in the GTA as compared to in their place(s) of origin, this was mostly related to the better facilities and resources offered by GTA schools and the higher valuation or cachet afforded by Western schooling, both in the GTA and in the sending society. Rarely did the respondents suggest that having a transnational reference gave them greater appreciation for the pedagogy or curriculum provided in GTA schools. Perhaps most interestingly, several former GTA secondary students with transnational ties gave examples that demonstrated the exact opposite of Louie’s finding (see Case Study #5). These respondents suggested that having experiences in more than one secondary school gave them a greater appreciation for the schooling in their place(s) of origin, as compared to in the GTA. These individuals expressed a clear preference for the quality of secondary school education provided in their sending societies.

Among the former secondary school participants in this study, H. supported Louie’s finding. She asserted that her dual frame of reference for secondary schools both in the GTA and in Trinidad made her appreciate her ability to explore a broader range of subject matters in school than she would have been able to enjoy in her birth country:

The schools here have so many options, like drama and carpentry and data entry. Whereas in Trinidad you either had to go into business or science in order to get a successful job. You had no other options. Here you have all of the trades and they’re almost equally valued [to sciences or arts education]. And there’s not as much pressure to be number one in class. Here you just do what you think you can manage and you won’t end up on the streets.

Similarly, V. said that she enjoyed the critical thinking promoted in her GTA school as compared to her experience with teaching through rote memorization in a Japanese secondary school:

When I learned world issues in Japan all I did was read the textbook. That’s it. In Canada I got to discuss those issues in schools. When you think and start debating about an issue,
you try to relate it with your experience and with what other people are experiencing in
the world. It was mind-blowing! It was good! You don’t use that part of your brain in
Japan. The culture itself in Japan is more rigid.

Yet while these respondents expressed an appreciation for the mode of teaching in the GTA as
opposed to in their sending countries, other respondents emphasized that they mostly appreciated
the greater status afforded by a GTA education rather than having any specific appreciation of its
content or educational philosophy. These individuals did not state a belief in the relative
superiority of their GTA school. Instead, the prestige afforded by Western schooling was often
significant to participants because it led to an improved transferability of their credentials for the
future. Several individuals stated that by attaining a GTA high school diploma they would be
more able to attend college or university internationally than their peers in their sending
societies, again hinting at their global perspective on future work and study. This post-national
perspective was again most evident amongst the more elite, transilient transnationals.

O., a visa student who attended a for-profit secondary school in the GTA, exemplified this
perspective. She expressed disappointment at the comparative lack of recognition her peers
receive for their Ethiopian secondary schooling credentials, both within Ethiopia and in North
America. O. finds this doubly upsetting due to her belief that schools in Ethiopia maintain higher
academic standards than those in the GTA:

We learn in the Western way back home. I went to an international school and we didn't
learn anything about Ethiopia. It was focused so we could succeed in America. So when I
came here, everything was easy. But if I went back and did university there [in Ethiopia]
I would have failed. I wouldn’t have been able to keep up. It made me appreciate the
ability to retake a class in school here, to have support from my teachers. Here I can just
pay for a class and take it again. There you have to retake the whole year. Imagine the
stress that people go through! But when they [Ethiopians] come here, my diploma is
worth more than theirs. But, you know, theirs should actually be worth more. When I
went back to Ethiopia, the one thing that I hated was they gave me more value than
people who had gone to school in Ethiopia. For me it was very depressing. I had
everything. Those people went through so much with school, and their diploma is valued
less there and valued less in America and Canada.

E., another visa student, also indicated that she appreciated the greater value associated with her
GTA education as compared to the schooling she would have received in Korea. This was
closely tied to her peers’ sense that, as a result of her Western education, E. would have an
improved chance to get a job when she returned to Korea, compared to friends who had been
educated domestically:
Friends at home are jealous. Sometimes I call them and say ‘I’m so tired. I don't like this.’ And they say ‘Why? I envy you. Why don't you like this? You’re going to a better university and you're going to have a better job. So why are you so sad?’

BB., whose family came to the GTA as refugees, said that during regular return visits to Bosnia, and in spending time with her extended family there, she too came to appreciate the social capital, and expanded job market, that is afforded to her by her schooling in the GTA:

I could do whatever I want [after high school]. My cousins [in Bosnia] kind of have to do what there is, what's available, what jobs are looked for. The majority of my cousins, some of them are in education, becoming teachers and whatnot, and then others work in agriculture and farming and tourism. It's very, very limited compared to here where you wake up and say 'I want to be this or that!' and you go for it.

Yet it was notable that in all of these cases, while the respondents did express appreciation for the status and value of their GTA schooling as compared to that in their sending societies, it was not necessarily accompanied by any personal increase in motivation to succeed in school or improved achievement levels. Some of the respondents had worked hard and received high grades, while others admitted to slacking off in school despite their comparative reference point.

Perhaps more notably, in several other cases interview respondents appeared to provide evidence contradicting Louie’s example of the positive implications of a transnational perspective on schooling in a North American context (or perhaps reversing the direction of causality in her findings). These individuals said that their transnational ties and experiences in secondary schools in both the GTA and their place(s) of origin, rather than make them appreciate their GTA schooling experiences, only increased their appreciation for their educational experiences in their sending society. D. provided an example of this. He compared the relative merits of his high school in Russia to the elite private secondary school he attended in the GTA as a visa student:

I think I developed a greater appreciation for the Russia system after being here. I definitely enjoyed the system here, although I was in an expensive private school. But it made me appreciate what the Russian system made you do and how it tested you. I don't think it's a very good system here. Here you can just sit in class and listen and don't have to worry that you're going to be called [to the board and questioned on your knowledge of the material]. It made me appreciate that I learned a lot more back home. And with math and physics I was quite ahead. It made me realize if I can succeed [in Russia] in a huge class with a teacher who's not even being paid well to do her job well, then something is working. Whereas here, the teachers had small classrooms and got good salaries and benefits and everything was very proper. And you have ‘helicopter parents’ that make
sure their kids do their homework and all that. And you still can't get math up to the same level.

M. offered a slightly different perspective. She specifically disliked her experience with the secondary schooling system in China. However, M. said that regardless of this, she thinks that if she had stayed in China she would have benefited from the more rigorous education system. M., who currently lives in Beijing, expressed some regret at not having continued her schooling in China. She also said that Western secondary schooling is not necessarily valued more highly in China than domestic schools:

Here [in the GTA] your teachers are your friends. They don't check your nails and you can wear makeup. There [in China] it was a little bit like boot camp. And for a 14-year-old who grew up here that was not something I could easily accept….So I was very relieved to come back to Canada. But in some ways I think I would be a lot smarter and more capable academically if I spent some years there…Later on, I worked at an English global law firm with an office in Beijing. And they don't always regard people who are Western educated as superior. Not at all, because you lack the general Chinese knowledge to do a lot of the work. And if you did all your education overseas you lack in language skills. It's pretty hard to find a job there as a lawyer from Canada.

B. (see Case Study #4) also said that she disliked attending high school in Nigeria, but that she now appreciates that there were greater consequences to her actions in that school than in the GTA. By way of example, she claimed that cheating was condoned in her for-profit private school in Toronto. As a result of her experience with the two schooling systems, B. gained greater appreciation for the relative merits of the Nigerian system, again disputing Louie’s findings:

Over here, I’m not saying there's no discipline, but there's no repercussions for what you do. You can do whatever and get away with it. There was one time I was taking an accounting class and I’m not good with math and I did really, really bad. I got a 60 or something. My accounting teacher was like, ‘Ok, come let's discuss this.’ He told me to just sit down and retake the exam. So we did it again with the books open. So we just looked up the answers in the textbook. If it had been in Nigeria they would have said ‘You need to retake the grade, clearly you don't know the information.’ So I feel like having consequences for your actions is really good, actually. I hated the Nigerian school at the time, but now I really appreciate that it was a good school.

Thus, while Louie’s example of a “transnational perspective” provides a good starting point in conceptualizing the Secondary Schooling Transnational Nexus, the data in this study point to considerable fluidity in the experiences and impacts for respondents of being in secondary schools both in the GTA and in their sending nation(s). For some, this dual frame of reference
did highlight the relative merits of schools in the GTA (although in most cases this was more to
do with the greater valuation placed on Western schooling and not an appreciation for specific
processes, content or curriculum within GTA schools). Yet for others, precisely the opposite of
Louie’s predicted outcome was experienced. In such cases, participants emphasized that their
transnational comparisons of schools led them to have an increased appreciation for secondary
schooling in their sending society. This suggests, yet again, the individuality of experiences of
transnationalism at the level of schools and institutions.

4.4.3 Questioning The (Ir)Relevance of Multicultural Frameworks Within GTA Schools

A variety of educational theorists have begun to tackle the evolving role of educators within a
shifting classroom environment that increasingly comprises an international and mobile student
body. Tierney (2006) promotes the value of the “global teacher” who is highly responsive to
cultural differences amongst the study body and coordinates classroom activities that connect
with and promote local, as well as global, development. Writing of his own experiences as a
“global teacher” in Sydney, Australia, Tierney states that his pedagogical goal was to apply “a
lens that dissents from the hegemonic traditions of British imperialism, with its model of
assimilation and/or acceptance of power of the well-entrenched incumbent” (83). Luke and
Goldstein (2006) advocate for a similar teaching model in their call for “world teachers”, while
Rizvi (2009) emphasizes “cosmopolitan learning”, an educational style that is based on
recognition that the world is “increasingly interconnected and interdependent globally, and that
most of our problems are global in nature requiring global solutions” (253).

Together, these authors suggest that the ability to negotiate and engage with issues of power,
identity, and conflict between and within cultures and communities has become essential for
Tierney (2006) acknowledges that rethinking the schooling system within this framework may
pose jurisdictional issues around accreditation and challenge longstanding beliefs about local
control over education, he argues nonetheless that global teachers are essential in a globalized
world.

Goldstein (2007) suggests that multicultural acceptance in classrooms must extend beyond what
Ien Ang (2001; 2003) has called “living-apart-together”, whereby groups are peaceful but have
little contact with one another in society, towards something that more closely approximates “togetherness-in-difference”, where groups that have been traditionally marginalized or excluded from the structures of Western hegemony can both claim their difference and convert it into powerful and attractive symbolic capital. The latter framework, Goldstein (2007) asserts, accounts for the dynamism of learning that takes place when different groups interact together in diverse classroom settings.

In Canada, multiculturalism was formally enshrined in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982 and has since been used by the state to define and promote a national identity (Hawkins 1988, Mitchell 2003). To date, many supporters of the multicultural project in Canada view it as assisting with the integration of immigrants and minorities by removing barriers to their participation and making them feel more included in the country. Such a view holds that multiculturalism leads to an overall stronger sense of national belonging and pride in being Canadian for all residents (Burnet 1979).

Yet critiques of multiculturalism have come from both the ideological right and the left. The former often suggest that multiculturalism leads to ghettoization and separation, encouraging members of ethnic groups to look inward and inhibiting social integration. Neil Bissondath’s popular book Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada (1994), for example, argues that multiculturalism reifies and legitimizes cultural distinctions, making them appear disproportionately significant and solidifying artificial distinctions of race and ethnicity. On the other hand, some immigrant and anti-racist advocacy groups argue that the broad ideals central to Canadian multicultural policy are tokenistic and come at the expense of specific, achievable goals and objectives. By encouraging ethnic and racial particularism, the entrenched power of elites remains unchallenged. By this reading, multiculturalism is simply the natural evolution of assimilation, as both primarily serve to solidify the existing power structures within the state (Kymlicka 2010, Reitz and Banerjee 2007).

Banks (2010) suggests that there are five essential elements to establishing and sustaining a genuine and equitable multicultural curriculum for all students in a classroom. These are: content integration; incorporation in the knowledge construction process; prejudice reduction; an equity pedagogy; and an empowering school culture and social structure (Banks and Banks 2009, Banks 2010).
In discussions about multiculturalism with study participants, there was general agreement that classroom curriculum is not necessarily neutral, passive or value-free (Pinar 1995). However, the role and place of multiculturalism in GTA schools was a controversial topic, with little consensus about its relevance in assisting with the academic success and/or classroom integration of students with transnational ties. In particular, the lack of a consistent definition or application of multiculturalism was raised by many interviewees as being a key component of the differing perspectives on its utility in GTA schools.

In general, the former GTA secondary school students with transnational ties were more critical of multiculturalism in classrooms than the educators. Approximately half of the educator respondents (10 individuals) saw multiculturalism as helpful in promoting a sense of inclusivity for students, even while many of the educators emphasized the need for the limitation of “reasonable accommodations” within schools. However, other interviewees, encompassing both educators and the majority of the transnational former GTA secondary school students (28 individuals altogether), suggested that multiculturalism has become invisible, irrelevant and/or tokenistic in the current milieu, and may even inhibit the integration of students with transnational ties.

Some of the educators, such as Q., who teaches geography in an inner-city public secondary school, argued that simple celebrations of food and sports from different cultures are meaningful in the educational context and allow newcomer students to feel more comfortable adjusting to the GTA:

We have a principal who loves soccer. So World Cup games will be on in the foyer. There have also been times in assembly where some kid will go up and make an announcement, totally unrelated to whatever else we're discussing, about the cricket match between Pakistan and Bangladesh and the students will all cheer. Most years we have a multicultural club and a multicultural show – the students dance, they sing, they play piano; it's exactly what you would expect. I wouldn't stay it's stupid. It's a nice opportunity for them to showcase their cultures. They enjoy it.

T., a public school ESL teacher, also accepted that multiculturalism of the “celebratory” type can be meaningful in the classroom. Yet she emphasized that many teachers do not have time to focus on multiculturalism, suggesting that it is primarily a helpful add-on to regular course instruction, time permitting:
I would ask students to share what it was like for them in their home country. I would try to draw in, at least at times, things that they had grown up with, because then it made them more comfortable or more willing to share. You can't do it all the time. But at the end of the semester, because we had kids from all over the place, I would do an international potluck, which was always very successful. But most teachers, we have so much on our plate. I think their time and patience wears thin.

Among those who saw the positive benefits of multiculturalism, it was primarily educators who suggested that their schools are going beyond tokenistic displays of culture, and starting to promote deeper forms of intercultural understanding and the tackling of negative stereotypes. Many educators gave specific examples of how their schools have advanced multicultural understanding in the past decade, evolving towards something approximating Rizvi’s (2009) idea of “cosmopolitan learning”. For example, AA. said that at her inner-city public school, religious accommodation has been a central focus for the administration. AA.’s school is located directly across from a mosque and numerous Muslim students now have an “admit slip” which allows them to leave class during prayer times. AA. said this is a recently introduced procedure at her school but that for her “It’s not a hassle. It's fine and no questions are asked [of the students]”. However, AA. also said that other teachers in her school are less comfortable with this practice, and are not supportive of any accommodation of students’ religious observance into the school day.

S., a Catholic school teacher in Scarborough, said that multiculturalism is “absolutely relevant” but emphasized the need to tackle negative ethnic and racial stereotypes held by his students. He used the analogy of trying to have different cultures “baked or embedded into the cake” of classroom teaching, rather than just having it spread on top “like the frosting”:

I think it's a good, courageous conversation to have, to say 'What are the problems of that culture? What are the stereotypes behind what's going on?' And to discuss if those stereotypes are true. In my world issues class, we discuss alcoholism in Russia and we discuss poverty and crime rates in the black population in the U.S. I think the stereotype

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32 “Interculturalism” typically critiques the ways that multiculturalism has been implemented in schools or in society overall (Agyeman and Erickson 2012). Amin and Parkinson (2002) state that interculturalism “is used to stress cultural dialogue, to contrast with versions of multiculturalism that either stress cultural difference without resolving the problem of communication between cultures, or versions of cosmopolitanism that speculate on the gradual erosion of cultural difference through inter ethnic mixture and hybridization” (967). Similarly, Wood and Landry (2007) argue in favour of interculturalism due to their belief that “schools and local authorities [should] develop structures and processes that would enable them to translate, adopt, and adapt their existing practices to take account of the changing realities of their communities” (264).
just looks at the facts and that's it. A good teacher looks those stereotypes in the face, talks about them, and then disproves them or contextualizes them. We need to challenge the students critically; otherwise multiculturalism is just a word without meaning.

HH, who is an administrator in the Catholic school board, thinks that teaching compassion for others is an essential element in promoting deeper understandings of differences among students through multicultural curricula. HH also mentioned that travel (either physical or digital) across cultural divides is an important tool that can facilitate this compassion. HH gave an example of how the curriculum in the Catholic secondary school system has evolved to respond to the growing cultural diversity within the student population:

There's lot of successes with multiculturalism. I can give you example after example. We now have curriculum dealing with the Japanese treatment of the Chinese, for example. And so Chinese students now are able to feel more confident speaking about their culture in that particular environment. And the motivation for this change was a combination of students and communities that are present here, who asked to be a part of developing this. So that's where it started….Do they keep the culture from the past? Well yeah, they do, and we encourage and affirm that you come to school with that. We even assume in a Catholic system that you come to school with religious diversity.

Yet some of the educator participants, while generally being in support of multiculturalism, mentioned that there is a need to set limits on the cultural accommodation that multicultural discourse promotes in the classroom. Notably, several of the educators suggested that it is their students, rather than the teaching staff, who are most concerned about these boundaries. This stands in opposition to the widely held assumption that older generations are more traditional and less comfortable with cultural accommodation in the public sphere than younger individuals (Bouchard and Taylor 2008).

Z., a North York public school businesses teacher, stated that many of his students bring biases from their home countries which can be difficult to deal with in the classroom. Z. said there is no need to de facto accept or legitimize these perspectives in schools:

We had a Wear Purple Day at school to address anti-homophobia. So I, of course, wore a purple shirt and a purple tie. That prompted a conversation in one of my classes that is predominantly boys. What came out of that was a lot of their cultural biases that are based on the ideology of their home country or family. They were saying 'Being gay is not acceptable.' So even though our school board is pushing towards inclusion, I felt how far on the opposite side we are from that.
K., who teaches at an all-boys Catholic school, also said that her students are more socially conservative than she expected. K. said her students often critique celebrations of one particular group as being at the expense of another. These students advocate an assimilationist model for individuals with ties to other countries:

There tends to be a lot of pride about one's own culture among students. But there also tends to be a bit of hostility towards other cultures. Any time Black History Month comes up there's a lot of objection, saying 'Why isn't there a month for this culture or that culture?'...I’m surprised by this, but I find that a lot of students tend to think that people should adapt to Canadian ways. They think, ‘You're in Canada now. Act like everyone else.'

Yet most of the study participants (28 out of 41), encompassing both educators and the majority of the former GTA secondary students with transnational ties, raised serious critiques about how multiculturalism is currently being integrated into the classroom context. Many emphasized that multiculturalism has become tokenistic, or that students and teachers are uninterested or uncomfortable with it. In certain cases, it was suggested that multiculturalism is exclusionary and may act as a barrier to the integration of students with transnational ties.

CC., who came from Iraq as a refugee with her family during secondary school, recalled that she was the president of an extracurricular Multicultural Club at her public school in the GTA. In retrospect, CC. thinks her club was not very effective. CC. said the club tried to address issues of systemic racism and exclusion, but that the students who were involved with it were all immigrants like herself, with little or no uptake among Canadian-born and white students:

Looking back, I think [the Multicultural Club] felt kind of tokenistic. It feels like it was almost a joke. The people involved were mostly the immigrant kids anyway. So I’d be involved in that and I'd have my Arab friends, my Indian friends, my South Asian friends. And then I would come out of the club at lunchtime and I would have my white friends making fun of the Iraq invasion. I have this memory where I literally came out of the club and this guy came up to me with a fake microphone and said 'How do you feel about the invasion?' And it felt like, 'This is such a joke. What am I doing bringing my food and having this poster with all this stupid stuff on it, when the people that I would hope would understand it don't really care anyway?'

R. (see Case Study #4) said that during secondary school in the GTA he felt that multiculturalism was mostly a guise for promoting assimilation. R. recalled teachers in his ESL classes constantly drilling pupils on how to properly adapt to the “Canadian way” which made many students feel excluded:
There were some assumptions the teachers had. They not only wanted to teach us a subject, but they also wanted to teach us that in Canada this is how we do things. It was constant. We’re learning about geography, but in Canada we think about it this way. We're learning about fitness, and in Canada we look at it this way. In physical education, the lady would talk about relationships and how you share things and so on. She would constantly say that ‘In Canada we share everything. We treat women like this. If you don't feel very comfortable with your partner you can just leave them.’

D. said he felt himself a victim of stereotyping in his private school in the GTA when he was asked to talk about his experiences growing up in Russia. D. thinks that it should be the responsibility of teachers to introduce ideas about different cultures, rather than focusing on individual student experiences:

I think it's the role of the school to provide general education, to tell you ‘People are different and do different things and you need to be aware and recognize that and stay away from stereotypical pitfalls.’ But when it comes to having students talk about their culture, I didn't feel like that was necessary. Yeah I come from Russia. But should I be the spokesperson for what Russia is like? That's a very narrow perspective, and kind of pigeonholes people. Teachers should teach about a culture and if I connect with something I can say my piece. I didn't want to be a cliché or poster-boy for Russia.

Some of the educators suggested that teachers and schools could do a lot more to transform classroom multicultural dialogue into something of greater relevance to students with ties to other countries. HH., a guidance counselor at a Catholic school in Etobicoke, said that he thinks his school should do a better job of welcoming newcomers and understanding the different cultures present in the classroom:

Even though we’re a Catholic high school, we have a really broad mix of religious backgrounds among the students. So we have a few Muslim students, women who wear their traditional garb. And do we understand that? I don’t think we do. And the same with the Hindu population. Again we’re saying, ‘We’re Catholic here. You understand us.’ And are we reaching out to understand them?

HH. also said that classrooms do not use the experiences of individual students enough as a teaching tool, a view that is at odds with D.’s above. This suggests that, as expected, there was limited consensus on how to best “reform” multiculturalism and better assist students with transnational ties. HH. emphasized that it can be difficult to address contentious issues in a classroom when there are students who embrace different national narratives:

I don’t’ think we’re sensitive to the idea that these two kids are Palestinian and these two kids are Jewish, or whatever. We just take it as a theoretical issue ‘Oh yeah, there’s this
conflict thing happening overseas’. I think we miss opportunities to engage with the experiences these kids have and the understanding that they have of a complex issue, whether it’s Israel-Palestine, Korea, or whatever. They should be encouraged to share in these discussions.

N. also mentioned the difficulty that often arises in discussing divisive international events in the classroom. A public school educator in a school with many low-income students, N. concluded that teachers often don’t have the appropriate training for these discussions, and that they may even have personal biases that are hard to repress:

It’s interesting to think about how much of ourselves we bring into the classroom as teachers. When the war in Gaza broke out, we got a letter from the [school] Board that said something to the effect of 'This is a contentious issue. If your students want to explore it, be very careful or don't.' As teachers we're not trained facilitators. No one's taught us to facilitate difficult conversations in the classroom. When you have something that brings in so many aspects of someone's identity, which in my case my students assumed was at odds with theirs, because I am Israeli and many of them are Muslim and Arab, it is a challenge.

Ultimately, many study participants suggested that without a clear definition of what multicultural classroom content entails in the current context, the idea has generally lost its meaning or value. Both the former GTA secondary school students and the educators agreed that it is teachers who end up with the bulk of the responsibility for incorporating multiculturalism in the classroom. For example, G., a Roma educator (see Case Study #2), discussed her frustration in trying to expand the Holocaust and genocide curriculum offered in Grade 11 in GTA public schools to include the Nazi genocide of the Roma. She said that the school board administration has not been helpful with making this change. At present, G. thinks that it falls to teachers to learn about the connections to the home countries held by their specific student populations, and to try to incorporate them into the classroom:

It really just ends up being up to the teachers to educate themselves. And it depends on how much will and time they have. It's the responsibility of educators, I think, being an educator myself, to make sure that we research and know the students we're working with. And that's called culturally relevant and responsive education. It’s catering the class to who the kids are.

Thus, the broad suggestion was that multiculturalism is something that needs to be continually re-evaluated so as to reflect emerging trends within the student population and work towards something approximating Rizvi’s (2009) idea of “cosmopolitan learning”. Overall, the educators were generally more supportive of multiculturalism as it is currently taught and promoted within
GTA schools than the former secondary students with transnational ties. The latter were more likely to assess multiculturalism as tokenistic or exclusionary. Yet given current trends, it is evident that transnationalism will be an increasingly relevant component of future negotiations about accommodation and difference within GTA schools. Necessarily, both students with transnational ties and educators will have an essential voice to contribute to these evolving discussions.

4.4.4 Differing Valuations of Public and Private Schools in the GTA and Abroad

In discussing how students with transnational ties interact with the GTA schooling system, respondents often raised the relative merits of public versus private secondary schools both within the GTA and abroad. While the public/private school divide is closely related to the differences in socioeconomic status between transient and transilient transnational migrants as outlined in Chapter 2, different issues related to private schools were also raised by former GTA secondary school students as compared to educators. Some of the transnational recent GTA secondary school graduates who came to Canada with few socioeconomic resources emphasized the high academic quality and accessibility of the public school system in the GTA as compared to in their sending societies (Gibson 1988). However, other, more elite transnational former GTA students had come from well-financed (often international) private schools in their sending societies. In some cases, these more transilient individuals noted that their student visa had been tied to their attendance in a private institution in the GTA. Attending a public school was not an option.

Yet the majority of the concerns with regard to a public/private schooling divide in the GTA, as well as its alignment with the socioeconomic statuses of transnational students, were raised by educator interview participants. The public school educators often raised concerns about private “credit mills”, or for-profit private schools that are targeting international visa students in the GTA, while providing low quality educational instruction. These educators also expressed unease about the growing offshore marketization of Western education. Private school educators, in turn, insisted that their schools had a greater ability than public schools to accommodate the needs of transnational students due to the larger financial resources available to private institutions and the unique programs they offer. These private school educators shied away from comparing standards in public as opposed to private secondary schools in the GTA.
Among the former GTA secondary school student respondents, a few mentioned that the study visa that had allowed them to enter Canada required that they attend a private school, thereby precluding their ability to attend a public school. W., who came to Toronto from Germany as a visa student during 10th grade, said that he needed to get a high school diploma that would be recognized by universities on his return to Germany. W. was under the impression that this wasn’t possible within the GTA public school system, so instead he attended a private school that offered the transferable International Baccalaureate (IB) program.

E., who came from Korea, said that her parents paid an agent in Canada to select a school for her in the GTA. E. believes that the agent misled her family into believing that she would only be able to attend a private school in Canada. Once in the GTA, she discovered this was not true. Public schools will admit international visa students but charge a hefty fee, which E. suggested was comparable to that charged by private schools targeting visa students:

I went to an agent who recommended me to go to this [private] school. He said that the marks that I got in Korea were really low, so I could not go to public school here. But I’m not sure if that’s true. It was fine with my parents because private school is not necessarily more expensive than public school for me - it's cheaper because if I go to public school as an international student I have to pay a large fee [while other students attend for free]. But at a private school I pay the same as everyone else.

The cost of attending a private versus public school was one thing. The quality of education offered by each was a more contentious issue. Several former GTA secondary school respondents emphasized that they appreciated the high quality of education in the public schooling system in the GTA as compared to in their sending societies. As well, many said their families would not have been able to afford private schools, either in the GTA or in their place(s) of origin. FF. said that her family had always sent her to private school in Mexico but when she came to the GTA they felt the public school was at a high enough level. “It's great that you have good public education here, it's a great opportunity. Especially since it’s quite expensive to go to private school here,” she said. Similarly, C. said that when her family moved from Argentina, her parents were enthusiastic about the comparative quality of the public education system in Toronto as compared to in Buenos Aires where she grew up.

Among the educator respondents, interviewees varied depending on whether they were employed in the public or private GTA school system, with a further division between those in for-profit versus non-profit private institutions. Among public school educators, some respondents stated
that their schools were doing a good job of serving students with ongoing ties to other nations. J., who teaches at a highly diverse public school in Etobicoke, said that the school she works at provides many services to students to help them adapt to life in the GTA and simultaneously sustain their connections to their places of origin. Her school has a community council, homework clubs, and a Somali Youth Association that organizes basketball games. The school is also working to create a Somali Parents Association. J. said that while on Muslim holidays such as Eid hardly anyone attends school, the school does provide a prayer space. On Fridays there are prayer services in the gym and occasionally an imam comes to talk to interested students. The school also sends home important announcements on the phone in three or four languages, including Urdu and Arabic.

Yet J. also said that her school has had to adapt to a rise in for-profit religiously based private secondary schools in the neighbourhood. She mentioned that recently many students dropped courses at her school and instead were taking them at a local private Islamic school where, she believes, “basically you buy your credits.” J. said that the administration at her school was very concerned about this, because families were paying $600 or more for their children to receive the same credit as in the public system, but with a lot less work. J. was under the impression that many of the Islamic parents were more comfortable with this schooling arrangement because it is a strictly religious environment, as compared to the secular public school curriculum.

L., who teaches ESL at an inner-city public school, also spoke about for-profit schools essentially selling high grades to students (from abroad). However, L. noted that in both the public and the private school system there is often false or misleading advertising aimed at international visa students. L. said this occurs because in the current era of fiscal restraint, schools are desperate for the high fees visa students pay:

> There’s a lot of money grabbing. International students bring in a lot of money to the school system and what they’re getting back is not reflective of what they’re paying for. There needs to be a real investigation into making an education system that is feasible for them...I don’t know how aware or unaware their parents are. But I honestly believe there is a responsibility, if you’re taking students’ money, to provide safer environments and more monitoring than is done, especially for students coming on their own.

L. also said that her school has received visa students who have transferred from for-profit private schools in the GTA where students receive much higher marks than she feels they deserve. L. said this often leads to students having considerable difficulty once they enter the
public system. L. suggested that visa students (and their families) are often very vulnerable to manipulation by school agents or independent private institutions:

We get many students from abroad from the private schools who just weren’t able to perform at our standard, but yet who had received high marks. This was happening not just in the private schools but also in the religious schools where they will give away very high grades or even put kids in much higher grades, just so that the parents send them there. But then the kids themselves just fail abysmally when they are in a different system.

PP., who is an administrator at a public school in North York with one of the largest ESL programs in the GTA, said that his school tries to educate students and their families about these “credit mills”. He said he tells these families that if the students go somewhere to pay for their credits, they will not be adequately prepared for university. However, PP. said that despite considerable publicity about the low standards in such schools, there is still little to no oversight of certain private schools by the province:

We try to educate the parents as much as possible about what these schools do and why it’s wrong. But nothing much has changed since reports have come out [from the Auditor General]. As public school teachers, we can’t do anything to combat that and we feel legally bound as teachers to teach.

As might be expected, the perspective of private school educators was considerably different from those of the public school educators. While there are considerable discrepancies between private schooling institutions, specifically in terms of those that are non-profit versus those that are for-profit and those that are religiously-oriented versus those that are secular, there was a refusal by all the private school teachers interviewed to acknowledge that there might be lower academic standards in their particular institution than in the public school system. KK., a teacher at a prestigious non-profit all-boys private school, pointed to several ways that his school is adapting to the students’ increasing transnational connections. In the standardized IB program that his school offers (which can be considered transnational in itself) all students are required to study a third language. In addition to this, the school hires tutors to teach literature courses in the students’ native languages for those who have problems with English. The school has offered literature in Korean, German, Farsi, and Mandarin, sometimes just for one student and other times for an entire class. However, KK. recognized that hiring these tutors is costly and a luxury few public schools can afford. As well, as an independent institution, the school can direct admissions to students who have an adequate level of English proficiency. In cases where the
students have very low English proficiency, KK. said they are simply rejected and told they cannot be properly supported in the school.

At times during the interview, KK. referred to his students as “clients,” hinting at the customer-service dynamic inherent in selling education for profit. As KK. teaches in the IB program at his school, he also mused that his own profession has increasingly become transnational. “In a way, it would be easier for me to get a job in London [England] or Singapore than in Newmarket [Ontario],” he said.

OO., who is an administrator at a for-profit all-girls private school, was frank about how her school is marketing itself internationally to attract wealthy students from abroad. She said that families overseas who are considering sending their daughters to her school are most concerned about where the graduates will eventually go to university. Most are focused on Ivy League American universities:

> All the schools are in competition for these kids. A major way our school markets itself is through the grad profile, which details where the girls subsequently go to university. I travel to these places and the product the parents are buying, if I can be that crass, is the educational quality we provide. And where people go to university seems to tell them that. It also tells you the clientele.

OO. also described how each year she travels to countries that her school is targeting and participates in educational trade shows and agents’ fairs to try and increase her school’s market reach in new regions. OO. said the agent business has become “huge” all over the world, with these educational entrepreneurs acting as liaisons between private institutions and wealthy visa students. OO. said educational agents charge parents approximately 10 percent of the student’s first year’s boarding costs, as well as taking commission from the school:

> Every year we go to the Caribbean and this year I went to Brazil and to Germany. I went to an agents’ fair in Mexico where you meet an agent every 25 minutes for two days. It’s like speed dating. I bring along a DVD showing them the facilities. This month I’m interviewing two girls from Russia. That’s a new market that’s opening up.

However, Y., who is an administrator at a non-profit religious all-girls private school, said that students with transnational ties are best served in a customized environment like that which her school provides. Y. said her school has small classes and provides an individualized and tailored educational experience for students:
We have a phenomenal guidance department so they can go and check in if they are struggling in class. They can also go to teachers and get extra help. The teachers are available before school, during school and after school for extra help. The residence staff will also help international boarder students. If they want us to read over a paper we will, or if they've got questions about the meaning of a word. I’d say about ten of our students also have private tutors in addition to this.

Overall, the private school educators implied that well-off students with transnational ties are sent abroad to acquire an educational commodity and mingle with peers from a similar socioeconomic background. This likely serves to reinforce existent divisions between the transient and transilient transnational students in the GTA and again suggests that such individuals may view themselves as having more in common with transnationals of a similar socioeconomic background than with co-nationals coming to the GTA with far fewer socioeconomic resources. The private school educators suggested that students and their parents are investing their time and money to acquire not just an elite education, but also social and cultural capital in the form of a high school diploma from an exclusive institution. The school is able to provide students with the resources they need to succeed, and they are treated as elite clients purchasing a valuable commodity. Thus, the valuations of private as compared to public schools provided by respondents were often related to a student’s available socioeconomic resources and the value added by the prestige of having an elite diploma. Educators within the private school system noted the benefits of private schools in assisting elite transnationals, while those in the public system generally worried about the commodification of education through the rise of for-profit institutions, or “diploma mills”. Public school educators held that private schools simply view transnational visa students as “cash cows”.

4.5 Summary

This chapter developed the analysis of the Secondary Schooling Transnational Nexus through exploring themes identified within the data at the level of schools and institutions. Much of this involved comparisons made by both former GTA secondary school students with transnational ties and educators about schooling in the GTA as compared to in the place(s) of origin (“here” versus “there”). Specifically, study respondents focused on differences between schools in terms of their organization, orientation and pedagogical focus. In addition, the former GTA secondary students with transnational ties reflected on how their experience of migrating during high school impacted their perceptions of the scholastic rigor and relative quality of the GTA educational
system and if and how this enhanced or diminished their academic orientation and scholastic success. This chapter also reviewed the considerable variation of respondents’ viewpoints regarding the (ir)relevance of the multicultural framework in schools in assisting with the integration and accommodation of diverse students, as well as the shifting valuations of public versus private schooling both in the GTA and abroad.

Notable divisions were evidenced between the responses provided by educators working within the public and private school systems and the transnational recent GTA secondary school graduates. As well, some of the educators appeared not to differentiate between all immigrant students and those with transnational ties. The next chapter will build on the analysis provided at the individual, family, and school/institution level, and look towards the broader policy implications of this research.
5 Transnational Migration and Secondary Education Beyond and Within the Nation: Implications for Policy

5.1 Introduction

“Migrants’ ties are not only established across nation-states but are also influenced by laws, social institutions and conventions, which operate at various scales – the local, the national and the global” (Vathi 2013:904).

This chapter advances the study of the Secondary Schooling Transnational Nexus to the level of implications for policy. Progressing from an analysis of individuals and schools in Chapters 3 and 4, this chapter considers the larger picture, focusing on the macro and institutional issues raised by this research. This is done with a conscious understanding that state politics and policies intersect and interact with the micro-politics of migrants’ transnational social practices (Robertson 2013). Consequently, an effort is made to examine both the neoliberal immigration policies developed by the Canadian government as a component of the “global race for skills” and the contingent and often counterbalancing strategies and desires of transnational migrants and their families within this context.

This chapter is divided into two sections. First, it focuses on identifying and illuminating current understanding of the transnational phenomenon, as broadly understood. This is explored in terms of the contributions of this study to transnational research vis-à-vis definitions, discourses, and measurement. This theme is divided into examinations of a) the evidence provided within this study that transnational ties in the GTA are experienced by both more transilient and more transient migrants, and how this has been fostered by recent changes in federal immigration policies; b) a reflection on the implications of a public discourse that has largely focused on transilient, socioeconomically privileged migrants, while acknowledging the recent consciousness-raising that has occurred about more transient transnational populations; c) analysis of the debate on whether transnationalism fosters or hinders migrants’ overall societal integration; and d) some methodological concerns about transnationalism which highlight the difficulties of measurement within the educational arena.

The second theme progresses from an emphasis on the transnational phenomenon, to the explicit focus of this research study as regards to furthering understanding about the connections between
transnationalism and secondary schooling. Here, reflections gleaned from this study are provided as to a) how and if education may be a specific asset to transnationals, and specifically how education may serve to mitigate against the dividing practices of the economic market; b) some evidence that the education system in Canada is being “transnationally transformed”, and resultanty, the concerns (and possibilities) that have been identified related to the marketization of secondary education to transnationals in the GTA and beyond; and c) how and if it is possible to reconcile the competing demands of students with transnational ties who simultaneously seek a more universal, transferable curriculum and a more particularistic schooling experience that can accommodate specific, local needs.

Overall, the goal for this chapter is to situate the experiences recounted by the research participants within the macro context in Canada, while deconstructing a range of viewpoints about transnationality within the GTA secondary schooling environment. The ideas engage with existing policy in Canada, as well as the insights and understandings of the interviewees. It is hoped that this chapter unpacks some of the broader implications of this research and will be of relevance to policymakers and professionals in the fields of education and immigration.

5.2 Expanding Understanding of the Transnational Phenomenon

“What role does transnationalism play in the vexed movement toward immigrant integration? The reality of migrant mobility in a globalising world brings the need for new adjustments, or at least new expectations, from a nation-state whose policies and institutions have been predicated on permanent settlement not circular migration” (Ley 2013:922).

While this study is immediately concerned with the educational context in the GTA, it also adds to the ongoing scholarly discussion of the transnational phenomenon as broadly understood. Interview respondents provided concrete evidence that transnationalism in the GTA is understood and enacted by young people at all levels of the socioeconomic continuum, from transilient to transient, in part reflecting recent changes to Canadian immigration policy. However, media and the public imagination have often focused primarily on the transnational ties of more wealthy, transilient migrants. This has both positive and negative implications. While the ability of transnational ties to either increase or decrease migrants’ societal integration continues to be hotly contested, participants in this study provided evidence of both scenarios, suggesting that transnationalism is a bidirectional vector in this relationship. Finally, this
research underscores some concerns about continued research on transnationalism, especially in a context of widespread cuts to social science research and data collection in Canada.

5.2.1 Transnational Ties in the GTA: A Transilient and a Transient Phenomenon

This study is certainly not the first to identify social class as an important factor mediating transnational practices (see, for example, Guarnizo and Smith 1998, Levitt 2001, Ley 2013, Mahler 1998). However, this research does provide evidence that transnational ties are sustained, valued and fostered across the social class spectrum in the GTA and that the transnational population includes individuals and families with higher and lower socioeconomic statuses. Chapters 2-4 of this study provide numerous examples of former GTA secondary school students who span a range of socioeconomic positions and have ongoing connections to their place(s) of origin. Together under the same research umbrella are elite individuals with connections to businesses and professional networks abroad in Hong Kong, Nigeria, or Tanzania, and individuals fleeing poverty or insecurity with their families from Bosnia, Mexico, or Iraq.

Thus, this study verifies the presence of both upper and lower class transnationals in the GTA. As identified in Chapter 2, the maintenance of social class or the hope of upward mobility was found to be a main motivational factor of transnational migration to the GTA. The transnational research participants assessed social class subjectively and in an ongoing manner during their migration processes. This indicates that there is still considerable fluidity within the transilient/transient continuum and that there is a need to remain cautious about applying rigid definitions of transnationalism. Yet it is important to acknowledge that social class is a relevant and essential lens of analysis in transnational research, along with such factors as gender, religion, ethnicity, place of origin, current region of residence, and time of arrival.

Importantly, the positioning of socioeconomic status as a mediating factor in the Secondary Schooling Transnational Nexus must be framed within the context of the macro state policies and politics of immigration in Canada. Currently, like much of the Western world, Canada’s immigration system is focused on “picking winners” (Hawthorne 2005). Yet defining who counts as a “winner” has been an evolving discussion. Recent changes to immigration policies in Canada have led to an increasing socioeconomic dichotomization of migrants coming to Canada, as the emphasis in recruitment has simultaneously been on attracting moneyed and skilled
permanent residents, and poor, transient temporary foreign workers (TFWs) (Lightman and Bejan 2013, Siemiatycki 2015). This, in turn, has shaped the profile of transnational migrants arriving in the GTA, and is reflected amongst the individuals with transnational ties that were interviewed for this study. As well, the socioeconomic division of migrants was also evidenced by the finding that some transnational interviewees felt a greater affinity to transnational individuals and communities from other nations who fell into their same financial stratum, as compared to their limited (or minimal) affinity to co-nationals with lower levels of social or economic capital and possibly precarious immigration statuses.

Lightman and Bejan (2014) theorize that the Conservative government under Stephen Harper has prioritized the intake of migrants based on their pre-conceived ability to acquire what the authors term “citizenship capital”. The authors state that migrants’ socioeconomic capital determines their potential citizenship capital, and subsequently their fate vis-à-vis future access to Canadian citizenship. Differences in citizenship capital are thus reflected in residency status, mirroring, in turn, migrants’ socioeconomic status. Consequently, the authors argue that those migrants lacking the entrepreneurial skills and fiscal resources necessary for the accumulation of citizenship capital become stuck in a state of temporariness and precarity in Canada: deemed good enough to work (in the short term) but not good enough to stay (in the long term) (Arat-Koc 1999).

Since the Conservative Party formed the federal government in 2006, the family reunification and humanitarian streams of immigration have been significantly diminished in Canada, appeal rights for migrants suspected of “public policy considerations” have been eliminated, deportations have reached record highs, and the number of temporary foreign worker residents increased threefold between 2002 and 2011, from about 101,000 to about 300,000 individuals (Alboim and Cohl 2012, Sweetman and Warman 2013). These changes are conceived of as part of what Robertson (2013) terms “global movements towards heterogeneous, precarious and temporary forms of migration” (159). Specifically, the Canadian TFW program, as well as the Super Visa instituted in 2011, are presented here as two important examples of how shifts to Canadian immigration policy can lead to the conscious and simultaneous targeting of both transient and transilient transnational migrants.
The TFW program, for its part, was originally developed as a catalyst for economic growth by supplying employers with a source of qualified individuals for labour sectors lacking Canadian employees (Fang and MacPhail 2008, Nakache and Kinoshita 2010). Currently, one in five newly created jobs in Canada goes to a TFW (Stanford 2013) and considerable literature has documented inherent inequities and abuses within the program (e.g. Alboim and Cohl 2012, Campbell et al. 2014, Goldring and Landolt 2011, Kim, Gross and Columbia 2009). Certainly, TFWs are not treated the same as Canadian workers; while in Canada, TFWs are not entitled to federally funded settlement services or most other government related assistance, including language training, public health care, and Employment Insurance and Canada Pension Plan benefits (Fang and MacPhail 2008, Mountz et al. 2002, Nakache and Kinoshita 2010, Ogawa 2012, Stanford 2013).

On the employer side, Canadian businesses are not legally bound to provide TFWs with health insurance, job training, or other social benefits. This too often leads to scenarios that are highly prone to workplace abuse (Atanackovic and Bourgeault 2014, Hodge 2006, Khan 2009, Stewart et al. 2006). Typically, after working the maximum time allotted within the program (four years), TFWs must return to their home country, while employers have the option of simply hiring a new batch of foreign workers to fill the very same positions. As TFWs lack the rights and entitlements that are attached to permanent residency, they often live in what Goldring and Landolt (2011) describe as a state of “precarity” in which “complex institutional and geographic pathways’ leave migrants vulnerable for increasingly long periods of time during which they must navigate ‘insecure migratory legal status’” (327). As many TFWs come to the GTA with low socioeconomic status and for a time-limited duration, these individuals may maintain continual ties to their families and friends at home, often negotiating their own intergenerational family separation while working in Canada (Atanackovic and Bourgeault 2014, Sargeant and Tucker 2009). Thus, TFWs are a major component of the growing transient transnational population in the GTA (which also includes refugees and un(der)employed economic migrants) and one that is being actively fostered by Canadian immigration policy.

A second example of how changes to Canadian immigration policy are leading to an increasing socioeconomic division of transnational migrants in the GTA is found in the federal government’s 2011 creation of a new visa entry category: the Super Visa. Valid for 10 years, the Super Visa allows multiple visitor entries, each with up to a two-year length of stay. At a fast
processing rate - only eight weeks - there are about 1000 of such visas issued each month. It has been suggested that this visa specifically targets wealthy (and vulnerable) elderly migrants (Matsuoka et al. 2012) and fosters a transilient transnational populace. The Super Visa was developed as an alternative to permanent residency for the foreign parents and grandparents of those families living in Canada who are established and wealthy enough to afford it (Lightman and Bejan 2013).

Under the Super Visa, the (typically elderly) visitors must obtain private and expensive health care insurance while in Canada, inclusive of repatriation costs, for a minimum of one-year and equal to the amount of $100,000 in the event of ongoing illness (Grady 2012, Keung 2013b). Thus, entry to Canada for parents and grandparents is made economically selective, privileging “desired” parents and grandparents who are living abroad against ordinary foreign relatives. The latter cannot afford a Super Visa and are viewed as potential burdens to the healthcare system should they gain Canadian residency. Making a business out of family – and benefiting only those families who can afford its related costs - the Super Visa is consequently one significant indicator of a broader tendency towards privatizing migrant entry to Canada (Alboim and Cohl 2012). The Super Visa is also reflective of the government’s commodification of citizenship and active courtship of wealthy transilient transnational migrants, who also encompass individuals who enter under the Business Immigration Program, many “visa students”, and economic migrants coming with considerable wealth (Siemiatycki and Preston 2007).

While the interview participants in this study did not come to Canada either under the TFW or the Super Visa program, they did provide evidence of both transient and transilient transnational students in the GTA in both the public and private secondary school systems. Both the former secondary students and the educators were well aware of how immigration policy impacts which migrants end up in GTA classrooms. C., who came from Argentina during high school and whose father is Canadian, stated that her friends and family in her country of origin do not have enough money to immigrate to Canada. “Unless you’ve got a pot of money back home, you can forget about getting to the top of the line to immigrate,” she said. U., who heads the guidance program at a Catholic school in Etobicoke, also made reference to the current federally sanctioned trend of targeting wealthy foreign students from abroad. He stated that there have not been concurrent investments to public education in the GTA to assist such students. Specifically, U. lamented the lack of English language assistance:
We’ve created a business of importing foreign students for their money. We put in some supports, but I don’t think we put in enough. We had 45 to 50 kids from a combination of Columbia and Korea and China [in my school] and I think we had two or three sections of ESL. That doesn’t cut it. We haven’t trained teachers to welcome these students, who see them as a burden.

Thus, while this study provides evidence of a small non-random sample of transnational individuals across the socioeconomic spectrum in the GTA, recent shifts in Canadian immigration policy suggest that the simultaneous targeting of elite migrants and marginalized guest workers from abroad, and the resultant socioeconomic dichotomization of newcomers to Canada (among whom increasing numbers hold transnational ties) will likely continue in future. Current Canadian immigration policy is actively targeting and segregating both transient and transilient transnational populations, with one line of entry for the socioeconomic elite and another, longer line, for temporary labour. This dichotomization is evident in schools and among newcomer youth, as evidenced by the participants of this study, as well as at the level of labour migration for adult immigrants coming to Canada.

5.2.2 Unpacking Academic and Public Discourse on Transnationals

Notwithstanding the fact that this study provides evidence of the transnational ties of more transient, less resourced individuals in the GTA, historically, the academic literature on transnationalism in Canada has largely focused on the elites. This has both positive and negative implications. Some scholars have suggested that the disproportionate focus on wealthy, transilient populations is a weakness in the transnational scholarship (Beck 2002, Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan 2003, Grillo 2007, Vathi 2013, Werbner 1999). Much of the existing transnational literature, they argue, disregards existing political and legal constraints on human mobility for the majority of migrants (Mountz et al. 2002, Robertson 2013, Wright 2004). As well, the focus on socioeconomically elite migrants may help create false impressions of equal access to hyper-mobile lifestyles and modern communication technologies, and ignore the inherent inequalities of global mobility and cultural flows.33

This historical emphasis on transient transnationals in policy, public discourse and scholarly literature is due, in part, to the greater ease of measuring the transnational ties that elite

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33 Similarly, the phenomenon of “cosmopolitanism” is also often attributed solely to elite populations and ignores individuals and communities with fewer socioeconomic resources (Mitchell 2006).
individuals and groups are more likely to display, such as documenting international businesses and physical homes owned abroad and tracing regular return visits to the sending societies. As well, the higher profile given to transilient transnationals is also likely due to their greater cultural capital, resources, and ability to assert their needs and desires to the mainstream population. Researchers, in turn, may demonstrate a bias towards people similar to themselves, and seek out research populations who are articulate, able to understand questions easily, and have greater comprehension of the research process (Kvale 1996, Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, Sears and Rowe 2003).

Undoubtedly, the spotlighting of elite transnationals has meaningful effects on who and what is popularly defined as a “transnational” in the GTA (Siemiatycki and Preston 2007). Building on existing research, as well as the reflections of the study participants in this research, both positive and negative implications of this trend can be identified. On the positive side, the increased visibility of transilient transnationals may be slowly changing public perception of who and what an “immigrant” is, both in classrooms and beyond (Bruno-Jofre and Henley 2000, Ley 2013, Tannock 2010). To the mainstream Canadian population, immigrant communities may no longer be monolithically viewed as poor, uneducated, backward, and taxing on government services (Berry 2006, Lee and Fiske 2006). Thus, there has been an increasing presence of transilient transnationals, who likely have less need of public assistance, and possibly even have independent means or employment abroad. These individuals and communities likely have less need to “take” jobs from Canadians, and may be counteracting negative stereotypes about a welfare consumptive immigrant population (Siemiatycki and Preston 2007). I., for example, who arrived in Canada from the UAE as part of a small, economically elite Muslim sect, credited the guidance and connections he received from his religious community as providing all that his family needed to integrate fairly easily into life in the GTA. His family had not required any public assistance since arriving in Canada.

On the negative side, however, this increasing visibility of socioeconomically elite transnationals, particularly in terms a the disproportionate focus on Asian populations on the West Coast, has led to public concern about the “strategic” acquisition of Canadian citizenship by one group and not by others (Yeoh, Huang and Lam 2005) and has downplayed community desires for greater participation and inclusion in mainstream Canadian society. Despite the fact that transilient immigrants were actively recruited by the Canadian state on terms that promoted
transnational ties, it has been suggested that wealthy Asian transnationals view permanent residency in Canada as a type of insurance policy against uncertainties at home, and represent a disjuncture between the citizenship expectations of the state and the agenda of individual migrants (Kobayashi and Preston 2007, Ley and Kobayashi 2005, Mitchell and Parker 2008, Siemiatycki and Preston 2007, Waters 2003).

The perception of this disjuncture has also been reinforced by a growing discourse about immigrants “abusing” the immigration system that has been instigated and promoted by the federal government. Federal Immigration Minister Chris Alexander, for example, stated in 2014 that “we want to ensure we are doing everything possible to prevent fraud and to attack it when it turns up in the [immigration] system” (Wingrove February 6, 2014). As an example of these efforts, a Citizenship Fraud Tip Line was created in 2011 to root out individuals who illegally obtained citizenship and to reduce cases of alleged document falsification (Kaiman 2012). This tip line symbolically shifts the regulative responsibility for fraud prevention onto the public and away from the state, reinforcing the discourse that immigrants are “using” the system and inflaming negative opinion about transnationals and other new immigrants (CBC news 2013).

A second, equally serious, and negative implication of having a transnational discourse that is disproportionately focused on the experiences of communities with higher socioeconomic status is that it may lead to a lack of awareness of the many more precarious, less resourced transnationals in the GTA, some of whom are likely to require social supports and public assistant and who often have difficulties in acquiring residency and/or securing economic stability (Fudge and MacPhail 2009, Goldring and Landolt 2011, Gross and Schmitt 2012).

Making matters worse, there have been widespread cuts to immigrant and settlement services under the Conservative government (Atanackovic and Bourgeault 2014, Landolt, Bernhard and Goldring 2009). Funding for settlement services was cut by about $6 million from 2011/2012 to 2012/2013 (Alboim and Cohl 2012), resulting in inconsistent and non-integrated service

34 This Tip Line is similar to the punitive procedure implemented to address provincial welfare fraud in Ontario, where governments similarly rely on the public to regulate undeserved access to state funded social services (Maki 2011).
35 This scenario is in some respects reminiscent of the context in Greece, where members of the Fascist Golden Dawn party have distributed whistles on the streets of Athens for residents to report “suspicious” foreigners (Brown 2014).
delivery. Settlement services funded by the state but delivered by community-based organizations or third sector agencies continue to have primary responsibility for assisting newcomers with their integration (George 2002, Maki 2011, Richmond and Shields 2005). The settlement sector is mandated responsibility for connecting newcomers to their communities and assisting new migrants with a variety of needs including: providing advice, language support, access to public services, and facilitating social participation and cross-cultural comprehension (Dowding and Razi 2006, Norquay 2004, Rose, Carrasco and Charbonneau 1998). Specifically, in the case of migrants with low socioeconomic status, these settlement services are designed to help with newcomers’ integration and reduce their social exclusion (Galabuzi and Teelucksingh 2010, Yan and Lauer 2008).

Increasingly, however, these agencies struggle under the burden of reduced budgets. The Conservative government has suggested that their policy of targeting highly educated and skilled immigrants with English or French language proficiency reduces the need for remedial settlement services. They have justified their cuts to settlement services by arguing that by picking the “right” immigrants, the costs associated with the “wrong” immigrants are reduced (Alboim and Cohl 2012, Sakamoto 2013).

While schools might seem a logical space to connect individuals and families with settlement services, a 2011 study by People For Education found that 40 percent of publicly funded secondary schools in Ontario reported that they “never” cooperated or coordinated with immigrant settlement agencies. This is notwithstanding the fact that newcomer students and their families identified schools as a source of information, not just on how the education system works, but also on where parents might further their own education and access training, health care and employment opportunities (The Measure of Success: What Really Counts 2011). Yet in the current immigration context, not only are schools out of the social service loop, but also settlement programs and service delivery are now primarily assessed on their short-term economic efficiencies, and not on their ability to assist newly arrived immigrants (transnational or otherwise) who are in need of long-term assistance and community supports.

However, as of 2012, during a time of high unemployment rates in Canada, a process of consciousness-raising has been occurring within media and labour advocacy sectors, furthering public debate about the reality of a transient transnational population arriving in Canada via the
TFW program. Across the political spectrum, the TFW program has more and more fallen into disrepute as a number of large multinational companies, including McDonald’s and Tim Hortons, have been accused of abusing the program in order to hire cheaper, foreign workers at the expense of Canadian employees.

A 2014 report by the *C.D. Howe Institute*, a conservative think tank, served to further inflame these concerns; the widely circulated report stated that the TFW program had spurred joblessness among Canadians in the provinces of British Columbia and Alberta (Gross 2014). The result of this media attention was an immediate month-long moratorium on the fast-food industry's access to the TFW program instituted by Federal Employment Minister Jason Kenney on April 24, 2014, amid widespread calls for “Canadians first” (Goodman 2014) in employment and TFWs as a “last and limited” resort (Curry 2014). Further changes to the program were announced on June 20, 2014, stating that henceforth employers would no longer be allowed to apply to Ottawa to bring low-wage, low-skilled temporary employees from abroad if the joblessness rate in their region is above six percent (Whittington and Campion-Smith 2014). This plan has met resistance from business groups (The Huffington Post Canada 2014) and it remains unclear what the implications will be in future. Nonetheless, there is little doubt that these scandals have led to increasing coverage and debate about the role of this component of transient transnationals in Canada.

Thus, in the past there has often been a disproportionate media and government focus on elite transnationals in Canada leading to some positive reframing of the public imagination vis-à-vis immigrants, as well as to negative repercussions related to public concerns about wealthy transnationals “abusing” the system, and a lack of understanding about the concerns and settlement service needs of more transient, less privileged transnationals in the GTA. However, the 2014 media firestorm about the TFW program may lead to greater understanding of the many transient, poor transnational migrants in the GTA, perhaps including refugees and un(der)employed economic migrants and their offspring who populate GTA schools. Undoubtedly, however, the education system has a role to play in this information struggle, as schools are often an important site of information reception for youth (transnational and otherwise) and their families. However, as of yet, the reality of transient transnational students, as an important component of the broader transnational populations in the GTA, has not received any substantial media attention.
5.2.3 Transnationalism and Integration: A Bidirectional Vector

Another area of contentious scholarly research and public opinion concerns what role, if any, transnational ties play in fostering or encumbering the integration processes of immigrants and minorities into mainstream society. Typically, when economists or policymakers measure “integration” they refer to the growing convergence (or not) over time of educational or economic profiles within a culturally and/or racially diverse population (Abada and Tenkorang 2009, Boyd 2002, Pendakur and Pendakur 2002, Pendakur and Pendakur 2011). While convergence is considered de facto positive, other social and cultural dimensions of integration are often ignored (Robertson 2013).

For example, there are concerns that the Canadian government’s preoccupation with the integration of immigrants “into Canada in a way that maximizes their contribution to the country” (Canada 2012) may be too narrow and misguided. The government’s key strategy in meeting its integrationist objective has been the careful selection of permanent migrants through Canada’s points system which awards entry to those who are highly educated, proficient in one of two official languages, and have skillsets in short supply in the Canadian labour force (Aydemir 2011). This places the site of intervention – and thus the problem and the solution to integration – squarely on the individual. Yet considerable research suggests that welfare residualism and its focus on the individual are largely ineffective in addressing the inherent inequities of the market, as is the original and defining role of the welfare state (Good Gingrich 2003, Good Gingrich 2008, Lightman 2003).

This study provides evidence that in a GTA secondary schooling context transnationalism can both impede and facilitate integration. Some study participants identified ways in which their transnational ties provided them with a positive perspective on the importance of schooling, and the opportunities education provides within the increasingly globalized economy and labour force. Yet others suggested that their transnational ties led to ongoing precarity or feelings of disconnectedness that diminished their academic achievement and lessened their broader integration into Canadian society. Thus, it is suggested here that transnationalism is a bidirectional vector concerning the integration of individuals and families.

Some of the study participants emphasized the need to question established assumptions that migrant students “want” to integrate into the Canadian norm. This leaves open the issue of how
schools should or can engage with ideas of inclusion without imposing. NN., a Catholic school administrator, suggested that integration in the schooling context does not need to come at the expense of a loss of cultural particularism. He argued in favour of a more global orientation to schools:

The school is a place to teach that we are a global community. There is nothing I can tell a Korean kid about their culture [that they don’t already know]. But I can help them in feeling that their culture is valued for as long as they are with me. Schools should be fostering the idea that we are a global community rather than saying that we [white, Christians] are the dominant culture or have the right answers, and the other groups, they have nice food and dance, but they should learn from us about how to live in the world.

As an example of best practice, N., an inner-city public school educator, pointed to the introduction of a program at her former school called “Tea with the Principal” which she saw as facilitating integration in an inclusive manner:

Groups of parents from different backgrounds will host the principal and any interested teachers with tea and some sort of treat and they share with the principal about their culture. I love this because it's engaging the parents too. We need to think [more] about how you leverage parents and work with the teachers and administration to do a better job of understanding different communities. It opens up ways of seeing connections that otherwise you wouldn't know about.

However, C., a transnational former secondary school student, stated that, “no one understood that it wasn’t like I had left Argentina for good. I always planned to return there. I wasn’t interested in ‘integration’”. Other former high school student interviewees emphasized that they felt uncomfortable being asked to sing the Canadian national anthem in classrooms or pressured to conform to the “Canadian way”. The visa students, who had come to the GTA primarily for educational purposes, also did not feel obliged to publicly affirm their loyalty to Canada. However, from the perspective of some of the educators, part of their role within classrooms was to promote a unifying national identity and build a shared understanding of civic responsibility and belonging. Thus, they saw their role as facilitating the integration of students coming from abroad.

Outside of the educational arena, popular images of transnationals sometimes suggest a causal link between strong transnational ties and weak outcomes of integration. While transnationalism is rarely decried as uniformly “good” or “bad”, some of the literature does attempt to dispel the notion that the phenomenon is largely harmless. Waldinger and Fitzgerald (2004), for example,
state that many scholars ignore the negative aspects of multiple national loyalties and limit transnational studies to peaceful activities. But not all transnationals have peaceful intent; the authors warn that long-distance migrant and ethnic nationalists may be drawn to “unsavoury means” such as terrorism to express their particular ethno-religious passion (Appadurai 1990, McLellan and Richmond 1994, Richmond 2001, Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004). At this writing, this inflammatory discourse is very much to the fore in government, media and public concern.

Yet Erdal (2013) suggests that the assumption that transnationalism inhibits integration “is based on a combination of essentialist notions of identity in general and essentialist ways of relating to national identity specifically” (988). From an in-depth review of the literature focusing on concerns about transnationalism, it is suggested here that such fears are often closely related to broader anxieties about the integration of immigrants and minorities in society which can be exemplified by two stereotypes captured in the media (and to some extent the academic literature): that of the “transnational as terrorist” or that of the “transnational as shut-in” (Arat-Koc 2006, Huntington 1993, Smith 2007, Weinfeld 2011).36

In the case of the “transnational as terrorist”, this image is based on an assumption that transnational migrants (and specifically those within Arab or Muslim communities) are more likely to be engaged in terrorist activities both abroad and in Canada, and that such individuals are a threat to mainstream society because they resist integration (Arat-Koc 2006, Davis-Ramlochan 2013, Samad and Sen 2007, Vertovec 1999). Under this view transnationalism is seen as a source of social exclusion for young people, underscoring recent concerns about “reactionary” transnationalism that have focused on “home-grown terrorists”, with examples including the so-called “Toronto 18” in 2006, the three young men from London, Ontario who were involved in a terrorist attack on an Algerian gas plant in 2013, and the dual shootings of soldiers in Ottawa and Montreal in 2014. The result has been a public backlash against Canada’s “too lax” immigration policies and multiculturalism more broadly, as well as the education

36 Robertson (2013) similarly finds that in Australian media and public discourse “student-migrants” are typically homogenized into two stereotypes: elite, unproblematic “designer migrants” who come with resources and do not need settlement supports, and “back-door migrants” who are thought to exploit education for disingenuous purposes and/or are a threat to social stability and Australian multiculturalism (6, 162).
system for its failure to stop this perceived trend (Miller and Sack 2010). Media have been quick to inflame public fears with editorials with headlines such as “Generation Jihad: Angry, young, born-again believers” (The Globe and Mail, June 6, 2006) and “‘Toronto 18’ case our first sign that ‘good Canadian boys’ are being radicalized too” (National Post, April 2, 2013).

Not surprisingly, public fears about transnationalism are also related to broader international relations, with examples including the “war on terror”, the so-called “clash of civilizations” between the East and the West, religious accommodation of minorities, and Russian isolationism (Arat-Koc 2006, Erdal and Oeppen 2013, Huntington 1993). In a context of a global and national climate of securitization, the changing social position of certain migrant and ethnic groups in the post-September 11th era has changed public perception of how and why migrants ought to integrate into the majority (Esses, Dovidio and Hodson 2002, Noble 2005). While, as might be expected, none of the interview participants in this study claimed to hold terrorist beliefs or tendencies, this in itself does not mean that the larger transnational populations in the GTA are or are not tending towards more violent transnational feelings or actions.

Arat-Koc (2006), for her part, cautions that there is a danger that the term “transnational”, as it is commonly employed, will be applied almost exclusively to racialized groups as a means to question their belonging and loyalty to their new place(s) of residence. She describes a Canadian environment where the transnational identities of many ethnic communities become fodder in larger debates about who to let in and who to keep out of Canada’s borders. This suggests that transnationals may be among the first to encounter restrictions on their movements and actions. These may include prohibitions on sending money to organizations feared to be associated with terrorism back home, restricted travel to certain places, and suspicion about foreign business partners (Wayland 2004). Yet undoubtedly, this association of “transnational as terrorist” is simplistic and disturbing to many, both in transnational communities and in the broader Canadian society. Once again, the potential role of the education system in breaking down such stereotypes is as yet an unknown.

In the second case of the stereotype of “transnationals as shut-ins”, it is suggested that transnational ties foster inward-looking communities, which, in turn, impedes their economic or cultural integration in Canada. Concerns of this type are often couched in altruistic-sounding language, with the suggestion that such groups are “missing out” or “falling behind” by
consciously choosing to remain separate from the mainstream. The spatial concentration of 
ethnic communities in Canada has led to increasing public commentary identifying geographic 
segregation as an indicator of the reluctance among some transnational immigrants to fully 
embrace the rights and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship or allow women and children the 
right to engage with the larger civic society (Good Gingrich and Preibisch 2010). In the 
educational arena, private or religious schools, and specifically those that are gender segregated 
and focus on ethno-specific or religious content at the expense of academics, has led to 
apprehensions that students in these schools will be unprepared and lack qualifications for the 
broader workforce (Dwyer 2001, Fraser 2000). Such a discourse is also often tied to concerns 
about “reasonable accommodation” and the extent to which some immigrants do not share a 
sense of national belonging, identity and political participation with other Canadians (Bouchard 

Ley (2013) suggests that for transnational immigrant entrepreneurs in Vancouver, the existence 
of undeclared overseas assets and the practice of circular migration place them at odds with, and 
resistant to, the state’s expectation of local accountability and belonging, which are considered 
key elements of immigrant integration. Thus, Ley (2013) finds evidence of a negative association 
in Vancouver between transnationalism and socio-cultural integration, and weak and inconsistent 
associations with economic integration.

Yet rather than relying on such restricting and simplistic notions of the religious and/or racial 
“other”, and perhaps by conceiving of transnationalism as a bidirectional vector that can both 
impede and/or facilitate integration, these types of concerns can be assuaged, or at least nuanced 
to some degree. The data from this study has suggested that “post-national” may be the best way 
to think about the identity of more elite, transilient transnationals; and that for more transient 
transnationals providing holistic settlement supports can assist with both social and economic 
integration. As well, there is a need to reformulate the basis for thinking about migrant 
integration (specifically through the education system) as a normative program (Erdal 2013). 
When study participants spoke about their “shared” or “multiple” loyalties to more than one 
nation, they appeared to be hinting at the need for a more flexible paradigm in the discourse on 
transnationalism and integration.
5.2.4 Methodological Concerns about Transnationalism in an Era of an “Attack” on Data

Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi caution that “what we measure shapes what we collectively strive to pursue – and what we pursue determines what we measure” (9). Through the course of this research, numerous methodological concerns related to researching transnational individuals and communities in the GTA were identified. Currently, methodological criticisms levied against the transnational canon typically include claims of conceptual conflation and overuse, sampling on the dependent variable by looking for evidence of transnationalism and then necessarily finding it, or suggestions that the entire phenomenon simply describes ethnicity using a new word – old wine in new bottles (Chen and Tan 2009, Guarnizo and Smith 1998). As well, it is often posited that only a small number of individuals, usually elites, actually sustain transnational links, or that transnational ties diminish over generations and thus, if relevant at all, are only applicable at the level of the immigrant first generation (Kasinitz et al. 2002, Ley 2013).

The participants in this study suggest that transnational individuals come from a variety of social and economic positions, both in the GTA and in sending societies. They also evidence that transnational ties are held not just by adults but also by young people, who sometimes comprise part of the 1.5 generation or are second generation Canadian-born. While anecdotes provided by study participants evidence that transnationalism may encompass emotional ties and imagined movement/travel, there are often greater difficulties in measuring feelings and imaginings, as compared to physical back and forth movement across borders.

Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2002) argue that current research on migrant integration is overly dominated by national frameworks and a focus on ethnic and cultural differences between minority and majority populations. Such a tendency may detract attention from other important foci of analysis such as class or gender (Martiniello and Lafleur 2008, Patel 2014, Sassen 2003). As well, scholars have identified that transnational research may provide an antidote to the tendency to reify the national scale in much sociological research, which is often termed “methodological nationalism”. Such methodological nationalism can lead to an exaggerated focus on the country of current residence without appropriate consideration of the site of emigration and the ongoing connections to the place(s) of origin that some migrants maintain (Bourdieu 1989, Patel 2014, Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002, Zimmerman, Litt and Bose 2006).
Concerns about measuring transnational behaviours and attitudes are compounded by what is widely regarded as the Harper government’s “attack” on social science research and data collection (Conway May 10, 2013, Keung 2013a). While much transnational research (including this study) focuses on small-scale qualitative inquiries, without complementary research utilizing large-scale data, defining a problem, such as the widening gap in Canada between marginal and elite transnational migrants, or framing it to garner public attention, may become a significantly greater challenge (Boyd and Schellenberg 2007, Schellenberg and Hou 2005).

Conway (2013) suggests that the current Conservative government is actively manipulating the evidentiary process of documenting immigrant integration. In 2010, the long-form Census was eliminated in Canada, removing a representative and authoritative data source that was used extensively to highlight the difficulties experienced by newcomers and racialized communities. In addition, the Harper government defunded the Metropolis Research Network and its affiliated Centres of Excellence, which has proved a major setback for many immigration researchers and activists (Black 2013). Some regard these actions as part of a deliberate strategy to undermine research documenting the needs of vulnerable immigrant groups in Canada, including transient transnationals (Lightman and Bejan 2013, Yalnizyan 2013).

In a context of cutbacks to data collection in Canada, efforts to “measure” and “know” the dynamics that function to make vulnerable social groups – including temporary workers, the incarcerated, unemployed, and working-but-still-poor individuals, both foreign-born and native-born – are frequently inaccurate or partial, leaving public opinion about such groups to be shaped by preconceptions and “folk theories” that masquerade as fact and common sense (Bourdieu 1989). As well, the limitations in Canada’s national datasets are compounded in international comparisons, as the most dispossessed of the world often remain uncounted or simply invisible. The more extreme the global divides between the “haves” and the “have-nots”, the less ability there is to accurately reflect these social realities and understand the contributing social processes. That which is not seen cannot be represented or measured, in quantitative or qualitative terms (Good Gingrich and Lightman forthcoming). Notably, these concerns about data collection are likely exaggerated in the case of transnational populations who are often misunderstood or discounted by researchers and policy makers (Razavi 2007).
Yet concurrent to cuts to national data collection in Canada, there has also been widespread increases in the use of “big data” and the tracking of individuals (Clough 2010, Ohlhorst 2012). This, ultimately, may provide Canadians with more information on the physical back and forth movement of transnationals to and from the GTA and their homeland(s). However, this shift has occurred in a context of heightened concern about privacy, security and terrorism and may also lead to disproportionate tracking of those individuals viewed with suspicion, fostering the aforementioned fears about “transnationals as terrorists” (Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004).

Providing a specific example of the difficulties of measurement within the Secondary Schooling Transnational Nexus, several of the former GTA secondary school student interviewees suggested that improvements must be made in the way that academic skill levels are assessed for students from abroad who transfer to GTA schools. Relatedly, they also mentioned that there is a need to provide transnational parents and students with more information on how the education system is organized in the GTA, and specifically the basis for streaming of students into academic or applied classes, which directly impacts a student’s eventual ability to apply for higher education. A range of scenarios was provided as to how injurious a flawed assessment process can be. For example, R., who came from Mexico as an undocumented refugee during secondary school (see Case Study #2), said that he was forced to repeat grade nine when he arrived in the GTA. This, he said, was not a serious problem. However, R.’s brother was held back two or three years and ultimately dropped out of high school. This occurred partially, R. felt, because his brother was improperly assessed upon entering the GTA school system:

It's a bit unfair because you come [from abroad] and they test you. But you don't know they're going to test you so you don't get to prepare. Suddenly you're thrown into a math test and you kind of have to deliver. They tell you go to this place where they're going to set you up in a school. You go there and the first thing they do is test you and from there they place you… My brother really suffered from this. He got into a lot of fights in school and eventually just left [school] because in a way for him it was humiliating to be there with kids who were so much younger than him.

I., who came to the GTA from the UAE as an economic migrant, recalled feeling “extremely humiliated” during his language and skills proficiency testing. If anything, I. was convinced that the private secondary school he had attended in the UAE was more advanced than public schools in Toronto. He also suggested that there is a need to better judge the overall quality of education abroad, not just English language competence:
It was very much a call to the cattle. It was horrible. …Despite the fact that I spoke English and had GCSC\textsuperscript{37} grades, despite the fact that I was number one in my grade in Dubai, despite the fact that I had all this paperwork showing that I could speak English, they made me do testing for English and math. And it was really insulting questions. I had been used to writing anti-war poetry and they were like 'tell me about your friends back home'. It was three days of waiting for my number to come, from 8am to 5pm, morning to evening, and finally on the third day when I got called the lady said to my mom 'Your son is so gifted. But, we think he should repeat a grade because he's too young.' I had to fight and tell them how I'd skipped a grade and started school early on purpose. I wasn't too young to be in grade 12. I felt, like, ‘screw you lady’.

Thus, altogether, there are numerous methodological issues that must be considered in efforts to improve research-based understanding of the transnational phenomenon in the GTA, both within and outside the schooling arena. Lacking simple resolutions, these problems will likely continue to generate discussion for decades to come.

Next, building on this broader analysis of the transnational phenomenon, the second section of this chapter examines how this study has contributed to existing knowledge specifically in terms of the connections between education and transnationalism.

5.3 Tying Transnationalism and Education

“The internationalization of education is deeply implicated in broader social transformations taking place across national, transnational and global scales…The hunt for non-government sources of revenue was the ‘cattle prod’ for the commodification of international education and the mass marketing of education-as-product to full-fee-paying international students”

\textit{(Robertson 2013:3-4, 19)}.

The second major contribution of this study at the level of policy is in expanding current understanding of the connections between transnationalism and education. From analysis of the Secondary Schooling Transnational Nexus it is suggested that education is a specific asset to transnationals and is regarded as such by some transnationals themselves. As well, study participants provided evidence that there has been, to some degree at least, a “transnational transformation” of the education system in the GTA in order to market secondary schooling to individuals abroad. Finally, the study participants suggested that at the macro level, there are competing demands as to how to orient the education system so as to best assist transnational

\textsuperscript{37} General Certificate of Secondary Education qualifications have replaced O-levels as the standard secondary schooling credential provided in United Kingdom and used in other (former) British territories.
individuals. By some perspectives, there is a need for a more universal, transferable and standardized schooling system. Other participants, however, identified a need for more Canadian content and/or advocated for a more individualized curriculum tailored to the specific transnational groups that are attending a given school. Whether these competing positions can be reconciled or concurrently addressed at this point in time remains a matter of speculation.

5.3.1 Education as a Specific Asset to Transnationals

In the context of globalization and increasing divides within and between nations (Piketty and Goldhammer 2014, Wilkinson, Pickett and Chafer 2011), a convincing argument can be made that education is of specific importance for transnationals today, regardless of their socioeconomic status (Caglar 2001, Richmond 1994, Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002). In the GTA, where there have been considerable cuts to settlement services and social supports, public education may be one essential tool readily available to more transient transnationals. It is suggested here that educational success can be a critical way to mitigate the dividing practices of the economic market for both transient and transilient transnational youth and their families.

Historically, there was a belief that the ethnic community in North America (or the “ethnic enclave economy” as it is sometimes referred to) could partially offset the economic disparities between an immigrant group and the broader society (Aldrich and Waldinger 1990, Breton 1964, Edin, Fredriksson and Åslund 2003, Foner 2001, Harney 1978, Petroff 1977, Portes 1987, Waldinger 1993). Portes (1987), for example, details the positive impact of ethno-specific businesses that are owned and patronized by the Cuban community in Miami, while Breton (1964) and Foner (2001) document the “institutional completeness” of immigrant communities, in terms of the ethno-specific social services and mutual aid societies they provide.

Today, there is less research emphasis on ethnic communities supporting the upward mobility of more marginal members. Instead, it is increasingly argued that a strong emphasis on education within many immigrant groups has partially replaced this intra-community support (Boyd 2002, Riffel, Levin and Young 1996). For some, then, education is seen as an asset that, once obtained, may partially mitigate barriers associated with social class. Education can be conceptualized as a valuable asset to all transnationals, regardless of their socioeconomic status, and as a powerful tool facilitating upward mobility and/or class maintenance for families and groups. In the past, “birds of passage” (Piore 1979) had little interest in education in Canada. For some, education
was seen as divisive to family unity and the goal of accumulating a nest egg in the sending society. However, at present, English language knowledge and a North American university degree often have as much if not more value “at home” than a pocket full of cash.

Mitchell (1999, 2001, 2003, 2008) and Ley (2005, 2010, 2013) have previously identified a relationship between Canadian schooling and domestic social reproduction for transient transnational migrants. Using the example of the East Asian populations in the West Coast of Canada, the authors suggest that because Western education is highly valued overseas, it is often regarded as instrumental in the reproduction of a family’s middle or upper class affluence and status. Accordingly, schooling is conceived of an integral component of the household strategy of capital accumulation within these communities.

Waters (2006), also writing about Hong Kong transnationals in British Columbia, finds that gaining Canadian citizenship has often proved the most economically viable option for families facing the prospect of financing multiple university educations abroad. As Canadian citizens, Hong Kong migrants are eligible for lower resident tuition fees, as compared to more costly international student fees. These transient transnationals also benefit from an education system that is prized for having a greater focus on critical thinking skills and assisting with the acquisition of strong English language capabilities (Ley 2010, Li and Li 2008, Waters 2003, Waters 2005, Waters 2006a).

In her study of visa students coming to Australia for tertiary education, Robertson (2013) characterizes this trend as “immigration for education”. She similarly finds that upwardly mobile families, usually from Asia, arrange for the entire family or particular family members to immigrate in order to access Western education, usually with the intention of returning to their sending society once their schooling is completed. In such cases it is thought that individuals who gain international education abroad will be more able to compete in domestic job markets once they return to their places of origin.38

While the studies noted above focus solely on transnationals with high levels of socioeconomic status, in some cases more transient interviewees for this study evidenced a similar trend. The

38 Other evidence, including data presented in this study, suggests that Western degrees may not always confer the privilege expected by migrants in their sending country labour markets (see Tierney 2006, Willie 2000).
transnationals who arrived in the GTA with low levels of financial resources and social capital also often emphasized the value of Western education. While individuals with precarious immigration statuses sometimes suggested that excelling at school took a backseat to gaining permanent residency, many other recent GTA secondary school graduates suggested that despite arriving in Canada when their family was economically hard pressed, they nonetheless saw Western education as a globally transferable asset and a means to their own and their family’s future upward mobility, either in the GTA or in their sending society, should they return.

M., for example, said that her family initially came from China with very limited finances. However, M. said that in the GTA her parents were highly focused on her maintaining her Mandarin language skills and getting the best possible education in Canada. This was done with a view towards facilitating her return to China once the political climate became more favourable towards capitalism. “My parents were motivated by political stability [to move to the GTA]… But for me to go back afterwards and work as a lawyer and make a really high salary, they were really excited and impressed.”

Many of the educator interviewees were also aware that education is of critical importance for their students with ongoing connections to their countries of origin. While some were concerned that this meant that the students were “using” GTA schools to facilitate a job in their home country when they returned, other teachers felt that their role was simply to help any and all students excel academically so long as they were in their classrooms.

T., a public secondary school teacher, admitted that she initially felt shocked when she learned that her ESL students were “using” the GTA education system and then planning to return home with their Western credentials. She said she felt troubled by some students’ apparent lack of loyalty to Canada and that she still struggles with this notion:

Some of my students did say 'I'm going to finish high school and go to college or university here and then I'm going back home to be a, whatever profession they happen to study here’. It took me off guard initially, like 'So you're using our school system to get ahead somewhere else'. So not all of them were like 'I’m so happy to be here, I’m staying in Canada forever.' I never got the sense they were going to go back and save their country it was just 'I came here to study because your schools are good, I’m going to study engineering because we need more engineers, doctors, whatever, in my home country and that's where I want to live and raise a family.'
Thus, studies of transnationalism that ignore educational strategies and schooling experiences of migrants are overlooking an important component of individuals’ and families’ deliberate assessments of how to best enhance their life chances whether in the GTA or elsewhere. As well, without an acknowledgement of the strategic use of education by transnationals in the GTA, researchers may be ignoring schools as an important site of research on the benefits and drawbacks of transnational ties for younger individuals.

5.3.2 The Transnational Transformation of (GTA) Schooling

Increasingly, the sale of educational services is an international market commodity. While there is historical precedent for students and scholars who are internationally mobile, even prior to the dominance of the modern nation-state system (AHR Conversation: On Transnational History with C. A. Bayly 2006, Ayukawa 2008), this study provides evidence of the contemporary marketization of secondary schooling to transnationals in the GTA and abroad. This “transnational transformation” of schooling is viewed within the broader context of a globalized knowledge economy and fierce competition amongst developed economies for high skilled workers. As Robertson (2013) aptly states, “both international education and skilled migration have become market-driven processes, conceptualized through a neoliberal framework of supply and demand” (40).

The rising rates of international students in the Global North are intimately tied to macroeconomic trends. While financial downturns in Western societies have led to high unemployment and growing negative public opinion about immigration, fiscal restraints have also made public universities and secondary schools look favourably toward the high fees international students confer. Private schools in many Western nations have specifically targeted offshore students and profit enormously from migration-driven demand. Some fold in the space of a few years, when economic fortunes in their students’ countries of origin unexpectedly change (Robertson 2013).

Most existing research on the marketization of education focuses specifically on tertiary education (Abada and Tenkorang 2009, Arvast 2006, Gargano 2009). Robertson (2013), for example, examines transnational “student-migrants” coming to Australia for university with international visas who, she argues, blur the boundary between skilled migrants and labour migrants. Such students typically arrive as part of a staggered pathway involving gaining a
temporary work visa, and ultimately permanent residency in Australia. Robertson argues that these individuals represent a new type of immigration that she describes as “radically different” than traditional settler migration (1).

Waters (2006) documents how in the last twenty years there has been a consolidation of the “international education industry” which is worth more than $100 billion. In 2010 alone, international students in Canada spent in excess of $7.7 billion on tuition, accommodation and discretionary spending (Advisory Panel on Canada's International Education Strategy 2012).

Waters (2006) suggests that this “industry” has given rise to the proliferation of language schools both internationally and domestically, satellite university campuses, distance or e-learning programs, international MBA programs, (inter)national education “brands” and the growing entrepreneurial focus and activities of educational institutions. Yet Waters also argues that the mobility of students is perhaps the most significant indication of the growth of this industry. The number of foreign (tertiary) students within OECD countries has more than doubled over the past 25 years (OCED 2002).

Under the 2002 Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA), international students in Canada who complete a full-time, two-year program of study at a post-secondary institution are granted five extra points in the evaluation process should they subsequently apply for permanent Canadian residency. As well, Canada has introduced a specific visa category that allows international students to “switch” their status from student to worker or resident while in Canada if they demonstrate a pre-existing job offer (Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan 2003, Robertson 2013, Vathi 2013). Yet, rather than view the state policies on international students as a one-sided process steering or even manipulating transnational migrant behaviour, Robertson (2013) notes that such individuals often become what Aihwa Ong (1999) terms “flexible citizens”, circumventing and manipulating state processes to their own advantage.

An important finding from this study is that the transnational transformation of schooling is now evident at the secondary schooling level in the GTA, as well as at the tertiary level. As noted in previous studies (see Waters 2005), students in secondary schools with transnational ties must be evaluated more within the context of their families’ broader migration and educational strategies as many high school-aged youth are still financial dependent on family and may be too young to make autonomous decisions about their own schooling. Secondary students are thus less likely to
interact with immigration officials than tertiary students (as they often have the assistance of family or, in some cases, a paid intervener), but they are nonetheless affected by the opportunities and constraints of the immigration regime.

In the GTA, study participants noted that there has been a marked increase in for-profit private (sometimes religious) secondary institutions targeting wealthy transnationals and international visa students. This, however, has led to public concerns about the lack of provincial oversight within these schools and suggestions that they are simply “credit mills” that treat students and their families as “cash cows”. Many of the public school educators interviewed for this study stated that there are serious questions about the quality of instruction provided at these private schools and that their students are “buying” their credits.

F., an English teacher, was the most recent teacher’s college graduate among the interview participants and had the most immediate experience navigating the job market. As at the time of her interview F. had not yet secured full-time employment. She expressed concern that her only teaching option would be at one of the so-called “credit mills” in the GTA. Yet F. stated that there was no formal discussion about these institutions at teachers college and nothing negative was said about them. F. thinks this is because teaching faculty understand that these for-profit schools may be the only places hiring significant numbers of new teachers in the GTA at present, given a Ontario job market with an oversupply of qualified teachers. However, F. said that she wished that there had been more discussion of the implications of the growth of these private and too often under-regulated schools in the GTA:

Talk of ‘the credit mill’ was hush, hush in school. We students talked about them all the time because these are actually the only places where there are jobs. People are working there because at least it's actual classroom experience, despite the fact that you don't get prep periods and the starting pay is something like a quarter of what you'd make at the TDSB starting out. So people are taking those jobs because there's such high turnover at them because they're so exploitative. But at teacher’s college, it was like they didn't know how to talk about this. I feel like they [education faculty members] know these are the only place some of us might get jobs. But at the same time they did talk about how they're getting shut down all the time because they don't meet Ministry standards.

Yet it was noted that like private secondary schools, GTA public secondary schools are also increasingly trying to attract international/visa students due to the high fees that they pay. International student fees for 2014 were $14,000 CAD per year for public secondary schools in Toronto (TDSB 2014). During a time of widespread cuts to public education budgets, this is a
tempting and increasingly important source of public school funding. Writing about the
Vancouver School Board, Waters (2006) suggests that the board has found itself “increasingly
embedded in a web of trans-local relations that leaves it dependent on, and beholden to, the
fortunes of East Asian economies” (1062). Similarly, public education in the GTA is
increasingly reliant on international financial fortunes and the funding provided by visa and other
(elite) transnational students from abroad (Advisory Panel on Canada's International Education
Strategy 2012).

Offshore Ontario secondary schools are another component of this transnational transformation
of the education system. Such schools are located abroad, but are taught by Ontario certified
teachers and graduates are issued an Ontario High School Graduation Certificate. They are
promoted as a promising public-private partnership with foreign governments that can
simultaneously address public disinvestment in education in Ontario and declining domestic
enrolment, as well as providing an avenue for surplus Ontario teachers to find jobs. Foreign
students and their families are attracted to such offshore schools as a way to facilitate their future
acceptance into Western universities, and it is suggested that such schools are advantageous as a
way to address concerns about fraudulent applications for study permits to Canada and false
reporting of English language and academic ability by overseas visa students in university
applications (Conradi 2008).

EE. said that many of her colleagues from teacher’s college had been forced to move abroad to
find employment, either at offshore Ontario schools or other English language institutions. While
EE. was unwilling to relocate from Toronto, she said that the pressure on her to leave the GTA to
teach abroad was constant:

At teacher’s college there was a huge push to have us leave the TDSB, to leave the
country. Almost every single email we got was to go teach in the UK or wherever.... In
my practicum placement, all the teachers knew how terrible the job market is. Every
single one of them told me that I should go take a job in Costa Rica or Croatia or
somewhere else abroad. They were like, 'You're young. Just go away for a few years until
the job market gets better.' And that's the advice that's coming from everyone, from every
instructor I talked to. I mean, I get that it's practical. That’s where the jobs are. They're
not over here.

As of 2014, there were Ontario offshore secondary schools located in China, the Netherlands,
Italy, Singapore, Egypt, Japan, Trinidad and Tobago, and Malaysia (Canadian Information
Centre for International Credentials 2014). However, critics suggest that such schools devalue locally conferred educational credentials in the places of origin, as well as serving to justify provincial cuts to education funding domestically (Conradi 2008).

However, the growing number of young Canadian university graduates teaching English overseas (Jeon and Lee 2006, Lin et al. 2002) was identified as having a potentially positive impact on the future teaching staff in GTA schools. F. suggested that individuals who teach abroad and subsequently join the ranks of Ontario teachers might be uniquely qualified to work with ESL learners and students with transnational ties. She thinks these teachers may also have an understanding of the relative strengths and weaknesses of Ontario curriculum as opposed to that of other countries:

What's interesting is that a lot of students at my school had already spent years teaching English in Korea or Japan or elsewhere in Asia, which is what all undergrads seem to do when they graduate. A lot of those people end up liking teaching and then end up in teachers college. So they often have a lot of really great teaching strategies for teaching ESL learners, which I don't have because it wasn't taught to me at school at all.

Overall, while there is considerable evidence of a transnational transformation of education (in the GTA) at the secondary level (as well as the tertiary level), study participants suggested that supports for students with transnational ties, in the form of provincial oversight of schooling standards/requirements targeted to visa students, ESL funding, or assistance with cultural integration, has not been forthcoming (Bernhard 2012). In fact, there has been limited discussion of how to best facilitate the academic advancement and integration of these students. To date, the presence of transnational students has been primarily viewed in a neoliberal context focusing on the positive short-term economics of international visa students in GTA schools.

5.3.3 Competing Demands for the Universal and the Particular in GTA Curriculum

An apparent area of disconnect within the data collected for this study is in the conflicting suggestions provided by study interviewees on how to best (re)orient the secondary schooling system to assist the increasingly transnational student population. Some study participants suggested that what is necessary is a more particularistic curriculum, one that is more focused on Canadian content, in order to foster a more unifying national identity. Yet others stated that
schools must become more global and internationally transferable in their orientation, so as to best assist students who move from place to place.

While at the level of theory many of the educator interviewees were interested in improving their curriculum to encompass a greater diversity of authors and ideas, they often felt at a loss in how to do so in practice. K., a geography teacher, said she typically makes only minimal reference to countries other than Canada in class. She said this is due to her lack of specialized knowledge about other places in the world:

I think there's probably too much emphasis on Canada, to be honest, especially in the Grade 9 geography course. Some of the students would like it to talk more about other parts of the world. But one of the problems is my own background. I actually feel a lot more comfortable teaching about the geography of Canada. So I teach more about here not only because that's what the curriculum says, but because that's where my own strengths lie too.

However, other public school teachers interviewed suggested that the issue is not that the current Ontario curriculum isn’t flexible or universal enough to engage the diverse student population. Rather, they said that most problems are simply due to resources (a lack of time) and/or limited ability on the part of school faculty. N., also a geography teacher, argued that teachers need to know their own limits in addressing controversial and complicated issues, particularly those related to current political and religious conflicts:

I can’t pretend that I know everything, there’s no use in that... We live in a very complicated world and I’m not sure we as schoolteachers can really explain the ins and outs of the Israeli-Arab conflict, or the nature of Islam versus Christian relationships and how the Jewish religion fits into all of that. But I think we can start to taste some of that. And the same thing applies to teaching the geography and the history of other lands and other cultures. I think we need to continue to provide tastes of other experiences, but I think it needs to be in relationship to what the students in the room want and require. Because if I can get them engaged in something, maybe they can explore it a little more on their own.

Providing an elite private school perspective, KK. said his growing awareness of the need to incorporate a more culturally diverse and internationally transferable curriculum in schools is partially due to the growing number of wealthy international visa students, who, along with their parents, are increasingly willing and able to advocate for their specific needs. These needs often include the ability to transfer their credentials back to their home country:
For years and years I thought the curriculum was pretty international. But then I took a look at it and realized it was mostly males and mostly Europeans. I think we need to change that. We are starting to get some Japanese authors, some Asians, some South Americans. So I think having a diverse clientele, one tries to think, ‘How am I going to get a 17 year old boy to read and how can I challenge him and show him the best from around the world?’ Having kids from different countries is pushing me from a European model to something a bit more inclusive.

Thus, according to study participants, GTA secondary schools currently have the challenging task of reconciling competing demands to be more universal, or more particular, or both, in order to best support students with transnational ties. This split is well documented within the scholarly literature: while some research emphasizes the need for greater individualization of schooling experiences to address the unique needs of (possibly vulnerable) students traversing borders, other research presents the case for a more universal curriculum, to allow students greater flexibility in a context of ongoing travel between more than one nation (Corak 2011, Hamann 2001, Rendall and Torr 2008, Rutter 2006).

In the former case, scholars suggest that the current structure of schooling may accentuate, rather than alleviate, the challenges that migration implies for children and youth. Transnational students, regardless of their socioeconomic status, may suffer from discontinuity and feel caught between the culture of their home, their school and their parents, leading to resentment about their migration and any possible ongoing mobility. Hamann (2001), writing in the American context, suggests that an overhaul of the education system is necessary to increase cultural competency of schools:

Creating curricula that are responsive to sojourner students requires a dramatic rethinking of school organization, curriculum, pedagogy, student needs, and the relationships at the instructor, student, curriculum nexus. [The goal is to] have a curriculum and assessment system that recognizes the realities in which such students live, the topics in which they are interested, and the culturally-related ways in which students are best at indicating/applying what they know. Faced already with the challenges of gaining one’s bearings in a new place and feeling uncertain about the duration of one’s stay, sojourner students may need even more affirmation of their existing knowledge and its potential application to present circumstances than do most students (56).

Goldstein (2003) similarly states that, “learning to work effectively with students who have strong affiliations in more than one community is critical to good teaching” (261) while Gargano (2009) allows that little is currently being done to adapt to the reality of students whose parents may be continually crossing borders:
Although the cross-border education community continues to engage in research on a national policy level, efforts are needed to create and implement policies and programs not only based on data that reflects these national trends and figures, but also by taking into consideration the voices of students who engage in educational sojourns and who are impacted by these very policies, thereby requiring researchers and practitioners to step outside standardized practices to develop innovative programs and realize the potential of international student mobility (332).

However, Hamann’s, Goldstein’s, and Gargano’s expectations of educators regarding transnational students may be unrealistic or further tax the resources of already under-financed public institutions in the GTA. Many of the educators interviewed lamented that they barely have enough time to teach the essentials demanded by the curriculum. In the case of private educational institutions, there may not be sufficient financial advantage or motivation to reorient schools at a system level, so as to accommodate the specific needs of students with transnational ties. Changes within private schools may be more at the level of providing specific accommodations (language or otherwise) to encourage the flow of fees from wealthy international students.

Luke (2011) suggests that fostering a single or unifying Canadian identity is not feasible, or even desirable, in the current schooling context. He states that discussions about adapting schools to the transnational context ought to focus simply on equity and inclusion, rather than attempting to provide a single, standardized solution to the needs of all students traversing borders:

[Our renewed focus ought to] represent a distinctive Canadian commitment to equity, to multiculturalism, and to a social contract between government, communities, and professional educators around education and the public good. This is about education and equity as core Canadian values, not a search for a scientifically derived technique (374).

The literature arguing that greater uniformity in education will assist transnational students also suggests that the concept of a “national” education project may be irrelevant for transnational students; transience or mobility may shape alternate conceptions about the purpose of schooling, at least from the point of view of the transnational student and his/her family. Conradi (2008), for example, found that in his work at a British Columbia offshore school in Asia, the focus in geography classes was more on “globalizing social studies” and less on Canadian issues and history. Rather than focusing on educating their children to be members of the Canadian consensus, transnational families and communities may be more interested in educating their children to be successful global citizens.
Zúñiga and Hamann (2009) label this a “fragmented schooling script” which emphasizes that schools are the institutional instruments of modern economies concerned with providing workers who can be productive in the face of changing and globalized labour market needs. Such a perspective often leads to calls to increase math and science standards in the GTA so as to be comparative and competitive internationally, as well as focusing on the specific technical skills required by global businesses and industries (Cowley and Easton 2014, Toronto Region Board of Trade 2014).

In North America, overall, there has been concern in the past decade about declining academic standards in public schools and a comparative weakness in math and science as compared to countries in the Global South. Writing in the *New York Times*, columnist Nicolas Kristof argued in 2011 that America should look to China for examples of education reform, praising the discipline and focus of Chinese teachers and students. Thomas Friedman, also writing in the *New York Times*, similarly wrote about the value of Singaporean mathematics education, although he cautioned of the need to borrow Singapore’s pedagogy without its downplaying of individual freedom (Friedman September 16, 2005, Kristof January 15, 2011). Yet policies do not always travel well; as Luke (2011) states, “too often, selective versions of educational science, and selective mining of educational research are undertaken in the service of particular economic and ideological interests” (375). By this measure, the arts and social sciences often suffer.

Mitchell (2001) provides a Canadian example of how transnational communities have sought to mimic the academic orientation of schools in their home country. She finds that some transnational migrants from Hong Kong in Richmond, British Columbia expressed concern about mixed-age classes, a lack of consistent standards in education, limited morals and discipline in the classroom and a pattern of learning set by the child rather than the teachers. This was as compared to what parents viewed as the stricter education system in Hong Kong. Mitchell found that these transnationals wanted greater emphasis on “fundamental” education that would be more conducive to measuring and tracking children’s success on a regulated, short-term basis, comparative to other youth of the same age.

In her case study, Mitchell describes how different cultural values can lead to different conceptions about the purpose of education:
The discussion by Richmond immigrant parents in letters, interviews, and public meetings can be seen as indicating less interest in educating children to be members of a national community and more in educating them to be successful global citizens. Regular standardized testing that is consistent by age and geography allows individuals more ability to move both locally and internationally and remain at the same educational level. Individuals are also better able to retain educationally based cultural capital. For many immigrant Chinese Canadians, the preparation of individuals to become high achievers in a global workplace is more practical and more attainable than their constitution as citizens of a particular nation-state. In this vision, inherently national narratives, such as that of multiculturalism, are willingly sacrificed for a more flexible notion of educational excellence (39).

In order to get their way, concerned parents from Hong Kong mobilized behind a “back to basics” educational agenda in Richmond, evidencing the power of a more transilient, transnational population. Such transnational communities may feel that a curriculum with increased emphasis on regularly scheduled standardized testing will give their offspring more flexibility in meeting future economic challenges. Another example of this is seen in the support for the International Baccalaureate program, especially among the transnational elite. In contrast to focusing on individual needs (or perhaps concurrent with this) a multinational or global curriculum is seen by some to offer transference of credentials and a minimizing of cultural differences (Mitchell, 2001; Zúñiga & Hamann, 2009).

Yet for all the debate, at present there is little data available on how and if transnational students would measurably benefit from either more individualized or more globally standardized educational orientations. In principle, it ought to be possible to have a curriculum that is both global and particular in focus. An example could be some private Jewish day schools the GTA where the school day is split between the standardized curriculum provided by the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training and providing ethno-specific curriculum and religious and spiritual content (e.g. the Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto and the United Synagogue Day School). However, this compromise would seem highly unlikely in the context of the more diverse, multiethnic and multi-religious student population in the GTA public schooling system. As well, it is possible that creating a more global, standardized curriculum would lead to a singular emphasis on maths and sciences, to the detriment of learning in humanities and critical thinking, or away from a focus on civic education and the fostering of a unifying national identity.
Thus, a tension between focusing on the global versus the particular is evidenced in the scholarly literature, as well as in the comments of study participants on how to best adapt the Ontario curriculum to the transnational context. While it remains unclear how to best reconcile these competing demands, the identification of this issue is an important first step for both educators and students with transnational ties.

5.4 Summary

Advancing from specific observations provided by the research participants as detailed in Chapters 2-4 of this study, this chapter focused on the findings and implications of the Secondary Schooling Transnational Nexus for policy. Initially, the chapter contributed to existing knowledge through identifying and illuminating current understanding of the transnational phenomenon. This was followed by some thematic contributions in terms of furthering understanding about the connections between transnationalism and secondary schooling, both specifically within the GTA and beyond. The next (and final) chapter concludes this dissertation and provides an analysis of some of the key findings.
6 Conclusions

“There's nothing that suggests that students need to be here permanently or for a specific given period of time. If a student comes to school every day there is no reason that they shouldn't be successful. We get paid to help them with that. Whatever time the family wants to be with us and for whatever reason they come here, in every case they need to be welcomed completely and their learning needs to be facilitated from whatever point they're at. So if they leave and return for the fifth time we can't be sitting here grumbling...Wherever they are, you start with that. You affirm it, and put the structures in place so the student can learn effectively”

(E., public school administrator).

This dissertation includes the perspectives of over forty former high school students and current educators on how GTA secondary schools are responding (or not) to the ongoing ties some migrant and second generation students maintain to their place(s) of origin. The different subject positions and socioeconomic backgrounds of the interview participants contribute to Tannock’s (2010) notion of “global city education” as an institution that is implicated in the creation and legitimization of inequalities in education and in society more generally.

Currently, the repercussions of transnational ties, both positive and negative, for students, educators and secondary schools remain largely unexplored. Only minimal research has been done on educators’ perceptions of the consequences of transnationalism on schooling (e.g. Reyes 2000, Zavala 2000, Zúñiga and Hamann 2009) and transnational students have rarely been differentiated or recognized as a subset of the broader immigrant student population in GTA schools (or elsewhere) or questioned about their potentially unique schooling needs and/or assets. Accordingly, this dissertation has attempted to tease out an understanding of the diverse nature of the transnational student. This was done using a two-pronged approach, providing the perspectives of transnational students and of educators.

Rather than attempting to review the entire contents of Chapters 1-5, this concluding chapter elects to present five major study findings or areas for future research and tie them to existing literature on educational best practice. Certainly, the qualitative and non-representative nature of the study sample suggests that any conclusions may have only limited generalizability to the broader GTA population. However, it is hoped that these five findings summarize the critical contributions of this dissertation to existing knowledge connecting transnationalism and schooling and present areas in need of further research and public policy exploration.
6.1 There is No One Prototypical Transnational Student

The interviewees in this study clearly demonstrate that students with transnational ties in the GTA can be distinguished across various axes of differentiation – they are diverse in terms of gender, social class, race, religion, national origin, and immigration status, to name a few key attributes. The transnational former secondary school students interviewed for this dissertation included both males and females. Some arrived in the GTA with considerable social and economic support and were part of the financial elite (both in their sending and receiving countries), while others had come with very little money or capital and struggled to make ends meet. The interviewees came to the GTA from seventeen different countries and identified with seven religions. Some were part of racialized communities and some were not. While some individuals arrived in the GTA solely for educational purposes on a time-limited student visa, others had migrated permanently with their families (both nuclear and extended), either as economic migrants or as refugees (with or without official documentation). Some respondents held Canadian citizenship at the time of their interview. Others did not. And some fully intended to remain in the GTA on a permanent basis, while others intended to only stay for a limited duration. All told, it would have been impossible to pick out one “typical” transnational student from the sample.

This finding of diversity within the transnational student population in the GTA contributes to ongoing debates within the scholarly literature. Currently, scholars are divided on whether transnational ties are maintained by generations beyond the adult immigrants who first relocate to a new place of residence (see Kasinitz et al. 2002, Lee 2004, Rendall and Torr 2008, Somerville 2008, Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004, Wessendorf 2007). As well, visa students are often not included amongst the transnational populations being researched. This study demonstrates that transnational ties are sustained by secondary school students, both first and second generation Canadian, as well as by visa students, many of whom may use an option allowing them to settle in Canada over the longer term. However, in future, the maintenance of transnational ties beyond the first generation for individuals who primarily reside in the GTA will inevitably be connected to what precipitated the migration process to begin with, whether there was a religious or political component to the first generation attachment, and whether there are ongoing economic interests at stake, such as property owned in the place(s) of origin.
Notably, in the limited case studies connecting transnationalism to education in Canada, the vast majority focus on the transilient Asian elite, with little or no discussion of other ethnic groups, visa students, or the importance of social class (e.g. Kobayashi and Preston 2007, Ley 2010, Mitchell 1999, Waters 2003, Waters 2005, Waters 2006a). As most migrant families and students in the GTA lack the resources, social capital, and mobility enjoyed by these elite communities, this study included the educational experiences of less privileged, more transient transnational individuals. Socioeconomic status was posited as a critical and mediating factor in everyday experiences of transnationalism and secondary schooling. While the transnational former secondary school students interviewed for this study were positioned across the socioeconomic spectrum, the interviewees emphasized that schooling can (and ought to) be considered a specific asset to both more and less resourced transnational individuals and families. As well, a solidarity and commonality of perspective amongst transnational individuals with similar socioeconomic standing was often evidenced to be of greater importance than any allegiance to co-nationals in the GTA.

6.2 Transnationals Constitute a Subset of the Broader (Im)Migrant Population

A second finding from this study is in regards to how to best position and classify individuals with strong transnational ties and if they constitute a unique population of interest. In this study, is suggested that that most immigrants (inside and outside of the classroom context) likely maintain some feelings of connectedness to their places of origins. However, the transnational interview participants were found to be distinctive because they did not see themselves necessarily settling permanently in their new place(s) of residence or having one home over their life course. These individuals could be distinguished from the majority of immigrant youth in the GTA because they had attended secondary schooling both in their place(s) of origin and in the GTA, and because they provided evidence of both physical and emotional ongoing ties to their sending societies.

Distinguishing between categories of migrants has importance in both academic arenas and for public policy and practice development. In the GTA, the majority of immigrants do eventually integrate into the mainstream population (at varying speeds and to varying degrees). However, some do not, either due to choice or due to lack of ability or interest (Good Gingrich 2008, Good
“Traditional immigrants”, or those who were not classified as transnationals in this study, generally arrive in the GTA intending permanent resettlement. They focus on integration (social, political, and economic) and seek to find their place within the broader community. Thus, a general assumption is made that over time the first generation ties to the sending society/ies will diminish and these ties will continue to fade with each successive generation.

The transnational migrants interviewed for this study, however, differed from the majority of immigrants in a variety of ways. These individuals had all wrestled with, or were still wrestling with, the idea of returning to or choosing their “home” as they defined it. Their individual or familial motivations for entry into the GTA sometimes focused on short-term gain rather than long-term resettlement. Some of the interviewees hoped to benefit from an additional, complementary citizenship and/or place of residence on top of their sending society/ies. More significant, however, is the lack of evidence that their connections to their sending societies will lessen over time. Often, individual or family priority was placed on intergenerational continuity of the homeland connection. As the interviewees shared the stories of their family’s migration trajectories, it was clear that, rather than simply slipping away over time, transnational ties may go through cyclical waves, receding and increasing over generations or the lifecycle due to economic, political, or other internal or external factors, or may be consciously nurtured over the long-term for personal, financial, ideological or other reasons.

Important differences between the integrationist orientation of many immigrants and that of the transnational former student interviewees were often tied to social class. Among the more transilient/elite transnationals (or educators working with such populations), there was a sense that many were not focused on settlement and incorporation in Canada. Rather, they maintained a “post-national” outlook and expected familial and economic connections, as well as privileged educational commodities, to allow them future access to the best universities, jobs, and international peer networks. These individuals seemed to practice a form of strategic citizenship, “motivated not by ideals of national unity in diversity, but by understandings of global competitiveness, and the necessity to strategically adapt as an individual to rapidly shifting personal and national contexts” (Mitchell 2003:388).
Interviews with individuals who had come to the GTA with more modest socioeconomic means (and the educators working with these populations) found that some of these students did maintain strong nationalistic feelings to their places of origin, perhaps due to their feelings of social exclusion in the host society. Many of those interviewed critiqued the multicultural discourse within their GTA schools or found it irrelevant. Unlike the elite transnationals, many of these less resourced study participants did not have confidence that in future they could work or study anywhere in the world, nor, for the most part, were their parents always actively involved in their schoolwork or advocating for their schooling needs. It was suggested that disengaged parents of transient transnationals, who may not think their children will be in GTA permanently, often have less incentive, as well as minimal voice and political muscle, to advocate for their desired reforms to the education system. Thus, the resources and strategies utilized in elite private schools were often found to be outside the range of possibility within the public system. The “transnational transformation” of the education system was a clear reflection of this reality.

6.3 Transnational Students Exhibit Unique Classroom Behaviours

Both the former high school students and educators interviewed for this study suggested that transnational students, in some cases, exhibit unique classroom behaviours. This, in their opinion, led to both opportunities and challenges in schools. For some individuals and communities, transnational connections are largely enacted at the level of actions and behaviours, leading to ongoing visits to sending societies (sometimes during the school year), the sending of remittances, or regular consumption of news and other social media from “back home”. Yet in other cases, transnational ties are largely at the level of feelings and emotions, as individuals juggle dual or multiple identities and loyalties and feel a lack of belonging in any one locale. In addition, the significance of modern communication technologies and forms of travel cannot be underestimated for young adults; these add to the strength of young people’s transnational attachments, allowing them to seamlessly and continuously interact within numerous sites. Thus, what in the past was only an emotional connection to the place of origin, today often includes a physical tie as well.
The former GTA secondary students in this study exhibited numerous forms of behavioural transnationalism. Some transnational students were found to return to their sending societies frequently, as well as to feel passionately about the politics and culture of their home countries. In certain cases, the students were seemingly more worldly and cosmopolitan than their teachers. And the data suggests that some teachers react defensively to this situation, and as a result do not take advantage of learning opportunities that transnational students may provide.

Some interviewees frequently travelled between their country/ies of origin and the GTA, leading to extended school absences. Such students required specific accommodations to make up their schoolwork or simply fell behind. While some of the public school educators tended to view extended absences from schools to return home negatively, some also saw an upside to having transnational students in their classrooms. There remained a sense that in many ways student’s transnational ties provide assets. For example, some teachers saw transnational students as enriching the classroom environment during discussions of world issues and as providing a broader range of perspectives and learning styles for assignments.

Interviewees out of school living arrangements varied. Some lived in transnational family constellations, alone as “satellite kids”, or as part of “astronaut” families, perhaps living with one parent while a second parent worked in the county/ies of origin. In these cases, the former secondary student study participants often struggled to balance household responsibilities with their required schoolwork and they sometimes relied on a paid “mentor” to serve as their guardian. The interviewees also identified numerous technological and cultural transnational actions they performed. These included texting or Skypeing with family and friends in the sending country, regularly reading local newspapers online, or closely following TV shows, sports and music in real-time in their place(s) of origin. Each of these had impacts on their involvement in the classroom and interest in the GTA curriculum.

The forms of attitudinal transnationalism identified by study participants included evolving ideas about “being Canadian”, and post-nationalism. Many of the educators suggested that strong emotional connections to countries of origin were related to an undeveloped Canadian identity amongst transnational students. This challenged some educators’ preconceived assumptions about the duty of schools to integrate all students into the mainstream. As well, divided or shared loyalty and identity negotiations were common among some transnational interviewees. Yet
while certain educators questioned what they saw as the “strategic” use of Canadian citizenship by transnational students to gain a Western education, most of the transnational former secondary students felt that this conclusion was overly simplistic. They suggested that their national loyalties are negotiated in an ongoing manner and that they can feel both Canadian and loyalty to another country simultaneously. Finally, complex notions about “home” and indeterminacy about future place(s) of residence were commonplace among the interviewees. There was often an emotional ambivalence towards their former “home” and complexity surrounding the views educators and former GTA secondary students expressed in regards to “giving back” to their sending society and any “debt” they owed to their birth country.

These transnational actions and attitudes sometimes led to different understanding of the goal of GTA schools or different reasons for attending. Many transnational former students did not buy into schools’ desire to build a single national consensus within the student body. The former secondary students also critiqued a variety of aspects of GTA schooling. Notably, while many of these concerns are likely also applicable to the broader population of immigrant students in the GTA, they take on unique meaning in the context of the transnational transformation of schooling. The former secondary school students with transnational ties pointed to a lack of English as a Second Language (ESL) supports in their public schools as well as the lack of transparency and information about how their school credentials from abroad would be recognized (or not) and a glaring shortfall in information for parents and students about how GTA schools are organized and how and why students are streamed. These students also noted an overall Eurocentric focus of the GTA curriculum and pedagogical styles.

On top of this, the transnational interviewees often felt specific obligations and/or loyalties to their place(s) of origin and had an understanding of the diversity of pedagogical outlooks in different nations. While relatively transient students with transnational ties were less likely to have additional family homes and businesses in their place(s) of origin, many were still able to return “home” on an ongoing basis, often to visit family for extended periods, as well as engaging in other forms of transnational activity, often through social media. Interviewees stressed that current GTA curriculum generally does not incorporate ideas of transnationality, and that the existing multicultural discourse may be insufficient to address lived realities of transnationalism.
6.4 Schools and Teachers Largely Do Not Recognize the Existence of Transnational Students

In analyzing the interviews, it was clear that there is currently a lack of understanding of the transnational phenomenon by educators in the GTA. For many educators, it appears that students with transnational ties remain invisible or hard to differentiate from the broader immigrant student population (whether or not they comprehend or use the specific term “transnational”). Some of the former GTA secondary school students with transnational ties insisted that they were misunderstood or indistinguishable in the classroom, and many of the educators had given no thought to if and how students with transnational ties differed from their other students who were born abroad.

To date, the bulk of existing data connecting schooling and transnationalism in Canada relies on the first-hand insights of students and parents (e.g. Goldstein 2003, Mitchell 2001, Waters 2005). While such perspectives are undoubtedly important, teachers and other educators are rarely questioned about their awareness of and/or perspective on the role of schools in facilitating, preventing or acknowledging students’ and families’ transnational ties. Thus, in addition to interviewing transnational recent GTA secondary school graduates, this dissertation added the perspective of current GTA educators (both teachers and school administrators) working in highly diverse secondary schools. It is hoped that by broadening the population of interest to include educators, as well as recent GTA secondary school graduates, a valuable and distinct viewpoint is added to the discussion.

Currently, there is general expert agreement that better teaching leads to more effective learning by students (Glassford and Salinitri 2007, Ryan, Pollock and Antonelli 2009). As well, there is evidence that teacher expectations are formed partially on the basis of race, ethnicity and social class which may lead to unintended and unacknowledged biases in teacher behaviour (Dei 2012, Heckmann 2008, Razack 1995). Bennett (2001), for example, finds that intercultural education is mediated through the “hidden curriculum” expressed in teacher expectations and attitudes towards student learning. What is less understood, however, is whether today’s teacher-training programs are adequately preparing teachers for the current globalized classroom context and/or to meet the needs of students with transnational ties.
In future, it is likely that secondary school students in the GTA who have ongoing ties to other nations will join the teaching staffs of these very same schools. With lived experience of straddling connections to more than one nation, such individuals may bring to the classroom a personal understanding of how the education system can better accommodate transnational students, perhaps alleviating some of the current concerns identified by the participants in this study.

Today’s GTA teaching staffs are majority white and female. However, the data suggest that this is changing (Hargreaves and Fullan 2000, Ryan 2003, Ryan, Pollock and Antonelli 2009). One need only look at the current crop of teaching training students in Ontario teachers colleges to recognize how true this is, at least in so far as race and ethnicity is concerned. Yet while the importance of wider racial and ethnic representation in teacher hiring is well documented, there remains a continued over-representation of white, female, middle class and heterosexual individuals within educational faculties in Ontario (Solomona et al. 2005). This is problematic as the literature suggests that visible minority teachers have an advantage in acting as role models and establishing relationships with minority students (who are also likely disproportionately transnational) (Vilegas and Lucas 2004), delivering culturally relevant pedagogy (Conradi 2008, Koengetter and Schroer 2013), and, according to some researchers, preparing minority students for the realities of racism and exclusion that they may encounter in the broader society (Carr and Klassen 1996, Frances and Tator 2000).

Ryan et al. (2009) use census data to demonstrate that the number of visible minority secondary school teachers and school counsellors in Canada has not kept pace with the rapid growth in the number of non-white students. In Ontario, they find that in 2006, 9.5 percent of all teachers were a visible minority, as compared to 22.8 percent of the population overall. Among participants in this study, most of the newer teachers estimated that at least seventy percent of their fellow students in teacher’s college were white, although some also stated that the teaching faculty at their universities and colleges was more diverse.

While an emphasis on social justice, equity and inclusion informs most teaching training programs in Ontario, many of the educator interviewees said that they found the discussions non-authentic and largely at the level of rhetoric. There was no mention whatsoever of transnationalism within these programs. The educators suggested that it was only by actually
working within a diverse school that teachers gained an understanding of how to negotiate multicultural realities in the classroom or became aware of a transnational reality.

In considering transnationalism, the public school educator interviewees in this study generally focused primarily on extended absences from school to return to the place(s) of origin. They saw these as highly problematic, and suggested that they should be viewed no differently than other circumstances leading to absences, such as sickness or students who are abroad with family for a sabbatical. Their perspective was often that schools may not be able to accommodate all types of transnational behaviours.

At the conceptual level, most of the educators regarded themselves as positively disposed to cultural differences in the classroom. However, the GTA educator study participants often couldn’t grasp that transnational students had special needs or advantages. Educators were often at a loss as to how to differentiate transnational students from the broader immigrant student population. They generally felt that their schools were doing the best they could to assist individual students, given the schools’ limited means.

6.5 Tensions Exist Between Accommodation and Assimilation for Transnational Secondary Students

The data from this study suggest that within the GTA, there is a tension between the extent to which schools can and should accommodate transnational students and their families, and the extent to which transnational students and families ought to assimilate to the pre-existing (but changeable) assumptions and requirements embedded within the secondary schooling system as it stands (Joshee 2004, Pashby, Ingram and Joshee 2014).

Most of the data from this dissertation support the former approach suggesting that secondary schools ought to better accommodate the unique needs and assets held by transnational students. Consequently, study participants (both former students and educators) had several central suggestions for areas within GTA secondary schooling that they saw as in need of reform or re-evaluation. Notably, many of these suggestions are bolstered by pre-existing research, the majority of which is focused on (im)migrant students overall, rather than on students with transnational ties in particular.
One prevalent suggestion was that schools must continually work to improve the “diversity” of their teaching staff to include greater numbers of individuals with personal experience of transnationalism and/or migration. This suggestion is reinforced by educational research that suggests that hiring educators from migrant and minority backgrounds is beneficial as part of a broader educational strategy to promote trust and bonding between educators and migrant families and their communities. Such literature also suggests that minority educators are more likely to act as role models for immigrant youth and to improve their self-confidence and motivation within schools. It is also suggested that this may ultimately improve educational outcomes for transnational and other minority students (Lindahl 2007, Sacramento 2015, Villegas, Strom and Lucas 2012).

An emphasis on increasing educator diversity appeared to go hand in hand with the suggestion that schools must increase the “inclusiveness” of their curricula and promote greater awareness of transnationalism among school staff. Among both former GTA high school students and educators there was general agreement on the need to incorporate a more “culturally responsive” or “intercultural” curriculum in schools. For example, many of the transnational former secondary students stated that there can be no assumption, overt or covert, that secondary schooling in the West is better, more interesting, or more challenging than schools abroad. Yet at the same time, they emphasized that there is a need to understand that the high valuation often accorded to Western schooling in the Global South is what draws many transnational students to the GTA. Their first priority is to be an Ontario high school graduate, not a Canadian. Staying connected to their home country, even at the expense of time in the GTA classroom, is often prioritized.

Here too the relevant educational literature emphasizes the need for training in intercultural education for all educators, regardless of race, ethnicity or migrant background (Wood and Landry 2012). As well, the suggestion is made that for intercultural education to be implemented successfully, institutional changes must include reforms to the curriculum and teaching materials, the expectations, attitudes and behaviours of teachers, and the goals and culture of the school (Banks 1993, Banks and Banks 2009, Banks 2010, Fyfe and Figueroa 1993).

Currently, there is great variation in the extent to which school practices reflect a cross-curricular international dimension. A report by a 2009 European Commission on migrant education
recommends that guidelines for interculturalism be developed at the national level and cooperation between municipalities and schools in this area be enhanced (Eurydice Network 2009). This bolsters the suggestion of some study participants that there is a need for greater consistency on rules and requirements related to extended school absences across different schools and school boards in the GTA.

One benefit of improving the emphasis on intercultural curriculum in secondary schools suggested by the literature is that it may help students form “balanced multicultural identities”. This may be particularly important for students who hold transnational ties and often struggle with questions of self and connectedness, as well as being of broader importance in the current era of rising concern about terrorism and bullying among second generation Canadians (Arat-Koc 2006, Blackwell and Bell April 4, 2013, Miller and Sack 2010). If schools promote a unilateral adoption of a local or national identity that contradicts the values of the migrant student’s original culture, Sacramento (2015) suggests that this may generate conflicts within the family and community and create difficulties for young people in integrating into schools, as well as in succeeding academically. Thus, there is a need to have policies that promote the “balanced construction of students’ intercultural identities though dedicated courses on the subject” (Sacramento 2015:5) as well as reinforcing the legitimacy of having a “flexible identity” or “shared loyalties”.

In addition to adapting the curriculum to emphasize more of a intercultural and transnational worldview, other suggestions to assist transnational students in schools provided by the study participants included increasing student engagement in classrooms, hiring more ESL teachers, and streamlining the process of credential recognition for students coming from schools abroad. As well, some study participants advocated for the use of more online learning platforms to increase flexibility in examining student outcomes, as well as the enhanced use of co-op placements or practicums so transnational students are able to accrue high school credits even if they return to their sending societies during the school year.

Again, considerable educational literature bolsters the assumption that such reforms would have positive outcomes. For example, data show that proficiency in the language of instruction is a fundamental determinant of successful education outcomes (Nusche 2009, Sacramento 2015). As well, enterprises such as the digital initiative My School, piloted in Lithuania, are being
celebrated for their attempts to allow for easier tracking and communication with student and families who are continually moving to other countries. Such policies may address early school leaving, improve learning outcomes and promote educational and social inclusion (Blaziene 2012).

While the above suggestions focusing on teacher diversity and inclusive and intercultural curricula are not new, at present, it appears that there is no larger context or underlying government or media impetus in the GTA to increase understanding of transnationals in the classroom. In fact, until students with transnational ties reach critical numbers within GTA classrooms, it may be too much to expect schools to break free of their role as “assimilating machines”. Thus, if the opposing perspective is taken, suggesting that it is primarily the job of transnational students and their families to better adapt to the pre-existing structures and rules within GTA secondary schools, then alternate recommendations are resultant. Under this perspective, there is a need to more clearly communicate student and parent expectations within secondary schools, and help students with transnational ties to understand these requirements, as well as outlining the consequences of failing to meet them. In this scenario, again, there is a need to make more translation services available, as well as to connect with social services and agencies and leaders within transnational communities.

Currently, much of the educational literature ultimately suggests that the best way to assist migrant students within the contemporary schooling framework is to emphasize the importance of parental and community involvement both within and outside of formal schooling. Such involvement of parents and the community may provide academic help as well as emotional support upon resettlement. Data suggest that such involvement has measurable effects on improving students’ outcomes, including secondary school graduation rates (Desforges and Abouchaar 2003, Jeynes 2007, Kim 2009, Turney and Kao 2009). Parental involvement within schools can establish continuity across the various spheres of a student’s life, as families connect with teachers and administrators and participate in school activities and events (Sacramento 2015). Conversely, a lack of community involvement in formal educational matters may lead to negative effects in the integration of (transnational) immigrants and their offspring, which can lead to significant social and economic costs for both the family and the community at large (Nusche 2009).
These and other recommendations provided by the interviewees may, in some sense, seem almost self-evident. However, they do provide further documentation that there are ways to potentially address the concerns of current GTA students with transnational ties. Yet, evidently, more difficult than identifying areas of concern is how to address those concerns at the level of implementation. Within educational policy reform, it is critical that a bottom-up approach is emphasized, with concrete measures taken to involve various voices in transnational and other minority communities. While offering a large-scale operational plan lies beyond the scope of this dissertation, it is important to note some key barriers policy planners may encounter if they seek to engage with the Secondary Schooling Transnational Nexus.

The main barriers to implementing change to assist transnational students in the GTA appear to include: a lack of political will, as current government initiatives do not appear to be focused on improving and revamping secondary schooling within the GTA; and, following directly from the former, financial constraints, as many interviewees mentioned the lack of funding provided in public schools to allow educators proper class sizes, skills upgrading, and language supports. Barriers to participation for parents and communities in schools may also include a lack of time, a lack of adequate transportation or limited help taking care of younger siblings. Communication difficulties may also arise due to language or cultural differences or issues related to alternative family structures and the difficulty of identifying issues to school bureaucrats (Sacramento 2015).

Further barriers to implementing the above identified reforms to GTA secondary schools include a lack of awareness about the transnational phenomenon, as exemplified by the majority of educator participants who were unclear how and why students with transnational ties were different than the broader population of students who are foreign-born; change resistance and rigid thinking about the role of schools and multiculturalism; and a dated national discourses about citizenship and migration promoted by both educators, schools administrators, and policymakers. In certain cases, overt/covert racism among groups in the GTA, as well as between educators and students, also directly leads to academic failure and obstacles to social integration for transnational youth.

Ultimately, the success of any reforms to GTA secondary schooling to assist transnational students must be evaluated in an ongoing and transparent manner, perhaps following the criteria
for migrant student success as set out by Nusche (2009). These include: whether the policies improve migrant students’ access to quality education (and this is particularly important in the case of more transient transnational students), whether such policies enhance migrant students' participation in and engagement with their education, and whether they increase migrant students’ performance levels, as measured by factors such as drop-out rates or ability to attend their higher educational institution of choice. To Nusche’s criteria, an additional criterion for success specifically for transnational students might include their ability to maintain and foster physical and emotional ties to their sending society within schools if they so choose.

It is hoped that by briefly identifying these broad barriers to better assisting transnational students in GTA secondary schools, steps towards their critical evaluation and reform may soon become a municipal, as well as provincial, national and international priority. Overall, this study aims to underscore that transnationalism is becoming an increasingly relevant and common phenomenon in the GTA and to shed light on a as yet little known experience, that of the Secondary Schooling Transnational Nexus.

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Viewed in the context of the transnational transformation of schooling, as well as the growing population of individuals with transnational ties within the GTA (due, in part, to high rates of Global South migration and increased access to new forms of long-distance communication technologies), the unique classroom behaviours and needs of transnational students present an important and pressing challenge for the broader educational community. Such students provide an opportunity to rethink curriculum and the ways that subject matters are organized and evaluated, as students with transnational ties may come to the GTA with the expectation of having their credentials recognized elsewhere and live between and within multiple locations on an ongoing basis.

Ultimately, a small qualitative study such as this one cannot conclusively state whether or not the transnational ties of students in the GTA provide benefits or barriers to students’ social integration and academic success within classrooms. What the study does suggest, as reviewed in this concluding chapter, is that there is no one prototypical transnational student, that transnationals constitute a unique subset of the broader (im)migrant population, that transnationals students exhibit distinctive classroom behaviours, that schools and teachers largely
do not recognize the existence of transnational students in the classroom or identify their specific needs, and that a tensions exists between better accommodating transnational students and their families and emphasizing their need for assimilation within schools. Thus, overall, it is hoped that this dissertation provides some insight into both the opportunities and the challenges that students’ transnational ties provide for multicultural and intercultural policy, globalized and globalizing classrooms, teachers and teacher education, as well as the Canadian school system as a whole.
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7 Appendices

Appendix A – Participant Recruitment Flyers

**Recruitment Flyer for Transnational Former Secondary School Students (GROUP A)**

**Invitation to Participate in a Study about Schooling and Connections to the Home Country**

Are you a former student at a GTA high school who experiences multiple, divided or fluctuating loyalties between Canada and you or your parents’ birthplace(s)? How did this impact your schooling experiences and your perspective on the education system overall?

I am a doctoral student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and am exploring questions related to how our school system is responding to (or not) the ongoing ties some immigrant students maintain to their places of origin. This study will help provide information that can hopefully lead to possible improvements to the education system to better respond to the needs of immigrant students and families.

I am currently looking for 25 research participants for individual interviews. If you are:

**A former student in a GTA high school, aged 18-30, who travels(ed) back and forth (emotionally as well as functionally) between Canada and your homeland(s)**

Then you are invited to participate in this research study. All interviews will be approximately 60 minutes, are confidential, and will take place at a space convenient to you. Questions will ask you about your experiences with the schooling system in Ontario, the possible benefits or drawbacks that ongoing connections to the homeland provide for you, and the role that multiculturalism may play in this.

If you have any questions and/or are interested in participating in my research study, please contact me, Naomi Lightman, by phone (647-865-6543) or by email (naomi.lightman@utoronto.ca)
**Recruitment Flyer for Educators (GROUP B)**

**Invitation to Participate in a Study about Secondary Schooling and Ongoing Connections to Countries of Origin / the Homeland**

*Do you have many immigrant students who maintain links to their place(s) of birth? Do you have students who go back and forth (emotionally as well as functionally) between Canada and their homeland(s)? Does this provide benefits or challenges in the classroom?*

I am a doctoral student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and am exploring questions related to how our school system is responding to (or not) the ongoing ties some immigrant students (and educators) maintain to their places of origin. This study will help provide information that can hopefully lead to possible improvements to the education system to better respond to the needs of transnational students and families.

I am currently looking for 25 research participants for individual interviews. If you are a secondary school teacher in the Greater Toronto Area at a school with a high (or rapidly increasing) proportion of immigrant students, you are invited to participate in this research study. All interviews will be approximately 60 minutes, are confidential, and will take place at a space convenient to you. Questions will ask you about their experiences with the schooling system in Ontario, the possible benefits or drawbacks that ongoing connections to the homeland provide for your students, and the role that multiculturalism may play in this.

If you have any questions and/or are interested in participating in my research study, please contact me, Naomi Lightman, by phone (647-865-6543) or by email (naomi.lightman@utoronto.ca)

Thank you very much!
Appendix B – Sample Interview Guides

** Sample Interview Guide for Transnational Former Secondary School Students (GROUP A)**

**Migration Experience:**

- Please tell me a bit about your background… Where were you and your parents born? If applicable, when did you move to Canada? Why? With whom?
- What country or countries, if any, do you consider your homeland?
- What is your experience integrating into Canadian society?
- Do you (or your parents) ever send remittances to family members or friends in the place(s) of origin?
- How often (if at all) do you travel to your place of origin?
- How do you maintain connections to your place of origin in an ongoing manner? Did your parents play a role in this? If yes, were their efforts in promoting these connections for you successful? Were there costs of this that you are aware of (trade-offs)?
- How did your parents educate you about your ethnic, religious, or cultural background?
- Do you ever feel like you (or your parent(s)) have multiple or divided loyalties between Canada and your homeland? How so?

**Secondary Schooling Experience:**

- Describe the secondary school you attended in the GTA… What do you think of the school overall? Were there many other minority or immigrant students? Did this matter to you or your parents? Were many of your friends from the same country as you/your parents?
- Did you ever attend school in your homeland?
- How did the curriculum in your school compare to what you know of the curriculum in your place(s) of origin? Was it easier or harder? Better or worse overall? Did this impact how you thought about your schooling experiences in Canada?
- How, if at all, did your connections to your place(s) of origin impact your school experiences? Did you perceive these connections are primarily a benefit to you or a disadvantage? Why?
- It may be helpful to provide some examples of such connections (as described in the literature). Specifically, did you experience any of the following? If so, please describe the scenario and any implications:
  - Were you ever absent in school (frequently or for extended periods) because of travel to your parent(s)’ place(s) of origin?
  - Did your parents ever work abroad?
  - Were you ever reluctant to partake in core classroom activities due to culturally based, gender or religious norms from your country of origin?
  - Did you have less/greater appreciation for Canadian schooling due to a comparative reference point in the place of origin?
  - Were you more knowledgeable of (and interested in) the political issues and history of your home country than Canada?
  - Did your connections to your place of origin impact any professional aspirations you may have?
  - Do you think these connections helped with your self-confidence as a youth? Did they mitigate any experiences of exclusion you may have experienced in school?
Did you ever engage in non-traditional or supplementary educational activities (e.g. after-school religious instruction, Chinese supplementary schools)?

Do you speak languages other than English? Did you have ESL difficulties? Did you or your family have difficulty communicating with your teachers?

Did you ever feel a lack of permanency in Canada? Did/do you return to your place(s) of origin for emotional/financial/professional reasons?

Overall, do you think these connection provided benefits and/or challenges educationally for you? For your parents? For your teachers?

Did your school or teachers ever adopt any specific strategies to accommodate students with more than one home? If yes, please describe. Were these strategies necessary or helpful? Do you think this phenomenon will increase or decrease in prevalence for students in the future?

The Role of Multiculturalism:

Was the multicultural framework in your school apparent to you? In what ways?

Was multiculturalism connected to your links to your place(s) of origin? How so?

Are you aware of any differences in terms of students’ connections to their place(s) of origin across ethnic groups/ economic classes?

What suggestions, if any, do you have for schools and/or the multicultural framework to help students maintain connected to their place(s) of origin? Is this an important role for schools? Is some sort of a limit on such connections necessary?
**Sample Interview Guide for Educators (GROUP B)**

**Teaching Background:**

- How long have you been teaching?
- Why/how did you decide on this line of work? Do you enjoy it?
- How long have you taught at your current school? What subjects do you teach?
- What is the composition of the student body at your school? Has it changed since you have been working there? If yes, have there been recent increases in the proportion of immigrant students?
- Do you think the school is well connected to its surrounding community? In what ways?
- How do students from abroad generally end up at your school? What sort of outreach does the school do, if any?
- Why do you think international parents would choose your school?
- In your opinion, what role, if any, should schools play in assisting with the integration of immigrant students and families?

**Students Who Maintain Ongoing Connections to Their Place(s) of Origin:**

- Do you have immigrant students (or students who are the children of immigrants) who maintain ongoing connections to their place(s) of origin? Put another way, do you have experiences working with students who have multiple, divided or fluctuating loyalties? Students who go back and forth (emotionally as well as functionally) between Canada and their homeland(s)?
- It may be helpful to provide some examples of such connections (as described in the literature). Specifically, have you witnessed the following scenarios, and if so please describe your experiences and reactions:
  - Students who are absent in school (frequently or for extended periods) because they are traveling to their/their parent(s)’ place(s) of origin;
  - Students whose parent(s) are continuously working abroad;
  - Students with barriers/reluctance to partake in core classroom activities due to culturally-based, gender or religious norms from the country of origin;
  - Students with less/greater appreciation for Canadian schooling due to a comparative reference point in the place of origin;
  - Students with a greater knowledge of (and interest in) the socio-political issues and history of their home country than Canada;
  - Students with higher educational aspirations due to more and better role models in the home country or the reverse;
  - Students with a heightened sense of self, greater self-confidence and/or a way to mitigate the possible impacts of social exclusion in schools;
  - Students who engage in non-traditional or supplementary educational activities (e.g. after-school religious instruction, Chinese supplementary schools);
  - Students with dual or multiple language proficiencies or English language difficulties; AND/OR
  - Students with a lack of (perceived or real) permanency in Canada if their families are continuously moving or considering moving, either to return to the place of origin or to other places for financial/professional reasons.
• Are there other kinds of connections to the place of origin that are identifiable in the classroom?
• In your experience, how important or widespread are such connections among students?
• What resources does your school provide for such students? What else are needed? Are there any changes in the curriculum that could help? What student support services, if any, are (or should be) available?
• Are these students (termed “transnational”) distinguishable from other immigrant students who are also going through the integration process? Is this something you have considered previously?
• Overall, for your students, do you think that such connections generally provide benefits or challenges educationally? For your teaching practices?
• Have you (or your school) adopted any specific strategies to accommodate such students? If yes, please describe. Are new strategies necessary? Do you think this phenomenon will increase or decrease in prevalence over time?

The Role of Multiculturalism:

• Is multiculturalism emphasized in your school? If yes, what are the goals of multiculturalism, as you perceive it, in your school?
• Is multiculturalism related to the building of Canadian identity? If yes, how so?
• Do you think that maintaining ongoing ties to the place(s) of origin can or should be incorporated into or distinguished from the broader multicultural framework in your school? How so?
• Do you think the school system itself works to enhance or diminish links to the place(s) of origin? Is this positive? Can this also be negative?
• Should schools resist/accept and/or encourage ongoing connections by students (or educators) to their place of origin? Is some sort of a limit on such connections necessary?
Appendix C – Information Letter for Research Participants and Interview Consent Form

INFORMATION LETTER FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Title of Project: Schooling Here and There: Transnationalism and Education in Toronto, Canada

Researcher: Naomi Lightman, Doctoral Candidate, Ontario Institute for Studies In Education, University of Toronto

Supervisor: Dr. Harold Troper, Professor, Ontario Institute for Studies In Education, University of Toronto

Dear Interested Participants:

My name is Naomi Lightman and I am a PhD Student at the Ontario Institute for Studies In Education at the University of Toronto. Under the supervision of Dr. Harold Troper I am conducting a research project that explores how Toronto schools are responding to (or not) the ongoing ties that some immigrant students (and educators) maintain to their place(s) of origin as the thesis component of my degree requirements. This letter gives you information about this study and includes important information about your participation.

Purpose of Study and Inclusion Criteria:
The purpose of the study is to explore educational implications of the ongoing connections to the place(s) of origin that some students and educators maintain in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). In order to compare experiences of different individuals who may have familiarities with multiple, divided and/or fluctuating loyalties between countries (or have students who do), this study invites two interested groups to participate. In total, approximately 40 participants will be included in this study. This will include:

- Approximately 25 teachers and school administrators working in GTA secondary schools (both public and private) with a large (or growing) proportion of immigrant students
- Approximately 25 former students at GTA secondary schools (both public and private), aged 18-30, who maintain ongoing connections (professional, familial, emotional or otherwise) to their place(s) or origin, and;

Your Participation:

If you agree to participate, you will be invited to one voluntary face-to-face interview that will last for approximately 60 minutes. The interview will be conducted between April 2012 and August 2013. You will be asked to choose a location and time for the interview that is convenient for you. In the interview, you will be asked about your experiences with the schooling system in Ontario, the possible benefits or drawbacks that ongoing connections to the homeland provide for yourself, or your students, and the role that multiculturalism may play in this. I may contact you afterwards in order to ask you to clarify some part of the information you provided.

With your permission, interviews will be recorded with a digital recorder to make sure that important information is not missed. You have the right to ask that all or any part of your interview not be recorded. You may turn off the recorder at any time.
I will also make some interview notes during the interview.

Only the researcher and the supervisor will have access to the data. Should you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or to withdraw at any time. You will at no time be judged or evaluated and at no time will be at risk of harm. There will be no consequences for those who decide not to participate or to withdraw. You may also decide to have your data withdrawn from the study at any time, without any consequences to yourself.

**Benefits:**
The only direct benefit to research participants for their involvement in the study is providing an outlet to discuss your concerns and/or positive or negative experiences with the education system as well as contributing to the research process. You may also benefit indirectly because the information you provide may enhance understanding at a policy level of the impacts of ongoing links to the homeland on the school system, which is currently not well understood. This may lead the way to changes that better address the needs and desires of immigrant students, parents and teachers. The potential benefits to the scientific/scholarly community will include advancement of knowledge, as well as possible improvements to the education system to better respond to the needs of transnational students and families.

If you wish, I can share major aspects of my preliminary analysis with you and you may have the opportunity to provide feedback. This can be done though emailing you the key findings, and offering my availability to meet with you at your convenience if you wish to discuss them. I will inform you when my research results are made public in academic journals or any other sources and explain where they can be accessed. As well, a copy of my thesis will be available in the University of Toronto library.

**Risks:**
There are no major risks involved in taking part in this research study. However, it is possible that talking about your experiences of migration and/or within the school system might be upsetting to you. If this happens, the interview can be stopped if you wish. You also have the right to ask for the interview to be rescheduled or restarted after a break, or to withdraw completely from the study. You are under no obligation to participate. Should you choose to withdraw from the study for any reason, all data connected to your participation will be immediately destroyed.

**Compensation:**
There will be no compensation (financial or otherwise) for participation in this study. Participation is completely voluntary.

**Participant Privacy and Confidentiality:**
All of your answers will be confidential. The recorded interview file and transcript will not have your name or any other identifying information on it. The transcribed interview will use a research code number instead of your name. The completed interview notes, recorded interview file, and transcribed interview will be stored in my computer which is password protected. All digital data will also be encrypted consistent with University of Toronto standards. Your name and other important information will be locked separately in a filing cabinet in my office at home. Only the researcher and supervisor will have access to your answers. All the files will be destroyed after five years.

Once any results of the research are published in academic journals or in any other formats, I will inform you of the details about when and how you can
access these documents. The collected data may be used for academic reports, publications or public presentations and the data will be confidential. Pseudonyms will be used in all these publications.

Should you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the Ethics Review Office, University of Toronto, Canada, at 416-946-3272 or ethics.review@utoronto.ca.

Thank you very much for your interest in my research study. Should you have any questions, please contact:

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252 Bloor Street West, 6th floor, Toronto, Ontario  
M5S1V5  
416-978-1219  
harold.troper@utoronto.ca
INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

I, ______________________________________, understand that Doctoral Candidate Naomi Lightman of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto is conducting a study to explore how Greater Toronto Area secondary schools are responding to (or not) the ongoing ties that some immigrant students and educators maintain to their place(s) of origin.

I understand that I will take part in an individual interview approximately 60 minutes long. I understand that with my permission the interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed and that the interview data and transcripts will be used only by the researcher. The recorded data and transcripts will not have my name or any other identifying information on them. A research code number will be used instead. The completed interview notes and recorded and transcribed interview files will be stored in the researcher’s computer which is password protected. All electronic information outside of a secure server environment will be encrypted consistent with University of Toronto data security and encryption standards. All the files will be destroyed after seven years.

Any questions I have asked about the study have been answered to my satisfaction. Any risks or benefits that might arise out of my participation have also been explained to my satisfaction. I understand that I may ask now or in the future any questions that I have about the study. I have been assured that no information will be released or printed that would disclose my personal identity and that my responses will be completely confidential.

I understand that my participation in the study is completely voluntary and that my decision either to participate or not to participate will be kept completely confidential, as will the information I share. I further understand that I can refuse to answer any question I am asked and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without explanation and without any penalty of any kind.

I hereby consent to participate in this study.

By signing below, you are indicating that you are willing to participate in the study, you have received a copy of this letter, and you are fully aware of the conditions above.

Name: _____________________________________ School: _____________________________
Signed: ____________________________________ Date: ______________________________

Please initial if you would like a summary of the findings of the study upon completion: ____
Please initial if you agree to have your interview audio taped: _____
Please keep a copy of this form for your records.

________________________________________  ______________________________________
Signature of witness                          Print Name                          Date
Appendix D – Detailed Breakdown of Interview Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>Generational/Immigrant Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. C</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>Canadian citizen by birth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. BB</td>
<td>Bosnia</td>
<td>Refugee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. M</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Economic immigrant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Q</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>Refugee</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. DD</td>
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