EXPLORING INTERCULTURALITY: DIALECTICAL TENSIONS WITH
IDENTITY AND SCHOOLING SYSTEMS WITH FIRST GENERATION
IMMIGRANT STUDENTS

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Abstract

First generation immigrant students' experiences, perspectives and histories deeply affect their socio-cultural understanding and connection to their surrounding environments, and can serve as a valuable point of entry into problematizing the concept of static integration. Working from a dialectical perspective, I utilize thirteen first generation immigrant students' accounts to explore their socio-cultural struggles, the two school systems into which they were imbedded and the ways in which these facilitated or impeded immigrant student intercultural experience(s). Results showed that students experienced internal struggles with sociocultural scripts, language and cultural loyalty in confluence with school systems that were in themselves expressing stress vis-à-vis socio-cultural facilitation and support.

Keywords: Relational Dialectics Theory, Interculturality, Immigrant Student Experience, School Social Structure.
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My mother, Marusia Roman, without whom I would not be an academic. Your verve, passion for the world and curiosity has always made me want to be better, to challenge myself and others around me. My father, Sorin Roman. You are my rock.
Dedication

To all fellow dreamers,
Your thoughts and actions will change the world.
Courage.
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INTRODUCTION

When I first began my research process my not yet clearly formed questions were centred on exploring the nuances of first generation immigrant students' experience with respect to social interaction and communication. Similarly, if the increasing flow of immigrant students in Canadian schools is positioned as an integration project, how have students' social relationships been affected? Moreover, in what ways have the social structures of the school system oriented students' social relationships and vice versa? As I began to delve deeper into these issues and refined my questions, it became increasingly clear that at the epicentre of this research were the interconnected themes of interculturality, the immigrant status (and/or identity) and the school as an institutional system for socialization and socializing.

As social diversity constitutes the current social context, the starting point for this research was interculturality. Through expanding my understanding of this type of interaction I began to tease out the complex links between culture, identity and schools. The deeper I probed into the literature, the more I came to understand that interculturality is a goal which involves relational processes actively and continuously negotiated in enveloping matrices of socio-cultural relationships and conditions. For this reason, I decided on using a dialectical perspective to explore the lived experiences of my participants' relationships within two schools in Southern Ontario so that unique insights may arise regarding the nature of immigrant intercultural social experience.

Through dialectical inquiry I began exploring the ways in which interculturality has been and continues to be mediated by the dynamic interplay of what dialectical researchers call, "unified opposites" (Baxter and Montgomery, 1998:4), or "tensions" at various loci of expression and that privileges neither broad structural context nor localized experiences, but rather focuses on relations.

As a primary focus for inquiry, therefore, this particular study brings together each of the threads that formed the basis of my original questioning and provided a way to explore the role of the Canadian school system in the processes of interculturality in the new school settings without diminishing the importance of human agency and/or relational units. My research questions can be summarized as such:
RQ1: What internal/external contradictions are experienced by first generation immigrant students as they socialize cross-culturally?

RQ2: In what ways (if any) does the school affect immigrant students' identity and social reality as they socialize cross-culturally?

WHY FOCUS ON RELATIONSHIPS?

Being part of a socially satisfying and diverse network of relationships holds many personal advantages\(^1\). According to research, this includes providing practical, informational, emotional and social companionship support (Ramsay, Jones, & Barker, 2007) This can be especially important for first generation immigrant students, who enter a new socio-cultural environment.

Research on the complex relationships between the individual as a unit and the functioning of various structures within society such as the family, an organization or the community (Fine & Lapavitas, 2004; Lin & Erikson, 2008; Bauer et al, 2012) provided a useful illustration of immigrant students' positionality within the wider conditions of displacement. According to Hortulanus, Machielse and Meeuwesen (2006), for example, when immigrant students have to deal with a variety of different social 'circles' such as their job, volunteer work and even different clubs, they need to possess adequate social and cognitive skills to navigate the expectations of each associated social situation (smth). Unfortunately, not much has been written on the extent to which children of immigrants have access to these skills compared to their native-born counterparts.

A notable exception is Kao and Rutherford (2007), who look at immigrant disadvantages in social capital and its effects on academic achievement (50). Their findings suggest that immigrant students possess less social capital than their native-born counterparts due to, among other things, minimal social networks on the part of parents and the students themselves (ibid.). Recent immigrants are also less useful than more seasoned immigrants in their knowledge of how the school system works, the importance of parent-teacher relationships, and other dimensions (Kao and Rutherford, 2007: 51).

Cherng (2015) analyzes immigrant students and three important groups - peers, parents and teachers - and concludes that, often, these students have poor relationships

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\(^1\) Among others, displaying better health (Umberson & Montez, 2010; Holt-Lunstad & Smith, 2012), more civic participation (McFarland & Thomas 2006;), and accumulating more social capital (Fine & Lapavitas, 2004; Lin & Erikson, 2008; Bauer et al, 2012).
with all three groups which, in turn, has a range of negative consequences, including a delayed process of integration due to an inability to understand the school system and the new cultural norms, as well as the general pressure of being an adolescent in a world with no emotional and social support (514).

I place much emphasis, therefore, on the issue of relationships. I take a step back, however, from previous studies' underlying assumption that immigrant students' social experience is primarily influenced by intimate connections possessed by the family and refocus the lens on students' direct rapport with their social relationships in schools. Moreover, recognizing that immigrant students' heavy reliance on relationships with their native communities can become counterproductive to integration, this study focuses on intercultural relations which encompasses a variety of connections, including those with "native" peers and "local" peers.

OVERVIEW OF THESIS

THE PREVIOUS INTRODUCTION has provided a brief summary of the study and my approach to first generation immigrant student integration, highlighting my focus on intercultural social relationships.

In Chapter 1, I describe the socio-political context of Canada in respect to immigration and the changing student demographics that warrant this study's analysis of first generation immigrant students specifically. I then fully flesh out the definition of the "immigrant" - the student who arrives legally in Canada as well as the "Visa" student who comes to Canada to study and eventually settles in the country. Next, I look at the stranger, the other phenomenon many immigrant students experience when arriving in a new host country and the varying forms of responses, from assimilation to integration, followed by a quick explanation of multiculturalism, its drawbacks and the reason for my personal approach to integration as intercultural process.

In Chapter 2, I present and ground in scholarly literature my conceptual framework of interculturality, fleshing out its central aspects, supportive theories and key analytical categories - culture and identity.
In Chapter 3, I introduce and justify my dialectical methodology in studying personal relationships, while in Chapter 4 I discuss the specific design of my study, its participants and data collection and analysis procedures.

In Chapter 5, I illustrate emerging social tensions based on individual-level dialectics. For this purpose, I use excerpts from data collected to illustrate how students' individual beliefs and attitudes about existing socio-cultural scripts and the positionality of their identity within that abstracted space, worked to complicate interactions with peers outside their own cultural "clusters", often creating limited inter-cultural relationships within schools. I also introduce the notion of shifting identity within the socio-cultural constrains of cultural clusters and the complex relationship between culture and language.

In Chapter 6, I continue on, to posit system-level dialectics, which exist in collective negotiations surrounding the interplay of personal and school tensions. Here I introduce the various contradictory aspects of schools that contributed to the intercultural engagement and/or isolation of my thirteen participants in the two schools, tweaking out some relational patterns among the social units and comparing school systems.

Finally, in Chapter 7, I tie all loose ends to give an ample imago of student social experience in relation to intercultural engagement. I then conclude with a discussion of recommendations, limitations and opportunities for further studies.

Works Cited


CHAPTER 1: IMMIGRANT STUDENTS

I’m a stranger in a strange land.
Carson McCullers, The Heart is a Lonely Hunter

I


The International migration database also showed that Canada was the sixth country with the highest proportion of foreign-born population (20%), surpassed only by Luxembourg, Switzerland, New Zealand, Australia and Israel ("Migration - Foreign-born population - OECD Data, 2016). Keep in mind that foreign born is defined by OECD as all people who have ever migrated from their country of birth to their current country of residence, not including second and third-generation individuals.

Interestingly, Statistics Canada chronicled the history of immigration trends and noted that since the mid-1990s, Canadian population growth has been attributed mostly to "migratory increase rather than to natural increase" (Chapter 5: Projection of international immigration, 2015). This suggests that population sustainability is dependent on stable immigration rates and that the percentage of immigrant people will only increase over time due to an accumulation effect.

Results from research spanning approximately a decade also point out the increasing diversity of Canada. Case in point, data from the 2001 Census shows that, at the time, the total population was comprised of approximately 1.8 million foreign-born people who had arrived during the previous ten years as immigrants. Out of those, 17% (close to 310,000) were school children between the ages of 5 and 16 (ARCHIVED Analysis Series, 2001 Census – Education in Canada: Raising the Standard, 2001 Census, Census year 2001, 2003).

By 2011, data from the National Household Survey (NHS) shows Canada had approximately 6,775,800 foreign-born individuals, 19.2% of whom were immigrant students aged 14 and under, and another 14.5% of whom were between the ages of 15 and 24 (NHS, paragraph 4-6). That comes to a whooping 2,283,444 immigrant students.
Against this background, it becomes immediately clear that the growth of immigrant students in Canada is becoming a primary source in transforming the nature of Canadian schools. That being said, while the integration of immigrant people into the labour market has been become a widely discussed topic in research and intellectual debates, very little research has been devoted to immigrant children and youth and their intercultural experiences in schools. To this end, the current study focused on first generation immigrants students as the unit of analysis.

II

CHANGING STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS. The location, size and composition of immigrant student populations in Canadian schools is also rapidly changing (Statistics Canada, Report on the Demographic Situation in Canada, 2010 and 2011). Unlike previous waves of immigrant students, many, if not most, are now concentrated in a relatively few metropolitan cities such as Montreal and represent a more diverse cultural and linguistic background then the early range of groups that came primarily from Europe (ibid).

In 2010 and 2011, data from the same study conclude that Asia, including the Middle East, was the major source of immigrants to Canada; these countries were the Philippines, India, China, Iran, Pakistan, Iraq and South Korea (in 2010 only) (ibid.). Indian and China followed in second and third place respectively (ibid.).

In Southern Ontario, where this study was conducted, and most newcomer immigrants settle, therefore, there is a culturally and linguistically diverse student population. For instance, one of the biggest board in the province- reported having a student population comprising of children who self identify as White (29%), South Asian (24%), East Asian (15%), and Black (12%). The remaining population consists of other groups including “Mixed”, Middle Eastern, Southeast Asian, Latin American, and Aboriginal (2011-2012 Student-parent Census). Not surprisingly, this socio-cultural reality has direct impact on the ways in which the schooling system must balance differences as well as initiatives it might take. Case, there is some research that looked at immigrant status and found that needs may differ according to the immigrant group being studied and the status (1st generation, 2nd generation and so on) of immigrant themselves in the host country. For instance, according to Jalal Safipour, Donald Schopflocher, Gina
Higginbottom and Azita Emami, found that when looking at non-immigrant Swedish youth\(^2\) in relation to their feelings of social isolation, it was significantly higher among youngest and oldest immigrant students (463). At the same time, these feelings decreased with the generation status - first generation felt isolated, second generation felt less isolated and so on (ibid.). Likewise, Cherng (2015) finds that minority immigrant youth are more "socially isolated than their native-born White peers and that the nature of friendships differs by race/ethnicity and nativity" (511).

Oxman-Martinez and her colleagues (2007) analyzed the relationships between perceived ethnic discrimination, social exclusion, psychosocial functioning, and academic performance among newcomer immigrant children from the People’s Republic of China, Hong Kong, and the Philippines in Canada and found that one in 5 children reported forming very few social relationships, with some gender specific differences (376); boys revealed higher levels of isolation than girls (ibid). Likewise, more than 1 in 10 were socially isolated and reported never participating in organized activities (Oxman-Martinez et al, 2007).

This seems to suggest that differences vary in degree and quality across immigrant groups and that, by association, the educational system needs to cater to a very heterogeneous group of foreign-born students. That said, it is equally clear that there are some reoccurring themes among immigrant groups when looked at in respect to "local" groups. For example, Arzubiaga, Noguerón, & Sullivan, (2009) explain that most, if not all, immigrant groups are "marginalized and become representative of what is wrong with society" (249). In other words, their disadvantaged position is something that is representative, of all groups, albeit to different extents (ibid.)

This puts them in a unique position, where the "immigrant" status is relevant. For this reason, in the next section, I move on to clarify who an "immigrant" student is by disentangling the various interpretations of who is considered an immigrant more generally, and the effects of those definitions so that it may be clear as to whom needs to be included.

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\(^2\) Youth is usually described as biological period within the life-course within the ages of 8-18 years of age.
WHO IS AN IMMIGRANT? Usually, they are seen as individuals who leave their country of birth to live in other countries for a period of time that lasts more than 6 months (Castles, 2000). This broad definition includes people who "land" in Canada for various reasons, from economic and academic opportunities to reunification with their families and/or war displacement as in the case of refugees. To illustrate a better image of these "immigrant" groups, therefore, I will look at the various categories conceptualized by existing policies and research, with a special emphasis on those directly relevant to this study.

As it stands, two major groups of foreign born individuals are accepted into the country: 1) individuals who are highly educated and/or skilled and 2) people who seek protection and settlement services (GOC, The refugee system in Canada 2015, paragraph). According to the current immigration policy information posted on the Government of Canada official website, the first group is the only one that holds the "permanent resident" status (ibid.) and can, therefore, be considered "immigrant". The latter cannot, in the technical sense, be regarded as part of the same category due to the involuntary nature of their relocation. Labelled as "refugees", these are people who have fled their countries because of a "well-founded fear of persecution, and who are therefore unable to return home" (GOC, The refugee system in Canada 2015, paragraph 3).

The fact that these two groups are given different status and only one is considered "immigrant" can be incredibly misleading. For instance, the Citizenship and Immigration Canada’s annual statistical publication (see Facts & Figures 2014: Permanent and Temporary\(^3\) citizens), reports that the number of permanent citizens and refugees who entered in Ontario in 2014 was counted at 95,814 and at 13,423 respectively. If we follow the definitional lines described above, that would mean only 95,814 immigrants entered the country that year and only their children would fit in this study, excluding a potentially huge number of immigrant children who, despite having different motivations for being relocated, are nonetheless in Canada and will remain here for long periods of time, if not all of their lives.

\(^3\) "temporary citizens" are, in fact, the refugees.
Educational research and policies are not much clearer in its definitions. According to Arzubiaga, Noguerón, and Sullivan (2009) who identified various "immigrant status" categories in the literature, explain these students can be identified along at least two lines of thought: 1) according to country of birth ("foreign born" vs. "native born") (see DiPietro, Slocum, and Esbensen 2014) and 2) along generational lines (i.e. first-, second-, third- generation immigrant).

The 2012 OECD Untapped Skills report, for instance, identified students by immigrant and non immigrant status, where immigrant status was based on the information reported by students on the country of origin of both their parents. As such, if both of the student’s parents were born in a country other than the country where the student sat the PISA test, the student is classified as an immigrant student (OECD, Untapped Skills, 2012: 18). Non-immigrant students were the remainder, that is, students who had at least one parent who was born in the country where the student took the assessment (ibid.). Then, among immigrant students, the report categorized them between first- and second-generation students based on the information they reported on their own country of birth. Therefore, second-generation students were immigrant students born in the country of assessment (where they sat the PISA test), whereas, first-generation students were foreign-born, like their parents (OECD, Untapped Skills, 2012:18).

This study follows the definition above, with a small caveat - the inclusion of students commonly referred to as "Visa" students, as they usually (or at least, in my participant schools) plan to stay for long period of times (i.e. throughout their university and beyond, usually amassing to periods of more than 4 years).

Defined by the government of Canada as study permit holders, therefore, these are individuals who been accepted by a designated learning institution in Canada such as a high school or university with the underlying assumption that once the visa expires, they do not continue to live in the country beyond their "authorized stay" (GOC, Immigration and Citizenship, Study Permit). Although they are not technically "immigrant" either, their stay in Canada is usually for more than six months and many eventually become "landed immigrants" who aim to spend the rest of their lives in the country. The participants in this study, who fit in this special category all reflected a desire for permanent relocation in Canada, immediately following the end of their
original planned studies, thereby prompting my decision to more broadly define the "immigrant" student as someone who was simply born in a different country and, for whatever reason, decided to move to Canada with the end goal of staying.

To sum up, although the definitions in both immigration policy and education research are broad and complex, this paper's approach is fixed on identifying students as "immigrants" regardless of their motivation or circumstances for landing in the country. All children who came with/out their families, voluntarily or not, as well as "Visa" students who came to study in Canada are grouped together in same "immigrant" status, with the "first-generation" accolade.

IV
SOCIAL CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE "OTHER" AND THE PROCESS OF SOCIAL INTEGRATION

I am a part of all that I have met.
Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Ulysses, 1842

THE STRANGER, THE OTHER. Students may experience drastic changes in their living environment when moving from one country to another such as encountering different norms, attitudes and ways of being and doing. According to Georg Simmel (1858-1918), well-known sociologist, this can create a sense of "otherness" or detachment from existing social relations in the new physical and socio-cultural space (Rogers, 1999). Conversely, Simmel also wrote that, based on the idea of similarity (Spykman, 1964), individuals who exhibit differences of various kinds might be seen as strangers, the other; indeed, some traits will inevitably be similar to those displayed by "native" group members but the other is still distinct enough that he/she is rejected by the general group (ibid.). Jenny Hsin-Chun Tsai's (2006) study on immigrant youth's friendship network formation, for instance, exemplifies this 'double edged effect'. In her paper, she explains how, on one hand, Taiwanese students in the U.S. were mistreated and taken advantage of, due to perceived differences in language, while, on the other hand, the immigrant students themselves took a distance from their native peers as a coping strategy to avoid nervousness and embarrassment (292). The result was a cyclical process of otherness, where immigrant students found themselves in a position of disadvantage.
Unfortunately, research suggests this discrepancy in power is not unusual (Cherng, 2015; Raza, Nakaie & Kazemipur, 2012). Even in Canada, where there have been several governmental attempts to pass laws and legislations to prevent inequity (see Table 1.1), much unfair treatment towards immigrant groups and individuals has been documented (see for instance, Gyepi-Garbrah et al, 2014 -adult immigrants and Oxman-Martinez et al, 2012 - immigrant children) In such cases, several questions arise. Should immigrant identities and customs to be retained? Are positive relations with the larger society to be sought?

By looking at some potential answers, Berry and his associates (Berry, 1990, 2006; Berry & Sam 2010) identify four modes of adaptation: 'assimilation' (no, yes), 'integration' (yes, yes), 'separation' (yes, no) and marginality (no, no) (Kim, 2001). These strategies depend on the extent to which the individual balances the two issues of culture maintenance and contact (Sam & Berry, 2010: 476) in their quest to find a place in the new society.

**Table 1.1 Canadian Laws (by year)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Canada and Equity Acts</th>
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<tr>
<td>Royal commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (1969)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canadian Multiculturalism Policy (1971)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Multiculturalism Directorate (1973)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canadian Human Rights Act (1977)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Constitutional Act of Canada (1982)</td>
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<td>Employment Equity Act (1986)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiculturalism Act (1988)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada's Plan Against Racism (2005)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Briefly, *assimilation* refers to the process of maintaining cultural identity, seeking close interaction with and adopting the cultural values, norms, and traditions of the new society (ibid.). *Separation* refers to individuals' choice to avoid interaction with members of the new society due to a strict loyalty to their original culture (Sam & Berry, 2010:476). *Integration* is the process of maintaining one's original culture while having frequent interactions with other groups, both local and/or immigrant - there is some degree of cultural loyalty maintained, while at the same time individuals seek to
participate in the larger socio-cultural network (ibid.). Finally, *marginalization* is characterized by acute isolation due to few possibilities or little interest in either having relations with others (often for reasons of exclusion or discrimination) or cultural maintenance (often due to cultural loss) (Sam & Berry, 2010: 476).

Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder (2006), reflect on these various ways of adaptation and find that *integration* was the most preferred strategy across cultural groups, while *assimilation* was the most preferred strategy for some groups such as the Vietnamese. Interestingly, the underlying assumption here is that individuals and groups have a choice with regard to how they engage in cross-cultural relationships. That, of course, is not always the case as policies and/or public attitudes towards immigrants (Cohrs & Stelz 2010:678) and the adaptation process can influence the ways in which immigrant social experience proceeds (see below).

For this reason, the next section addresses the history of assimilationist policies in Canada and the emerging trend toward pluralism that has defined public and academic discourse on immigrant adaptation more generally.

V

**ASSIMILATIONISM.** Policies related to individuals and groups of different cultural backgrounds converging were largely built on the assumption that successful adaptation is a desirable goal. Most policy efforts were designed in such a way that the models and findings would aid in the transition and individuals' complete functioning in the new socio-cultural society. This view reflects the widely accepted "melting pot" ideology (Kim, 2001), popularized by immigrant Israel Zangwill's interpretation of the 1908 Melting Pot play which calls for the convergence of "stranger" cultures into one mainstream or "local" cultural tradition and its accompanying ideas and practices (ibid.).

Since the 1970s, however, Assimilationism started to be questioned, and a new movement begun prompted by prevalent feelings of alienation and/or stringent competition for socio-economic advancement (Kim, 2001). For example, in 1985, George J. Borjas questioned the common notion at the time in the U.S. that immigrant individuals' earnings grew rapidly as they assimilated into the country and found that, contrary to belief, immigrant earnings both relative and overall, grew at a much slower rate than predicted - by 20% lower, in some cases (Borjas 1985: 484). In other words,
despite the general tendency of the immigrant population to assimilate in the larger American 'culture', professional benefits were not as advantageous.

To contrast, Gordon Darroch (1981), looked into Canadian immigrants and assimilation patterns and found that ethnic and immigrant status actually had very modest influence, in comparison to other factors, on the acquisition of occupational status and income (97). Instead, individual assimilation to both “dominant English-Canadian cultural and socio-economic patterns" (ibid) was the overwhelmingly common experience among immigrants (ibid.). This indicates a more successful outcome to original goals.

Later on, due, in part, to increasing migration and a slow recognition of existing racism towards minorities (Gordon M. & Zinga, D., 2012) and colonialism in the country (see Indian Control of Indian Education Policy (1973, 1976, 2001), OCOFOV Education Report 2012), Canadian policies and popular attitudes shifted to a pluralistic approach (see Table 1.1) that embraced cultural diversity. The United Stated, on the other hand, still enjoys strong allegiance to the state, despite recent immigration which continues to "belie the melting pot thesis" (Joshee R. & Johnson L., 2007: ix).

Variations aside, since the 1970s, it became evident that assimilationist policies would (and have) fail(ed) in both countries. Michael Novak, who wrote in his book The Rise of Unmeltable Ethnics about this unachievable idealistic goal of homogeneity, explains the important role of culture in this:

There is no such thing as homo Americanus. There is no single culture here. We do not, in fact, have a culture at all - at least, not a highly developed one, whose symbols, images, and ideals all of us work out of and constantly mind afresh; such "common culture" as even intellectuals have is more an ideal aspired to than a task accomplished...(1971:18)

Canada even less. With its multicultural policies that started to emerge in the 1980s, it is difficult to conceive a unified identity that undermines all others. Still, culture partisanship are tricky business and we must be cautious, in completely dismissing the assimilative model. No individual can completely escape some assimilative aspects of day to day life as long as he/she is dependent on the local culture. Of course, I would not want to convey the impression that all immigrants want or need to undergo a process of complete assimilation. In fact, Berry, Phinney, Sam & Vedder (2006) found that some recent immigrants do not want to be absorbed into the new socio-cultural culture, but
largely preferred to navigate in between both their ethnic culture and the new culture and others associated mainly with their ethnic culture. This tends to reflect the intercultural reality of living and interacting in a new environment, with its inherent interrelation.

In any case, the process of adapting to a new host environment exists between the space of choice and necessity; most people who live and study (or work) in the new environment presumably want and need to have some sort of social competence to the local culture so as to achieve social functionality in their daily lives (Kim, 2001). Those who refuse completely or do not have the social and cognitive skills necessary for at least partial adaptation, end up either in separation or in marginality as is the case with older members of immigrant families who arrive in the host country and are restricted to their native communities.

Conversely, no immigrant can ever attain complete assimilation, regardless of his/her goals and/or desires (Kim, 2001). If I were to make a parallel, the process of living in a new society is slightly like typing a command code into the computer command prompt - it will allow you to perform new tasks but it will not replace the original operating system. The paradox of adaptation today, therefore, is that assimilation - though eliminated from policies- is simultaneously avoidable and unavoidable.

VI

TOWARDS INTEGRATION In 2008, US President and world leader, Barrack Obama, gave a speech at the Constitution Centre that reinforced the long established idea that cultural diversity is incredibly hard to eliminate, due to the fact that cultural identities are central to ethnic institutions such as the family and other "primary" groups (Gans, 1997: 878). That said, he also suggested that complete separation among cultural constructs is not desirable:

I chose to run for president at this moment in time because I believe deeply that we cannot solve the challenges of our time unless we solve them together, unless we perfect our union by understanding that we may have different stories but we hold common hopes, that we may not look the same and may not come from the same place but we all want to move in the same direction towards a better future for our children and grandchildren.
~ Barack Obama, Race Speech (2008)

Interestingly, the President's conceptualization of culture and diversity, clearly frames identity in terms of nationality, tying personal characteristics to larger structural social structures; not coming from "the same place", for instance, denotes an antecedent loyalty to culture in the original country. This complicates the general discourse on integration as
immigrant individuals and groups might hold multiple and contradictory identities (see Chapter 2, discussion on identity) that interact in unpredictable ways, but always with an intercultural "undertone".

To simplify the matter (if such a thing is possible), contemporary social science research has delivered two major approaches for dealing with such issues: multiculturalism and interculturalism. The two terms, which were initially used interchangeably, have now come to mean different things, each with its own critics and supporters.

*Multiculturalism* is an idea that originally was meant to respect the Other's identity, while integrating them into mainstream society (Koegeler-Abdi & Parncutt 2013: 111). But despite it's well intentioned goal of creating a supportive social reality, multiculturalism has been criticized for its tendency to conceive the Other as "a self-enclosed 'authentic' community towards which he, the multiculturalist, maintains a distance" (Koegeler-Abdi & Parncutt 2013: 111). In other words, the multicultural perspective values ethnic maintenance, but assumes a natural separateness between cultures (Rozbicki, 2015: 132). This, in turn, imposes several challenges. First, the emergence of the other effect assumes an innate group cohesiveness that is elitist, and therefore, adverse towards attempts for newcomer integration. Often, individuals who do not (or cannot) follow all conditions of membership, are shunned socially, limiting opportunities for meaningful exchanges of values, beliefs and attitudes among diverse individuals.

Likewise, in the name of cultural group identity, the "native" group member is limited to levels of change exclusively pertaining to the group (Rozbicki, 2015:132.). To make a parallel, Marianne van Woerkom and Karin Sanders' (2009) research in business groupings attempt to understand the complex relationships between group cohesiveness and teams in regards to group processes such as knowledge sharing and team learning and find that, only when there are a balanced number of diverging views in a team, will each individual team enter into a "cognitive mode that allows for the questioning of assumptions and the generation of new insights" (146). If we juxtapose this phenomenon to cultural groups, then their composition would have to already be already diverse in its
cultural constructs for cognitive differentiation, which is true only to a certain degree. Indeed, the overarching socio-cultural guidelines for different groups allow for partial difference but there is strict adherence to the overall cultural script pertaining to the group.

Second, as intercultural connection is not considered, existing hierarchies and inequities are reinforced. Postcolonial communication scholars Raka Shome and Radha Hedge put it best when they say:

The rhetoric of multiculturalism celebrates the diverse assemblage of cultures in their pristine flavours- colourful yet standing separate in their authenticity...The discrete positioning of cultures without any sense of their interconnected histories reproduces the violence of colonial modernities and fixes difference in a spectacle of otherness (qtd. in Rozbicki, 2015: 133).

As such, when different cultural groups are assumed naturally separate, equity is impeded, as immigrants’ place in society is not only shaped by the availability of pure structural and economic factors but also depend on the "cultural values that the people of these societies share, on the level and quality of their social relationships, and on the norms that regulate them" (Chirkov, 2006:36).

In Antecedents of Underemployment: Job Search of Skilled Immigrants in Canada (2012), Laura Guerrero and Mitchell G. Rothstein respectively, offer an illustration of this preference for economic prospects rather than cultural interconnectivity. The authors talk about the social support given to skilled immigrants after they arrive in Canada and explain that any help on the part of the Canadian government is largely related to job search self efficacy, with very little in the way of either language fluency or cultural knowledge (333-4) to aid in navigating the new socio-cultural milieu. In all probability, this is because, there seems to be a tacit assumption that immigrants will eventually assimilate behaviourally (Sakamoto 2007: 519) - at least enough to "fit in" with the crowd and as such, adaptation is not something that society as a whole must work on.

For these reasons my study, therefore, has gravitated towards interculturality as a conceptual framework for analyzing social experiences of first generation immigrant students. Through the philosophy of interculturalism where, among other things, cultures are considered to be "dynamic identities which are constituted while opening themselves differently to differences" (Ibanez & Saenez, 2006:15), I believe can overcome the limits of multiculturalism described above. Also important is the recognition that the cultural
field discussed here is highly politicized and complex. Many other theories, including those mentioned throughout this study such as multiculturalism, contact theory and so on have, with time, informed and aided in the development of interculturality as we know it and each has some merit. The decision to choose interculturality, therefore, is both personal and academic.

To illustrate this, the next section addresses in more detail the philosophical underpinnings of my conceptual theory and the analytical categories that will inform the analysis.

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CHAPTER 2

INTERCULTURALISM: THEORY & APPROACH

No man is an island
(meditation 17, J. Donne)

No, nor woman neither
(Hamlet)

INTERCULTURALITY, like most sociological approaches, means different things to different people. Before discussing the details and analyses of this study, therefore, it is apposite to consider the central aspects, supportive theories and key analytical categories of the conceptual model utilized. Powell and Sze (2004) refer to the philosophical and political science theory of interculturalism as that which recognizes that in a society of mixed ethnicities, cultures act in multiple directions. Host or majority cultures are influenced by immigrant or minority cultures and vice versa. Multiculturalism ends to preserve a cultural heritage, while interculturalism acknowledges and enables cultures to have currency, to be exchanged, to circulate, to be modified and evolve (1).

Thus, interculturalism requires an implied "openness and willingness to be exposed to the culture of the 'other'" (Greenfields & Ryder, 2013:93). Once a person is exposed to an element of a different culture and seeks to understand and accept it willingly, it is expected that an 'exchange' of sorts will ensue (ibid.), where all parties reciprocally negotiate their otherness (Rozbicki, 2015:1).

Interculturality also engages a wide range of groups, including both migrants and "locals", of different generations and classes (Koegeler-Abdi & Parncutt 2013: 111); the assumption that migrant groups are the only ones responsible for "working on" developing good rapport with locals is otherwise synonymous with assimilation and/or maintenance of colonial hierarchies.

The intercultural does not necessarily need to happen in a physical space; individuals may come into contact with ideas and elements which originate in a culture that is not closely situated to them (ibid.). Online exchanges (or "telecollaboration"), for instance, involve the use of (text-based) online communication tools to bring together learners from different countries and have long been documented as valuable to supporting interculturalism (Belz 2003; O’Dowd & Ritter 2006; O’Rourke 2007). At the
same time, general access to media tools is also transforming cultural knowledge more broadly; Robert Shuter (2012), for instance, explores the intersection between new media (i.e. internet, social network sites, online gaming sites etc.) and intercultural communication, to show that cultural exchanges and learning do occur, albeit to uncertain extents (225-231).

Interculturality, therefore, can be said to occur when people encounter cultural otherness (Rozbicki, 2015:1). At that juncture, individuals begin to understand that certain perceptions of reality shared by their group have been taken for granted and that these cultural "truths" are not universal but socially constructed by their own socio-cultural and physical environment (ibid.). The responses vary upon this realization but whatever the form they assume (i.e. defensive, adaptive etc.) (Rozbicki 2015:2), intercultural relationships act as one of the most dynamic forces underlying change (ibid.).

To sum up, I would argue that these statements (see Table 1.2 for summary) embody the central aspects of interculturality and, as expected, my own research encompasses these shared assumptions.

**Table 1.2. Central Assumptions of Interculturality**

| 1. Intercultural encounters are ultimately relations of difference |
| 2. Selves and relationships are dynamic, emergent concepts, maintained or changed through interaction in multiple social situations |
| 3. Intercultural communication and interaction are not limited to physical space, they occur whenever an individual comes into contact with ideas and/or elements of another culture |
| 4. Reality is socially constructed, and people are active interpreters of their social environment |
| 5. Intercultural relations are powerful forces of change(s). |

referred to frequently in order to explain encounters between immigrant students across cultures.
II

CULTURE, as the first key analytical category for interculturality, must be understood in order to bring intellectual growth. As mentioned above, its meaning is highly contested across disciplines and therefore, some reflection on its ontology should be the starting point for framing its definition. According to Rozbicki (2015), the spectrum of possible interpretations ranges from culture seen as a "fixed design, a key that opens all investigative locks, to a postmodern, fluctuating assortment of individual communicative acts." (6)

The fixed design model is drawn from Jacob Burkhardt's works in the nineteenth century on cultural history and assumes that culture is a relatively stable structure, with a set of values that guides its members - tells them what and how to think and is internally coherent (Calaresu, de Vivo and Rubiés, 2010). Such an essentialized concept of culture lacks in its ability to count for individual agency- in other words, people making changes. Static and timeless understandings of culture, with all of its major aspects (such as race, class and so on) are simply "ahistorical" (Rozbicki 2015:5). Cultural harmony, in the minds of people, therefore, is built upon shared symbols and representations, not by objective reality (ibid.).

This is why contemporary research has all but abandoned analyzing culture as a coherent, autonomous system and has shifted towards how it creates its meanings (Rozbicki 2015). Having said that, this approach to culture has not disappeared completely and was taken up by several contemporary scholars such as the late Samuel P. Huntington who conspicuously argued that civilizational distinctions will inevitably result in a clash at the global scale (see Clash of Civilizations, 1996). But even if he was right when he wrote about the dangerous potential behind culture, the problem was that his "key" categories (i.e. civilizations), were highly abstract.

That main attention, for that reason, shifted to subjective construction of meaning. Any claims to objectivity were dismissed, and counteracted by a general belief that there are "as many meanings of a text as there are readers" (qtd. in Rozbicki 2015:7). Following this line of thought then, culture is conceptualized as only a "collection of stories about an individual's social group" (ibid.).
To some extent, this totalizing conceptualization of culture is reflected in my own work. It is used in the sense that it directs the attention to individuals' construction of reality, away from the homogenous concept of national identities, with it oversimplified determinism. It also allows us to understand that even within the same culture, there are different ways of experiencing reality, depending on myriad factors such as ethnicity, family and so on. Identities too are, therefore, multiple and fluid. But just as earlier approaches made cultures more "solid" than they really are, so I believe that postmodernism has moved culture too far on the subjective end. The problem with the tendency to paint culture in these terms is that it leaves the collective cultural context of each individual's "own" beliefs. Even those (like myself) who are supposed to detach themselves from their a priori cultural lenses through self-analysis are not able to fully do so.

In a sense, human responses -especially the encounter with the cultural other - resembles interpreting colour; each individual sees colour typically but uses the available socio-cultural script⁴ to make sense of it. To put it differently, each individual thinks subjectively but he/she does so with "acquired, collective sociocultural categories and conventions of interpreting the world that precede their individual interpretations" (Rozbicki, 2015). This is particularly important to understand when discussing interculturality, as the meaning of reality is determined neither by the culture nor the individual alone.

III

IDENTITY is often reduced to the concept of culture. As explained above, the tendency of scholars has been to over-emphasize on culture to explain the experiences of people from different spaces, especially as it often presented as solid, unchangeable and objective (Dervin 2011). This is rather problematic as it gives the impression that there are "resolutely distinct human essences" (qtd. in Dervin, 2011), to be found at the level of collectivities, whether ethnic or national (Verschueren & Ostman, 2006). The following reaction to the aftermath of the Finish school shootings in 2008 exposes how identity is seen as tied to national culture and conceptualized as an almost natural phenomenon:

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⁴ refers to norms and categories of thinking appertaining to the long-term, collective experiences of a group (for a more comprehensive analysis, see Chapter 4).
Yes, we are maybe quieter than people in other countries. Why is it such a big problem? It just belongs to Finnish culture. It doesn't mean that we are depressed or something, it's just in the habit of Finland.

(qtd. in Dervin, 2011:11, The Times website)

It is evident, therefore, how culture is said to influence Finnish society and how people are absolved of all agency (and responsibility) in this case. However, when an individual appertains to multiple origins, agency becomes much more principal in both identity formation and what the individual does, more generally. Taken from a conversation with a close friend who lives in Canada, looks Chinese but whose parents are from India, the excerpt enacts a dialogue between her and another person when she was in Korea:

Where are you from?
- I tried to explain that I was living in Canada but did not come originally from an East Asian country, and that my parents were, in fact, from India.
So then, how do you see yourself?
- I choose to call myself Canadian.

The next example differs from the previous one as it shows how solid identities (related to 'nations') often pressure people to choose among interposed cultural memberships. It is also interesting to note how such rigid identity construction contributes to the discourse of the "other", by creating a relation of us vs. them. This is not to say that identification per se always remains static.

Identity depends on context and is rather fluid as an analytical category (Dervin 2011:16), constantly negotiating otherness according to each respective context. As K.P. Ewing (1990:251) puts it:

...in all cultures people can be observed to project multiple, inconsistent self-representations that are context-dependent and may shift rapidly. At any particular moment a person usually experiences his or her articulated self as a symbolic, timeless whole, but this self may quickly be displaced by another quite different self, which is based on a different definition of the situation.

In the light of the above, therefore, the question arises: how do we reconcile the fact that a priori collective meanings (or "culture") affects the larger society, while
individuals are concurrently active agents who use and change those meanings? To me, the first step needs to be to move away from defining identity (or culture, for that matter) as an Object, to viewing it a Process. Thus, instead of asking the question "What is someone's identity?", the emphasis should be on "How is identity constructed as presented?" and "How does "culture" interact with various students' identity construction as presented to them?" in various intercultural contexts.

IV

ADDITIONAL INTERCULTURAL TERMINOLOGY must be to provided to discuss interculturality; marginal vocabulary through which this topic is discussed is equally vital as these concepts shape what is being said. I have tried, as much as it is possible within the realm of research, to avoid limiting or fixing a normative understanding of these terms. Instead, my goal is to offer a variety of perspectives and meanings. While interculturality has been the focus of this study, it has implications for the definition of related concepts as well, as seen with culture and identity, but also diversity, adaptation, relationships, and so on. Many interpretations of the same word can be exacted, connected, in turn, with the complexity and variety of understandings, worldviews, languages, cultures etc. As a researcher, I can attempt and hope to promote a better and shared understanding of these diverse meanings. As such, the following explanations of terms should be understood as providing conceptual footholds for my approach and a starting point, not a final word on the subject.

The first set of key concepts are those already recognized by the larger research community as important to understanding interculturality; the second relate to the less known ideas exposed in this paper. These have great value, but would benefit from further research and intellectual elaboration in regards to what they can offer to interculturality and social relationships more generally. Moreover, they would serve better with a better image of how these concepts fit together.

Cultural Identity refers to those aspects of identity shared by other members of the same culture so that, taken as a set of cultural characteristics, highlight them as distinct from members of other cultures (UNESCO, Intercultural Competences). Like other forms of identity, cultural identity too is socially constructed - that is, imagined and/or created and then assumed ownership, whether it being about speaking a language,
creating a food or following a set of socio-cultural "rules". According to Hecht (1993), individuals have multiple identities which are not fixed but change over time and are frequently constructed and reconstructed through intercultural communication and interaction (78). It is also commonly agreed upon that individuals are not singular and monolithic in their identity, but multiple and complex, to include things such as: gender, class, age, ethnicity, history, nationality, language, occupation and so on. These identities are sometimes in conflict or in cooperation, shifting according to the social context. For instance, Leonard Seabrooke (2014) explains in his paper, Identity Switching and Transnational Professionals, that individuals are able to switch identities (i.e. activist, policy, scientific and corporate) in order to have meaningful relationships when moving across the different network domains (2-3).

Cultural diversity (or simply diversity, as used in this paper) refers to the substantial amount of cultures that exist in the world today. Cultural diversity allows, and interculturality demands, understanding both one's culture and others', with the accepting idea that one culture is a possibility among many. Through communication and interaction, information exchanges occur that allow to interpret and negotiate culture more generally. Cultural diversity is therefore “a mechanism for organizing the most productive dialogue between meaningful pasts and doable futures” (UNESCO, 2002, p. 11).

Values, beliefs, and attitudes are key aspects of culture which underlie all interaction and communication. It is generally assumed that values are believed to be true or false (UNESCO, Intercultural Competence 2013:11), beliefs are assumed to be good or bad (ibid.) and attitudes reflect personal characteristics such as being conservative or open-minded (ibid.). Values, beliefs and attitudes are usually assumed "normal" by members of a culture, learned early on in childhood and reinforced by adults who see them as the truth. Some challenges are presented when individuals find that their assumed values, beliefs and attitudes might be more flexible than initially believed, leading to change and/or conflict during intercultural interaction and communication. As mentioned before, a further complexity is that individuals are members of more than one culture, whether each loyalty is evident or not and exist either in simultaneity or separation at any given time. An extended family, work colleagues, students learning in the same school:
these clusters all develop into certain cultures or subcultures. So even when it appears that the communication and interaction occurs intraculturally (meaning, among members of the same culture), there needs to be a certain intercultural competence.

**Cultural Cluster** refers in the context of this study, to the cultural groupings that are specific to one native community and its associated culture. Participants, for instance, often referred to these clusters by assigning titles specific to each nationality so that one cultural cluster was categorized as the "Chinese groups", while another was categorized as the "Persian group". Its relevancy is associated with the lack of or minimal intercultural communication and interaction in the two schools, subject of Chapter 4.

**Communication (and interaction)** often seen as the message and medium respectively through which culture is negotiated. The meaning is inherently co-constructed between at least two people and includes both verbal (i.e. language) and nonverbal behaviours, which encompasses everything from movements to many aspects of material culture (such as food, attire, artistic representations, music etc.) Communication, specifically, is viewed as constantly changing and never static (UNESCO, Intercultural Competence 2013:10).

**Intercultural (-ity)** refers to individuals of two or more different cultural groups (of whatever size, at whatever level) interact or influence one another in some fashion, whether in person or through various mediated forms (UNESCO, Intercultural Competence 2013:11). Specific to interculturality, is the notion of **adaptation** which refers to the extent to which individuals are affected by the relationship(s) between larger societal structures, individual characteristics and cultural group memberships.

**Cultural Competence**, often used in conjunction with interculturality implies both understanding and producing appropriate communicative messages in ways that will make sense not only to the speaker but also to others. Understanding the language is only part of the equation and much research in English Language Learning stresses the importance of knowing what can be said to whom, in what context and with what connotations (see for example, Cummins et al, 2012). This complex skill must always be the goal of interculturality.

**Dialogue** is a form of communication that is decidedly multidirectional (Baxter & Montgomery, 2015). It requires both engaging in exchanging information about one’s
own ideas, interests, passions, concerns and listening to those of others, but even more, dialogue entails “remaining in the tension between standing your own ground and being profoundly open to the other” (Pearce & Pearce, 2004, p. 46). Often, it leads to mutual understanding and/or comprising and without it, no conflict can be resolved or mediated. The goals of this study, which argues for social integration, requires that different cultural clusters in the two schools, and cultural groups, more generally, learn to engage in intercultural dialogue.

**Intercultural dialogue** refers specifically to dialogue which occurs between two or more members of differing cultural groups and presupposes a mutual openness to multiple perspectives, even those who stand in direct opposition to one's own. As phrased by UNESCO, intercultural dialogue "encourages readiness to question well established value-based certainties by bringing reason, emotion and creativity into play in order to find new shared understandings"(UNESCO, Intercultural Competence 2013:11-12). This type of dialogues also assumes all parties to the dialogue to be culturally competent in the exchange; one party assuming competence while others do not create imbalance in the exchange and eliminated the co-construction inherent in the notion of dialogue. Intercultural dialogue, is therefore, an important tool for creating an environment of mutual understanding, respect and social integration.

**Resistance** is a key characteristic to consider when addressing cultures in their handling of tradition and change. In many debates, the idea that identity should be preserved is equated to an attempt at resisting the push of assimilation, as described in the previous sections. Usually framed as a dichotomy, resistance is seen as something that is achieved in its totality or not at all. But such a view is inaccurate as assimilation and resistance work along a spectrum, to espouse several strategies for adaptation, including social integration as a valued goal, where humans are ultimately connected, and posits reciprocal relationships (UNESCO, Intercultural Competence 2013: 21).

**TWO FURTHER POINTS** must be emphasized for this (and any) research on interculturality. The first is that people do not naturally prescribe to an intercultural perspective (Rozbicki 2015: 12). On the contrary. Initially, most people automatically take an indigenous, ethnocentric perspective (ibid.); ethnocentrism here is defined as the
preference for and positive affect toward one’s ethnic values, beliefs, and attitudes relative to all others (Yinger, 1985).

Gyepi-Garbrah et al (2012), for example, investigate intercultural encounters between Indigenous peoples and newcomers living side by side in Winnipeg, Canada and found that it was not enough at the micro scale to build intercultural social capital (1804); the gap in mutual understanding has prompted negative stereotyping, leading to social distancing (ibid.). Similarly, people do not "misread" otherness. To describe a mind frame in that way already presupposes the possibility of "reading" it properly, even though many people do not actually have the knowledge to do so, as one staff member explains in the study:

One thing that’s very common is our new Canadians don’t necessarily understand the context and history of oppression and colonialism that happened to our Aboriginal peoples and so trying to find spaces where we can explore that and create that opportunity for education is really important (Gyepi-Garbrah et al 2012: 1804-5 - staff member, partner organisation A, interview-3).

Having said that, I must stress one last point. As Pierre Bourdieu has pointed out, to understand the other is, to some degree, always to misunderstand, since no person is able to fully see through the other's eyes, outside their own personal perspective (Bourdieu, 1980: 68). Intercultural perspectives, therefore, are not exclusively about excessive focusing on processes and interactions which unite and define the individuals and the groups in relation to each other but likewise about the return to an individual’s self (i.e. identity) (Abdallah-Pretceille 2006: 476). In other words, the work of building an intercultural perspective applies to others as much as to the individual him/herself.

The second point to be made is that no social act is initially intercultural. When two distinct groups interact with each other, they are each interpreting the interaction through different socio-cultural scripts. Their meeting only assumes the characteristics of intercultural fact when subjected to analysis (Abdallah-Pretceille 2006: 480). This is important to recognize, as most people's life is limited to the local (Rozbicki, 2015:12). People do not live 'world-wide'. They live in their societies, cultural and/or professional groups and social relations (Schaefer, 2003). No person has the cognitive ability to live globally. As Georg Simmel and Alfred Schuetz have shown through their classical work on The Stranger, people's central concern for them is the familiar because it is immediate.
and recognizable (Schutz, 1944:499-507). To make a parallel, when the Spanish conquistadors first encountered Native American Kingdoms such as the Aztecs and the Incas, they did not feel they were in an intercultural relationship; rather, their reaction to their civilization was one of repulsion and inferred superiority (Restall & Fernandez-Arnesto 2012). Unfortunately, even a brief reflection will lead to the conclusion that such a perspective on the cultural stranger is not an aspect of the past. Despite the ever interconnectedness through the "virtual world", people still primarily live in their native cultures. It is not very likely that a native Jamaican can wake up one day and decide they no longer have any connections to Jamaica because they feel they belong to France. Culturally universal truths are, in my opinion, inexistent and any truths prescribing life are nothing but previously held values, beliefs and attitudes adjusted into "natural state" by the receiving group. This new "natural state", however, must first pass and be negotiated through interactions, conversations and experiences among all members-which brings us to the most frequently discussed but biased issues involving interaction among different cultures - the ethnocentricity that people display towards each other.

The term, as described early in this section, implies a range of emotions and attitudes towards the other, from hostility to intolerance, and has been viewed by research as the measuring stick for cultural failure, as it prevents people to "treat others on their own terms and to value them equally as fellow human beings" (Rozbicki 2015:13).

On closer inspection, however, it becomes evident that this ethnocentrism is not something that is necessarily so negative in its effects. While in its extreme forms it can emerge as violence and/or discrimination, it also represents worldviews that have historical roots and which help individuals make sense of their world. Its embedded nature also makes it hard, if not impossible, to change completely. Indeed, there are some studies, such as that by De et al (2015), who show that ethnocentrism tends to diminish as mobility increases (5) but realistically speaking, there is no possibility of a tabula rasa. When people interpret otherness (or anything, for that matter), they are doing so because of "pre-existing tools gained from their social environment" (qtd in Rozbicki, 2015:15). The interpretation people assume of otherness, therefore, is not determined by culture but it is dependent on it. Seen in this way, a degree of bias is a prerequisite and lifeline of the intercultural process.
Finally, the most beneficial effect of this biased phenomenon is the preservation of cultural identity (Rozbicki, 2015:14). This identity should be protected not only because it is recognizably each individual's right but because attempts to eradicate groups and societies, as seen in various past conflicts around the world (see WWII, Rwanda ethnic cleansing etc.), is dangerous. Such sameness would appeal to some, but not others and therefore, is decidedly a more likely source of conflict than even the coexistence of incompatible societies because of it induces an unbroken cycle of pressure and resistance.

VI

This chapter conceptualizes the parameters of interculturality, which encompasses the following two major underlying assumptions: 1) intercultural relations are a relation of difference and 2) intercultural relations are powerful forces of change. That said, the foregoing lines of argument and accompanying literature suggested the intercultural is not a natural state; contact between two different cultural actors does not automatically presupposes either an intercultural perspective or an underlying intercultural method to communication and/or interaction. Exploring the intermixture of various cultural individuals, therefore, has the potential to refine and expand our understanding of experience in cross-cultural encounters.

In doing so, two analytical categories must be considered - culture and identity. Their ambiguous conceptualizations seem to result in simultaneous opposition and interrelatedness creating fluid relationship(s); not only does culture affect individuals' construction of reality and, therefore, social experience, but individuals' identities seem to alter culture. An analysis of this dynamic is later provided in this study along with suggested future research directions to develop our understanding of intercultural encounter.

Works Cited


CHAPTER 3: RELATIONAL DIALECTICS

Struggle as we may, "fixing" will never make sense out of change. The only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it, and join the dance.


I

In this chapter, I examine dialectics as a metatheoretical orientation informing my analysis of intercultural relationships of first-generation immigrant students. As Baxter and Montgomery reiterate in their book, Dialogues & Relating, its history is long, with a genealogy that contains many specific dialectical theories but which share the same basic worldview (4). Their differences come, on the other hand, on theoretical particulars (ibid.). I will begin, therefore, by describing the origins of dialectics and emphasizing the four common elements underlying all dialectic perspectives - contradiction, change, praxis and totality - so that I might "set the stage" for the remainder of the chapter. Then, I examine in depth the unique principles employed throughout the study in developing an intelligible frame for understanding the practices and predicaments of interacting and communicating in intercultural relationships.

II

THE GENESIS OF DIALECTICS. The word "dialectic" originates in ancient Greece, and refers to a specific type of argument that consisted in finding weaknesses in an opponent's argument, thereby dispelling the validity of his/her argument (Gadotti, 1996). According to Gadotti (1996) and his understanding of ancient dialectics this would be, in turn, outdone by another synthesis (9).

Socrates (479-399 B.C.) is considered by researchers (see Meyer, 1980; Dobbs, 1994; Gadotti, 1996; Baxter and Montgomery, 1996; Bonner, 2014) the "master of dialectics" (Gadotti, 1996) in ancient Greece (ibid.) due to his unprecedented systematic and methodical style where analysis and synthesis put the terms of the question in dispute, thereby "enabling truth to be born as if it were a birth" (Gadotti, 1996).

Still, literary interpretations of ancient works show us that dialectics existed in elemental form before Socrates (see Reams, 2013). Lao Tzu and Heraclitus, were two philosophers from ancient China and Greece respectively, who contributed significantly,
albeit in parallel to each other in the sixth century B.C.E. (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996:19). Their conceptualization of dialectics expressed remarkably similar views (ibid.), as will be seen below.

For instance, Lao Tzu, who is believed to have written the famous *Tao to King* (The book of Tao), became the intellectual foundation of the Taoist philosophy and religion (Khoo, 1998), with a vision of reality as dynamic caused by the interplay of opposing forces (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996:19). In his works, Lao Tzu explains:

"Being and non-being create each other. Difficult and easy support each other. Long and short define each other. High and low depend on each other. Before and after follow each other" (qtd. in Baxter & Montgomery, 1996: 19).

This notion of continuous change is likewise epitomized in the popular Taoist symbol of the yin and yang. Here, yin represents darkness, intuitiveness, stillness and the female and yang represents the light, rationality, action and motion and the male (IEP, The Yi-Yang Symbol) See Figure 3.1. It is important to mention that the design is intended to be fluid and in constant motion (ibid.). The eye should move along the two opposite sides, always in constant interplay (IEP, The Yi-Yang Symbol). The two dots symbolize the belief that when either force reaches the extreme, it contains the other (IEP, The Yi-Yang Symbol). The best example of this is when we consider the nature of love; when there is too much love, it becomes obsession.

Across the world in Greece, Heraclitus of Ephesus (535-463 B.C.), was constructing his own philosophy of Logos [λόγος, a plea, to reason], which saw truth in the unity of opposites (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996). According to Baxter and Montgomery, Heraclitus believed that reality is a "process of ongoing

![Figure 3.1]
flux and change" (20). In 1979, Kahn translated the few existing writings of Heraclitus in his book, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, and explains the philosopher makes an interesting analogy to the idea of change:

> One cannot step twice in the same river, nor can one grasp any mortal substance in a stable condition, but it scatters and again gathers; it forms and dissolves, and approaches and departs...As they step into the same river, others and still other waters flow upon them" (52).

To Heraclitus, therefore, change is continuous. As such, reality emerged from change that comes from opposing forces, as "it forms and dissolves, and approaches and departs..." (Kahn, 1979). Inevitably, the question that arises from this type of conceptualization of dialectics is in regards to the nature of movement and transformation. How does it occur?

Gadotti (1996) explains Plato (420-348 B.C.), was among the first to view dialectics as a research technique (9). The philosopher's work with various ideas allowed him to separate but not confuse them, by placing them into collective discussion and dispute (ibid). This process, therefore, would be divided into two steps: 1) first, separate ideas must be merged into one singular and coherent thought and 2) second, break the resulting though back down into parts (Gadotti, 1996).

Aristotle (385-322 B.C.), who was Plato's student, on the other hand, broke off from his mentor's conceptualization of dialectics and reduced it to mental exercise (Vogel, 1968: 92). Indeed, Vogel (1968) explains Aristotle did not see dialectics as a method through which one could *de facto* reach the truth, but instead a methodology for dispute, probability, and "ideas" (95). Aristotle did eventually conciliate his own views with those of his master, by putting forward his theory on the *act* and *potency*, which assumes changes exist as potential not net released (Gadotti, 1996). In other words, behind every action and/or variable, there is a certain undetermined amount of possibilities to be chosen and then performed.

Following the third century after Christ, when it was still believed Aristotle had said it all, the debate surrounding dialectics started to be given a second chance (Gadotti, 1996). In his work, *Discourse of the Method*, Rene Descartes (1596-1650) returns to the Platonic understanding of dialectics and argues that reaching the truth entailed analyses and syntheses so that each unit of analysis could be reached, followed by the two steps
described above (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996). Karl Marx (1818-1883) too suggests later on, the need to proceed through these two steps, calling them in turn "method of research" and "method of exposition" (ibid.).

According to Lalande (1960), however, Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) was the turning point to dialectics as a central theme of philosophy (227). As Hegel saw it, dialectics is a "natural way of the determinations of knowledge, things and, in general terms, of all which is finite" (Lalande, 1960), thereby painting the rational process as a dialectic process through which the manifestations of ideas are the forces of reality and where contradiction is not illogical but natural (ibid.).

III
MARXIST DIALECTICS. As hinted above, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) were the two minds that transformed dialectics into what it is today, contributing in turn to a philosophical (material dialectics) and scientific (historical materialism) status (Gadotti, 1996: 13). In their work, Philosophical Letters and Other Writings, Marx explains his interpretation of Hegel:

...It is not the consciousness of man that determines his being, but, on the contrary, it is his social being that determines his consciousness. (Marx & Engels, 1977a, 1:130)

Breaking from Hegel's purely theoretical laws of thought represents a huge step forward into the contemporary dialectic perspective, as it is sees dialectics as "conception of man, society, and the relationship between man the world" (Gadotti, 1996). Moreover, to contrast previous philosophical and scientific perspectives, Marx focuses instead on the process (see Marx & Engels, 1977).

The difference between Marx and Hegel, therefore, sits at the locus of movement; both authors sustain that movement takes place through the opposition of contradictory elements but Hegel localizes at the abstract level (or logic), while Marx places it in the thing itself (ibid.). That said, it is important to note that Marx did not reject the notion that knowledge is subjective. On the contrary, some authors like Baxter and Montgomery (1996) and Gadotti (1996) explain Marx recognizes that the world is always distorted from reflection upon on it; it doesn't just exist in thought as Hegel claimed, it also exists independent of it. Interestingly, this reflects my interpretation elsewhere (see Roman,
2013) of Nietzsche's (1844-1900) conceptualization of truth as existing outside human existence; the two are very similar in their understanding of truth and reality. To make an analogy, consider this old philosophical question: If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?

Marx would probably argue that it does, but when it comes to history, where people are directly involved, it a combination of both ideas in the human mind and the real conditions of man's existence that creates it. But Marx did not just change Hegel's reasoning, he made profound "changes to the way we think and analyze social reality" (Gadotti, 1996). As Henri Lefebvre (1974) explains, "the Marxist method insists...on an essential fact: the reality to be reached through the exposition (synthesis), is always a reality in movement" (36).

Because dialectics considers things and phenomena as a unity of oppositions that are interrelated and continuously changing, only movement seems to be constant. The rest, especially different elements of the real, are relative. Indeed, as can be seen from Hegel's Dialectics of Nature (1954) and the Marx-Engels reader (1978,1972), edited by Robert C. Tucker, the two authors attempted to demonstrate some general laws\(^5\), without much success.

Whatever the case may be, it is not these authors' laws that took momentum to concretize the foundation of dialectics, but some general principles found in their conceptualization that in incipient form that transformed into the four principles of dialectics.

IV

THE FOUR PRINCIPLES of contradiction, change, praxis and totality emerged from the long history of dialectics and tend to form the foundation of all theories of dialectics (Montgomery & Baxter, 1998; Rawlins, 1992). As I shall describe in this section and the next, these structures have been the pillars for various interpretations of human, social interactions. I then delve into my own account of dialectics, with the understanding that my approach is also supported by these four principles.

\(^5\) For Marx, there are endless categorical possibilities: the quantitative vs. qualitative, concrete vs. abstract, essence vs. phenomena etc. For Engels, see Dialectics of Nature (1954). Here, there are three laws: 1) law of conversion of quantity into quality and vice versa, 2) law of interpenetration of opposites and 3) the law of the negation of negation.

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Contradiction, at its origins, refers to the unity and struggle of opposites (Rawlins, 1992:7). Although in colloquial language the word has a negative connotation, from a dialectical perspective, contradictions are liberated from this stigma (ibid.). In fact, as can be deduced from the previous section, contradiction is considered vital to all things, physical or ideological. The idea that the transformation of ideas, things or phenomena occurs only because these opposing forces exist simultaneously in their own self and at the same time move towards "unified opposition" (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996) is what guides me; in fact, I have used these two authors and their works as the theoretical backbone for this paper. The question that emerges, of course, is, what does "unified opposition" really mean? Each element of this definition deserves some attention, stating with the concept of "opposition".

According to Baxter and Montgomery (1996), two tendencies and/or features of a thing and/or phenomena are "oppositions" if they are incompatible and negating one another (8). But not all oppositions are the same. The authors explain the most often encountered distinction is between negative and positive oppositions (Baxter and Montgomery, 1996).

A negative opposition (sometimes referred to as "logically defined") takes the form of "X and not X" (Baxter & Montgomery, 1998). In other words, the opposition contains a feature(s) and its absence. For example, the action of "being friendly" versus "not being friendly", where "not being friendly" entails the absence of "friendliness" and therefore, contains everything that is different from "being friendly" such as insulting, distance, jealous and so on. To contrast, a positive opposition takes the form of opposition "X and Y", where both "X" and "Y" are distinct from each other but incompatible and as such negate the other (Baxter & Montgomery, 1998). For example, "hating" would be the positive negation to "loving". The authors posit that positive negations are easier to study because they simply refer to distinct phenomena (ibid.). That said, positive negations have their own complexities to consider. For instance, due to the fact that a researcher does not have logical negation (i.e. "X" and "not X"), he/she must first demonstrate that "X" and "Y" are positive negations (ibid.). Likewise, positive negation might not work in binaries necessarily. Thus, when I analyze the feature of "identity" from a dialectic perspective in the next chapters I will identify various
dialectical oppositions that co-exist. The complete understanding of "identity" will be based on the complexity of oppositions suggested by the data available.

According to Bochner, Ellis & Tillmann-Healy (1998), opposition is a compulsory but not sufficient element for contradiction; the oppositions must simultaneously be unified (). This can occur in two ways: first, each opposition inclination in social reality presumes the existence of the other (ibid.). Yet again, consider the concept of "identity"; it is only meaningful because we understand its positive negations so that without knowledge of "groups", "systems" and so on, the concept of "identity" would make no sense. Secondly, these oppositional tendencies must be interdependent and part of a larger whole (Rawlins, 2012). For example, in the context of relationships, "individual autonomy" and "relational connection" are unified opposites. The two aspects of social reality form a positive negation in that the total autonomy of individuals preclude their relational connections, while total connection between individuals precludes their individual autonomy. On the other hand, individual autonomy and relational connection, as argues in the previous chapter, form an interdependency as well. Social connections are necessary for the construction of identity just as relational connection is founded on the existence of individual's distinctive identities. In sum, opposition negate but also interweave among themselves.

Lastly, Baxter & Montgomery (1998) explain that dynamic interplay between opposites can be said to be the third prerequisite for contradiction (9). Indeed, this is what distinguishes the dialectic approach from a dualist one (ibid.). It is easy to confuse one with the other, because both deal with opposites but they are incredibly different. Rawlins (1998) explains in his book that dualism construct opposites as relatively static phenomena, that exist in parallel and whose dynamism is ignored. Dialectics does not. To put it differently, dialectics is "both/and" in nature, whereas dualism is "either/or".

The second principle of the dialectic approach, therefore, is inherently linked to the first concept. That said, it deserves separate attention so as to clarify on important aspects to it.

**Change** is inherent in all aspects of reality. As explained before by Gadotti (1996), the transformation of things (regardless of what you are referring to) does not take place in a circular process of infinite repetition of the old (19), but gradually
becomes something else. The analogy he makes are various topographic markers that change over time. I also connect it to the process of life, from being a child to him/her growing up, and then becoming "old". Change is never the same, always flows. In this way, change is paradoxically a stabilizing element. To make yet another analogy, think of the unpredictable friend, whose unpredictability is the only predictable element of her/him. Change functions in the same way.

That said, there are two small caveats, two underlying emphases that relate to change: 1) position to causation and 2) whether the change process is inherently indeterminate or teleological (Baxter & Montgomery, 1998). The first, refers back to Aristotle, whose "efficient cause" is conceptualized as the widely known "antecedent-consequent relationship" (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996) or cause and effect (X is a cause of Y; X and Y cause, and caused by one another) (Baxter & Montgomery, 1998). This study's follows this conceptualization.

The second issue, which relates to change is the long debate over whether the change process is teleological or not (Rawlins, 1998). That is, does the change move toward an idealized state of resolution, synthesis or transformation as typified in Marxist writings, or not? My answer is no. Despite the popularity of Hegel and Marx (who forwarded the teleological oriented dialectics), it seems to me that intercultural relationships cannot have a definitive resolve. Culture and identity (see Chapter 2), as interrelated aspects of interculturality (whether internalized or externalized), constantly change to transform interaction. In turn, each interaction moves and transforms the "cultural" in ways that are not predictable. You may also wonder by now, if interculturality is seen as medium for integration, would integration not be the end goal? The answer is again no. Integration and interculturality, in this case, is seen as two sides of the same coin. Different outlooks, but same object.

Praxis focuses on the "simultaneous subject-and object nature of the human experience" (Baxter & Montgomery, 1998: 9). In other words, an individual both influences and is influenced by cultural forces outside him/herself (ibid.). Indeed, for the purposes of this study, I include the roles of the individual and socio-cultural space of schools to explicate interculturality.
According to Baxter and Montgomery (1996), praxis focuses attention on the actual practices by which individuals create "the future out of the past" (14). Each dialectician situates this praxis differently; Marxist dialecticians, for instance, emphasize material production and class struggles (ibid.), whereas relational dialecticians study relationships and its de facto practices (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996) to create meaning (ibid.), where each individual in the relationship responds to dialectic contradictions that have arisen from their past interaction (ibid.).

It is important to draw attention to the fact that up to this point, opposing tendencies were presented one at a time, as if they are separate from each other. However, the dialectical perspective does not function in separation (Rawlins, 2012). In turning to the fourth, and last common principle, I complicate this narrow view.

**Totality** does not mean "completeness", in the sense of painting an exact illustration of a phenomenon (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996). Realistically speaking, it would be impossible as the world is too detailed for the human mind to depict it in this way. Totality, as the authors describe, refers to the underlying understanding that contradiction does not exist in isolation but is shaped by from its physical and socio-cultural context (ibid).

To disentangle this analytic nightmare, dialecticians have introduced a number of distinctions (see Cornforth, 1984). Take, for example, the internal-external distinction of contradictions, as described by Rawlins (2012). As the word "internal" might suggest, this type of contradiction refers to all tensions that exist within the unit of analysis, while an "external" contradiction refers to all tensions between the unit of analysis and the system(s) in which it exists (Rawlins, 2012). In the context of my study of social and cross cultural relationships, internal contradictions are those that exist between the individuals studied (for example, how individuals can be both willing and unwilling to engage with people from other cultures). External contradictions, on the other hand, in this context, refers to those oppositions that are situated between each specific relationship and the larger socio-cultural environment: for example, how individuals conform to the school's expectations of intercultural relationships but also construct their own special bond. Again, I must also point out the interconnectivity of all aspects of a
relationship and therefore underline the interrelatedness of internal and external contradictions.

To conclude, the dialectic approach paints relationships as continually changing due to a complex interplay of both internal and external contradictions. This study, however, shares the commitment of all four fundamental principles of dialectics as well as enters analysis with a unique voice. As you may have noticed, my particular approach follows the work(s) of Baxter and Montgomery (1996, 1998, 2011), which I have expanded on in the next section.

IV

A RELATIONAL-DIALECTICS PERSPECTIVE. The specific dialectical orientation of this study draws from what Baxter and Montgomery (1996; 1998; see also Baxter 2011, 2015 for a more updated version) call in their book, *Dialogues & Relating,* "relational dialectics" (ibid.). This theoretical approach is well-suited to study interculturality because of it flexibility and focus on both interpersonal and social processes.

In 2011, Baxter made revisions to the original theory, elaborating on the "interplay of multiple, competing discourses, or voices” (5), which are reflective of "different meaning systems formed at both the sociocultural and interpersonal levels, and every interaction is animated by multiple competing discourses.” (Fox, Osborn & Warber, 2014: 528).

In other words, underlying forces that manifest as discursive struggles (aka dialectics) act to simultaneously bring together (centripetal) and pull apart (centrifugal) the dynamics of a relationships (Baxter, 2011); each relationship is also defined by a unique set of interrelated dialectics that occur due to the "joint action" of the parties (ibid.). That said, three 'main' dialectics have been identified consistently in interpersonal

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6 Centripetal discourses do tend to dominate over centrifugal and hold more power over the meaning-making process (Baxter & Norwood, 2015: 282). Take the frequently encountered example of an individual sacrificing their own needs/desires for the sake of cultural expectations in the family. The collectivist dialogue is functioning centripetally against the centrifugal dialogue of individualism (ibid).

7 Baxter and Montgomery (1996) recognize that communication is unique in itself and any instance. Initially coined as, "joint action” (42), this form of communication cannot be understood through public or individual tendencies but as something specific to the partners' connected actions (ibid.). As such, when two individuals (let's say A and B) communicate with each other, it manifests in a specific way for the exact reason that it is A and B communicating, and not, for example, A and C.
research (Fox, Osborn & Warber, 2014). First, integration–separation (autonomy–
connection) captures the basic struggle between individuation and interdependence,
second, stability–change (i.e., predictability– novelty) refers to the fundamental
opposition between continuity and discontinuity and finally, expression–privacy (i.e.
openness–closedness) captures the tension between what is or not said (Baxter, 1990;

Of these three dialectics, the one that appears most relevant to research on
interculturality is integration-separation. Schools create a forum in which members can
practice interaction with other cultures. That said, some individuals are able and willing
to initiate and maintain communication across cultures, while others are less comfortable
to communicate outside their own cultural groups.

Baxter and Montgomery (1996) suggest that integration and separation are both
elements necessary for effective relationships (11). As such, two or more individuals
must work to balance integration and separation within the relationship as well as
between their own group and the broader social network (ibid.). Within the relationships,
for example, individuals may have differing expectations for intercultural encounters,
which may cause tension (see Chapters 3 & 4).

This shift has the potential to significantly alter intercultural relational processes
by redefining individual understanding of cross cultural connection, allowing social
network members greater access to the relationships of others, and diversifying the ways
communicative struggles play out both between individuals and between "themselves"
and their networks.

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CHAPTER 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

“You'd be amazed how much research you can get done when you have no life whatsoever.”

Ernest Cline

I.

MY ROLE AS A RESEARCHER is always to reflect on my own interests in and motives for studying first generation immigrant students as well as to continually question how my privileged position as a researcher shaped my work. During data collection, I wrote frequent analytical journal entries, based on observations, my thirteen interviews and informal conversations with students, teachers and school staff. I also kept recording thoughts, impressions and ideas outside the two research sites, which supported the process of self-reflection.

My personal experiences and connections also shaped my relationship to the research sites. As a first generation immigrant student, I too understand the difficult journey some students encounter when they first arrive in Canada. Although my experiences were slightly different than those of my participants due to my high language abilities and knowledge of the Canadian school system at the beginning of my journey, I did identify with some of the socio-cultural needs they experienced such as the desire to see my school provide more social and cultural support. My participants’ experiences, on the other hand, seem to be fraught with clearer tensions and it is their specific backgrounds, personal uniqueness and place in time that made this study worthwhile. It is also important to mention that I attended Greenstone S.S. from Grades 10 to 12 and I lived in the school community with my parents for 9 years in total. The fact that I was a former student of Greenstone S.S. was something that my participants were aware of and immediately sparked stronger student-research bonds. There were several times during the interview when my participants asked about my experiences in the school and I had to slowly divert the questions back to my research goals. The only difference for me as a researcher was that when I attended Greenstone S.S., the school itself had a large population, with close to 1200 students, whereas this time, the school only had about 900 students (as stated by one of the staff members). I was not surprised by the fact that the

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8 Both schools, as well as all participants' names have been changed in order to protect their privacy.
school welcomed diverse students or that many of them were first generation immigrants. I too was one of them at one point in time. That being said, I want to point out that I came from a different place than they were. Unlike my participants, I was native in English when I first came to Canada as I grew up bilingually and unlike many of them, I came with my family for support.

My relationship with Lana S.S. was very different. I did not grow up in the area or spent my teenage years there but I did attend a university that is 10 minutes away by car and/or subway and later, worked at a high school that was located 2 minutes away, by foot. I preferred to conduct my research study at Lana S.S. due to its specially designed structure for immigrant students as well as to avoid a conflict of interests. Likewise, it is important to mention that the high school I worked at, coincidently has fewer immigrant students in general which would have offered less opportunity for me to recruit first generation immigrants.

II. OVERVIEW OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS AND CONTEXT

A. THE RESEARCH SITES. In my study, I concentrated on the ways in which newcomer immigrant students experienced social engagement, with a particular interest in the relationships between students' social interactions, school social structure and identity. Because of my interest in this particular group of students, I conducted my study in two schools situated in Southern Ontario, where the majority of newcomer immigrants to Canada reside. These schools were located in communities with large newcomer immigrant populations in a large urban city in Southern Ontario. Therefore, the demographic profile of these two areas might not be representative of the whole school board or urban city.

Lana S.S. is, according to its website, one of the oldest schools in North America designed specifically for new immigrant high school aged students. The school itself is small and located in an area that, based on the most recent 2011 census data, is home to 272,380 first generation immigrants, 188,400 second generation immigrants and 223,065 third generation immigrants and over. In other words, it is largely populated by immigrant families.
Greenstone S.S., on the other hand, is a large high school located in a nearby area, that accommodates all students. However, the same 2011 census shows that this particular area is also very diverse. For example, 376,925 individuals are first-generation immigrants, 167,275 are second-generation immigrants and only 116,155 are third generation and over.

This significant newcomer immigrant population, and the inevitable trend of increasing diversity in schools (see Chapter 1), motivated me to look into the social reality of newcomer immigrant students and how it affects social integration and cross-cultural interactions. For this study, I sought to receive the support from a school board that is concerned with the success of all its students, including newcomer immigrants. In this way, I hoped my research would simultaneously contribute to improving newcomer immigrant students’ experiences and enrich education more generally.

I conducted my field work during the 2015-2016 school year. I received my university level ethics approval in early October, 2015 and immediately afterward applied for the school board ethics permission. Upon approval, in late October of the same year, I started looking for schools interested in my research study. I identified two schools, Greenstone S.S. and Lana S.S.\(^9\) that were a perfect fit, based on personal experience of the two communities they were located in.

I started my journey by emailing the principal at Lana S.S. and forwarding a copy of the Information and Consent Letter for School Administrator (Principal) [see Appendix A], and the two ethical approvals. The principal replied back and arranged for a meeting. During that time, I answered some additional questions about my study, my general interest in the subject and knowledge of the area. I explained to her that I work in a nearby school but would prefer to conduct my research at Lana S.S. since the school is designed specifically for immigrant students and there is no conflict of interest.

After the meeting, the principal suggested I reach out to students by setting up a table at the school entrance with posters, info packages and consent forms. It was the poster that sealed the deal. After some days, one teacher, Mr. Arthur\(^{10}\), saw my posters and offered to introduce me to his students and encouraged me to participate in his

\(^9\) This is a reminder that the school names, Greenstone Secondary School and Lana Secondary School, are fictitious.

\(^{10}\) All participant and staff names used in this dissertation have also been changed to pseudonyms.
classroom. During one of his classes, with permission, I held a group info session with
the students where I summarized the important details of my study and answered some
expected questions about consent, participant rights once consent was given and
anonymity. The week after, several students came back to me with their signed consent
forms and we set up a schedule. Most interviews were conducted during lunch time, in
the library. That said, a few interviews took place during class time, with permission
from Mr. Arthur.

Immediately after I contacted Lana S.S., I also got in touch with Greenstone S.S.
After sending an email to the principal with attachments of my consent form, the ethics
approvals and a brief explanation of my being a former student of the high school, she
arranged for a meeting. Again, I was asked questions about my study, my approach to
recruiting participants and my previous experiences as a student in the school. The
principal suggested that I approach teachers and ask them for consent to present my study
to their students. She offered to get me in touch with them by sending an email to those
she thought would be helpful liaisons for my research with immigrant students. I was cc-
ed for access.

After this meeting, I waited to see if I would get any responses. I did not receive
replies right away but after a follow up, two teachers volunteered to open up their
classrooms for me: one of my former teachers, Mrs. Roberts and Ms. Candace, a new
teacher at the school who was also pursuing a master’s degree at the time. The three of us
set up an appointment to meet in the morning in their respective offices, where I
explained the study to them (though separately, due to time constraints). After receiving
permission from each of them to come by their classrooms, I spoke to their students about
my study and gave them the consent forms to sign and/or present to their parents (see
Appendix B & C). The students came back to me with all of the required documentation
the following week and we set up a schedule for the interviews. Because it was the week
before exam time, the time frames ended up being very flexible as there were no classes
being conducted at the time. We secured a board room within the school on a Monday,
with the principal's approval, and began the interviews the day after.

I commuted to the research sites in my car. The commute to Lana S.S. and
Greenstone S.S. each took 35 to 50 minutes, depending on weather conditions and traffic.
My interviews took place over the winter season. Lana and Greenstone were a few kilometers away from each other and because the commute between the schools was small, it took only about 10 minutes to drive between the two schools. I usually parked my car in the school's free parking lot and stayed for half a day in each school, every day, for a period of approximately 3 months. Upon arrival, I signed in as a "School Visitor", greeting the front desk staff and went to meet my participants.

B. THE TEACHERS. Although the original schematics of my study did not include the involvement of teachers in the recruitment phase (or any phase, for that matter), context and suggestions from one principal pushed me to consider and ultimately collaborate with teachers in both schools. Although I continued to recruit students through set up spaces and posters, many of my participants did end up coming from those teachers' classes which is why it is important to include this unexpected complexity to my methodology.

At Lana S.S., Mr. Arthur saw my recruitment poster on the school walls and approached me with an interest in the study. As someone who works with immigrant students every semester, he recognized the importance of working towards understanding social experiences of this eclectic group in the school and offered his support. As such, it can be said that his participation was self-selected. One benefit of self-selection sampling is that it speeds up the process of recruitment. This is because people who approach the researcher about a study are usually already more positive about participation. They also presumably fulfill the required sample characteristics that the researcher is looking for. For example, Mr. Arthur knew beforehand from the poster that I was looking for immigrant students and that he could introduce me to my desired type of participants.

That being said, the strength of self-selection sampling is also its weakness. The underlying assumption behind the participant's willingness to participate is that it will offer different data than a participant who is not willing or reluctant to be involved in a study, creating some self-selection bias. In the case of Mr. Arthur, some possible selection bias was created since we cannot know whether students in his class were more willing to engage in my study because of his attitude towards research. Indeed, I initially did not want to involve figures of authority due to the possibility of undue influence but the set up was such that his involvement included only introductions and support for
observations which minimizes bias. Arrangements for interviews were made between myself and the students I was introduced to, with absolutely no involvement from the teacher.

At Greenstone S.S., it was the principal who suggested I use the connections teachers had to be introduced to immigrant students. She used what researchers would recognize as *purposive sampling* (Creswell, 2008) to identify ESL teachers and/or teachers with known groups of immigrants in their classes who might want to participate and put me in touch with them. One benefits of purposive sampling as cited by Francis C. Dane (2011) in qualitative research is that it allows the researcher to obtain "specific individuals" (122) for research exploration purposes (ibid.). This was in tune with my ideas of recruiting students who are either immigrant or of an immigrant background.

**C. THE STUDENTS.** My purposive sampling of newcomer immigrant student at the high school level was necessary in order to collect the specific data needed to answer my research questions (Creswell, 2008). I was working on the assumption that older (15 years old and up) but new immigrant students who came into the education system would have more difficulty engaging socially (Safipour, Schopflocher, Higginbottom and Emami, 2011). Thus my two main selection criteria: 1) they must be immigrants to Canada and 2) they must be in high school (grade 9-12). I did not originally intend to interview international students (also known as "Visa students") in Canada although in retrospect variation in my sample, while not intentional, proved to be an enlightening addition to this study of immigrant students. Their experience proved to be very similar and provided another layer of complexity to my analysis.

There were thirteen students from the two classes that participated in this study. Two additional students were recruited from Lana S.S. by interacting with me at the information desk; in total, there were 8 girls and 5 boys. Coincidently, most students who came from Lana S.S. were girls (one boy excepted) while most students who came from Greenstone S.S. were boys (two girls excepted), creating an unusual gender divide. Similarly, the students interviewed at Lana S.S. were much newer to Canada (had arrived a few months earlier) than the students at Greenstone S.S (arrived one or two years before).
Out of thirteen students in total, two were over eighteen of age and signed their own consent, while the rest received permission from their parents/legal guardians. Four students self-identified as being "visa students" while the rest were first generation immigrants.

Overall, while my particular research interest focused on the comparisons and relational patterns among all the immigrant students who volunteered, my eclectic group of first generation student provided insights into how various diversely students experienced these processes.

III.
DATA SOURCES & COLLECTION
Various data sources were used to analyze newcomer students' experiences of social engagement in relation to identity and school social structure and to better understand how these relationships facilitated integration and cross-cultural interaction. Using observations, semi-structured interviews and a personal research journal, I studied existing social structures in the two schools, and how new students to Canada, particularly first generation and visa students, experienced these personal and institutional associations.

The study began with school observations. During my time at Lana S.S., I had the opportunity to observe several classes and interact with my participants before the interviews began, while my observation time at Greenstone S.S. was limited to time spent outside the classroom, due to coincidently arriving at the school site right before the exam period, when students did not have any classes. I conducted individual semi-structured interviews with students who volunteered and were given parental/guardian consent to participate. Those students who were over 18 years of age, were given a personal consent form to sign.

With the participants’ consent, the student interviews were audio recorded, allowing me more freedom to be present and engaged as a facilitator during the interviews. I took some handwritten notes during interviews, and in some cases used them to add contextual information (e.g., muffled voices, inaudible speech) after transcribing the recording. The same research procedure was conducted at both schools.
A. PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS. At Lana S.S., I conducted my main personal observations during Mr. Arthur's drama class. I was also able to conduct observations during lunch time because the school was small and many of the students would come and chat with me by the information table set up in the main foyer. These observations were an important component of this dialectical research because they provided me with information about the unofficial school social structure as well as opportunities to see the actions and behaviours of my participants. In fact, many of my participants introduced me to other students, their friends and even some teachers in the school, giving me many opportunities to see the relational manifestations of their social connections and get a clearer image of social engagement, in a way that interviews could not.

The bulk of my classroom observations took place over a period of seven weeks, from the beginning of December, 2015 to the third week in January, 2016. I usually came in for two or three days a week, half a school day each time (depending on the classroom schedule). There were times, however, especially after the interviews commenced, when my presence was required for all five days of the week due to last minute interview withdrawals, rescheduling, absences or tests. I used that time to make more notes and fill in my personal journal with more observations.

At Greenstone S.S. I was unable to conduct any classroom observations due to the fact that many of my interviews occurred right before the exam time period, when students didn't have class. They would have switched courses in any case, as the school works on a semester by semester schedule. Nonetheless, I was able to make some personal observations by interacting with my participants in between and after the interviews and conversing with the school staff. I also had an advantage, namely that I attended this school some years before and was familiar with its general school social structure.

As with Lana S.S., I started conducting my interviews at Greenstone S.S., after the winter break, in the beginning of January and was present in the school for two or three days a week, in the morning or the afternoon as my juggling schedule allowed. Fortunately, the flexibility of the exam period time allowed me to successfully commit half a day as well, usually the opposite half to Lana S.S.
Since my research was intended to look at immigrant students' experiences with social engagement and/or isolation and identity, I focused my observations particularly on the ways in which students interacted with one another, their attitudes towards figures of authority such as teachers and school staff, how they dressed, the language they spoke and levels of cross-cultural interaction.

It is important to mention that the observations I conducted were not guided by a specific protocol. These were not, in any sense, the same as in-depth observations specific to ethnographic study. That said, these analytical notes aided me in properly recording ideas and/or questions that arose on the field and facilitated ongoing critical, reflective commentary on my positionality as a researcher in the study (see above).

**B. INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS.** I conducted one set of *semi-structured* interviews that lasted between 30-60 minutes, at a location of my participants' choice within the school. At Lana S.S., most of my participants preferred the library, which was quiet during lunch time while at Greenstone S.S. most of my participants agreed to meet up in an empty boardroom provided by the principal. These interviews probed students’ understanding of how they engage socially in the school in relation to different stakeholders such as fellow students, teachers and staff as well as their diverse de facto experiences with coming into the school, making friends, using resources, culturally sensitive events and shifting identities (see Appendix E). With their consent, I audio recorded the interviews. The interview usually had three parts, starting with some general questions about their background, experience in their native country and current status in the school, to experiences in the school vis-à-vis social relationships and lastly, identity. While at some points, I felt my participants discussed issues that were not relevant to my research questions, their willingness to share with me intimate and sensitive aspects of their lives in the school, created a bond that not only allowed me to ask what I needed and get honest answers but in fact, turned out useful in providing context for both the constructs of intercultural engagement and identity.

By using semi-structured interviews, therefore, I was able to let my participants express themselves openly about their needs and experiences, without going off on completely different tangents so that I was later able to conduct a comparative analysis.
C. RESEARCH JOURNAL. I kept a detailed personal journal in which I wrote down notes and reflections about the two school sites, the thirteen interviews I conducted in addition to information I gathered from informal conversations with students, teachers and the school staff. My personal journal reflections helped to clarify and organize the ideas, connections and/or themes that emerged and guide my own understanding of where I stand in the research. It is important to mention that, at times, I felt my role in the classroom or during an interview influenced how my participants behaved and/or how a particular discussion progressed. By reflecting on these particular instances, I became more aware of my own research strategies and my role as a researcher. I wrote reflective and analytical memos in my personal research journal frequently, as an aid to my own thought processes and analyses of the two school sites and my participants.

D. DATA COLLECTING PROCEDURES. I provided the information and consent letter designed for school administration [see Appendix A], to the principals and teachers interested in participating in this study and obtained consent from all partied just mentioned. Before the recruitment phase or any data collection, I also explained the goals of my research to the administration and teachers involved and answered any remaining questions.

Similarly, I explained my study to the students and then sent information and consent letters (see Appendix C) home to parents/guardians of the students in each class, if they were under eighteen of age. Students and teachers were reassured that their involvement and participation were completely voluntary and that they held the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without repercussion. To make the prospect of participating more appealing, I offered to bring food during the interview and promised a gift card with the value for one movie and ten dollars as gifts for participation, as approved by the university and school board ethics committees. Despite this, in each school, one student decided to withdraw and refused/did not collect their gifts. As per my information collection and removal procedure, I deleted all data collected prior to withdrawal such as name, age, grade and snippets of information about their background.

I studied students from two classrooms in two different school from the beginning of December, 2015 to the third week of January, 2016. My actual interviews sometimes spilled over into the month of February. While I did not originally intend to secure two
school sites, I did contact both Lana S.S. and Greenstone S.S. simultaneously due to worry on my part as a researcher. As such, when both schools showed interest, I decided having participants from the same school board and in nearby areas would enable in-depth critical comparison and contrast among diverse students’ experiences with intercultural engagement. The only weakness was that each school was designed differently, as Lana S.S. is a language school while Greenstone S.S. is a regular public school and therefore resulted in very different school cultures and characteristics.

I was present for observations and interviews at each school concurrently, spending half a school day each. At Lana S.S. I recorded a week's worth of drama class time, while at Greenstone S.S. the amount of time spent observing was much shorter, limited to time before and after the interviews.

E. DATA ANALYSIS. Applying my conceptual framework (based primarily on Baxter and Montgomery's relational dialectics) to my research sites, I paid attention to how both internal and external forces acted on first generation immigrant students' intercultural opportunities and experience. Sometimes I wrote down my ideas and/or observations collected during the interviews and classrooms on the similarities and differences as conceptualized and experienced by the thirteen learners in the two different school settings so that they might be revisited later on during analysis.

I then transcribed my notes into electronic format. I used transcription conventions adapted from Kvale (2007), such as placing a dot (.) in parentheses to indicate a tiny ‘gap’ within or between utterances (6). Other conventions were self-explanatory; for example, sighs or laughter were recorded in brackets.

The first preliminary analysis was conducted on my observation notes to reflect on my research questions. Once compared to existing literature, more focus of analysis emerged. Several iterations of the interview data were conducted, by using a constant-comparative method, to further identify, elaborate, and clarify emerging themes (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) and to determine salience and recurrence (Fox, Osborn and Warber, 2014).

The research questions that emerged out of these reflective analyses are the following:
1. How did first generation students' conceptualization of social interaction influence their experiences for cross-cultural interaction?

2. How did newcomer students' co-construction of culture and identity facilitate or impede cross-cultural interaction?

3. In what way(s), if any, did the two school systems affect opportunities and intercultural experience for these students?

**F. LIMITATIONS OF STUDY AND METHOD.** While there was much strength to using a dialectic orientation for the purpose of my study, there were also some obvious limitations. Foremost, to commit to a relational dialectics approach is to accept the reality that relationships, events and experience itself is continuous in its changeability (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996, 1998, 2011). There are no end goals to be reached, no ultimate truth to uncover (ibid.). For this reason, this perspective, defies orthodox social science methodology and inherently accepts multiple, related perspectives and elements on the process of relating (ibid.). The challenge that emerged (and with which I still have to struggle) is to represent interculturality in a consideration that reflects reality. As such, I readily admit that by deciding to focus on two levels of analysis (i.e. intraindividual and intrasystem) alone, I might have created a manageable study but have indubitably left out existing nuances.

Secondly, because these particular research settings were closely connected to my school and work experiences respectively, I may have inadvertently overlooked certain institutional aspects because they were so familiar to me as a result of my history with the two research sites (see “My Role As a Researcher” in this chapter).

A final limitation was that I am a novice researcher. While I set out to conduct a multiple case study with a dialectical perspective, this study is of course challenged by both the time constraints of my degree requirements as well as the particular mind frames and prior knowledge(s) I gained as a Masters' student.

**Works Cited**


CHAPTER 5
IDENTITY & SOCIAL RELATIONS IN SCHOOLS: THE PHENOMENON OF CULTURAL CLUSTERS

"Turtle Island is the place where people of all four colours will come together. But that does not mean being in our own ghettos but coming together for the common good."
Lenore Keeshig, Feb 23rd, 2016
Land and Knowledge of Self, University of Toronto

I

The way that newcomer immigrant students deal with different perspectives, histories and identities, including their own, can influence the kind of social relationships they form in school and in the rest of their lives. The ability to communicate and interact across cultures is an essential part of a socializing process that can engage and include all students and promote mutual trust, respect and understanding (Sani, 2014).

As Kim (2001) has argued, students' heavy reliance on interactions with peers from their own native communities might become counterproductive to their integration in Canadian society - if, indeed, such integration is their goal (pg 17, Ch 7). In other words, immigrant students cannot remain confined to these "cultural clusters"¹¹ and also become highly integrated in the host country. This is because the subtle but intrinsic function of this type of social system is maintaining a strong association to the native country (ibid.) by reinforcing the original cultural patterns which are understood only by their co-nationals (Kim, 2001). This is reflected in the lives of immigrants who arrive in the host country at a later age and whose activities are almost completely limited to their families and/or native communities (ibid.).

Having said all this, interculturality occurring in schools may prove difficult to understand without first disentangling the tensions experienced by first generation immigrant students themselves. The first generation immigrant students I interviewed had complex social experiences in relation to the intercultural context of their schools, facing

¹¹ Native community is the generally accepted term that refers to a group of individuals who share the same culture, and often the same nationality. In this paper, however, I prefer to use the term "cultural clusters" to refer to the phenomenon of students grouping according to nationality and its associated culture and language, as their social interactions are frequently, if not always, restricted to the physical space of the school. In other words, their relationships are limited to like individuals they meet in school and not outside.
various tensions both within themselves and with the existent cultural groups. These created a difficult environment for intercultural ties, limiting their social interaction almost exclusively to like individuals.

This chapter explores the existing contradictions at the intraindividual level. First, I examine contradictions relating to students' identities and their underlying dependability on the cultural cluster due to fear based on the discrepancy among cultural scripts. I also provide a discussion about the role of language in culture and the acute sense of deficiency arising from this element of their socio-cultural script. Then, I explore inner contradictions vis-à-vis the relationships between cultural clusters and the dominant "Canadian" culture. In the final section of this chapter, I look at the notion of shifting identity within the socio-cultural constrains of cultural clusters, expounding on opposing but intersecting feelings of compliance and/or resistance.

II

Intra-Individual Dialectical Tensions

From the interview transcripts, I derived three intra-individual dialectical tension categories that highlight the internal forces representing the inherent contradictions between one’s personal identity and the diverse social reality the individual experiences. Intra-individual dialectics focus on an immigrant student's internal tension. Three main dialectics within the individual emerged from the data: 1) Deficiency-sufficiency, 2) Past-Future and 3) Compliance-resistance.

Deficiency- sufficiency. A specific struggle that emerged from the data was a battle within first generation immigrant students between their socio-cultural knowledge deficiency and the perceived socio-cultural knowledge sufficiency of their peers. This dialectical pull occurred within participants as they struggled to be confident in themselves and their abilities to connect with peers outside their native cultural script while learning and adapting to the new cultural environment.

Indeed, all students interviewed were keenly aware of the importance of these culturally prescribed guidelines. They initially felt that having little to no knowledge of

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12 The notion of 'cultural script' used here reflects a concept that includes national attachment and its affixed assumptions about social interactions (Holvino, 2010), which provide the parameters for judging overt behaviour (Dhingra, 2007). In other words, cultural scripts can be understood as individuals' guidelines to ways of doing and being in a social space.
the "correct" way to behave and/or speak was key to them having such a hard time adjusting to the new socio-cultural environment. In their interviews, first generation students speak of their strong feelings of being "lost" and the ensuing nervousness:

It was hard because I lost my family and I left where I grew up. And I feel comfortable there but here everything is changed, I felt not comfortable. (Ramad, Iran, 19 yrs. old)

I felt nervous, I was like, I don't know what to do, what to say. Like, I felt kind of lost. (Tareq, Iraq, 18 yrs. old)

These confessions aptly illustrate the negative feelings associated with the belief in one's own real or perceived deficiency. For support, most students relied on peers in the school who held the same cultural script (or were, at least familiar with it) to fill in that knowledge gap. A student describes his own experience,

Yeah. Like, I first came to here like, again, I saw from same country... and they also helped me cause I didn't even know how to open my lock. [laughs] Like, in my own country, the locks are different. Like, they open with keys and here is like, codes and they told me how to open it. I asked them like, I took their phone number, if, I have any problem, I phone them and I ask them. (Amal)

The incident clearly underlines the helpfulness of having someone who knows how things "work" in both the native country, as well as the host country as it makes it easier to fully explain cultural differences. Even something as simple as opening locks, which may be self-evident to 'locals' may be information that is not existent in first generation immigrant students' socio-cultural repertoire. The individual that is doubly knowledgeable is most apt to negotiate knowledge and experience for the newcomer and act as a cultural "broker" of sorts.

At the same time, when confronted with the possibility of others' sufficiency in cultural guidelines, most participants expressed an ambiguous rapport with the idea of becoming sufficient themselves. The following dialogue with a male participant illustrated the oppositional qualities of deficiency-sufficiency:

Interviewer: Which culture do you feel closer to?
Interviewer: Why is that?
Luke: Because if I'm applying for a job, I have to Canadian. Or maybe going somewhere, you have to know the place; learn the things they do, yeah.
Interviewer: Did someone tell you that you need to do that?
Luke: It's just me.

This student accurately expressed the dialectical tension between lacking knowledge of culturally prescribed guidelines and the perceived sufficiency required in the "Canadian" world. This comment provides an excellent example of the role "cultural scripts" have on the dynamic character of identity formation. Although he did not report any specific incidents that led him to believe in the importance of adherence to these cultural guidelines, he could feel and describe the existing pressure to become "Canadianized" and the tension between his own abilities and those of others.

Indeed, several participants suggested that their own ways of thinking and communicating were, if not in conflict, at least dissimilar to the ways of thinking and communicating in the dominant culture. The following statement, made by another first-generation immigrant student, pinpointed this tension:

It was hard [making friends]...The culture is different and I can't get good contact with them. The culture is different, like, when they said a joke, I couldn't get them. You know, I learned how to behave here in Canada. I changed how to behaved. Maybe less shy and more funny. (Ramad)

The student's understanding that his sense of humour is different than that of his native peers suggested that first-generation immigrant students may see themselves as cultural outsiders. Other participants also shared Ramad's feelings that they would have to change their language and/or culture if they had any hopes of fitting in. Perhaps unsurprisingly, they expressed an inevitability to the task of learning a new cultural language. The question, therefore, became, not whether the students would learn but, how much. From dress to socializing, many first generation immigrant students were torn between what their prior cultural scripts and the uncertainty of what they were learning in the new school (and arguably, the new country). A female student epitomized this dialectical pull as she reflected on the extent of 'local' influence on identity:

Like when you're with your Canadian friends, like when they talk, they make me feel a little bit Canadian but I'm still Vietnamese. Because the culture, because back home, my auntie speak Chinese and Vietnamese...Yeah, when you hang out with them and be friends with them, it will affect you a lot. And how you eat, how the education, how you learn, something like that. (Luna)
The dialectical tension in this student’s experience is essential to understanding interculturality. She, like many first generation immigrant students, wanted to form connections outside their native cultural clusters. In doing so, however, she felt that her communication with native students might shape her original cultural self to an extensive degree. On the other hand, this manifestation seemingly arose only when the exchange of cultural knowledge was unidirectional and the social expectations of assimilation were high. The realization that a middle ground exists often resulted in a negotiated balance between various identity alternatives. A male student who lived for long period of time in both his native country and Canada explains:

Of course, I am Persian but I am trying to mix it. You know, I try to get good things from my own country and good things from Canada. (Amal)

Other participants agreed. Ramad, for example, who was originally from Iran, explained in his interview that he rejected some aspects of his native cultural script even if he still maintained strong ties with his cultural cluster,

Interviewer: Do you find that in terms of culture, people behaved differently [in their country]?
Ramad: Sometimes. Like some people like to wear the black things.
Interviewer: You mean the niqab?
Ramad: Yeah, like the eyes.
Interviewer: And how do you feel about this custom?
Ramad: I think if you like to go like, why you should be here? Like, if you wanna be like that, go to your own country!

Again, this passage illustrates how identity does tend to shift with time, regardless of self-perception about oneself, yet the change implied here is decidedly cultural; i.e. in the above passage and the one before, it was only after Ramad encountered the cultural other that his own perception changed.

It is important to mention that adherence to the socio-cultural script of the dominant culture was not only insisted upon by native peers. In one special situation, a student was pushed by someone in her own cultural cluster to perform- or at least give the appearances of- being 'Canadian'. Ironically, this resulted in a set of expressions that is inter cultural in nature due to deficient-sufficient dialectical struggle experienced by the student.
Interviewer: Do you feel like you've changed since you came to Canada?
Diana: Like, how I behave?
Interviewer: Sure.
Diana: Oh, yeah. A lot of people say that.
Interviewer: Yeah, what do they say?
Diana: Like, the way I speak. Maybe I was rude when I was back home.
Interview: You were rude?
Diana: Yeah, I was. I used to argue a lot with older people because that's what my friends did. And now, my friend, you know that girl that was talking to me? When she's talking and she holds food and she goes outside and stuff, and I'm like, how can you do that? People are gonna see you and she's like "Who cares?"...and she's like "You got Kenyan culture, stop that." She's like, "Why are you so shy? You're like, Canadian now. Stop that!"

Interculturality here, therefore, is twofold. First, the direction of Diana's attitude towards adults changed due to her becoming sufficient in the socio-cultural expectations of the dominant culture vis-à-vis child-adult interaction. Second, her lack of knowledge (or "deficiency") regarding acceptable public behaviour resulted in a retained element of native cultural identity. The deficiency-sufficiency dialectic inherent in her utterances, therefore, provides a number of ways in which both integrating and differentiating cultural behaviors may be enacted.

Not surprisingly, several participants suggested that immigrant students sometimes feel the tension of deficiency-sufficiency due to an underlying fear of ridicule. A student described her own feelings of deficiency and the ensuing reticence to communicate with individuals of other cultures:

Because there are much more people that come from different countries. I can know a lot of different cultures but in private school, we always speak Mandarin. You speak Mandarin, I speak Mandarin so no more speaking English...But my English is not very well. If I want to talk to someone, make it nervous and I don't know how to speak clearly. They don't understand me. I don't know how to describe. [looks in dictionary] Discriminate. (Tara)

Thus, the negative reaction to Tara's limited knowledge of culture as presumably accepted by the dominant "Canadian" world heightened the dialectic and reinforced the idea of otherness so unfavourable to interculturality.

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13 Although Diana is originally from Eritrea, she and her Kenyan friends consider themselves from the same culture. This study accepts this interpretation.
All things considered, one more point needs to be made. Several comments from participants indicated that the tension between knowing and not knowing the culturally prescribed guidelines is not restricted to immigrant-native knowledge development; a sense of deficiency also came from lack of knowledge and understanding of other immigrant cultural scripts. The following example describes Luke's efforts to learn about his peers from other countries:

Yeah, people in my school, I study their country; Afghanistan, Koreans. Like, in Korea, they have like, k-pop.

Similarly, uncertainty about the appropriateness of simply being and doing in their own cultural way heightened this dialectic and continually increased a fear of communicating outside their cultural cluster, even if the desire was there to do so. Amal explains,

When they try to talk about something, they shy. Like, if you think someone from a different culture doesn't like something, you won't do it.

More notably, the deficiency-sufficiency dialectic turned negative when the topics of conversation were about cultural issues such as religion that cut across cultures and frequently differ in their interpretations. One interview illustrates this,

Interviewer: Can you give an example?
Mena: They say like, it happened with one of my friends, she was said by [name]: You Asians have Ewww. I'm European, you Asians are black. Look at me, I'm white. You Asians have dark hair, look how beautiful hair I have and my friend is like me, she didn't want any trouble and didn't say to anyone. And the same thing happened to me. They're like "Muslims are terrorists" etc. etc. and all these things I faced. But I protested against it and I know now that the girl I protested against told about it to all of her friends and now their friends now look at me like "Ahhh, I'm gonna kill you!". So you can harm me, it's okay, I don't have to fear you. I don't have to be scared.
Interviewer: Where was the girl you fought with from?
Mena: Roma, I guess. But I'm not gonna be sure, because I heard her say "I'm a powerful Roma girl". I don't know, is Roma girl, is Roman.
Interviewer: Why fight though?
Mena: Cultures and language. Like, because I am Muslim, people misunderstand me and it has been happening not with me only but with some other girls also. And there is some kind of racism I see in class and lots of things. You know, cultures and language.
Due to absence of frequent intercultural interactions, disagreement did ensue. This antagonistic manifestation is important to consider as immigrant students continue to experience challenges related to their own and other's lack of knowledge and the subsequent prejudices. Of course, not all resultant intercultural interactions are inevitably negative, as several perspectives indicate; Luke, Amal and even Diana all explains above that an individual does not need to be locked in a single identity, and that incorporation of new cultural elements in the psyche is possible without "throwing away" or being disloyal to the original culture. The deficiency-sufficiency dialectic, merely indicates that some immigrant students struggle to maintain ties to their native cultural origins, while at the same time, learning the dominant culture.

* LANGUAGE. A special consideration needs to be given to the element of language in culture and its association to the deficiency-sufficiency dialectical tension.

To begin with, all participants reiterated the importance of speaking a common language when engaging in cross cultural interactions and argued that deficiency in English (the dominant language in Southern Ontario) contributed to the effect of cultural clusters. This was due to the fact that knowing and speaking different languages, simply made the communication pathways harder between individuals and prevented many from making the effort (or taking a chance) to learn the dominant language, especially if they already had connections to a cultural cluster,

They're like, eighty percent from my own country (laughs) cause, when I come to the school, like, every day, I don't talk English at all. Like, I'm only with my friends, like, Persian friends, I would talk in my language. (Amal)

Not surprisingly, therefore, most students interviewed were keenly worried about their language abilities. Often, they felt deficient, which in turn, created anxiety about participating in interactions outside their own cultural clusters. Here, both Tara and Anna, from Lana S.S. express a similar perception on language sufficiency:

My speaking was so bad. I'm afraid that if someone can't understand me, what should I do? So, I'm afraid of speaking. My friends all come from China so it's easier because we speak the same language. (Tara)
I think more friends that are Chinese. Understanding them. I can understand them. (Anna)

Sometimes, the belief in their own language deficiency was effectively the decisive element that contributed to the cohesiveness of their cultural clusters. Shame and/or fear of being ostracized for not being fluent in English successfully inhibited any chance on the part of the immigrant students to try and become sufficient.

Because my English is not very well, if I want to talk to someone...they don't understand me. I don't know how to describe that. [looks it up in dictionary]. Discriminate. (Tara)

Other times, actual discrimination occurred. Diana describes her experience,

Diana: when I first came to Canada there were girls that used to make fun of me. Interviewer: why?
Diana: My English wasn't really good. Interviewer: You English is fantastic now though.
Diana: I know! they're kind of nice to me now. they see me using English and stuff and they look at me in the other way. they're like "Oh my god, that's really fast!" and before, because it didn't use to speak English there, they used to make fun of me.

Interestingly, whereas socio-cultural knowledge was supplemented by the cultural cluster seemingly without any undercurrent feeling of shame on the part of the receivers, when language came to the forefront of the discourse, the internal dynamic changed,

Yeah, because my friends are really good at English, but they not use. But when I talk to them and they speak, they make you feel like you're so bad. (Luna)

Even when individuals came from the tight-knit cultural group, therefore, the feeling of being 'unequipped' persisted. Why this is the case, is not clear but regardless, comments of this sort sometimes led them to a more developed awareness of their insular lives and their dependency on the cultural cluster, as revealed in the following exchange:

Interviewer: Was it a difficult experience for you, coming to Canada?
Tara: Yeah, of course. My speaking was so bad. I'm afraid that if someone can't understand me, what should I do? So, I'm afraid of speaking. My friends all come from China, so it's easier because we speak the same language.
Interviewer: Do you every talk to people in other communities?
Tara: Yes, but it's not very, we, if I'm in the hall and I meet someone I will say hi and ask "How are you?" an no more talking. Yeah, only Chinese friends.

To some extent, the above exchange suggests Tara's sincere acceptance of the nature and limits of her friendships with other cultures. It is noteworthy that these participants also freely acknowledged that this knowledge deficiency was possibly a temporary barrier that will be diminished with continued proximity to other cultures. As Tara herself explains, school performs this facilitating role rather well,

Before, I study in private school so too many Chinese people but I can't improve my speaking. But here, there are a lot of people who come from different countries. I think I can meet them. In class.

Despite the fact that the perceived offending is still done through language, the essential assumption Aryana is making here is that there are some culturally accepted ways of doing things which are reiterated through words. She goes on to say to highlight the relationship between the two elements:

So, first, I think it's only the language. [after] maybe, because the culture difference. When I talk to people, I'm afraid I said something to offence them.

(Aryana)

As such, her fear is rooted in the belief that her reactions may not be culturally acceptable or appropriate. But I digress. The linguistic script clearly plays an important position in the feeling of deficiency portrayed by students. Considered alongside earlier comments on socio-cultural knowledge of both dominant and other immigrant scripts, however, a secondary question arises:

➢ Are the linguistic and socio-cultural scripts separate?

Several student’s comments about cultural elements illustrate how the linguistic element is closely tied with culture, making the separation more complex than usually portrayed. For example, consider, yet again, Ramad's comment on humour. He does not separate language itself and culture, but teases out a mutual relationship between language itself and the cultural meaning behind the words used:

...the culture is different and I can't get contact with, good contact with them. The culture is different, like, when they said a joke, I couldn't get them. (Ramad)
In this case, therefore, humor is a linguistic manifestation that carries underlying cultural meanings. To make an analogy, if culture is a force, then language is one medium through which we are able to perceive it. Below is the physical representation of the place of language in culture and the deficiency-sufficiency dialectical tension.

To sum up, the deficiency-sufficiency dialectic indicates the complex ways in which some first generation immigrant students struggle to balance their cultural self, while at the same time, learning and communicating with both dominant and other cultures.

II

Past-future. A second dialectic emerged as the participants indicated they struggled with the dialectical pull between their past and their future. The past could be defined as the social connections and relations students formed with their families, culturally similar friends, and native communities before and/or in the beginning of their displacement. The future can be conceptualized, on the other hand, as the social connections and relations students want to form in the future and which presumably are more culturally sophisticated. Loyalty to family, friends, and the community - to one’s roots - is a strong part of many "immigrant" cultures, generating tricky circumstances for interculturality.

Many students felt tension between their existing past relations and the future relations they wanted. They envisioned the future in terms of goals of cultural complexity
and network expansion, which some of them did not enjoy before arriving in Canada. The Past-Future dialectic focuses attention on the recognized fact that many countries, including Canada, have been struggling with issues of managing multiculturalism (Taylor, 2012), desperately trying to avoid "a retreat into ghettos, and a refusal to accept the political ethic of liberal democracy itself" (ibid.). Unfortunately, many first generation immigrant students have personally experienced this type of social struggle.

This dialectical tension emerged from the data as participants described their attempts to navigate both the native cultural cluster and the new, diverse socio-cultural environment. By seeking to expand their social network to include individuals of other cultures, these participants indicated that they sometimes felt like outsiders to their own cultural groups due to the very intercultural relationships they were engaged with. They struggled between loyalty to their past and its inherent individual relationships, and the idea that their future interactions may create distance between themselves and their cultural cluster.

Within the Past-Future dialectic lies a tension between what familiarity and the unknown. Of the 13 participants in this study, all expressed a desire, or at least an interest, in intercultural relationships. Consequently, all students had some experience attempting to connect with the cultural other and the subsequent feeling of alienation from their own cluster. A student discusses how her friends did not have an understanding of her experience with, and desire for, the intercultural.

Oh, like, I can talk to foreign friends and I want to make foreign friends. But they're [friends] like "I can stuck with Chinese people, we can do that, we don't have to make foreign friends". (Aryana)

In order to honour her friends' choice to separate themselves from other cultures, Aryana had to follow the same detached approach to intercultural interaction. She recognized her distinct preference and, in doing so, her connections within the cultural cluster and her desires of interculturality were at odds with each other.

Because immigrant students interact in two or more distinct cultures, they attempt to dedicate themselves to all. One student explained the struggle,
I'm okay with people from the same country and different countries but I don't know why... I don't talk much with Chinese people. I still make friends with them but I don't want to speak Chinese in school. Maybe outside it's okay but inside, so, somehow, I make friends more friends with Canadians than Chinese or Vietnamese. (Una)

Una, therefore, explains the social divisions that sometimes occur when struggling with the past and the future. In this case, her friendships with individuals from the same cluster were positioned in a physical space outside the school, while relations with "local" peers were restricted to the school. Interestingly, her explanation hints at a complex relationship between instrumentality-feeling underlying her decision to place relations in this way.

In any case, data suggests that cultural cluster expectations often conflicted with these immigrant students' personal goals. To maintain a strong connection with her past, this same individual explained that she would have to speak the native language and behave in the same way in order to fit in. However, her experiences with other perspectives altered her own way of thinking and ability to subscribe to such rigid demands.

They behave really different...They're [Canadians] really open. They're not like, they don't care about your age. They're okay with that and they're still friends with you...the Vietnamese and Chinese really respect older people. So when you speak with them, they really want you to be polite, gentle...But I am used to Canadians so I'm talking with Chinese, I don't feel comfortable. (Una)

The Past-Future tension, therefore, came down as a conflict between honouring one’s past monocultural relationships and focusing on one’s own needs and desires of intercultural network expansion.

In the attempt to balance both the past and the future, immigrant students expressed difficulty in finding opportunities for intercultural relations due to people's general tendency to group together in a tight cultural cluster. An interesting situation encountered is my participant's attempt to form connections with individuals of various cultures when she did not belong to any cultural cluster to begin with.

Unlike Una, whose Past-future dialectical struggle conduced her to engage less with culturally similar peers, Diana - a fourteen-year-old first generation immigrant student who came from Eritrea- could not be part of a cultural cluster at all due to the
lack of people in the school from the same culture. For this reason, she turned to other peers, with some negative outcomes. In her interview, she explains how this attempted exchange impacted her social reality in the school:

Interviewer: Do you have a lot of friends from your country?
Diana: Not really. There are few people from my country here because I was the only one from Eritrea, from my country, in this school and it was hard.
Interviewer: What about people from other countries?
Diana: They stick together.
Interviewer: They stick together? What about after they learn the language, is it the same?
Diana: Yeah, kind of.
Interviewer: So then, what about people who, like you, don't have somebody from their country?
Diana: oh, I used to sometimes, like, hang out alone. A lot of people, like girls were going together and stuff. I made friends in like, the last minute.
Interviewer: And how did you make those friends?
Diana: I went to some programs but when I joined Rivendell14, the school, I made a lot of friends and I found that the school was way better than the school I was at before.

By having no connections whatsoever to rely on whilst other intercultural relations could be tested or materialized, Diana had difficulty, therefore, breaking through the Past-future dialectical struggles of other students and the resultant exclusivist social environment. Still, the questions beg: is the cultural cluster a positive or negative phenomenon?

Participants suggest its existence is not entirely disadvantageous. Amal, for example, hints that belonging to cultural cluster does, indeed, provide some distinct social advantages. In his case, having a group of culturally similar individuals did not just aid in supplying information to cure his socio-cultural knowledge deficiency (see above) but also to generate more connections for his social network:

Yeah, and then like, I was during lunch, one of them came and told me like "Let's go to the cafeteria. I gonna introduce you to like, other students" and that was how I found my new friends.

Likewise, Mika describes her process of finding friendship through the cultural cluster:

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14 Rivendell is a pseudonym.
We, like, became friends and then she introduced her friends to me and something like that. You know, a lot of people so, I think that's the process.

Even when other peers from the same cultural clusters did not offer to make introduction, they could still be used as a resource for networking. Mena, another first generation student, explains her feelings of otherness was expelled when her network expanded - which happened as a result of seeking support from someone in the same cultural cluster,

...I found a girl who just dresses up like South Asian and then I thought, I must be her friend, and that's M. And I was really curious, like "come, come, come, talk to me!", I'm gonna talk to you, I'm gonna be your friend. She never talks to me and I thought, I'm gonna talk to her, she seems nice. So, I talked to her "hi, hello!" and we became really good friends and we are now really good friends. And I made friends on Facebook, I find lots of mutual friends like in Lana S.S. I sent her a request because I know, I mean, I like to make new friends, I love to see new people and I talk to them like "hi! hello!" and they say "You are really nice!!". So, like this, I know lots of people at Lana S.S. (Mena)

The cultural cluster, therefore, offers twofold support: 1) it mediates the knowledge gap of immigrant students and 2) it acts as a resource for more social relationships, thereby slowly helping immigrant students regain the complex web of connections they had previously lost when they left their native country. It is also evident that the initiation and expansion of social networks within cultural clusters is not solely dependent on mentors. As described above, Mena took it upon herself to create more connections despite having been offered no support initially.

At the same time, several perspectives suggested that the Past-future dialectical tensions within individuals in the cultural cluster tends to create the "bubble effect" mentioned above, where students rarely intermingled with people from the "outside". Mika and Luke explain their experiences,

Some of them are really good. Like one of my classmates, she's Iranian, she likes me a lot. I don't know why, we have three classes together but sometimes we don't talk to each other even if we are in the same class, she has her friends and I have my own but we're still in the same class. (Mika)

Hmmm, people in Canada is like, very nice so, they're like friendly so yeah, it's easy. But not really close friends. Only close friends that I hang out with is the, from Philippines, like Pilipino. (Luke)
As you might have noticed, interculturality was not entirely inexistent. That said, when relationships were initiated across cultures, they were very superficial, or at the most, tentative. According to Altman and Taylor (1973), in their social penetration theory, relational intimacy needs an increasing depth and breadth of self-disclosure so as to fulfill personal needs. Considering, the cultural involvement presented above, therefore, the relational ties with either 'local' Canadian or other immigrant groups did not indicate any strength or likelihood of emotional involvement. Tara, explains just how shallow the social interactions can be:

Yes, but it's not very, we, if I'm in the hall and I meet someone I will say "hi" and ask "how are you?" and no more talking.

Most of my participants faced the same weak intercultural connection; their interaction and communication was limited to surface pleasantries. In fact, the conception of friendship across cultures included only basic elements of interaction and the occasional support that did not create the deep connections needed for meaningful interculturality, with either native or other immigrant peers. As Mena describes, their "friendships" are composed of people that they see or pass in the school:

I found lots of friends, even I couldn't ever imagine I can have lots of friends in one place. I have lots of friends there; I don't even have classes with them. I just know them because I see them. They say hi. [researcher emphasis]

To contrast, social relationships within cultural clusters expanded into more types of socially unifying activities. For instance, many students spent time with friends from their cultural clusters outside of school or during lunch and engaged in various non-academic and academic past times such as studying together, sports or simply "hanging out".

I usually hang out with my friends and study my homeworks and do my, do what I am interested in like assignments or something. (Ramad)

Sometimes I play soccer with my friends and most times I go gym...Ahhh, in the gym class. And I go to gym too and I have a couple of friends there. (Tareq)

...after the first period, we will go to the second period and study, and hmmm, it's lunch time. We come together, we eat and talk with friends and before we had Christmas. I play piano with another Chinese girl; we need to practice. Sometimes
we practice in Miss K's classroom, sometimes in the cafeteria...sometimes, we went to the Cornwell\textsuperscript{15} library, sometimes we stay here [school] because the weather is cold, we don't want to work so we stay here... (Anna)

This type of more meaningful engagement with culturally similar individuals reinforced the native cultural script and facilitated a stronger and faster connection. Meanwhile, when some of my participants took the step to interact with members of other cultural clusters, some ostracizing and stereotypes arose indicating that the deficiency-sufficiency dialectical tension is not an imaginary struggle. One of my participants, Anna, for example, explains that, students from other cultures sometimes have preconceptions or stereotypes about her and her friends:

Yeah, some students, they are from different countries and they think "No, you study all day!" and I say "No, we sometimes play!" A lot of students tell us that you guys study so hard. (Anna)

The stereotype that Asian students are always studying is not unheard of but, unsurprisingly, none of the girls appreciated their peers' biased image of them. In fact, it often acted as a social barrier to further interaction with other students as the following example explains,

Yeah. But I think we do not study that hard. In China, is more harder. In here, homework is very little and sometimes, very interesting so we want to do it and we can finish it quickly and we can play or something and I think some of my classmates, they do not do their homework so they think we are study hard (Anna).

Anna, therefore, feels it is unfair that she and her friends are judged in this way and it is the other students’ own lack of similar experiences that influences their skewed perception. Unfortunately, some incidences were based prejudices much harder to dispel. Again, I appeal to Mena as she explains how religion comes into play:

...because I am Muslim, people misunderstand me and it has been happening not with me only but with some other girls also...they're like "Muslims are terrorists" etc. etc. and all these things I faced. (Mena)

This possibility of hostile interactions creates a certain reticence to open up to the possibility of forming relationships outside the cultural cluster. Therefore, whether real or

\textsuperscript{15} I have changed all names to prevent any leaks in privacy.
perceived, relationships with peers from one's own community is simply viewed as a safer choice.

This ability to know (i.e. sufficiency) is described by Kim (2001) as *host communication competence*, or the overall capacity of someone who is new to a country to receive and process information appropriately and effectively as well as respond to other according to the "host communication system" (Ch 2, pg 2). While the natural tendency, therefore, to interact and communicate with native community groups in schools offers support as individuals in the cluster act like cultural brokers, it also suggests that, in the long run, it impedes the process of fully developing intercultural relations as no interaction or communication activities occur among different cultures, which would serve as points of reference for checking and validating their own behaviours.

The major disadvantage, therefore, to cultural clustering is its transition from a *support system* to a *dependence system*. Once the students drew forth the resources and support their needed from relationships within their cultural clusters, the expansion of social relationships outside their own culture was limited, thereby limiting intercultural connections that could offer access to social opportunities with other immigrant groups.

Having said this, the underlying assumption of this social dynamic suggests that there is some potential for building cohesive intercultural relationships in the two schools as most initial interactions were framed by reciprocal openness. In the ambit of the intercultural goal, the next step would be to develop a relational dimension which favours exchange among cultures through contact, cooperation and sharing of experiences (Contini & Maturo, 2011: 3685).

*Compliance-resistance.* A special consideration must be given to immigrant students' loyalty to their native culture and the encompassing socio-cultural script. My data suggests that first generation students were actually conflicted as to how to approach the cultural in their own behaviour. In this discourse, *compliance* denotes the desire by first generation immigrant students to adhere and maintain elements of their own culture. By contrast, *resistance* denotes first generation immigrant students’ desire to expel or eliminate original cultural elements. It is important to note that this tension is closely
related to, but not the same as, the past-future dialectical tension. While social relationships within the cultural clusters created ambiguity regarding the possible formation and maintenance of intercultural relationships, the compliance-resistance dialectical tension refers to individual choice regarding personal identity. The participants in this study felt tension between desire to incorporate and keep apart cultural elements of their own culture. They felt a dialectical pull from the compliance-resistance tension between honouring their own culture within and acclimating to a culturally diverse school. According to the following conversation with Diana, the dialectic of compliance-resistance is highly influenced by the cultural space in which the individual exists,

Diana: At home, actually. Because when I am at home, with my brother and stuff, we mostly speak English and sometimes, my brother he goes to middle school and hangs out with all of the Canadian people and he acts more Canadian and stuff. Like, you are so weird, stop doing that.

Interviewer: What does he do though, that makes him Canadian?

Diana: He sometimes, when he is arguing with people, he hangs out with people that are like...but not really. Like fighting doesn't make you more Canadian but like, the way he speaks.

Interviewer: And are you the same way?

Diana: Yeah, I guess so.

This tension is relevant to both themes of personal identity and integration. Identity-wise, Diana struggles with her own identity practices as she is made aware of her brother's stark departure from their cultural 'tradition'. For example, while she is also speaking English, the language ascribed to the dominant culture in Southern Ontario and her school, at home, Diana is likewise irritated by her brother's extensive behavioural assimilation. That said, this realization occurred only due to the physical space in which the exchange occurred, as the dominant culture in the home contrasted the dominant culture in the school. Integration-wise, this exchange illustrates an interesting ramification.

According to the cultural compatibility theory, first developed in the United States in an effort to explain differences in achievement patterns of minority children, differences in values, beliefs, expectations in the home might clash with those in the school (Phelan et al, 9). While I do not necessarily agree that cultural differences create difficulties and/or issues for students appertaining to multiple cultures, it is suggested by
this specific encounter that cultural identity might be negotiated and transitioned between physical environments that consign different cultures.

Interestingly, when asked what the larger "Canadian" cultural script looks like, the majority of newcomer immigrant students interviewed had a hard time articulating what separated "Canadians" from themselves except the idea that the difference encompassed all cultural aspects, including their way of thinking.

Yeah, you know. Like, the culture is different. Like, the foods, the clothing, everything. (Amal).

Yeah, like, politics is totally different than my country. And the relationships is different cause like, here, two people live with each other as girlfriend and boyfriend but in my country, they couldn't. Like, job, in my country, getting job is hard and to make enough money is hard too. Everything is different. (Ramad, Iran, 19 yrs. old)

The two answers are quite different in the things that are listed, but they do reflect the generality that most participants reiterated when asked about "Canadians". As such, the overarching definition seems to encompass the two major aspects of identity: 1) tangible aspects (i.e. food, clothes) and 2) less tangible manifestations (i.e. attitudes, family relations and so on) (Filpisan et al, 2012: 5526).

Perhaps inevitable, a third aspect that emerged from many students' answers was that "Canadian culture" was also defined by its varied demographics and the intrinsic cultural diversity within its social system:

[There is] only one culture in Philippines and there's like a lot, millions of culture here. (Luke)

No. Cause, like, maybe in different cities but in Toronto it's multicultural. (Ramad)

Canada have a lot of cultures. It's a big country, people from all over the world, I think and many languages and many different cultures. (Anna, China, 15yrs. old)

This is in tune with the grander rhetoric of multiculturalism in Canada that was officially instated in the 1971 Multiculturalism Policy of Canada and which presupposes "racial and ethnic harmony and cross-cultural understanding" (Canadian Multiculturalism: An Inclusive Citizenship, 2012).
That said, some students were not as convinced that the larger Canadian culture is necessarily the mosaic artwork most people assume and highlighted the importance of race in the dialogue of citizenship and overarching culture. In her interview, Luna, the sixteen-year-old student from Greenstone S.S., explains:

No, like, they're like black or white, and Canadians are born in Canada because there are some visa students but the Canadians, the lifestyle, the way they think. (Luna, Vietnam, 16yrs old)

The postulation here is that the prevalent identity in Canada follows a "white" and/or "black" script and suggests that her understanding of who Canadians are, is tied not only to skin colour but also to a stereotypical understanding of how these races behave culturally. This interpretation, of course, begs the question of why these two races are grouped together and what Luna truly meant to say by it. There could be two understandings: 1) she believed the two races are so similar that they could form a larger group, that of the "Canadian" 2) the two races are dissimilar but co-exist to form together the identity of the "Canadian".

Whether this was a real or perceived discrepancy in cultural scripts, intercultural interaction and communication between immigrant groups and "Canadians" was held back. For instance, Ramad explains that he has more meaningful relationships with people from the same community because they are so similar in thinking, making it easier to relate to one another:

Ramad: My relations with the Iranian guys is more deeper than the relations with the Canadian guys because I understand what they think about because they grown in the same community that I did.
Interviewer: Do they ever mingle with each other though?
Ramad: The others? Someone who came to Canada from when he or she was a little child, you know, he or she can like, hang out with Canadian guys cause they grew from when he was a child, they grew here but for people like me that came here when you came...

Some simply wanted to comply with their original cultural script. When asked, multiple participants admitted they felt their identity was more representative of their native country, regardless of the fact that they wanted to engage with their cultural clusters or not:
More Iranian. But maybe by the time, I feel more Canadian...Because of my language, my way of thinking, my culture, my childhood, everything. (Ramad)

Vietnamese. Because it's only been two years. Maybe, like when you're with your Canadian friends, like, when they talk, they make me feel a little bit Canadian but I don't have background. I'm still Vietnamese. Because the culture, because back home, my auntie speak Chinese and Vietnamese and in the summer, I go back to my country. (Luna)

Notice the inherent contradiction between Luna's interactions outside her cultural cluster as described before and her retained cultural identity. This also underlines the reality that even when some students still followed the native cultural script, their behaviour stand in sharp contrast to the "Canadian culture". In her interview, Diana explains that students sometimes have a hard time following the new rules of behaviour and cling on to past behavioural expectations:

Like people who had a hard time because of their culture. Probably like, in their country they used to fight more and here, they start making trouble and stuff. Arguing people and like, they push people in the hallway. (Diana)

Regardless of this, it is important to mention that participants believed some version of integration would eventually occur. Their understanding of cross cultural interaction and communication carried with it the notion that learning new things would automatically shift their cultural understanding of being and doing in society, or at least, influence it. This seems to be in line with previous research that states adaptive changes take pace as long as individuals are engaged in a given sociocultural environment (Kim, 2001).

Interestingly, although some students resisted this effect, most participants also held the prevalent belief that adherence to implied norms and Canadian "lifestyle" was important and wanted to integrate, and even follow the overarching cultural script (exactly, if possible):

Like the way you think is different. You have to change like, you have to get like, match yourself with the culture. Like, there is no specific culture but like, you have to match yourself with the community, with people (Amal)

Alas, the decision to some spend some time with students who were seen as Canadian had its own effect on identity and social interactions among the student interviewed. As
can be gathered from comments above, being continuously engaged with different members of other cultural clusters implied changes in personality as well as views on life.

Interestingly, the two major behavioural characteristics that stood out as being affected by student entrance in 'Canadian' society were 1) the acquisition of more freedom and 2) increasingly open and outgoing attitudes.

As Tareq explains, his own school and personal schedule was monitored less in Canada, thereby ensuring more freedom to develop individually:

Tareq: They really, everyday, they tell me to study hard like, not to waste time or do bad things like go out with my friends. Back in my country, they give me two hours to go out with my friends so like, I had a specific schedule.
Interviewer: Do you have a specific schedule here as well?
Tareq: No, not anymore. Right now, they don't have to tell me what to do.

Some responsibilities, therefore, were shifted from the parents to the child, creating more independence. This is observed by Tareq as something in tune with "Canadian" parents' cultural script:

I think Canadian parents are like, more open minded. They tell their children to do whatever they like. (Tareq)

Whether this is seen as something to be desired, varies among the immigrant students interviewed. Tareq himself thinks that "what my mom tells, she is right."; he explains his mother knows what is best for him and is perfectly comfortable following his native cultural guideline where parents are actively involved in all of their children's decisions. Others, prefer more freedom in general and see this shift as positive, even if it contravenes their cultural scripts. For instance, Mena explains that the freedom she saw in Canada the first time she arrived was liberating, as it did not exist in her country:

I saw people, I saw girls dressing up however they want, such freedom. This is beautiful! They can wear makeup, they can tie their hair however they want. These things were not in my country. (Mena)

The expansion of freedom also affected how their social relations in school were framed. Most students explained that the initial "shyness" they had due to a socio-cultural
knowledge deficiency slowly improved and they are now more open and outgoing, even if that is true within their cultural clusters alone. Here, Diana explains her experience:

SR: Do you think you changed since you came to Canada?
Diana: I'm less shy.
SR: Why do you think you're less shy?
Diana: Because, when I consider when I came to Canada, when I want to talk to people I thought "should I talk to her or not?" and I'm like "no, it's okay!". I was really shy but here, I go to people in Lana S.S. and ask them when they came to Canada and stuff like and we start being friends; like what grade they are in and stuff like that.

Again, according to students, this is in tune with Canadian personhood and the overarching cultural script:

Diana: Like in Canada, they are really confident. Yeah, in my country, they are like really shy so when they go to someone's house, they can't do anything. Like "nah, fine, I can't do this".

This concept of shifting identity as a unique and subtle developmental process immigrant students experience which can lead to the intercultural personhood (Kim, 2001: Ch 5, pg 8). For this reason, of particular importance in this integration process is the development of an emotional maturity and understanding of cultural differences as well as an actual desire to expand the social network outside the cultural cluster. Still, despite cultural clustering and various dialectical tensions as exposed in this chapter, there is hope. As intercultural dynamics unfolded there was some potential for building cohesive intercultural relationships in the two schools as most initial interactions were all framed by reciprocal openness.

This is to say, in sum, that the cultural cluster is not an entirely positive phenomenon; it both offers a vital platform for later cultural sophistication as well as produce some tensions related to it that conduce and/or inhibit interculturality more broadly. The dialectical tensions experienced by the first generation students I interviewed present a complicated image of forming relationships and the relation among them once they have been formed.

*
Conclusion & Implications. In this chapter, I presented findings emerging from a dialectical study of first generation immigrant students' internal struggles vis-à-vis interculturality in school. The interview testimonies of participants suggested that they experienced three major intraindividual dialectical tensions: 1) first, in feeling deficient/sufficient in comparison with other types of peers 2) second, in desiring open and culturally diverse relationships while also wishing to honour and keep such relationships pertaining to their cultural cluster and 3) finally, between complying and/or resisting to original and new socio-cultural elements.

More broadly, the findings highlighted the selective relationships of immigrant students in the school, while simultaneously suggesting the benefits and disadvantages of cultural clustering; social relations within the cluster helped students to navigate school and make sense of their positionality within the dominant culture and effectively prevented them from expanding their socio-cultural network, even when there was desire to do so.

This exploration contributes to our understanding of interculturality, therefore, in that it looks at the forms contradictions take and the unique ways that first generation immigrant students manage the knot of dialectical tensions within their own self (as being a continuously changing cultural identity). This knowledge may be helpful to the students themselves, their parents, and school counsellors to recognize the tensions specific to entering a new schooling and cultural environment, as well as to promote strategies for managing the tensions.

Works Cited


CHAPTER 6
INTERCULTURAL RELATIONS AND IDENTITY: THE AFFECT OF INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEMS

“Any system was a straightjacket if you insisted on adhering to it so totally and humorlessly.”
— Erica Jong, Fear of Flying

I.

Immigrant students' intercultural communication and adaptation in a new diverse environment cannot be fully understood without taking into account the social conditions of the environment. To the extent that immigrant students participate in the social processes of the school, therefore, they are influenced by that school. The conditions specific to the school environment in which the first generation students immerse themselves in, evoke specific responses to peers and/or groups of different cultures by serving as the cultural, social and political forces in accordance to which they (i.e. immigrant students) must work with to increase their chances of socio-cultural sophistication (Kim, 2001). Of particular relevance to this chapter's discussion are those dialectical tensions within the school system that affect (and are affected by) the quality of first generation immigrant student’s intercultural communication and competence.

Specifically, three dialectical tensions have been identified from the data as being the most relevant to the experience of intercultural relations: the receptivity and/or closedness of the school toward first generation students, the inadvertent or open conformity pressure exerted by the school on immigrant students and the underlying instrumental-affection goals of the school environments.

In examining these system tensions, it is also important to recognize that the school environment is not a "monolithic entity but a multilayered and hierarchically arranged complex social system" (Kim, 2001). In other words, the two school environments - Lana S.S. and Greenwood S.S.- which are referred to below, incorporate all levels of the social context, from the macro-level (i.e. society) to the mezzo levels (i.e.
local community) conditions; and, although each layer is distinct in its own composition, it also acts as a metalevel. In other words, the environment focused on here, the school, is assumed to express many of the forces that operate in the higher level of the overall environment.

II. Intra-System Dialectical Tensions

From the interview transcripts, I derived three intra-system dialectical tension categories that highlight the relationship(s) between a student's personal social network, cultural identity and the social conditions in the school. I now look in detail at each of the dialectical tensions - receptivity/closedness, conformity-acceptance, instrumental-affection - and offer representative excerpts from each school, Lana S.S. and Greenstone S.S.

A. Receptivity-closedness. The first tension that emerged from my analysis was the extent of the schools' ability and willingness to accommodate first generation students interculturally. This dialectical pull occurred when participants attempted to access the school for social goals, with mixed success. Receptivity, therefore, can be defined as the accessibility of the school, otherwise known in literature as "communication climate" (Leets & Giles, 1995), through which relationship building with individuals of other cultures can occur (ibid.). The lack of receptivity, or closedness, in turn, is defined as limited access to the school as social medium. A point to be made is that the expression of the receptivity-closedness dynamic, in this particular study, is articulated through the explicit and implicit attitudes of school faculty members and staff such as teachers, guidance counselors and so on towards first generation immigrant students arriving at the school and ranges from maximum interest to maximum indifference.

To move things further along, I now turn to analyze each school and to theorize the ways in which the receptivity-closedness dialectical tension shaped (and was shaped by) each school environment so that we may better understand the intercultural in each case.
A.1. Lana S.S. The following example from a student at Lana S.S. illustrated the type and extent of school social support (or receptivity) for first generation immigrant students:

Interviewer: And how did you meet these girls?
Mano: First, we are in the same class. Teacher, she asked me what language I speak and I tell her and tell me to help. Next time, I go to the girl and ask if they need any help, and sometimes, teachers ask me to help students.

The above excerpt suggests a process of selective social facilitation, revealing the contradictory impulses to be helpful in aiding students to connect as well as simultaneously detached from their social needs. It also underlines an unintentional proclivity towards facilitating cluster formation, presumably, due to the generally accepted idea that personal networks with 'native' communities result in the fulfillment of needed support. While this assumption is true, to a certain extent, in doing so, an underlying message also ensued; that of the "natural state" of concentrated cultural clusters. Indeed, when Mano decided to initiate contact with other students so as to provide assistance, her instinct was to go to individuals of the same culture. Of course, we cannot be absolutely sure it was truly the underlying message that shaped her reaction or her own idiosyncratic choice but it is reasonable to assume that the institution's social expectations played a role.

Similarly, several other perspectives picked up on the idea that connecting with individuals of the same culture is the normal first step in their journey to reconstruct a lost social network. Diana explains,

Interviewer: Okay. What are some things that help?
Diana: Before the students make...have a hard time, especially at Lana S.S., they're all immigrants, right? The teachers help them make friends before they have a hard time. And they call some people from their country. and when the students are in front of the office, and they're alone, they're like "oh, hey! come! This is a new student, his name is blah blah blah..."
Interviewer: so they introduce you to people of the same culture. What about people who, like you, didn't have somebody from their country?
Diana: Oh, I used to sometimes, like, hang out alone. A lot of people, like girls were going together and stuff. I made friends in like, the last minute.

Again, this experience highlights Lana S.S.' seemingly monocultural approach to facilitating relationships. Even when the students did not have access to people from their own culture, the school did not seem to extend their support beyond this approach and/or promote interculturality as a solution for network deficiency. This is not to say, of course, that the school, should aspire to be an omniscient force for cross-cultural (or any) relationship-making. As expounded on by Kim (2001), the decision to engage must ultimately belong to each individual (Ch 1, paragraph 7). However, receptivity on the part of the host environment, which is, in this case, the school, is an important element that can bring intercultural relations when individuals' fear and misconceptions produce a separatist orientation (see previous chapter). The following excerpt from Mena describes first-hand this need for institutional support,

So, after talking to the teacher, I was feeling a little bit lighter. I was feeling that "oh, great! Maybe I'm gonna be better, I'm gonna have a better time here." And then I came here, to Lana S.S, the first day was really terrifying for me. I came into the school, I was sitting on the bench in front of guidance office. There were lots of people walking around me, I was expecting "please, someone come and say hi to me! Please, I'm really nervous, I need a friend!". There was no one who came to talk to me. Everyone was looking at me, the new girl, but no one came to talk to me. Even, I saw lots of people who are now my friends, really good friends. (Mena)

At the same time, Barker (1994) suggests receptivity also tends to be higher in environments where there are a variety of policies and programs to provide immigrant students opportunities for participation in the dominant, or "mainstream" processes. Fortunately, when asked about the opportunities available to first generation students at Lana S.S., the receptivity-closedness dialectic tension tended to veer toward the receptive end of the spectrum, at least in terms of policies and programs. Case in point, several students mentioned several programs that were provided by the school where intercultural relationships emerged, as can be gathered from this student's description of the school environment,

Interviewer: are you currently in other activities outside of school?
Diana: Here? yeah, I used to volunteer.
Interviewer: What kind of volunteer work did you do?
Diana: It was acting class where you practice your confidence and stuff.
Interviewer: and how did you find out about that? How did you become a volunteer there?
Diana: Well, my friends told me about it and then I started volunteering there. and every Thursday there's cooking club.
Interviewer: Oh, interesting. and did you make any friends there?
Diana: oh, yeah, kind of.

This situation is incredibly illustrative. Like many other students, who may or may not have had a cultural cluster to rely on, Diana was given an opportunity to meet with diverse individuals. Likewise, out of the exchange of information, ideas and experiences, friendships emerged, thereby reaffirming the importance of contact as the mechanism for connection with the cultural other. The existence of "programs", therefore, seems to have compensated for the sporadic social interference of teachers.

Interestingly, many perspectives also counted regular class time as pertinent to network expansion as long as the set up was receptive towards initiating intercultural relations with other individual of other groups. Selena, another student at Lana S.S. briefly explains what this "classroom receptivity" should looks like:

   Interview: Do you think there anything that the school can help with, in terms of making friends?
   Selena: Yeah, such as if we have some group work, team work, we can make friends and like, some club, we can make friends there.

The goal, therefore, is an environment where interaction is somewhat "forced" upon students, in that they must be pushed to exit the comfort zone of their cultural cluster. Not surprisingly, perhaps, "group work" and available institutional structures such as "clubs" that are known for the inherent trust and consistent contact among members is recognized, even by the participants, as a powerful tool for such type of interaction. The question that remains to be answered, however, is the following: how can the school motivate students to join existing structures? or rather, how can the school motivate students to develop a culturally balanced network, considering the intraindividual and intrasystem tensions mentioned thus far?
To answer this, more research is needed, although the receptivity-closedness dialectical experiences of Lana S.S. do seem to suggest classroom approach and extracurricular activities available to students are part of the answer.

A.2. Greenstone S.S. Similar to immigrant students’ experiences at Lana S.S., immigrant students at Greenstone S.S. also offered evidence of what I describe as the dialectic of receptivity-closedness. For these participants, however, this dialectical tension differed in nature; whereas Lana S.S.’ focus seemed to be to engage students with each other and facilitate social relationships, Greenstone S.S.’ focus was on providing linguistic support, with the understanding that through the development of communication competences, the social network will naturally expand to include both “cluster” and “local” peers. The following examples illustrate the importance placed on language by the school and its students as central to social existence,

**Interviewer:** and how did you find the experience [of coming to Canada]?

**Amal:** When I came here, my mom had to go to my home country like, I was here with a friend to assess and I did the math and esl tests. They put me in esl a like, the easiest one. And before I went to the first period of my class here, I met one of the teachers that she were from the same country and like, and she talked to me and my mom. Like, my mom came after and she told us something about this school, like how is it, and the first day I came here, I saw many people are like me like, esl c, a and b. I wasn't shy anymore.

Besides learning what came next for Amal academically, he also found that ESL classes in themselves were a physical space for social and intercultural connection, thereby becoming a primary place for expression. Notice, however, the evident relief in finding out that he was placed in an environment where everyone was "like him" and the inherent suggestion that intraindividual tensions are minimized in such a context because language need not be perfect. Likewise, Ramad inadvertently expresses his focus on language as fundamental to social interaction:

**Interviewer:** Did you get any help from the school when you first came?

**Ramad:** Yeah, sure. We didn't know anything about the communication in Canada, and we came here to get help.
The above exchanges, therefore, suggest that this particular school was also receptive, albeit in a different manner. Classroom receptivity, as a general characteristic tended to focus on dissimilar elements, each school focusing on skills and relations respectively.

In light of the above, several students commented on the ability of their school to provide training for students' linguistic skills as can be seen in the following example,

**Interviewer**: and how do you think the school can help new immigrant students who are coming into the school?
**Tareq**: (.) The esl classes, it was very helpful because I always have some problem with the writings so, yeah, I got better now.
**Interviewer**: Oh, okay. And from what you've seen, do you a lot of newcomer students struggle with English?
**Interviewer**: Yeah, I kind of seen because like, the newcomers, they always speak with each other like, from (.) like of the Chinese come they only speak with Chinese.

For Tareq, therefore, the school was successful in its receptivity. However, implicit in his response is that there are other elements that are covered in the language class that my have assisted in his ability and willingness to interact cross culturally. Considered alongside the cluster formation, this passage suggests the classroom acts as reprieve from self-imposed cultural distancing. Likewise, the interview testimonies of several participants suggest that the connections formed within their language classrooms are also socially and emotionally fulfilling, and provide them with a sense of common purpose and shared identity.

Still, some students felt these English classes were not enough, and more help was needed from the school:

**Interviewer**: do you feel you need any help from the school?
**Luke**: I need help from the school about my (.) about the culture. I was asking about Canada, I was asking the history teacher. His name is Mr. [X]. I was asking what do Canada do and what's happening to Canada or smth.

Although Luke indicates here he is satisfied and grateful for the school in terms of providing him with the necessary survival tools (i.e. language), general information about Canada and more importantly, insight into Canadian culture, in particular the ways in which "Canadians" think and behave is sorely missing; in this particular respect, the school system displays a certain closedness, whether it is conscious or not. At the same
time, this manifestation can be said to reflect the *deficiency-sufficiency* dialectical tension and underlines the differing and complex tangents of dialectical tensions.

Similarly, unlike the institutional context of Lana S.S., the majority of students at Greenstone S.S. felt that more opportunities were needed in order for any meaningful intercultural interaction to surface. When asked what the school could do for new immigrants incoming in that respect, many responses referred to possible institutional structures that were more prevalent in the other school. Luna, for example, remarked that cultural events and social opportunities were either missing or out of reach for some students,

Interviewer: can you think of any ways in which the school can help new students who come to Canada?
Luna: (.) I think the system in Alberta is pretty good. People on Christmas or on, lunar year, they will try to make a festival so maybe the [current] school can do more because this year, this school was so boring.
Interviewer: so, have more cultural events?
Luna: (.) and maybe volunteer because so many students like us like, would like to volunteer but they don't know how to speak with guidance, don't know how to ask the teacher so, yeah.

Thus, even through there were excellent linguistic resources, the sentiments described above also imply a desire for more substantial structures be put in place that would allow students not only to celebrate culture but also access it. Having no festivities such as Christmas or the lunar year, therefore, highlights the *openness-closedness* dialectical tension and suggests that, in this particular aspect, there is not much openness. Whether this is done in the attempt to be equitable to all cultures is not definitely clear, but whatever the reason behind withholding these celebrations is, it creates an environment of cultural closedness.

Similarly, it would seem that micro level access to institutional structures such as volunteering, while potentially available, is closed off to many immigrant students as they struggle to voice their concerns. Again, this example highlights the complexity and radiants of these dialectics tensions as the *openness-closedness* tension is affected, in turn, by the *deficiency-sufficiency* contradiction playing out within immigrant students when deciding how to respond to the need to ask for their needs to be addressed.
The openness-closedness tension is also suggested, first in Tareq's comparison of the two schools he studied at, regarding the availability of individuals from other cultures and then also in the much more specific conversation about institutional structures that exist in the current school. Also, note the initial confusion that emerges out of my asking about existing programs.

Interviewer: oh, I see [laughs] did you make any friends there though [another school]?
Tareq: Yeah, but not like outside my community. They're all like, from my community. That's why I moved here, like, my most important reason was like, I wanted to speak more with people outside my community friends.
Interviewer: Why did you want to do that?
Tareq: so I can learn more about the language, the culture, everything.
Interviewer: Oh, okay. Interesting. And can you think of any things that the school can do to help with that or that it can work on?
Tareq: yeah, I agree with everything.
Interviewer: (.) In this school or the previous one?
Tareq: Both.
Interviewer: And there's nothing that they can do to help students?
Tareq: No, they have very good classes and programs for newcomer students.
Interviewer: What kind of programs?
Tareq: (.)like the classes?
Interviewer: Because you said that the school has a lot of good programs for newcomer students. Can you give an example?
Tareq: (.) there is one. I forgot what's it called. They take you around the school and they talk about everything, like the history of the school and everything.

Evident in this quote is that Tareq experienced a desire to engage in cross-cultural interactions at a previous school but was unable to do so. Although he did not mention the roots to this need, he managed the past-future tension by moving to Greenstone S.S. where, unfortunately, not much institutional support was given in this respect either. Indeed, availability of cultural diversity is implied but the rather 'weak' example of "programs" where cultural support was given indicates a lack of helpful institutional structures.

In addition to student responses indicating that they would like to see and benefit from more culture in ESL language classes, cultural events and open socio-cultural opportunities, some first generation students also suggested some practical help was needed in order to fully branch out of their cultural cluster,
Interviewer: can you think of anything else that we can help with and how?
Aryana: I think maybe for our living. Like, you can make some presentation where the space for us to know better about the whole system here in Canada. It will really help a lot and at beginning, I don't know where to shop, how to do laundry but I have my roommates. They can teach me but (.) and also, here, some of us, they stay with their relatives not their parents. they're still international students and they don't have the chance to leave (..) like me, I don't have parents but their relatives help them so maybe that can help.

Interviewer: Do you experience difficulty with things other than English?
Reno: yeah, when I go outside, I can't talk with others. when I buy something, I don't know where they are but I don't know how to ask the (.)

The two students, therefore, highlight a desire for additional help vis-à-vis socio-cultural expectations outside the physical space of the school.

Although one might argue that knowing "where to shop" has nothing to do with culture and interculturality, it is clear to me that this is not the case. This is because in order to understand the "whole system" in Canada and be able /have the confidence to interact both with other immigrant peers as well as "local" peers, a first generation immigrant student must also understand the cultural script pertaining to "mainstream" society. This includes things that are not necessarily acknowledged to contain "culture" in their essence. For example, the feat of buying a coffee at Starbucks or Tim Horton's is more than simply offering money for a cup of coffee. The environment, language behaviour and service expectations are specific to each corporation as well as the more general "Canadian" script. According to Kim (2001), in the literature, this aspect is defined as the host mass communication, which includes "various ways and sites in and through which the host culture is disseminated and perpetuated, such as restaurants, schools, churches, supermarkets..." (Ch 2). As such, a desire for more support in this particular area in not surprising. In a way, however, this particular aspect of the openness-closedness tension did not occur in isolation as it noticeably intersected with instrumentality- affection contradictions, which will be discussed later on and which refers to schooling and relationship goals.

B. Conformity-Acceptance. Similar to the past-future dialectical tension in the previous chapter, the two schools varied in the degree to which they exerted influence on first
generation immigrant students' loyalty to past patterns of behaviour. Conformity, in this case, therefore, is defined as an implicit and/or explicit pressure on the part of the school for first generation immigrant students to conform to the dominant socio-cultural script of the school, whereas acceptance refers to an implicit and/or explicit understanding towards students' original cultural habits and practices. I mention the nature of the school's influence because there is always some degree of either conscious or unconscious pressure, no matter how miniscule, by the socio-cultural boundary of the school.

The most visible aspect of this dialectical tension is found in both schools' official and unofficial policies and practices of English. For instance, even if it is acceptable for immigrant students to speak their own language outside of the classroom, for instance, they are not allowed to hand in or present in their own language during their classes. At the same time, acceptance was extended to students in the form of allowing students to help each other either for schoolwork or becoming accustomed to the new school system by using their natal language. That said, this accepting behaviour was not necessarily conducive to relationship-making per se. As argued above, contact among various culturally similar and different peers increases the likelihood of intercultural connection but is not guaranteed. Even when interculturality occurs, its nature may not be perceived as being meaningful in a social way. As Mano explains,

I didn't have any friends. I had helpers but no friends. (Mano)

At the same time, the conformity-acceptance dialectical tension expressed by the school did not exist in isolation. Most all of the thirteen participants interviewed in the two schools expressed contradictory feelings towards this practice. In a way, their responses mirrored the conflicting practices in the school, in that they both resisted and complied with the expectation to learn and use the English language.

I talk my language when I go home so I don't forget my language. When I'm at school, I speak English. Sometimes, I met Pilipino, I talk in my (.) language. then when I come home, I talk my language with my parents. (Luke, Greenstone S.S.)

The above suggests, therefore, that there is awareness on Luke's part of the danger of learning and using English in school. As a result, to minimize the "damage", he actively
sought to practice both languages so as to avoid losing his first. More generally, his and others similar experiences suggest the intersectionality of both internal and external forces on identity expression.

Inherent to the conformity-acceptance dialectical tension is also an analysis of first generation immigrant students' social reality experience within the dynamics of, on the one hand, being pushed to be part of the school culture and, on the other hand, feeling different and distant from their other peers. As such, this dialectic, as framed by the participants in the two schools, manifests itself in two underlying contradictions: 1) when socio-cultural expectations differed from those of first generation immigrant students' native schools (difference-similarity), thereby changing their behavioural tendencies and 2) when the academic system itself supported and/or rejected their interculturality, with various social effects (inclusion-exclusion).

*B.1. Lana S.S. Participants at this school, for the most part, went about the business of attending class and completing coursework without giving much thought to either socio-cultural differences between school systems in Canada and their native countries or the effects of those differences on themselves and their social reality. When asked about their current school experiences, for example, many recounts included descriptions of their then daily schedule without any mentions to previous schools. However, as soon as the question was relayed, students, without exception, immediately exclaimed "yeah, it's very different". At the same time, during the interviews it became apparent that my participants had difficulty articulating those differences even as they encountered assorted triggers — particular events, social dynamics or discourses— that prompted those feelings of differentness. For example, Mena recounts her first experience with the current school when she first came from Bangladesh,

Yes, so much different. And this school has lots of ups and lots of downs. I'm saying this because when I first came to this school, I was too much nervous, I can't explain how much I was nervous because in my country, I faced a lot of bad things. And I thought that here, people were gonna be even worse. They were gonna torture me or what (...) I was really nervous. So, when I went to the assessment, I don't remember the name of the place, the school, the teachers, I am really grateful to them that they sent me to Greenstone S.S. ...because it's a small school, not with too many students, not thousands of students and there, they really take care of students. It's good for newcomers, she should go there.
Here the participant suggests that despite the various intraindividual tensions mentioned previously (see Chapter 4), the current more accepting environment is, all in all, much more conducive to the formation of positive relationships than the one in her native country. Of course, I do not mean to suggest that bullying (or any other such negative experiences) is representative of Bangladesh schooling but merely to underline that social structure itself is relevant to creating accepting and/or discriminating behaviours. Indeed, when probed a little further, Mena explained that the different socio-cultural expectations of appropriate behaviour were the main roots to her growth,

And then again, I had to Chittagong and again, it took lots of time for me to adjust, just after 3 years I had to go back to Chittagong and there also, the people who were there used to say that she is "characterless". I don't know why they called me characterless, because of my dress up, I think. I don't know. And boys were really, really rude. I didn't go to school properly because I always had fight with them, really serious fight and complain to my mom because, it's not like it's my fault and my teachers also didn't support me, never did support me. They also said this girl is bad. ...

Because everything is so much different in my country. I saw people, I saw girls dressing up however they want, such freedom. This is beautiful! They can wear makeup, they can tie their hair however they want. These things were not in my country.

As a consequence of these experiences, Mena tended by and large, to shift her cultural identity to encompass the dominant attitude of acceptance specific to this school. Without a doubt, negative social exchanges between herself and individuals of other cultures still occurred at Lana S.S., as can be observed from excerpts in the previous chapter, but the fact that she was immersed in the current environment seems to have changed her view on relationships all together,

Interviewer: Do you think they'll be as open and friendly to people who are new to Canada?
Mena: Ahmmm, well (.) it's like 50/50 because there are different people everywhere. Everyone is different. Some can be friendly, some can not be friendly. That's it. I hope they'll be friendly. When I get to another school. I just hope I'll get their support.
Thus, Mena's perception towards the extent of her peers' "friendliness" transformed from a fear that she would be "tortured" by her peers to having hope for social and emotional support on the part of her peers by mere fact of being immersed in the accepting nature of the school's social structure.

At the same time, it is important to mention that there were some perspectives that suggested there are some inadvertent pushes towards conformity to the socio-cultural expectations of the current school. As students reiterate, the general "rules" are explained by other students so that newcomers might follow them in turn,

When I joined the class, the students helped me. Tell me everything, show me your agenda and everything, I tell you what to do and where you are going. She tell me everything (Mano)

They can get someone from their country or some other culture and practice English with them. show them all of the rules, like tell them. and show them their classes. and what activities they do and stuff (Diana).

More specifically, it suggests that such feelings for conformity are typically brought on in encounters during class or in conversations about school related matters, thereby making the identity change almost inevitable.

The fact that the role of teachers is mentioned in the Mena's example is also important. Many students at Lana S.S. experienced vastly different social dynamics between various stakeholders in the current school than were originally accustomed to, thereby changing their perspective on both themselves and the way social relationships could be conducted.

Interviewer: How about teachers [on differences]?
Reno: Yeah, of course. In Canada, the teachers are more friendly. For us, they () for my friends but not my teachers. I like the Canadian teachers better because the Chinese teachers are like (.) how to say that (.)they are (.)
Interviewer: Tough?
Reno: Yeah.

Interviewer: Are the teachers different?
Tara: Yeah, here the teachers are always kind. They can always help you. In China, they are too harsh. They will beat you, like(,)slap you if you do a mistake.

Interviewer: Are the teachers different?
Anna: Yeah. Teachers not (.) Some teachers are very nice but some are not.
Interviewer: They're not?
Anna: In Canada, teachers are all very nice, I think. And they will help you if you have any questions. They will answer you. And in China, no. They sometimes say, I have no time.
Interviewer: They have no time, yeah? Are they mean in what they say or how they are?
Anna: They will punish students if they are fail in a test or they did not do their homework or they talk in the class.
Interviewer: But how did they punish you?
Anna: Hmmm, you can't go into the classroom, you stand outside for the whole day or you do some work, not study. You, I don't know what they say, sometimes you need to [pause] write something.

The other reoccurring theme from these accounts, therefore seems to be a stark difference in disciplinary practices. The tendency of teachers in other countries to be strict, regardless of how it was expressed, in turn, affected immigrant students' so-called "shyness" that translated into their general behaviour and prevented them from initiating connections with both students from their own cultural clusters or other immigrant students.

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B.2. Greenstone S.S. Unlike the case with Lana S.S., participants at this school were more capable of articulating differences between school systems in Canada and their native countries and the effects of those differences on social reality and their cultural identity. Whether this understanding came from the fact that, on average, students at this school had been in Canada for longer periods in Canada than the students at Lana S.S., is unclear. However, some interesting distinctions arose. Foremost, several perspectives argued that the classroom setup was not very favourable to intercultural relationships, as there was not enough time to spend with other peers, presumably forcing students to interact with whom they already knew. As Aryana explains,

Aryana: I think it's kind of hard. I think if I don't have same class with other people, we don't have the chance to talk because here, we change classrooms and we don't have a long break between classes so we don't have a chance to talk and back in China we like, have this class and then we stay together for the whole three years. So, we know each other really well. So, we have chance to talk because we study together but here, I got into this class, I meet this group of people and then I change.
The issue then, was the lack of prolonged contact in class which is presumably conducive to meaningful relationship making. In order to facilitate the necessary space for communication and interaction, therefore, supplementary efforts on the part of the school needed to be made (see previous section). Interestingly, this reality manifested despite stark differences in how school responsibility played out.

Many students, for instance, indicated that previous school systems were much more "tough" in regards to workload and test-taking. Indeed, time was limited in this respect as well, perhaps even more so, but that actually resulted in more meaningful relationships. This stand outs, as the logical conclusion is that relationships formed easier when adversity was the common experience. In other words, even if there was much more intellectual pressure to perform and limited time for interaction, their common experience of difficulty unified students. As Luna suggests, this changed dynamic also affected student attitudes vis-à-vis schooling in general, thereby altering not only student-teacher relationships but also their own behaviour,

Interviewer: Yeah, how different [school system]?  
Luna: First of all, people speak English, right? And then the subjects are really not like (.) not push you like you need to do this, you need to do that and the teacher is really nice, like, you did not yell at you. But sometimes, it's too easy so some students, they're like "I don't care" or smth like that. But, here, make me feel confident, they help me like, to () myself and do my best.

This conversation summarized first generation students' social transformation and highlighted the effect of the two underlying contradictions of conformity-acceptance, namely that of difference-similarity (in systems) and inclusion-exclusion (identity & relationships).

C. Instrumental-affection. Borrowed from William Rawlins (1992), instrumentality and affection, traditionally describe the opposing desires of students to, in equal measure, deepen their relationships with their school friends as well as treat these relationships as the means to particular ends (e.g., do well in assignments). In identifying instances of this contradiction in interviews, however, the importance of the school itself as a physical and relational affect became apparent, thereby convincing me to fit this contradiction at the intrasystem level. Thus, the instrumental-affection dialectical tension is framed as each
school's contradiction between the simultaneous pull of having to facilitate academic achievement and mould its students’ opportunities and expectation for a path of professional advancement, on one hand, and wanting to support the socio-cultural needs of students on the other, as manifested in the implicit goals of students' approach to both cluster and intercultural relationships.

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**C.1. Lana S.S.** When asked to describe the process of relationship making, participants frequently began by contextualizing their tendency to cluster in terms of their aspirations for "integration" in the school. For example, Mena commented:

And the first day I came to Lana S.S., our guidance, she wanted to call two Bangladeshi students but they didn't receive it. I was so excited "Ahhh! They're gonna come and I'm gonna have new friends, I'm gonna feel less scared" but something happened and the call couldn't register the classroom and they didn't come. So Miss H didn't try anymore but I'm not gonna blame her, because she didn't know what my situation was. If she knew that I was this much nervous she would definitely call them and if possible, she would bring them from class. I think every new student that comes, should be given the opportunity to meet someone, just so that that person can help him or her understand that this is the school and this is the way it should be.

The *instrumental-affection* struggle within this student centered around her desire for social inclusion and knowledge attainment, reflecting the dual and contrasting perspectives of schooling. In almost identical fashion, Reno states "I went to school to study and they, they [students] help me." Other participants invoked similar images of relationships as tools for academic success. Though there is insufficient space here to consider in detail participants’ expressed motivations for using relationships in this way, the predominance of instrumental considerations in their accounts is undoubtedly related on some level to the context of their schools' goals (a number of participants were recommended to attend university, for example). Likewise, one might surmise that the predominance of such motivations had some bearing on processes of friendship formation and development. For example, it would be faulty to interpret Mano's earlier description of her classroom peers as “helpers” without giving due consideration to the wider schooling context.

Nevertheless, over the course of interviews, it became apparent that the school was concerned by more than assisting students academically, generally attempting to aid
students' in their emotional needs, either by providing institutional help or facilitating cluster relationships that worked in the same fashion. Remember that Mano, for example, described her friendships as limited to her cultural cluster which did include "other countries like Bangladesh and India.", which were similar culturally, but not countries such as China due to vast socio-cultural changes and difficulty of communication.

Though these experiences, therefore, participants acknowledged that their intercultural friendships were curtailed by the instrumentality and emotional support received from their cultural cluster, as sought by and facilitated by the school.

C.2. Greenstone S.S. Though both schools in the study appeared to experience the contradiction of instrumentality and affection, the nature and extent of this tension varied between the two. In the case of Greenstone S.S., the school's goal leaned towards instrumentality (as opposed to the more equally dual orientation of Lana S.S.), as much support was given towards academics and/or professional achievement. This is epitomized in the following conversation,

Interviewer: Did the school help in any way?
Luna: yeah.
Interviewer: Can you give me an example of how the school helped?
Luna: They helped with English, with my math because I'm really bad at math, not really good. But they say they help, just stay after school or something, at lunch you can meet me so I need my math now.

This exchange offers two insights; one more obvious than the other. First, Greenstone S.S. seems to value intellectual growth and success and promotes an inherent message of academic achievement. Indeed, this seems to align with my own experiences as a student in this school environment. Second, it indicates some root causes to this inclination to begin with. Allow me to explain.

As seen in chapter 3, students who studied at Lana S.S. found themselves in a special situation in that it was a school designed specifically for individuals with transition (and language) issues, which, de facto, included mostly immigrant students. On the other hand, Greenstone S.S. was a "regular" school and although it too houses diverse students under its roof, those students are usually more socio-culturally savvy than the
newcomers of Lana S.S. In fact, most students at Lana S.S. (Lydia excepted) had lived in Canada for less than 6 months, whereas all students at Greenstone S.S. had lived in Canada for more than 6 months. In other words, the student demographics at the two school created different realities.

On one hand, Lana S.S.’s circumstances pushed for both social and academic support in equal measure because its demographic was comprised mostly of new first generation immigrant students. Greenstone S.S., on the other had, was comprised of various students, immigrant and otherwise, with students who had been living in Canada for far longer. Working, I presume, under the impression (wrongfully so) that after some prolonged time, immigrant students would not have any difficulty in finding both cluster and intercultural friendships, the focus shifted then to academic success instead. As Ramad explains, student approaches shifted in response,

Interviewer: Would you go to someone in the school for personal help?
Ramad: No. the more I try to (.) I come to school, I ask for help, more for education and stuff.

First generation immigrant students at Greenstone S.S. found, therefore, that they were also expected to find their own solutions for the problems of connecting interculturally, while the school worked on fitting them into the acceptable academic conventions of the classroom. This was often reflected in an instrumental-affection dialectical tension at the individual level as well. For example, Luna goes on to explain that she uses both her peer connections to navigate her way through the unfamiliar school system,

Yeah (.) because the system is different than Vietnamese school so sometimes I can't understand all of it but my friends sometimes like, explained it for me (Luna)

Consequently, individual approaches were shaped by the instrumental scope that particular relationships offer vis-à-vis the larger instrumental orientation of the school. At the same time, the cultural cluster offered more than academic and knowledge supply, thereby curtailing the need for expansion to other cultures. Case, Ramad states that his activities with his Iranian friends includes things like hanging out but also "study my
homeworks and...do what I am interested in like assignments or something”. Interacting and communicating outside the culturally safe, knowable and helpful cultural cluster, therefore, would mean going out of one's way to from relations. This rarely happened, and in fact, any intercultural relationships that had formed might have to suffer. As Aryana explains, she too had to retreat from her few intercultural relationships in order to fulfil the academic expectations,

Like, at the beginning, because we have the same class a lot and I know her and her friends and other Pilipino and also, Vietnamese or something like that but recently, because, it think, the assignments are getting harder and we need to ask classmates about how to talk about this so, Chinese people, we talk a lot. Recently, I think Chinese friends are more... (Aryana, she too is Chinese)

Considered alongside earlier remarks, these excerpts suggest a degree of tension in student’s relationships, which is likewise evident to a lesser degree in the friendships of participants in the other school. By necessity, first generation immigrant students at school, in general, are required to pass through tests and complete assignments and, therefore, some level of instrumentality is to be expected in their school relationships, including their friendships. At the same time, however, the interview testimonies of participants suggest that their cluster relationships offer instrumental and social and emotional support thereby providing them with a sense of cohesion. Tension between instrumentality and affection therefore provides one instance of how the dialectic of inclusion-exclusion is formed and experienced among students in diverse schools.

III.

Conclusion

First generation immigrant students cannot fully develop intercultural relationships and cultural identity without participating in the social processes of the school environment. They are, by nature of existing in the physical and socio-cultural boundary of the institution, able to communicate only if they are also in accordance with (or at least, partially) the overall social norms and practices of the school. For these reasons, this particular chapter explored the inherent dialectical tensions of the two schools studied, Lana S.S. and Greenstone S.S., so that we may better understand the contradictions at system level that work with individual experience. The interview testimonies of my participants suggested that schools exhibited tensions both in their
ability and willingness to facilitate social connection for this group of students (receptivity-closedness) and the extent of pressure to be put on first generation immigrant students' relationships vis-à-vis socio-cultural scripts. Lastly, both schools struggled with balancing the instrumental-affection goals inherent in schools, affecting in various ways the interculturality of relationships in each school.

Because this study focused on a participant sample that was unintentionally limited to only those who had arrived less than two years in Canada, a specific context was created where the analysis focused on the early stages of intercultural socializing into the two schools. Since the participants were in the early stages of their social relationships they expected things to change over time, and they hoped that the changes would be positive. A possibility for future research might be to explore how dialectical tensions between immigrant students transform over the long-term course of their entire schooling. A particular area of interest might be also whether the so-called cultural cluster effect is harmful to social experience in the workforce or whether they help newcomers advance through the early stages of socialization to a more secure place in society, more generally.

Works Cited


CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSION

In this study, I examined the complexities of personal identity and school social structure in intercultural relationships of first generation immigrant students who arrived in Canada in their early adulthood by analyzing data through a relational dialectical lens. It is expected that their ages and "new arrival" status (i.e. two years or less) inadvertently created an analysis of the early stages of socializing and socialization of 'elder' immigrant students specifically. Because the data did not include younger first generation immigrant students, therefore, it is impossible to tell if their experiences are and/or would have been comparable. A vector for future research might be to explore how dialectical tensions of both younger and older immigrant students transform over the long-term course of their entire schooling. Likewise, the data in this study did not focus on a specific group of immigrant students, thereby limiting the possibility of teasing out possible characteristic experiences vis-à-vis different groups. More research that would disaggregate the various backgrounds and each groups' experiences and needs would potentially serve to improve our understanding of the existent variety of experiences as well as the strategies needed to facilitate interculturality for each. That said, the data did achieve its goals in that it offered an understanding of first generation immigrant students' overall experiences in regards to interculturality at the two schools sites.

Using one on one in-depth interviews with a semi-structured approach, I managed to highlight the intraindividual dialectic tensions that affected (and were affected by) students' intercultural relationships as seen and understood by the participants themselves. First, testimonies suggested that most immigrant students struggled with learning and balancing socio-cultural scripts (i.e. deficiency-sufficiency). This was partly due to the fact that students felt there were unspoken expectations to follow the socio-cultural "rules" of the school while in school. This, in turn, seemed to have created uncertainty about the suitability of being and doing in their own cultural way and a general tendency to group with culturally similar individuals so as to avoid ostracism and/or judgement. Perhaps unsurprisingly, most students were also keenly worried about their language abilities and the consequence(s) of both practicing and avoiding the dominant language (i.e. English), most notably fearing the choice between losing their
linguistic roots and distancing themselves from other immigrant and/or local students. The second most prominent internal struggle referred to participants' division between loyalty to their own cultural group and forming new relationships outside of it (i.e. past-future). In certain instances, a choice had to be made between the two to the detriment of the first, although most students agreed they had a strong support-dependency relationship with individuals from their own cultural group. Finally, there was some tension between the internal "push and pull" of maintaining one's own cultural elements while adapting to the new socio-cultural environment (i.e. compliance-resistance). In this case, it is suggested by students' utterances that adherence and/or incorporation of specific cultural elements depends on the physical space it is expressed in, with the result that, in schools, immigrant students tend to want (and fear) and do emulate (and resist) the innate socio-cultural expectations.

Besides exploring internal aspects of intercultural experience, I also looked at the various intrasystem dialectical tensions as expressed by the students themselves and their discourses. Their accounts suggested that both schools - Greenstone S.S. and Lana S.S.- struggled to provide social support with regards to relationship formation (i.e. receptivity-closedness). More specifically, participants from Lana S.S. suggested that the existence of school programs is helpful but the existent monocultural social support needs to be expanded to other cultures. On the other hand, participants from Greenstone S.S. appreciated the linguistic support offered by the school but felt more cultural assistance would benefit them in the long term. Likewise, both schools struggled with the diverse socio-cultural expectations existent within their physical boundaries (i.e. conformity-acceptance), indicating that schools in general might need to careful in the inherent messages they send their students when practicing certain linguistic and cultural elements; certain policies such as the English-language acquisition focus of the schools (and one might argue the curriculum) might inadvertently suggest a preference towards the language. Last, but not least, the two schools' difficulties in balancing the instrumentality and affection goals of its institutions (i.e. instrumental-affection) created confusion among immigrant students, often compelling participants to tailor their relationships according to demand(s).
In the end, what is clear is that my participants allowed me to successfully reach a deeper understanding of my research questions. Indeed, the first generation immigrant students I interviewed and observed helped me begin my work of understanding the internal and external tensions found in the initial phases of moving to a new and potentially different socio-cultural environment. By looking at both student utterances as well as the implications their utterance made I was able to understand them and their intercultural relationships. For reiteration, my research questions can be summarized as such:

RQ1: What internal/external contradictions are experienced by first generation immigrant students as they socialize cross-culturally?

RQ2: In what ways (if any) does the school affect immigrant students' identity and social reality as they socialize cross-culturally?

To this, my students revealed three intraindividual dialectical tensions - Deficiency-sufficiency, Past-Future and Compliance-resistance- as well as three intrasystem dialectical tensions - Receptivity-Closedness, Conformity-Acceptance and Instrumental-Affection- which affect and are affected by their experiences in the two schools.

II

Recommendations. There are two important considerations in determining a future course of action vis-à-vis the facilitation of intercultural experiences for first generation newcomer immigrant students in schools. First, my analysis suggests different stakeholders such as educators, administration, researchers and especially policy makers, need to acknowledge the inherent dialectical tensions students face when balancing differing cultural scripts and the possible emergence of a support-dependence system of cultural clusters. Indeed, as the description suggests, cultural grouping has both advantages and disadvantages as it simultaneously provides the emotional and instrumental favours needed to adjust to the new host environment and acts as a barrier to intercultural expansion of students' social network. Also, between feeling deficient/sufficient, deciding on cultural loyalty and their own stance on culture appurtenance, the data suggests schools may need to actively support students in the confusion so as to achieve a healthy balance and it is with this that I believe interculturality can be positively altered through offering more help in schools.
Understandably, the work facilitating interculturality is also affected by the level of desire on the part of the students themselves to engage and eventually form more meaningful relationships with both "local" Canadians as well as different immigrant groups. While my research has pointed towards a complicated relationship between desire to participate and resistance, at a material level, social relationships seem to be shaped by existing social structures in school. Open-systems can circumnavigate the complexity of identity and socialization by providing the necessary "space" where the psycho-social, linguistic and structural borders start to break down. On the other hand, closed-systems tend to affect in opposite ways. As such, the intrasystem dialectical tensions presented above suggest the need to create accessible 'communication climates' and reconciling social expectations.

Changes in understanding the school culture are also required by outside stakeholders attempting policy-practice-research partnerships. In supporting first generation immigrant students, more active help might be needed in both training teachers to understand the nature and inherent benefits of interculturality as well as how to apply it in practice. The tendency of both schools studied to facilitate and support cultural clustering, for example, is both beneficial and detrimental. While the cluster offers the necessary social, emotional and instrumental support for incoming new students, it also has the potential for limiting relationships across cultures, thereby, circumventing opportunities for cultural growth and understanding of fellow peers, both immigrant and local. Students' accounts suggest more programs where students of different cultures can connect, appropriate linguistic and social support as well as clear schooling goals are the first steps in minimizing the negative aspects of cultural clustering.

Second, there is a need to consider for policy and practice the implications of individual goals for socialization. While there is the risk of delegitimizing the native community by supporting interculturality, it is important to retain perspective on what is lost when we ignore the mechanisms needed for opportunities in "mainstream" society. Debate continues on how "successful" immigrant students fare after leaving the school system and the impact of social networks, yet it is generally accepted that the lack of long withstanding social relationships across cultures of immigrants affect both their social
integration and advancement in the larger society. For this reason, more research would be beneficial in analyzing the effects of the clustering effect long-term, as the immigrant students move beyond the initial stages of socialization to a more stable and complex existence in the host society.

Debates also rage on the extent and nature of citizenship and the art of belonging. In acknowledging the importance of identity on forming, maintaining and expanding social relationships outside the sometimes constraining cultural clusters, an interesting expansion of this research would be the intricacies of cultural appurtenance. Why do some immigrant students try to detach themselves completely from their original culture? why do some resist the new culture? Is interculturality truly inevitable among and within students?

Last, but not least, interculturality must be a special consideration for policy makers. The cultural field is complex and highly politicized, with various and conflicting definitions, expectations and interpretations. The current educational policy arena in Canada, for example, tends to frame experience in threads of equity (see for e.g. Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009), without much emphasis on the intricacies of cultures in contact. I believe by focusing on interculturality and adopting the dialectical method as a framework, this approach can form the pillars to more open and flexible policy that will recognize the highly localized and contradictory experiences of immigrant students and begin the process of offering more meaningful support. Indeed, the highly elastic reframing of policy-making would aid in eliminating the age old complain for rigidity and impersonal advance.

III

Contribution(s) to Research. This study, I believe, is an important first step for research on interculturality and its various radiants with regards to immigrant student experience. To date, most research on immigrants in Canada has focused on academic achievement and postsecondary success, with only sporadic emphasis on the complex nature of their relationships in school.

Other research has focused on this group as a disadvantaged segment of society that unfortunately experiences social exclusion and ethnic discrimination in the face of systemic inequality. In this environment, there are certain barriers that immigrant
students must surpass, often with negative effects such as losing one's own identity in the process of seeking success. That this study focused on the dialectical tensions concerning interculturality present in both students themselves as well the institutions they are now a part of, speaks to a more nuanced understanding of the social aspect(s) of their realities. In some way, we expect categorization of experience and do not expect students or their facilitating schooling environments to feel conflicted about cultural network expansion and/or socio-cultural guidelines.

The results of study, however, suggests the opposite. Each student and each school investigated seemed to have various stresses to contend with, from student struggle with their community, socio-cultural and linguistic scripts to their experience of the inconsistent institutions that facilitate their learning and social development. This to me indicates that research into the study of immigrant students must be grounded in a framework that sufficiently addresses the situation of today's immigrant and which includes a closer look at the complex nature of their schooling reality. Likewise, the relational dialectics approach I used suggests that orthodox social science methodology might learn from the idea that reality (including relationships, experience and so on) is in constant change and multi-directional. There is a certain richness in looking at both structural and localized experiences at the same time. In other words, my study is important, because it starts a conversation about the need for new ways of conducting research of as well as understanding immigrant students and their socio-cultural experiences in Canada.

IV

Limitations. Although this study has offered some useful insights into intercultural relationships at the two schools, it is not without its limitations. First, the two school systems were different in their natures. While they both followed the same government issued curriculums, they were each designed to serve a different population; on one hand, Lana S.S. was a school designed specifically for students who struggled with English and which realistically housed only first generation immigrant students, while, on the other hand, Greenstone S.S. was a "regular" school, in that it was composed of both a variety of immigrant students (i.e. first, second and third generation) and 'local' students whose families had been in Canada for more than three generations. It is also important to
mention that despite having some students who struggled with English, all of my participants were sufficiently able so as not to require external translators. This inadvertently affected the generalizability of my data in that it is impossible to know how differently (or similarly) students with severe language issues might experience their own relationships and/or their schooling environment.

Secondly, the complex nature of both my unit of analysis (i.e. interculturality) and my method (i.e. dialectics) likewise created generalizability issues. While some possible strategies emerged from the tensioned experiences of my participants, it is hard to know for certain whether these would be apt for helping other first generation immigrant students or any other students with a different status. Thirdly, my close connections to both schools (see My Role As A Researcher) might have influenced me unwittingly; some aspects might be too familiar to me to pick out as a foreign observer would. Likewise, my novice status as a research might have had the same effect.

Lastly, my understanding of interculturality, dialectics and research choices were, without a doubt, influenced by my ever-growing but particular mind frame as well as, unfortunately, my degree requirements; the best example of this would be the limited time frame I had to work with.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Consent Letter (+ Information For Administration)

Dear @@@@,

I hope the school year is going well! Last time we discussed the possibility of conducting a research study in your school I was starting my second year of my Masters of Education program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education - University of Toronto. After completing my preliminary research, I am looking forward to starting to work with you and possible participants. Under the supervision of Dr. Nina Bascia, I hope to conduct a qualitative research study that explores and examine the first-hand
experiences of newcomer students with respect to their needs in the school. I hope to invite 10 volunteer students at the school to participate in this study, upon receiving your approval.

Below I have described in better detail the study I hope to conduct. Also, if you agree to give consent for this research to begin, there is a place for you to sign your approval. Please be assured that student and school participation are completely voluntary: you are free to refuse to participate and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

This study has been reviewed by OISE/UT, by the University of Toronto's Ethical Review Office and will be conducted under the utmost standards of ethical research. Participants can contact the Ethics Review Office at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416-946-3273, if they have questions about their rights as participants.

**Rationale for the Research**

The rationale for these research questions stems from my personal experience interacting with newcomer students living in Toronto and, occasionally, from different cities such as Quebec City, Edmonton or Ottawa. Throughout my friendship with these individuals, I have observed firsthand the various challenges and tensions inherent in the process of integration into the Canadian educational system and the lack of proper mechanisms for support. In my research on the educational needs of immigrant students (term most encountered) I have found almost no Canadian literature which provides insights into these students' worlds. There is some relevant literature coming from the United States but they are only useful to a certain point, as the two countries are sometimes vastly different in their demographics, approach to education and educational
policies. I have found, however, abundant literature and statistics on the rise of migration rates in Canada which suggests that the education of this group is imperative. As such, I felt that my thesis should provide insight into the experiences and challenges that are facing a growing number of newcomer students on the „ground level”.

**Student Participation**

If you consent to participate in this study, 10 students will be asked to meet with me for a minimum of 45-60 minutes’ interviews at a location and time that is convenient for them. These interviews will take place in the winter/spring of 2016. The students' participation also includes allowing me to refer to the proper documentation on school policies, so that I may capture more fully your approaches, practices and experiences as a school in regards to their needs. For example, you may have formal policies on bullying prevention, support for ELL students and so on or informal groups set up such as a buddy system or extra help after hours for students. During the interviews, I will ask them to share their experiences and challenges they have faced as newcomer students and their thoughts on ways in which training and resources may be developed in order to assist future students in similar circumstances.

**Privacy and Confidentiality**

Information collected during this study will remain fully confidential. Audio tapes of the interviews, written transcripts, and notes taken about students' experiences and the school environment will be stored on a password protected computer and will be accessible only to me and my thesis supervisor. The school and student participants will be assigned pseudonyms to protect their identity, and real names will be censured in the thesis at all times and in any presentation/report that may arise as a result of this study.
Student participants will be able and encouraged to review the interview transcripts in order to correct or change information that they feel would reveal their true identity or does not reflect what they meant to communicate. Considering the fact that I will become known to the school openly as a researcher, the identities of student participants may become known to other members of the school. That being said, the topic of the research is not considered high risk. All research materials will be destroyed five years after completion of the study. Any materials provided by the student participants will not be photocopied or reproduced in any way. Any field notes based on observations made at the school will also maintain student anonymity and the anonymity of anyone who is not part of the study.

During the interviews, student participants can decline to answer any question and can stop the interview at any time. Participants are also free to withdraw from the study at any time without fear of negative consequences or judgment.

The school will be sent a summary of the research results via email which should be available to all participants who are interested in my research findings.

**Why student participation is important**

Student participation is important because there is very little research on the needs of newcomer students on the ground level from the perspective of students themselves. Moreover, most of the research on this topic focuses on language acquisition and is placed outside of Canada offering a skewed image of this group. Yet, I believe that studying the ground level experiences of these students would contribute to a deeper and better understanding of the possibilities of providing support and ensuring personal success.
If you consent to this study, please send me a quick email indicating your approval. Once I am at the project, I will ask you to sign a copy of this letter and will make a duplicate for your files.

Thank you so much for your time!

Sincerely,

Sigrid Roman
OISE/University of Toronto
Email: sigrid.roman@mail.utoronto.ca
Phone: (xxx) xxx-xxxx

Dr. Nina Bascia
OISE/University of Toronto
Email: nina.bascia@utoronto.ca
Phone: (xxx) xxx- xxx

I have read and understand the above information, agree to participate in the study described above, and have retained a copy of this information-consent form.

Appendix B

CONSENT LETTER (PARTICIPANTS)

Dear Participant,

I am a graduate student currently enrolled in the Master of Education program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). As part of the program, I will be writing a thesis that explores the stories of newcomer students and their experiences with identity, social engagement and the school/home environments while in school. I believe that your participation in this study would be extremely valuable to my study and a wonderful opportunity for you to share your experiences.

Your participation would include an interview of approximately 45-60 minutes at a location within the school that is best for you. Please note that the interviews cannot be during class time. Interviews will be audio recorded, transcribed, and analyzed by myself in order to further develop my research project. Because my own identity as a researcher will be made known to the school in an open manner, the identities of all/some student participants may become known to other members of the school. Your written responses, however, will remain anonymous as fake names will be used in all written and verbal reports that arise from the project. You will also be able to look at my final analysis in order to correct any misunderstanding(s) that might arise.

Know that your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may decline to answer any questions that arise or withdraw from the study at any time. Because of the anonymous nature of the data (answers/observations) collected prior to withdrawal, it may not be possible to delete it. For example, if certain answers are incorporated in the initial analysis and synthesized but the student wishes to withdraw
AFTER this happens, I will NOT be able to separate the data. If you have any questions or require further clarification, please feel free to contact either myself or my supervisor, Dr. Nina Bascia, at any time. You may also want to contact the Office of Research Ethics at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416-946-3273, if you any have questions about your rights as a participant.

If you agree to be interviewed, please sign the section below. Please retain a second copy for your records. Thank you very much for your consideration!!

Sincerely,
Sigrid Roman, MEd

Principal Investigator
sigrid.roman@mail.utoronto.ca
Phone: (xxx)-xxx-xxxx

Research Supervisor
nina.bascia@utoronto.ca
Phone: (xxx)-xxx-xxxx

Consent to Participate

[] I wish to participate in the OISE/UT project as outlined above.

Participant’s name (printed): ______________________________

Participant’s signature: ________________________________

Date: _________________________

Appendix C

CONSENT LETTER (PARTICIPANTS’ PARENTS/LEGAL GUARDIANS)

Dear Parent/Legal Guardian,

I am a graduate student currently enrolled in the Master of Education program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE/UT) and I am writing this letter to ask for permission to interview your child. As part of my studies’ program, I will be writing a thesis that looks at the stories of students new to Canada and their experiences with identity, social engagement and the school/home environments while in school in order to better understand the possibilities of providing support and ensuring personal success. I truly believe that, by allowing your child to participate, not only will it be invaluable to my research but also a wonderful opportunity for him/her/they to share their experiences.
Their participation would include an interview of approximately 45-60 minutes at a location within the school that is best for them. Please note that the interviews cannot be during class time! Interviews will be audio recorded, transcribed, and analyzed by myself in order to further develop my research project. Because my own identity as a researcher will be made known to the school in an open manner, the identities of all/some student participants may become known to other members of the school. Their written responses, however, will remain anonymous as fake names will be used in all written and verbal reports that arise from the project. Your child will also be able to look at my final analysis in order to correct any misunderstanding(s) that might arise.

Know that your child's participation in this study is completely voluntary and he/she/they may decline to answer any questions that arise or withdraw from the study at any time. Because of the anonymous nature of the data (answers/observations) collected prior to withdrawal, it may not be possible to delete it. For example, if certain answers are incorporated in the initial analysis and synthesized but the student wishes to withdraw AFTER this happens, I will NOT be able to separate the data. If you have any questions or require further clarification, please feel free to contact either myself or my supervisor, Dr. Nina Bascia, at any time. You may also want to contact the Office of Research Ethics at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416-946-3273, if you any have questions about your rights as a participant.

If you agree to be interviewed, please sign the section below. Please retain a second copy for your records. Thank you very much for your consideration!!

Sincerely,
Sigrid Roman, MEd

Principal Investigator
sigrid.roman@mail.utoronto.ca
Phone: (xxx)-xxx-xxxx

Research Supervisor
nina.bascia@utoronto.ca
Phone: (xxx)-xxx-xxxx

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**Consent to Participate**

[ ] I wish to participate in the OISE/UT project as outlined above.

Participant’s name (printed): ______________________________

Participant’s signature: _______________________________

Date: _________________________

Appendix C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
[Pre-Observation Questions]

Personal History: Getting to know you.

- Country of Birth
- Places students have previously travelled to/lived in/studied at.
- Languages Spoken/ Mother tongue and additional languages
- Experiences with learning another language: when, where and how did they learn it?

Current School Experience: Tell me about your experience with education and schooling at this high school

- How long have you been a student here?
- What grade are you? How long do you expect to stay at this school?
- Describe your daily routine.
- What are some differences between the educational environment in your natal country and your new educational environment at this school? Important events that have shaped your interaction with teacher(s)/other student(s)/ school staff/ parent(s)/members of your own community. When did this take place?
  
  Possible follow up question(s): Is your current school's environment more or less fulfilling? Explain.

- What are some strategies you have used in order to succeed both personally and academically?

Attitudes and Perceptions

- What are some positive aspects of being a newcomer student at this school?
- What are some negative aspects of being a newcomer student at this school?
- Have you encountered any barriers to making friends? Explain.
- What can teachers/parents/ peers/ other do to offer support?

Identity Construction
In your own words, describe which citizenship you feel more attached to and why.

What are some cultural challenges that you face as a newcomer student in this school? The community, more generally?

How did you address these challenges? Are there any issues you think the school might be able to help you with? If so, how?

Which group(s) of people have the most effect on how you see yourself? Think of people in your life such as friends, family members, teachers, school staff, coworkers etc.

Socio-cultural Script

What expectations do you have for yourself as a student?

What expectations does your family have for you as a student?

What expectations does your school have for you as a student?

How different are expectations at home versus expectations in the school? If there are no differences, why do you believe that is the case?

Describe an incident where cultural values clashed between your home environment and the school environment. This can include interactions between your friends at school and your family. How did the tension get resolved?
NEWCOMER STUDENTS IN SCHOOL

WE NEED YOUR HELP!! We are looking for students who are new to Canada to participate in research at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. We would love it if you could help us learn more about your experiences in school and how to help alleviate the integration process.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

FEEL GOOD! about participating in research and helping other children

Exploring your own needs and experiences and share your stories.

Receive 10$ worth of compensation and food during the interview!!!

To find out more about the research we are doing, contact Sigrid Roman. email: author@mail.utoronto.ca.