On Challenges, Decision-Making and Belonging: Exploring the Transnational Identity Formation Experiences of Brazilian Student-Migrants turned (Im)migrants to Canada

By

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ABSTRACT

ON CHALLENGES, DECISION-MAKING AND BELONGING: EXPLORING THE TRANSNATIONAL IDENTITY FORMATION EXPERIENCES OF BRAZILIAN STUDENT-MIGRANTS TURNED (IM)MIGRANTS TO CANADA

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Science without Borders (SWB)/Ciência sem Fronteiras (CsF) is a Brazilian migration-for-development program that has sent post-secondary students to Canada or other developed countries around the world to study STEM subjects. The program began in 2011 and has seen thousands of students participate in coming to Canada. Despite the requirement to return to Brazil immediately after the study period in Canada has ended, some former SWB participants have decided to (im)migrate back to Canada, facing new experiences and challenges when compared to their first time in the country. In this paper, I use a transnational lens to explore the factors affecting transnational identity formation for this group of student-migrants turned (im)migrants to Canada. I argue that, by examining the factors that affect the development of transnational identities for (im)migrants, we can better understand the different routes that (im)migrants take and why. My findings indicate that the types of challenges participants faced were both an outcome and a cause of their agency and the development of their transnational identities. The decision-making strategies that participants used to respond to various challenges were also relevant to the process of negotiating these identities and developing a sense of belonging to one or more places. This research draws on findings from the analysis of personal accounts and self-perceptions obtained through semi-structured qualitative interviews with sixteen former SWB participants who have returned to Canada.

Keywords: (im)migration to Canada; student migrants turned (im)migrants; transnationality; identity formation; identity and belonging; social inclusion; immigration discourse; immigration policy; migration-for-development; qualitative methods
DEDICATION

To Renê – thank you for inspiring me every day by your curiosity, humility, and efforts toward self-improvement. You motivate me to want to become the best person and researcher that I can be.
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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

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<thead>
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CALDO</td>
<td>Consortium of the Universities of Alberta, Laval, Dalhousie and Ottawa</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAPES</td>
<td>Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (Portuguese); Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (English)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBIE</td>
<td>Canadian Bureau for International Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIC</td>
<td>Citizenship and Immigration Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNPq</td>
<td>Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (Portuguese); Brazilian National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (English)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CsF*</td>
<td>Ciência sem Fronteiras (Portuguese)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELP</td>
<td>English Language Program at the University of Guelph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENEM</td>
<td>Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio (Portuguese); National High School Exam (English), for university entrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IELTS</td>
<td>International English Language Testing System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRCC</td>
<td>Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (formerly CIC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OINP</td>
<td>Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMP</td>
<td>Peer Mentoring Program at Trent University Durham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNP</td>
<td>Provincial Nominee Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR</td>
<td>Permanent Resident / Permanent Residency status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEM</td>
<td>Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWB*</td>
<td>Science without Borders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOEFL</td>
<td>Test of English as a Foreign Language</td>
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*CsF is the Portuguese name and SWB is the English name for the same program.*
CHAPTER 1: Introduction

1.1 – Peter’s Story

Travelling outside of Brazil and coming to Canada for the first time in his early twenties was an experience that Peter began envisioning for himself almost a decade earlier as a young teenager. Back then, Peter had learned a bit about life in Canada while following the online posts of a Brazilian who had moved to Canada. Peter decided at that time that he liked the idea of living in Canada for himself. Then, some years later and not long after he had begun his undergraduate studies in Brazil, an opportunity arose for Peter to apply for a study abroad exchange program that had just been launched by the Brazilian government. His application to the program, Science without Borders (SWB) or Ciência sem Fronteiras (CsF), was successful and Peter came to Canada while still completing his undergraduate degree. During his exchange to Canada, Peter took English classes, academic courses in his field of study, and spent a semester getting experience in a research lab. Along with his fellow SWB students, Peter learned a lot about how to do things in Canada and what daily life was like. He joined forums and other online groups for Brazilians living in Canada. As he had lived alone during the first few months and walked a lot, he also came across places beyond the typical touristic sites, which was an experience he felt that the other Brazilian SWB students likely did not have. It was a time for learning, exploring and growing; life was good. For Peter, the main complaint was just the cold winter weather.

When the time for Peter’s exchange was up, a short 16 months after it had begun, he returned to Brazil and transferred what academic credits he could. Peter continued with his academic program, for which there was still a year and a half of studies remaining, but he was feeling burnt out and depressed; returning to Brazil had proven to be a much more challenging
experience for Peter than it was to leave Brazil in the first place or to go to Canada. It took Peter a month to readjust to life in his hometown, with the violence in Brazil and negative personal experiences during this time only complicating his ability to do so. He knew that employment opportunities with a decent salary in Brazil were also becoming scarce, so Peter started searching for information about pathways for travelling abroad again soon after completing his undergraduate degree. Peter conducted most of his search for information online. He also had the experience and knowledge he had gained during his time in Canada which served as a starting point for his search, taking into account what he already knew about immigration to Canada and what information he still required. Additionally, Peter had connections that he had established in Canada and in Brazil which he could reach out to if he could not find the information he needed to on his own. Given the pathways for immigration available and the large number of international graduate students Peter noticed during his first time in Canada, returning to Canada as an international graduate student seemed to him like the best option and is what he decided to do. After a year of searching, gathering information, and sending dozens of emails to faculty across Canada without reply, Peter was finally able to find a supervisor and could put a plan in place for his return.

Since arriving back in Canada almost five years after entering the country for the first time, life in Canada for Peter has been full of new experiences and challenges; choosing to return on his own, Peter no longer has access to the support and services that SWB provided during his participation in the program. At the same time, despite being an intended immigrant to Canada, Peter did not return to the country with permanent residency (PR) status, meaning there are limitations to his rights and opportunities. Even after putting hours of preparation and planning into every step he takes, there have been a lot of uncertainties for Peter along the way. Being in a
new city and settling into daily life is something Peter is figuring out as he goes; but he has realized that he is not alone. There are many other Brazilian and non-Brazilian migrants like him trying to find their place. These are individuals who have developed connections to their new home in Canada, but who also maintain connections to the lands where they were born. It is more than a matter of just being here or there, of thinking in terms of borders, of belonging to one place. Peter is still in the early stages of his return to Canada and is taking it step by step. While he dislikes the violence in Brazil, he still is fond of his homeland—especially the weather—and is just used to being there. Thinking of the long-term, though, Canada is where he wants to be.

Peter’s story highlights some key points for consideration. Migration-for-development programs, such as Science without Borders, provide educational and Global South-to-Global North migration opportunities for student-migrants that they otherwise likely would not have access to. These opportunities lead to the formation of various transnational ties—social, educational, professional, economic, and so on—which have an enduring impact on the experiences of individual migrants and their connections to people and places. Migration is very much a public issue right now, in Canada and worldwide. Strong pro-immigrant and anti-immigrant perspectives exist. Despite being a popular topic in the public discourse, there is still much to learn and understand about the different types of immigrants and migrants to Canada and their migration and identity formation experiences. There are a variety of migrants with different needs and identities whom our policies should aim to consider, individuals whose ties, identities and status might fall outside common perceptions of what an immigrant or migrant to Canada looks like and needs.
An international development perspective and studies on international migration tend to examine meso- and macro-level processes that represent issues, concerns and trends in migrant sending and receiving countries. For instance, how identity is affected by the political economy of migration, such as national labour and migration policies in Canada and Brazil, is an important consideration. However, individual migrant experiences are also a critical unit of analysis. A better understanding of the causes and consequences of network formation, integration, decision-making and belonging are relevant to individual identity formation, as well as to these broader trends and processes. The experiences and decisions of intended development agents, such as student-migrants who have gone abroad and are expected to return ‘home’ to develop Brazil, have an impact on the broader goal of international development initiatives.

In this thesis, the ethnographic approach I take focuses more on how the details of decision-making contexts and processes contribute to establishing a sense of belonging and the development of transnational identities for these individuals. Further, the experiences of this particular population of Brazilian student-migrants turned (im)migrants to Canada have not yet been examined in such a way in the scholarly literature. Taken together, these points are relevant to the analytical frame used in this thesis. The central theoretical issues this thesis addresses concern the ways migrant experiences and identities are conceptualized in the migration discourse and policy, which fail to adequately account for student-migrant experiences, and how network formation, belonging, and the transformation of migrant identities go beyond “integration” in the receiving society. Student-migrants develop more than just the transferable skills and knowledge expected to bring a greater benefit to the sending society. Additionally, for immigrants or migrants to Canada or other developed countries around the world, connections to
different people and places often exist simultaneously and vary over time, affecting experiences of inclusion, integration, belonging and identity.

1.2 – Context

The focus on transnationalism that emerged in migration studies in the 1980s (Brettell 2015; Hannerz 2000) was ground-breaking in the way that migration began to be conceptualized as more than just a unidirectional phenomenon. Despite the fairly recent emergence of this perspective for studying transnationalism, transnational migration had, in fact, existed long before being examined this way in the literature (Levitt 2004). Studies on transnationalism and transnationality have since expanded the field to new areas of research on the diversity of migrant connections, movements, temporalities and experiences (Vertovec 2001). Indeed, research on migrant identities has now come to also include the examination of transnational identities that extend beyond national borders. Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004) call for the broadening of the analytical lens used in migration studies as “migrants are often embedded in multi-layered, multi-sited transnational social fields, encompassing those who move and those who stay behind. As a result, basic assumptions about social institutions such as the family, citizenship, and nation-states need to be revisited” (1003). Looking beyond national borders, ‘social fields’ are defined as “multidimensional, encompassing structured interactions of differing forms, depth, and breadth that are differentiated in social theory by the terms organization, institution, and social movement” (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004:1009).

As with most research, however, this is a topic which has garnered a variety of perspectives. Roger Rouse has been critical of “the tendency to examine struggles over collective identities without reference to the related processes by which people are made individual” (1995:352) and the common “view that (im)migrants already possess collective identities in the places that they
leave” (1995:353). More recently, studies have explored the significance of personal networks and the navigation between multiple social worlds for the formation of transnational identities (Gu and Schweisfurth 2015; Robertson 2018).

Discussions on migration worldwide have been marked in recent years by the migration crisis which has seen the growing and ongoing spread of refugees and migrants into Europe from African and Western Asian countries (Berry, Garcia-Blanco and Moore 2016; de Haas 2008; Fargues 2008; Triandafyllidou and Maroukis 2012). This, in addition to the emergence of the anti-immigration Trump era, has resulted in much contention arising in the popular discourse on migration. In the United States, contemporary discussions and policy debates on migration tend to discriminate against and emphasize the criminalization of migrants (Abrego, Coleman, Martínez, Menjívar and Slack 2017; Ewing, Martínez and Rumbaut 2015; Franklin and Medina 2018; Menjívar 2016). The impact of this on perceptions of citizenship and belonging is that it accentuates the division of migrants into categories of legal or illegal.

In Canada, George and Selimos (2017) claim that perceptions of integration as a “one-way process of fitting in” (14) serve to undermine “[t]he transnational, racialized, and political character of migration which underpins the practical challenges that immigrants face (from anxiety and de-skilling, to poverty, housing, and employment)” (14). Moreover, Peter Li has noted the dichotomous, success-or-failure conceptualization of immigrant integration in the public discourse (2003). The construction of citizenship, belonging and integration in these terms is problematic because such categorizations have been presented as binary distinctions in contrast to each other, without offering alternatives. Binary categorizations include not only legal/illegal, but also documented/undocumented, and status/non-status (Abji 2013; Glenn 2011; Goldring, Berinstein and Bernhard 2009; Goldring 2010; Goldring and Landolt 2011; Horton
2015; Lewis, Dwyer, Hodkinson and Waite 2015; Menjívar 2006). Not only is the line that demarcates the separation between two categories often quite vague, but it also fails to capture the lived realities and experiences of (im)migrants, especially those who fall somewhere in between (de Genova 2002:421; Goldring et al. 2009: 239; Kubal 2013; Menjívar 2006). For some, such as transnational (im)migrants, one’s positioning within or between categories of temporary or permanent might vary at different points throughout their lived experiences. Furthermore, binary categorization serves to justify attitudes and policies that facilitate social exclusion, workplace exclusion, and other forms of discrimination against (im)migrants. For example, the failure of immigration, labour and other policies to acknowledge the existence of (im)migrants whose needs, desires and trajectories fall outside the neat categories of what it means to be a temporary or permanent migrant leads to assumptions that (im)migrants must be either one or the other, or else they do not belong. At the core of practices of such categorization is the process of othering, whereby “migrants are positioned as ‘the other’ and are defined and treated as separate, distant and disconnected from the host communities in receiving countries” (Grove and Zwi 2006:1931). Classifying individuals as exclusively belonging to either one group or another is therefore problematic and limiting.

Therefore, it is my view that the public discourse surrounding migration is indicative of the enduring common perception of migration as a unidirectional, temporary or permanent movement (CCR 2014; Pagtakhan 2017; Saunders 2018), regardless of whether the views expressed appear to be pro- or anti-immigration. While temporary migration is usually associated with migration patterns in which migrants return to their home country, the discourse in receiving countries focuses more on the impact of migrants coming to the country (e.g. more competition for jobs, adding to the cultural diversity, etc.) rather than what happens when
migrants return home. The emphasis, therefore, is on the significance of migrants coming to the country and fails to fully consider the impact of multiple, multidirectional migrant movements. Policies are designed with similar common perceptions of migration, and this is problematic for three key reasons.

First, policy-makers set up a whole array of policies that build on this limited, either-or assumption of what migration looks like. Second, the popular discourse around migration, which influences and is influenced by policy, is also shaped by limited assumptions about migration. Empirical data show that ‘immigrant’ is not a one-size-fits-all category. The broad categories for permanent immigration to Canada – economic immigration, family reunification, and humanitarian considerations (IRCC 2018b) – indicate the legal pathways taken to enter and remain in Canada. While these categories might also provide a sense of migrants’ most immediate needs upon settlement, such as information about the local education system for migrants with families, not all migrant experiences and identities are the same. Not all immigrants necessarily want to remain permanently and exclusively in Canada and migrants’ desires or needs might change over time. For any immigrant, employment or personal opportunities in one’s sending country might arise, family members back home might fall ill, and connections to Canada might grow or weaken for various reasons. It is uncertain to what extent a given immigrant wishes to integrate into Canadian society and/or to maintain ties with the people, culture and economy of their homeland. Oversimplifying migrant categories based on temporariness or permanence, or the migration pathways chosen, serves to generalize about all migrants. Generalizing about migrants this way situates them in policies and the discourse as a collective group of definable others, without acknowledging the fluidity and multiplicity of immigrant or migrant categories, experiences, and identities. Static categories and perceptions of
identities do not consider the different factors that affect migrant experiences and which extend across borders and change over time. The transnational connections that modern immigrants or migrants create, maintain, and negotiate play a role in immigrant experiences and how these individuals are incorporated into daily Canadian life.

In an increasingly globalized world, new opportunities for migration have been created by governments and institutions. Canada is a popular migrant-receiving country (Gogia and Slade 2011:8) and has established new immigration pathway programs in recent decades. For instance, the installment of Provincial Nominee Programs (PNPs) (IRCC 2019b) has diversified the immigration and migration opportunities available to different types of migrants. In migrant-sending countries, particularly those considered ‘developing nations’, this has also been seen with the government support of migration-for-development initiatives such as study abroad exchange opportunities for post-secondary students. These include programs such as Science without Borders (SWB), as described in Peter’s story. SWB is an example of a contemporary Brazilian migration-for-development program in which the promotion of student mobility has been established through partnerships with multiple countries around the world (Ciência sem Fronteiras. n.d.d). By sending university students abroad to study in developed countries, the goal has been to encourage temporary mobility for a few (the students), to ultimately benefit the mass (residents of Brazil), by increasing the skills and human capital of the labour force. However, as Peter’s story indicates, despite the requirement to return to Brazil immediately after the study period in Canada has ended, some former SWB program participants wish to return to Canada. For former SWB students who have been successful in returning to Canada, the settlement process has involved facing new experiences and challenges beyond those they faced as student-migrants. These experiences have resulted in the formation and negotiation of
transnational identities for these individuals which lie outside the scope of current immigration policy and migration discourse. My thesis focuses on these former students, confronting issues of transnational identity in the face of persistent simplistic migration discourses.

The motivations of institutional actors in Canada and Brazil and how macro-level political economic processes—such as the neoliberalization of universities—impact identity formation are central to broader, macro- and meso-level analyses; however, a more micro-ethnographic approach is better suited to the purposes of this study. This thesis examines key theoretical issues of how migrant experiences and identities are understood, transformed and negotiated within and across different social fields, particularly for a population of student-migrants turned immigrants. In doing so, this thesis contributes micro-level insights on the relationships among facing challenges, making decisions and developing a sense of belonging in order to develop a better understanding of transnational identity formation processes.

1.3 – Aims of this Study

The specific research questions that my research aims to address are: What factors have contributed to the transnational identity formation experiences of Brazilian student-migrants turned (im)migrants to Canada? And, in light of these factors, how have their identities been maintained or transformed throughout the different stages of their (im)migration journeys? To answer these questions, I will discuss and analyze findings from data collected during semi-structured interviews with 16 former SWB participants who have returned to Canada. The broader aim of this study on Brazilian student-migrants turned (im)migrants to Canada is to examine participants’ self-perceptions and personal accounts in order to better understand the experiences of a group of individuals whom our (im)migration policies and discourse fail to fully consider. This thesis will argue that, by examining the factors that affect the development of
transnational identities for (im)migrants, we can better understand the different routes that (im)migrants take and why. Canada is a country that welcomes thousands of diverse new (im)migrants every year, continuously changing the composition of the country. Thus, there is a need for increased awareness and openness to the different (im)migrant identities that exist in Canada. A heightened awareness and openness to different (im)migrant identities will provide an opportunity to better understand and address these individuals’ needs and challenges, how they fit within or navigate the immigration policies in place, and what efforts can be made to make Canada a more inclusive society for diverse types of (im)migrants whose realities fall outside of current understandings of immigrant categories and experiences.

In particular, I will explore the transnational identity formation experiences of Brazilian student-migrants turned (im)migrants to Canada by analyzing the factors that have affected their sense of belonging, their (im)migration-related decision-making, and the challenges that they have faced throughout their (im)migration journeys. In doing so, this thesis will contribute new understandings, experiences and perceptions of (im)migrant identities to extend those currently seen in Canadian immigration policy and the media and public discourse. An increased public awareness might serve to encourage public discussions of (im)migration that reflect a more informed understanding of diverse (im)migrant experiences and positionalities.

1.3.1 – Terminology

In this thesis, I employ the terms ‘(im)migrant’ and ‘(im)migration’ when analyzing and discussing the experiences of this study’s participants. While the term ‘immigrant’ refers to an individual whose international movement to a new community is permanent, the term ‘migrant’ refers to an individual whose movement may not necessarily be permanent and it may be either
domestic or international in nature (Foner 2003:16; Horevitz 2009:748). The term ‘(im)migrant’ reflects the dynamic—and, at times, indeterminate—nature of the status and identities that these individuals possess. The target population of this study is former SWB students whose goal in returning to Canada is to achieve permanent residency (PR) status; however, the path to achieving this is neither straightforward nor easily accessible without certain types of settlement support and information.

1.4 – Science without Borders (SWB)/Ciência sem Fronteiras (CsF)

The focus of this research project, namely the experiences of this study’s participants, would not have been possible or come to fruition as they did had it not been for participants’ opportunity to take part in the Brazilian Science without Borders (SWB)/Ciência sem Fronteiras (CsF) program. The following sub-sections will provide some contextual information about the program itself followed by information about its relevance to Canada.

1.4.1 – About the SWB Program

Science without Borders (SWB)/Ciência sem Fronteiras (CsF) is a Brazilian government- and privately-funded migration-for-development program (CBIE 2018) that sends post-secondary students to Canada or other developed countries around the world “to study internationally in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) subjects” (Canada 2014). The program began in 2011 and was developed with the goal of encouraging and supporting participants in the accumulation of transferable knowledge and skills to bring back and contribute to developing Brazil (Ciência sem Fronteiras n.d.e). While five streams were launched with the establishment of SWB in 2011 (Government of Brazil 2012), the program has seen the implementation of seven different streams in total since it was first created. These
include the ‘Graduação Sanduíche’ or ‘Graduate Sandwich’ stream, which in English is the equivalent of an undergraduate exchange stream. There has also been a Technologist stream, a Technological Development stream, a Doctoral Exchange stream, a Doctoral Full-Degree stream, a Post-doctorate stream, and a Professional Masters stream (Ciência sem Fronteiras n.d.a, n.d.d).

The first of these streams, the undergraduate exchange stream, is the most relevant to the experiences examined in this thesis. To participate in the undergraduate exchange stream, SWB students had to have completed no less than 20% and no more than 90% of the required courses for their undergraduate studies in Brazil (Ciência sem Fronteiras n.d.b). As part of the application process, SWB applicants were required to achieve a passing language test score, proving proficiency in the host country’s official language. They also had to complete a medical exam, and to meet other specific academic requirements (CAPES 2015a: 6,7).

In 2014, the SWB program released its last call for applications for the undergraduate exchange stream, and this particular stream was discontinued after a four-year run (Ciência sem Fronteiras n.d.a, n.d.c). Since then, the SWB program has continued to exist through its other streams. Upon completion of the exchange period, the length of SWB students’ return obligation is equivalent to the time spent abroad (CAPES 2015b: 35). This return obligation is outlined in the contract SWB students sign in order to participate in the program. If students do not return to Brazil after SWB and remain there for the full length of their return obligation, they may face consequences. This might include having to pay back some of the government funding provided during their participation in the program. For example, if a SWB student spent 12 months abroad participating in the program, they would have to return to Brazil almost immediately afterwards and remain a resident of Brazil for at least the following 12 months. In this thesis project, 15 of
the 16 participants completed the SWB experience during their undergraduate studies—in other words, through the ‘Graduate Sandwich’ stream—while one participant took part in the program’s Doctoral Full-Degree stream.

1.4.2 – SWB in Canada

By March 2015, over 6,500 students had participated in coming to Canada through the SWB program (Sarmento, Thiago & Andreotti 2016; Grieco 2015). Nation-wide, at least 95 post-secondary institutions have participated in hosting SWB students, including 32 colleges and 63 universities (CICan 2015:15; Stevenson 2015). For the fifteen participants in this study who participated in the undergraduate exchange stream, the SWB experience lasted between 12 and 16 months, depending on whether participants completed three or four semesters abroad. For the sole participant who participated in the doctoral full-degree stream, the SWB experience lasted for four years. SWB students travelling to countries where English was an official national language, such as Canada, were required to complete an English language proficiency test such as TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or IELTS (International English Language Testing System). If they achieved a score on the test that was below the level required at the institution where they would study during SWB, an additional 4-month semester in which to take English classes extended their 12-month exchange to a total of 16 months. In this case, students would begin their SWB exchange with a 4-month semester of English classes, followed by two semesters of academic courses in their field, as well as a 4-month internship or research project experience (CBIE 2018). The internship or research project component was usually completed during the summer semester, from May until August. In this study, nine of the sixteen participants completed a semester of English at the beginning of their SWB experience while the other participants did not.
Through its different funding bodies, the Brazilian government provided financial support to enable students to participate in the SWB program. These funding bodies included the Brazilian Federal Agency for Support and Evaluation of Graduate Education, known as CAPES (CBIE 2018), which is a funding body of the Ministry of Education (IIE 2019), or the National Council of Technological and Scientific Development (CNPq). The organization of financial support for students during SWB was overseen administratively by the Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE) or the Consortium of the Universities of Alberta, Laval, Dalhousie and Ottawa (CALDO) (Canada 2015; CBIE 2018). These administrative bodies managed the payment of tuition fees directly to the academic institutions (CAPES 2015b:22), while the funding that SWB students received directly during their participation in the program included monthly installments to cover the cost of rent, food, and other living expenses; a larger initial installment to help students get settled; funding to cover the cost of school supplies; funding to cover the cost of relocating, such as airfare to and from the host country; and, funding for health insurance (CAPES 2015b:15-19; Ciência sem Fronteiras n.d.b).

1.5 – International Students and Graduate Migration in Canada

The previous sections in this chapter provided some background information on the SWB program and SWB in Canada. The following section will now provide an overview of the post-secondary education system in Brazil, the presence of post-secondary international students in Canada, and the immigration pathways available to international student-migrants or graduate migrants in Canada. This will be helpful for framing some of the institutional, economic and social contexts of the environments in countries from which SWB students and other student-migrants are sent, and the environments where they arrive.
1.5.1 – Post-secondary Education in Brazil

In Brazil, there are both public and private post-secondary institutions. Brazil’s federal and state universities are public, government-funded and widely considered to be some of the best in the country (Times Higher Education 2017). The university admissions process in Brazil is different from that in Canada, primarily in the sense that students who want to be admitted to a university in Brazil typically write an entrance exam known as ENEM. While not standardized, it has become very popular in recent years and is used by universities in assessing students’ eligibility for program admissions as well as scholarships (ENEM 2018). In fact, applicants to the SWB program’s undergraduate exchange stream who had written ENEM in or after 2009 had to have achieved a score of 600 points in order to be eligible for SWB. If applicants had not achieved a score of 600 points or more, they did not meet the first criterion for SWB eligibility and could not proceed with the application process (CAPES 2015a: 7; Ciência sem Fronteiras n.d.b). Also different from Canada is that professional degrees, such as medicine and law, are direct-entry from high school and completed as Bachelor’s degrees in Brazil, or ‘bacharelados’, similar to other undergraduate programs (MEC 2017; Mundo Vestibular 2019). Bachelor’s degrees in Brazil, depending on the nature of the program, typically take between three and six years to complete (MEC 2017; Mundo Vestibular 2019), whereas Bachelor’s and Honours Bachelor’s degrees in Canada are structured as 3-year and 4-year programs, respectively.

As noted by participants in this study, the main costs of attending a public university in Brazil are those associated with living expenses as well as any research-related costs. Additionally, financial support in the form of scholarships, bursaries and subsidies (e.g. monthly food allowance) may be available for students from their institutions. In December 2016, it was announced that there would be funding cuts to the support provided by the Brazilian government.
for science, technology and education programs (Siqueira and Duarte Rocha 2017: 812). Moreover, recent media reports have focused on the challenges university students in Brazil face in finding employment upon graduation, including former SWB participants (Ferreira 2018), which is often attributed to the current political and economic crisis in Brazil. Studies have also noted that a common career goal for university graduates is to attain a public service position rather than necessarily work in industry or elsewhere in their field (Albrecht and Krawulski 2011). Indeed, having a university degree entitles successful public position applicants to a higher entry-level salary than applicants without a degree (Presidência da República 2013), which may be seen as an incentive in itself to apply for a public position, regardless of the job market. As with SWB, students pursuing a post-secondary education in Brazil might also encounter opportunities to study abroad and gain international experience. According to a recent survey conducted by the Brazilian Educational and Language Travel Association (Belta), from 2017 to 2018 there was a 20.5% increase in the number of Brazilian students studying abroad. Moreover, Canada continues to be the most popular destination country for Brazilian student-migrants (ICEF 2019). Canada has not only welcomed SWB students from Brazil, but has hosted and continues to host an increasing number of post-secondary students from different countries around the world.

1.5.2 – Post-secondary International Student Population in Canada

Statistics Canada (2018) reported that, in the 2016-2017 academic year, international students represented approximately 12% of all students enrolled in post-secondary programs in Canada. If we look at data provided by one of the academic institutions that received SWB students, the University of Guelph, a similar percentage is found. According to the University of Guelph’s 2017-2018 Fact Book, international students represented 3.6% of the university’s
undergraduate student body and 15.4% of the graduate student body, respectively, in the 2017-2018 academic year (2018:14). This amounts to approximately 1400 students out of a total student body population of around 29,500 (University of Guelph 2018:10). In addition to international students completing full-degree programs in Canada, there are international students studying in Canada as part of the numerous exchange programs.

Overall, the number of international students attending post-secondary institutions in Canada has increased rapidly in recent years, even surpassing the growth rate of domestic student enrollment (Statistics Canada 2018). To further illustrate this point, a recent article in the University of Toronto’s student newspaper, *The Varsity*, notes that the representation of international students in the University of Toronto’s student population has jumped from 10% a decade ago to 22% in 2017 (Takagi 2019). Moreover, the University of Guelph’s 2017-2018 Fact Book states that, between 2013 and 2017, undergraduate international student enrollment increased by 58.6%, and graduate international student enrollment increased by 27.8% (2018:14). It is also worth noting that international student tuition fees at many post-secondary institutions nation-wide are significantly higher than the domestic tuition fee rate (Anderson 2015; Statistics Canada 2019). Given the potential profit to be accrued from recruiting international students who pay more in tuition, there may be incentive for institutions to promote the internationalization of the student body (Anderson 2015). While paying higher tuition fees is hardly an incentive for studying abroad—although most institutions have at least some opportunities for funding and/or scholarships—obtaining a Canadian graduate degree might open the doors to a path toward immigration.
1.5.3 – Graduate Migration and Immigration Pathways

While several pathways for immigration to Canada exist, a discussion of the immigration programs open or accessible to graduate migrants in Canada is helpful for further contextualizing the experiences of participants that I examine in this thesis. In Canada, the main classes of immigration include skilled workers, family sponsorship, and economic immigration. In addition, some temporary pathways have been designed to result in a path toward permanent residency, such as the Interim Pathway for Caregivers that was launched in February 2019 (IRCC 2019a, 2019c). Provincial Nominee Programs (PNPs) also exist with the purpose of targeting “workers who: have the skills, education and work experience to contribute to the economy of a specific province or territory; want to live in that province; and want to become permanent residents of Canada” (IRCC 2019b). PNPs are province-specific with different streams or pathways to specially target students (Robertson 2013:29), for example, or “business people, skilled workers [and] semi-skilled workers” (IRCC 2019b).

In Ontario, there are several Ontario Immigrant Nominee Programs (OINPs), all branched under three different job offer categories. These include the employer job offer category, the human capital category, and the business category (Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade 2019a). Within the human capital category there are two-subcategories, specifically “the international graduate streams and Ontario’s Express Entry streams” (Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade 2019a). The first of these, the international graduate streams, includes the Masters Graduate Stream (for specific program information, see: Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade 2019b) and the PhD Graduate Stream (for specific program information, see: Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade 2019c). These international graduate migration streams
are the result of a fairly recent shift in Canadian immigration policy to facilitate PR status for students when they have completed their programs (Williams, Williams Arbuckle, Walton-Roberts, and Hennebry. 2015 2015:11). Moreover, this shift seemingly undermines the idea of migration-for-development as it may in fact lead to brain drain from developing countries, a topic discussed in section 2.3.1. In addition to their possible eligibility for one of these two international graduate streams, recent international graduates—depending on their personal circumstances—might also qualify for application to one of the family sponsorship programs (e.g. spousal or common-law sponsorship). It is less likely that recent graduates with little or no work experience would meet the eligibility requirements for any of the skilled worker or economic immigration pathways. Research on graduate migration will be further discussed in the second chapter of this thesis as part of the literature review and discussion on the theoretical framework.

1.6 – Significance

While the Anthropology of Migration and the Anthropology of Development are well-established and growing fields of scholarship, the experiences of student-migrants turned (im)migrants from the Global South to the Global North have only recently become a focus of studies in these arenas (see: Chira 2016; Robertson 2013, 2018). In this study, I draw on Robertson’s use of the term ‘student-migrants’ to describe participants as “mobile subjects who arrive within a nation-state on a student visa, but transition subsequently to different forms of temporary or permanent migrant status” (2018:539). This research will examine the transnational identity formation experiences of a sample of second-stage (im)migrants whose (im)migration journeys first began when they became temporary student-migrants participating in a migration-
for-development program, namely SWB. Although the significance of a sense of belonging, social inclusion and the challenges (im)migrants face has been touched upon in the social science literature for its impact on identity formation (see, for example: Anthias 2008; McCrone and Bechhofer 2008), this research will consider the experiences of a particular population of student-migrants turned (im)migrants to Canada that have not been examined in such a way in past studies.

This research will produce ethnographic contributions to the anthropological literature on Brazil-Canada relations, contemporary Brazilian (im)migration to Canada, and the impacts of post-secondary migration-for-development programs. In particular, the relation between student-migrants turned (im)migrants’ identity formation processes, feelings of social inclusion, and (im)migration-related decision-making has not been a dominant focus in ethnographic studies conducted in this area. The findings produced by this study will help to develop this area of studies further, even if only through a small contribution.

Additionally, this research will contribute to enriching the public discourse on social inclusion and belonging for student and other (im)migrants to Canada. It will facilitate a better understanding of how (im)migrants’ interactions with individuals and institutions affect their sense of belonging in Canadian society, as well as the relevance of transnationalism to the discourse and policies on (im)migration. How and if (im)migrants to Canada feel they belong and are accepted by society is likely to influence their sense of national or transnational identity. This research will address how an examination of the experiences and challenges that (im)migrants to Canada face can help raise awareness and encourage efforts that support social inclusion. This, in turn, will increase the potential for informing policy-makers who can mobilize formal change so that Brazilian and other student-migrants turned (im)migrants’ needs can be
better met and their inclusion in Canadian society better supported. This topic is vital to broader discussions of the needs and experiences that shape the (im)migration journeys and identity formation processes for the various (im)migrants in our Canadian cities today and in the future. Further, this topic is relevant to discussions regarding the effects that global migration will have on the diverse needs and policies of our future cities and the types of significant and positive change that members of society can make to accommodate them.

1.7 – Organization of Chapters

In this introductory chapter, I have presented key concepts and information regarding the focus of my Master’s research and the direction that my thesis will take. After introducing the topic through Peter’s story and situating it within the larger context and specific aims of this study, I explained my use of the terms ‘(im)migrant’ and ‘(im)migration’ throughout this thesis. I then provided further background information on the SWB program and the relationship between the SWB program and Canada. This was followed by a brief overview of the post-secondary education system in Brazil, the post-secondary international student population in Canada, as well as the PNPs and other (im)migration pathways for graduate migrants to Canada. Following this, I outlined in more detail the significance of the topic that I explore in this thesis. I will now provide a description of the organization of the four subsequent chapters.

Throughout this thesis, I incorporate and draw on the perceptions and information that was shared by this study’s participants during semi-structured interviews. I use pseudonyms for all participants as part of the measures taken to maintain confidentiality. Additionally, I draw on the works discussed in chapter two. The discussion in chapter two is structured around four broad bodies of literature beginning with the anthropology of migration, immigration and transnationalism. The second topic focuses on works examining the migration-development
nexus and graduate migration. This is followed by literature on social inclusion, belonging and identity formation. The last part of the discussion is organized around literature on policy, discourse and immigrant integration. Following this, chapter three outlines the research methodologies and procedures undertaken in the process of planning, conducting, analyzing and writing up the research, which has resulted in this thesis project. In chapter four, I discuss the findings and analyze the data. The three main themes that emerged from the data are decision-making and information-seeking strategies, encountering challenges, and belonging and identity. Within each theme I present a list of the sub-themes that will be discussed and analyzed for the role they played in the manifestation of participants’ transnational identity formation processes. Chapter five, the conclusion, provides a review of the aims, findings, and theoretical contributions of this research. I also examine the perspectives participants shared on how the findings from this study might be put to use. After this is a more detailed discussion of some limitations to the study. I then conclude the chapter with suggestions for practical applications of this study and possible future directions for further research.
CHAPTER 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 – Introduction

This research combines a number of theoretical approaches and insights from various bodies of literature to consider the role that a sense of belonging, one’s support and social networks, (im)migration-related decision-making, and challenges faced play in the transnational identity formation of Brazilian (im)migrants to Canada. The first section of this review looks at research that has been done in the anthropology of immigration, migration and transnationalism and from that review, identifies how studies of student-migrants turned (im)migrants warrant further research. The second section provides a review of the main perspectives on the migration-development nexus and migration development theory, as well as the growing interest in graduate migration at both a regional and international level. Following this is a discussion of the literature on inclusion, belonging, social network and identity formation for immigrants and other types of migrants to Canada. This includes a consideration of the anthropological and sociological research on (im)migrant access to settlement resources, services and support in Canada, as well as research that has been done in other disciplines. The fourth and final section outlines scholarly perspectives on popular migration discourse, immigration policy and immigrant integration, with an emphasis on the ways in which inclusion, exclusion, and national identity have been considered and discussed.

2.2 – Anthropology of Migration, Immigration and Transnationalism

The Anthropology of Migration is an evolving field undergoing transformation at the same time that migration patterns around the world are taking on new forms and being examined from new perspectives in the literature. When new types of migration or (im)migrants emerge faster than researchers are able to take notice—or at least faster than it is possible to design,
conduct, and complete a study on the topic—gaps in the literature emerge, such as those on the transnational identity formation experiences of student-migrants turned (im)migrants to Canada.

To provide some historical context, anthropological studies of migration emerged later than in other social sciences disciplines due to the tendency of anthropologists to view “cultures as discretely bounded, territorialized, relatively unchanging, and homogeneous units” (Brettell 2015:148). By the mid-twentieth century, anthropological ideas and conceptualizations of culture became less fixed and “thinking and theorizing about migration became increasingly possible” (Brettell 2015:148). The field of migration studies began to grow quickly. Just a decade or two later, in the 1970s, an interest in return migration—the processes by which migrants voluntarily or involuntarily return to their homelands (Gmelch 1980)—arose (Brettell 2003:47). Since then, types and processes of migration have diversified further just as different world economies and social and political systems have continued to change over time. Globalization has led to a “global restructuring of capitalism” that has enabled the maintenance of transnational interconnections for migrants (Glick Schiller 2003:103) and thus has implications for anthropological theory and methods in the study of local communities (Kearney 1995:548). In the 1980s and 1990s, transnational approaches to migration began to emerge in anthropology and other social science disciplines (Hannerz 2000; Jeffery and Murison 2011:131). Elizabeth Horevitz’s (2009) review of immigration theories developed within and outside the discipline of anthropology argues for the importance of an interdisciplinary approach in this field (745). At the same time, Horevitz stresses the importance of recognizing anthropology’s contribution to theories of immigration and transnationalism as she explores the frameworks that have contributed to modern studies in this field and the critiques that have been made (746). Given this recognition of anthropology’s contribution, I will examine the factors which have led to the
maintenance or neglect of transnational interconnections for student-migrants turned (im)migrants to Canada through an anthropological lens, which will include the testing of other theories, such as social identity theory.

2.2.1 – Transnationalism(s), Translocality, Mobility and Transformation

‘Transnationalism’ refers to the transcendence of relationships, institutions and systems beyond national borders (Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc 1995; Vertovec 2001:573). Steven Vertovec (2001) notes that arenas and forms of transnational manifestation may vary in scope and time, with such variance being dependent on the maintenance and frequency of connections and communication. He offers that, instead of conceptualizing transnationalism as a single theory, “we may do better to theorise a typology of transnationalisms and the conditions that affect them” (Vertovec 2001:576). ‘Transmigrant’ is a term that refers to those who maintain identities and ties to both their natal societies and the societies to which they immigrate (Schiller et al. 1995:48). Transnationalism and the study of transmigrants have been prominent features in anthropological and sociological contributions to the literature since the early 1990s. Some of these studies have focused on the challenges brought about by limited English language skills and undocumented status (Margolis 1994, 1995). Maxine L. Margolis (1995) is one of the pioneers in her field, having begun her studies of the Brazilian community in New York City in the 1980s. Margolis coined the term “yo-yo migration” (1994:263) to define “the remigration to the United States of immigrants who have purportedly returned home ‘for good’” (1995:32). Other scholars, such as Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt, have argued that transnationalism arising from the sponsorship of states and multi-national corporations, known as “transnationalism from above”, needs to be distinguished from grassroots-based forms of transnationalism, or “transnationalism from below” (1999).
Geographers David Conradson and Deirdre McKay employ the term ‘translocal subjectivities’ to acknowledge “the fidelity and commitment that most transnational migrants continue to feel towards family, friends and community in particular locations” (2007:168). They present a discussion of three relevant elements for translocal subjectivities, including the significance of geographic mobility and continuous positioning or self-positioning; the significance of specific localities rather than nation-states to the development of migrants’ selfhood; and, the significance of emotional states that are inherent to mobility (2007:168-169).

Sarah J. Mahler (1998) has noted that mobility appears to be a key issue in studies on transnationalism; yet attention should also be paid to a wide variety of transnational connections and mobility, not just the ability to physically move between multiple places, or “here” and “there” (76,77). In a case study on how selfhood is experienced by student-migrants inhabiting urban spaces as translocal subjects in Australia, Shanthi Robertson notes the significance of social interactions, friends, and the development of multiple friendship networks (2018). More specifically, in this case study, Robertson examines the ways in which interactions with friends shape migrants’ senses of selfhood, which extend beyond national borders and are transformed by migrants’ mobility (2018).

Vertovec, in his work on the impact of transnationalism on structural transformation, examines the manifestation of change across three spheres—namely, the sociocultural, political and economic domains of daily life (2004). Moreover, sociologist Ewa Morawska attributes “the persistence of […] transnational activities [even after immigrants have settled] to be[ing] context-dependent or contingent on the interplay of the economic, political, and social circumstances on both sides of these cross-border connections and immigrants’ concerns and purposes” (2009:155). In this study, I will consider the impact of participants’ economic,
political and social ties that extend across borders for the role they play in participants’ sense of connection. An understanding of the ties that align with how participants see and wish to position themselves across multiple social worlds is an important consideration when exploring conceptualizations of identity.

2.2.2 – Transnationalism and Identity(ies)

Examining identity formation is essential to understanding processes of transnationalism and the development, maintenance and negotiation of transnational identities. Several factors influence the development of different or new identities assumed by migrants at various stages of the migration process. These include age, gender, educational attainment, class background, linguistic capability, family structure and support; the politics, society and economy of the country of origin; the politics, society and economy of the receiving country, and so on (Brettell 2002:286; Glick Schiller 2003:113,117). Anthropological studies on transnationalism have examined the impact of transnational identities on processes of integration and social inclusion in the receiving country (Brettell 2015; Carruthers 2013) and the nature of interactions that occur between new and established residents in institutional environments (Vertovec 2007:967).

On research on identity in migration studies, Rouse discusses looking beyond the framing of identity in terms of a single locality. He calls for the consideration of transnationality and the development of multiple identities or new singular identities based on links to multiple localities (1995:354). Studies on the transformation of identities for international student-migrants have looked at the impact of linguistic and cultural capital development, as well as the motivations influencing their transnational mobility (Singh and Doherty 2008). In their research on transnational and diasporic identities, Bhatia and Ram assert that migrants’ acculturation does
not depend on the individual alone, but also on the structural and political factors in the host country that are beyond migrants’ control (Bhatia and Ram 2009:147).

Research on immigrant integration has noted that integration is a process which occurs within different social structures and systems, with migrants’ occupational categories providing one way of negotiating identity and immigration (Huot, Laliberte Rudman, Dodson and Magalhães 2013). A study on French-speaking immigrants to Canada found that the types of capital that immigrant workers bring with them, such as linguistic capital, and the capital that they have access to in their workplaces upon arrival, affects their ability to negotiate integration (Huot et al. 2013:9,16). Additionally, intersectional identity markers such as race and gender are not only connected to the identities and forms of capital possessed by immigrant workers, but play a role in occupational engagement and processes of integration. Integration is an “on-going process” (Huot et al. 2013:13) and capital is lost and gained as integration occurs, such as by navigating social relations and “learning ‘how things work’” (Huot et al. 2013:13), both in the workplace and in Canada in general. When capital is lost or devalued, such as when immigrant workers’ training and previous experience fails to be recognized upon their arrival in Canada, this “limit[s] their possibilities for occupational engagement and by extension their integration within the community” (Huot et al. 2013:18). In this thesis, I will examine the ways in which participants describe their experiences of negotiating integration and/or belonging to determine what factors have had the greatest impact on participants. Specifically, I will consider how previous experience in Canada, the navigation of social relations, as well as the maintenance of different identity categories (e.g. student, worker, etc.) or markers has impacted this process of negotiation.
This research will build upon previous work done by anthropologists and other social scientists by examining subjective views on the ways in which transnational identity formation processes develop for Brazilian SWB participants who have returned to Canada. The findings obtained in this study will contribute to the literature on transnationalism, transformation, and migrant identities by focusing on a specific population of student-migrants turned (im)migrants to Canada. Given the fairly recent implementation of the Brazilian SWB migration-for-development program, the experiences and changing identities of these individuals has not been explored in previous studies. At the same time, research on the migration-development nexus, which examines policies and mobilities that are relevant to the Brazilian SWB and other study abroad programs, has become a prominent feature of the current development and social science literature.

2.3 – The Migration-Development Nexus and Graduate Migration

2.3.1 – The Migration-Development Nexus

In the introductory chapter of *The Migration-Development Nexus* (2011), Thomas Faist and Margit Fauser advocate for approaching the migration-development nexus using a transnational lens. They argue that doing so facilitates the recognition of “the emergence of a new agent in development discourse, variably called ‘migrants’, ‘diaspora’ or ‘transnational community’ […]and it] captures both the cross-border ties and engagements these actors sustain and the role played by institutions on the local, national and global level” (Faist and Fauser 2011:1). Stephen Castles highlights the importance of examining migration and development within the larger context of “issues of global power, wealth and inequality” (2009:23) and therefore as significant to social transformations. In failing to do so, researchers and policy-
makers might develop “mistaken ideas on [migration’s] potential for enhancing economic, political and social change” (Castles 2009:23). Glick Schiller and Faist (2010) argue for recognizing the key role that migration plays in social transformation by adopting a “global perspective on migration” (12). This means employing “a conceptual framework that includes inequalities between North and South, East and West, [and] sees migrants as a major force in reshaping social and political formations” (Glick Schiller and Faist 2010:12). Moreover, it means examining the transnational fields of power in which and across which migrant settlement and social transformation occur (2010:12,14).

On the link between transnational migration and its impact on global social inequality, Faist addresses the importance of exploring the connection between economic remittances—the cash flows sent from migrants abroad back to their homelands—and social policy (2010:79). He points to dissimilarities between migration discourse and policy in that there are pro-migrant labour views in developed countries, yet exclusionary neo-liberal policies that promote labour control, favour temporary contracts over permanent positions, and restrict migrant workers’ rights (Faist 2010:46). As Glick Schiller (2010) notes,

“[e]ven scholars of transnational migration […] have not provided a perspective on migration that explains why major financial institutions, which portray migrants as agents of development through remittances that sustain impoverished communities, seem unconcerned that these very same people are increasingly disdained and excluded in their communities of settlement” (25).

Further, Glick Schiller (2010) argues that adopting a ‘global perspective of migration’ and analyzing the underlying power structures of local institutions which incorporate residents into society might allow for the linking of migrant localities to modern, neo-liberal capitalistic restructuring (26). Migrant agency is key to social transformation on different scales, from the local to the global (Glick Schiller 2010:27). While examining how student-migrant agency
affects the localities they have connections to is beyond the scope of this thesis project, this research will explore the factors affecting student-migrants’ connections to different places. More specifically, it will examine the factors affecting student-migrants’ experiences of settlement in Canada during and/or after SWB, as well as factors affecting the development, maintenance and/or negotiation of their transnational connections.

The historical significance of student-migrants being sent abroad from developing countries for the purpose of development has been noted by Skeldon (1997). Skeldon points to suggestions that the earliest programs for the promotion of student education abroad date back to Asia at the turn of the twentieth-century (1997:109). During the early 1900s, Europe was a primary destination for student-migrants and in the 1920s interwar period the United States was a close second (Perraton 2017). By 1950, there were over 30,000 student-migrants in the United States (Perraton 2017:163), with more than a third coming from Asian countries, and slightly less than another third coming from Latin American countries (Skeldon 1997:110). Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, Asian and Latin American countries were the overall dominant source regions of student-migrants to the United States (Skeldon 1997:110). Most of the data on student-migrants to Canada seems to focus on international student trends beginning in the 1990s, which I think suggests that until this point in time, international student numbers in Canada were comparatively less significant than numbers maintained in other developed countries. By the early 1990s, the number of annual student-migrants to Canada was similar to the total number reached in the United States four decades earlier, at over 30,000 student-migrants per year (Skeldon 1997:110).

From this point onward, however, the rate of international student migration Canada began to increase rapidly (Canada 2017; She and Wotherspoon 2013; Lu and Hou 2017). The
majority of student-migrants in Canada during the 1990s primarily came from Asian countries (~47%), followed by African countries (~17%) and European countries (~16%), with only a small proportion coming from Latin America and the Caribbean (~8%) (Skeldon 1997:110). Between 1990 and 2013, the number of student-migrants to Canada from China increased from 5% to 24% of the student-migrant population, and the percentage of student-migrants from India increased from 1% to 13%. Meanwhile, the percentage of students from all other source regions decreased during this period (Lu and Hou 2017). A recent Statistics Canada (2018) report noted the continuing increase of international student enrollment across the country for the 2016-2017 academic year, with most international students consistently coming from China. With the number of international students increasing worldwide and the growing competition for countries to recruit them, Canada and other developed nations are establishing new recruitment programs and using visa and immigration policies to target international student-migrants (AUCC 2011:31; She and Wotherspoon 2013:136). That more than half of the adult immigrants to Canada in the first decade of the 2000s held university degrees suggests that Canada is an appealing country to immigrants who value education (AUCC 2011:31), and that it is a country where there is a demand for skilled labour (AUCC 2011:5).

Some points arise from the discussion on student-migrants. These include the misalignment between the expected circular nature of the migration and students’ desires to stay or return abroad (Skeldon 1997:110) and the policy implications of the skills gained by student-migrants which position them advantageously for assuming roles with political power and influence upon return to their homelands, possibly leading to policies of westernization in these sending countries (Skeldon 1997:111). They also include the tangible threat and consequences of brain drain when student-migrants sent abroad decide to remain abroad (Patterson 2006;
Skeldon 1997:112). While the origins of student-migration point to a focus on development (Skeldon 1997), for sending countries like China, which has become the primary source country for student-migrants globally, the focus has shifted from sending students abroad to encouraging them to come back. Talent recruitment policies and initiatives aimed at Chinese expats and/or student-migrants abroad have served as a method for decreasing or preventing the ‘brain drain’ of the Chinese labour force, and have contributed to an increasing rate of skilled labour return to China since the 2000s (Miao and Wang 2017). As Patterson notes, “[d]evelopment through strategic transnationalism is bidirectional” (2006:1894). Although not referring specifically to student migration and/or migration-for-development programs, international student mobility has the potential to impact and contribute to development in both sending and receiving societies.

Castles, de Haan and Miller (2013) argue that, for at least the past 50 years, the out-migration of post-secondary educated individuals from developing to developed countries has contributed to ‘brain drain’—which can compromise the potential for development—in Asian and East Asian sending countries. In particular, there has been a loss of skilled labour or human capital through the movement of skilled workers trained in fields such as the sciences, technology and education (Castles, de Haan and Miller 2013:161). Whether individuals are trained domestically and go abroad to gain experience, or they go abroad for international training as student-migrants, when they do not return to their sending country then the potential for development relocates, too. For example, Castles and colleagues (2013) note the contribution of Chinese and Indian IT professionals to the growth of Silicon Valley in the United States (161). Moreover, when a large number of skilled immigrants are recruited by a particular market or industry in a developed country, this may create a dependence on skilled foreign labour (Castles, de Haan and Miller 2013). Sending and receiving countries’ perspectives on international student
mobility as a form of migration-for-development vary, and they depend on the benefits that can be gained from supporting international student mobility. For instance, host countries that receive and train student-migrants from the Global South benefit financially from the additional revenue gained from higher international tuition fees, the internationalization of their post-secondary curriculum and impact on social diversity, as well as the contribution to the skilled labour force when student-migrants decide to stay (Statistics Canada 2016). In Canada, whether authorities’ and institutional actors’ motives for, and understanding of, the SWB program focus more on developing the sending country, satisfying Canada’s labour needs, or both, is a consideration worth exploring but beyond the scope of this project. While ‘brain drain’ is a risk that sending countries must consider, taking measures such as establishing a return obligation—as has been done with the Brazilian SWB program (CAPES 2015b: 35)—is one way of discouraging this possibility.

With labour migration policies that aim to recruit skilled labour through skilled worker and graduate migration visa streams (IRCC 2019b; Robertson 2013:29; see section 1.5.3), developed countries like Canada and Australia have become popular destinations for international student-migrants. In her book *Transnational student-migrants and the state* (2013), Robertson addresses questions related to the student-migrant experience in Australia. She examines the migration process, students’ relationships with the Australian state, and the larger global social processes at play in her contribution to the literature on the education-migration nexus (Robertson 2013:9). Until the 2000s, international students in Australia had been regarded as an elite class. However, beginning in 2004-2005, vocational and education training (VET) courses became more accessible to a variety of international students through policy changes, as did pathways for (im)migration. The lower cost and faster completion time of VET courses in
comparison to university degree programs meant that these skilled labour and trades programs also became more accessible to international students of less affluent classes (Robertson 2013:51-52). Around this time in the mid-2000s, public perceptions of international students changed under the influence of “political and media discourses” (Robertson 2013:55). Specifically, ideas of international students shifted to a focus on them as migrants, too, or student-migrants, and two popular tropes emerged. The ‘cash cows’ trope highlighted student-migrants’ exploitation by the education sector and migration policies due to the high cost of tuition they paid and the lack of rights, care for their welfare, and quality education that they received (Robertson 2013:55). Meanwhile, the other trope of ‘back-door migrants’ saw student-migrants seeking PR status as undesirable, “problematic and opportunistic intrusions into the nation-state […] and] a threat to economic and social stability” (Robertson 2013:57). Robertson argues that both of these claims were not only critical of education-migration policies, but also overlooked student-migrants’ agency in how they navigated their relationship with the neo-liberal state, responded to policy changes, and made claims to their rights (Robertson 2013:58).

Robertson argues that student-migrants’ migration journeys and experiences include periods of precarity due to the education-migration nexus and the three ensuing “multiple ‘gates’ of membership that migrants must pass through to enter the nation-state” (2013:68). The first gate is passed when obtaining a student visa as an international student. The second gate is passed by applying for permanent residency, which is an opportunity usually available to student-migrants after they successfully complete their educational program (Robertson 2013:69-70). The third gate, leading to naturalization, can be passed after permanent residents remain in the country for a required period of time and meet other citizenship eligibility criteria (Robertson 2013:70). This process is similar in Canada. Student-migrants or other types of migrants to
Canada who have a year’s worth of full-time skilled work experience may be eligible to apply for permanent residency through Canada’s Experience Class (IRCC 2019e). It seems unlikely that the majority of international students to Canada have been able to gain a full year’s worth of paid skilled work experience by the time they graduate, particularly since they will have spent the past year or more studying full-time. However, as previously mentioned, Provincial Nominee Programs such as the two international graduate migration streams in Ontario have facilitated the immigration pathways available to international student-migrants to Canada. Similar to Robertson’s (2013) analogy of the gates of membership that student-migrants must pass through in Australia, once permanent residency is attained, applying for citizenship after a minimum period of time\(^1\) is the next gate to membership in Canadian society.

On employing transnationalism as a lens for understanding student-migrant actions and experiences, Robertson notes that there are two primary uses of this term. One use is that it is theoretical lens for conducting empirical research and examining migration. ‘Transnationalism’ is also “used to refer to patterns of migrant behaviours, social actions, institutions and migrants themselves”, making it “a descriptor of various social practices” (Robertson 2013:73). Both of these uses are relevant to the analysis presented in this thesis. Firstly, using this lens allows for an understanding of transnationalism and student-migrant experiences as part of a multidirectional, ongoing process. Secondly, it is a useful way to describe the social practices of the student-migrants turned (im)migrants examined in this study, and its relevance to what I describe as the formation of their ‘transnational identities’.

\(^1\) In Canada, the period of time that permanent residents must remain in the country before meeting this criterion for citizenship eligibility is 1095 days out of the last five years. (For more information about this and other criteria required for citizenship eligibility in Canada, see: IRCC 2019d).
This work and others have drawn on student-migrants’ voices in analyses and discussions of international student mobility, specifically looking to students’ perspectives and personal stories which tell of their negotiations of identity and belonging across transnational social fields (Gargano 2009; Robertson 2013; Robertson 2018). In a more recent work on student-migrants’ transnational mobility, social experiences and translocal subjectivities in Australia, Robertson analyzes data from 30 semi-structured interviews conducted in Melbourne. Two common key themes emerged from her findings, both of which are relevant to participants’ perspectives on friendship networks (Robertson 2018). Firstly, student-migrants’ sense of belonging in Melbourne was impacted by their changing friendship networks. Learning from new friends and having cross-cultural experiences helped student-migrants to establish “connection[s]” (a term used by a participant and quoted in Robertson 2018:545) to people in their host society. Student-migrants’ sense of belonging to Australia was closely linked to the social relationships that they had formed there (Robertson 2018:546). Secondly, student-migrants’ relationships with friends in their sending countries also changed, becoming more strained over time (Robertson 2018:541). As demonstrated by the personal narrative of one participant, Shui, the personal transformation that she felt she had undergone, including the exposure to different cultural perspectives, affected her ability to relate to and bond with family and friends back home. Shui’s translocal subjectivity—meaning one’s sense of being in relation to a given place—affecteD her sense of belonging to her sending society (Robertson 2018:549-550). In this thesis, I, too, draw on student-migrants’ voices and experiences to consider the connection between participants’ changing social networks and their self-perceptions of identity and belonging to one or more places.
2.3.2 – Graduate Migration

In the introductory chapter to their edited volume on graduate migration, geographers Jonathan Corcoran and Alessandra Faggian (2017) assert that understanding the decision-making processes of graduates who relocate is important for both the planning of local economic development and the accommodation of knowledge loss, “technology transfer, investments and trade” by the sending communities (1,2). Graduate decision-making is different from that of the general population and various factors and opportunities in both sending and receiving societies (Arthur 2017) influence each individual graduate differently. These include the social networks, skillsets, and preferences of an individual and the market demand for jobs in their field at the time of graduation (Corcoran and Faggian 2017:3,4). Studies on the transnational identity formation experiences of international students have examined Chinese student-migrants and the impact these types of experiences had on their future contributions and efficiency in the Chinese labour force (Gu and Schweisfurth 2015). They note that,

“[s]uch experiences are avenues for diverse social networks that reinforce a complex cosmopolitan identity and awareness. They are, also, avenues for transnational(ised) new competences, skills and worldviews, which are increasingly valued by the students themselves upon return home” (Gu and Schweisfurth 2015:947).

Through a comparison with the findings produced by this research, I will draw and build on Corcoran and Faggian’s (2017) exploration of the factors influencing the rationalization, motivation, and outcomes of graduate migration decision-making and how this affects individual migrants. The personal accounts collected from participants in this study will include their experiences in Canada as student-migrants during the SWB experience. Interview questions about their feelings of social incorporation and inclusion at that time were designed to elicit any links that exist between participants’ first experiences in Canada and their ultimate decisions to
return. This research will also make use of some views on the migration-development nexus, as well as the education-migration nexus, which seem to suggest that too much emphasis has been placed on student-migrants’ or other migrants’ gains in economic and human capital over the importance of personal relationships and social dynamics (Robertson 2013, 2018). Using the data collected through semi-structured interviews, I will investigate whether the development of human and economic capital or participants’ relationships with other non-migrants and experiences of inclusion had a greater impact on them while studying in Canada through SWB or after they had returned to Canada. Doing so will also require drawing on the social science literature that exists on (im)migrants’ experiences of support, social inclusion and belonging, and how this relates to larger processes of identity formation.

2.4 – Social Inclusion, Exclusion and Identity Formation

In the foreword to politician Ratna Omidvar and policy researcher Ted Richmond’s study, Immigrant Settlement and Social Inclusion in Canada, the Laidlaw Foundation’s perspective on the topic is presented as that “social inclusion extends beyond bringing the ‘outsiders’ in… [and] is about closing physical, social and economic distances separating people, rather than only about eliminating boundaries or barriers between us and them” (Freiler and Zarnke 2003:ix). The Foundation has identified five key dimensions of social inclusion including valued recognition (and respect), human development (opportunities for learning and development), involvement and engagement (having support and independence to make

2 The Laidlaw Foundation is an organization in Ontario with a commitment to supporting various forms of engagement in the community. The Foundation “invests in innovative ideas, convenes interested parties, shares its learning and advocates for change in support of young people being healthy, creative and fully engaged citizens.” (Laidlaw Foundation 2019)
decisions oneself), proximity (access to public and social spaces of diverse/mixed classes and people), and material well-being (Freiler and Zarnke 2003:ix). What each of these five dimensions involves depends on each individual migrant’s situation and needs. Under Stephen Harper’s Conservative government, Jason Kenney was Minister of Immigration from 2008 to 2013 (Knowles 2016; Satzewich 2015:40). During this period of time, economic immigrants were a primary focus of Canadian immigration policy (Satzewich 2015:63); however, Omidvar and Richmond stress the importance of considering barriers to social inclusion faced by other types of migrants, such as temporary workers and refugee claimants (2003:4). The challenges faced by student-migrants, and especially student-migrants turned (im)migrants, are overlooked in these discussions on government-funded services3 (OLIP 2010a, OLIP 2010b, LIPC 2014). As noted in section 2.3 above, graduate migration is not a new phenomenon; however, the experiences and perspectives of the types of (im)migrants to Canada this research aims to examine—namely former migration-for-development program student-migrants turned transnational (im)migrants—have not yet been taken up as a main topic of focus in the literature on social inclusion and belonging.

Case studies in the literature show that feeling excluded and/or isolated is a common experience for certain types of (im)migrants. Margolis (1995) found that many Brazilian immigrants in New York City experienced isolation and that the majority of them only had Brazilian friends there, speaking to their identity and status as being “in [the United States], but … not of it” (33). Professor of politics Christina Boswell and UN High Commissioner for Refugees Jeff Crisp stress the importance of migrant networks for providing “a source of

\[\text{3 In this context, government-funded services include services funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), previously known as Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) (IRCC 2017; IRCC 2018a).}\]
information, financial assistance and support for those considering moving, and which can provide economic, social and psychological support on arrival” (2013:71). Additionally, Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco describes how “transnational migratory social chains” have a great impact on facilitating the settlement and transition of newcomers by means of sharing diverse types of knowledge gained from previous experience (2003:58). These works point to the multi-faceted value of social networks and seem to support Henri Tajfel’s (1974) social identity theory, which emphasizes that groups are responsible for instilling a sense of belonging and identity in individuals. Indeed, Levitt and Glick Schiller conceptualize “ways of belonging” as referring “to practices that signal or enact an identity which demonstrates a conscious connection to a particular group” (2004:1010). As de Lima (2012) notes, “belonging and identity are […] forged out of interactions between people […] across different spaces” (215), which is particularly relevant for the examination of belonging and identity development among transnational (im)migrants with transnational connections.

In drawing on the theory of symbolic interactionism, “sociologists attempt to understand identity formation by situating the individual in a particular social world because it is the interactions in social settings that construct who we are” (Kaufman 2014:36). More specifically, identity formation can be defined “as a process of both personal avowals and social attributions” (Kaufman 2014:35), which stresses both the personal and social nature of its development. For the purposes of this study, national identity is the broader dimension of identity being examined, with an emphasis on individuals’ self-perceptions and accounts of its manifestation in their personal and social experiences. According to McCrone and Bechofer (2008), cultural markers or identity markers include things such as one’s ethnicity, “birthplace, ancestry, accent, appearance and dress, indeed, anything which might be read as an indicator of national identity”
In exploring the relationship between cultural markers and perceptions of or claims to national identity, they note the potential construction of such markers as indicators of identity differences which serve to justify forms of social exclusion (McCrone and Bechofer 2008). Brazil is a racially diverse country and the racialization of individuals and groups has been examined for its presence in the immigration discourse, and for its relevance as a factor in the social and economic inclusion, exclusion of different types of minorities and immigrants to Canada (Korteweg 2017; Lightman and Good Gingrich 2017; Li 2001). Although race, ethnicity and gender are elements of one’s identity that impact daily experiences and interactions with others, it is unclear to what extent they affected Brazilian students’ eligibility and successful application to the SWB program. Studies on the broader processes of systemic, institutional discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender as well as class (Ahmed 2012; Arora 2018; Fitzgerald 2017; Gutiérrez-Rodríguez 2016; Harris and Leonardo 2018) might be useful for this line of inquiry. Given the uncertain impact of these identity markers on students’ eligibility to participate in SWB and the uncertainty surrounding how successful the recruitment strategies for this study would be, gender, race, ethnicity and class were not inclusion criteria selected for and do not occupy a prominent place in the thesis.

Roger Rouse has argued that the link between “class relations and the politics of identity […] more broadly [lies] in hegemonic efforts to make ideas about identity frame the ways in which people understand what it is to be a person, the kinds of collectivities in which they are involved, the nature of the problems that they face, and the means by which these problems can be tackled.” (1995:356). Such discussions on identity are relevant to both self-perceptions and others’ perceptions of an individual’s selfhood. Although “identity is relational and multilayered” (de Lima 2012:213), this is a fact that cultural stereotypes might fail to consider.
For transnational migrants, “issues related to belonging and identity encompass complex and dynamic social processes embodying many different affiliations and multiple and intersecting identities stretched across spaces and places” (de Lima 2012:215). Moreover, personal, cultural identities as well as (im)migrant identity categories can be examined in a variety of contexts.

In research on settlement and service accessibility for (im)migrants, there has been a focus on the services provided via formal government institutions, such as healthcare and housing (Setia, Quesnel-Vallee, Abrahamowicz, Tousignant, & Lynch 2011; Hulchanski 1997), and the sanctioning of a needs-based model for providing settlement services (George 2002). Omidvar and Richmond (2003) argue that most of the settlement services offered to immigrants focus on providing support to newcomers in the early stages of arrival. There is a form of exclusion built into this model of service provision. Further, although these services are funded by various private and public sources, it is non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are primarily tasked with the delivery of services (Omidvar and Richmond 2003:7). Depending on a given NGO’s outreach potential and target population, certain types of (im)migrants might face barriers in accessing services, leading to the inclusion of some but also the exclusion of others.

In the case of international students, or student-migrants turned (im)migrants, Arthur (2017) claims that the campus community plays an important role in the social interactions and integration for these types of (im)migrants. In their relationships with international students, faculty, domestic students and personal counsellors are all “social resources for fostering the exchange of academic and cross-cultural learning” (Arthur 2017:888). Ryan (2011) examines migrant social networks and resources in terms of ‘bonding’ and ‘bridging’. While she defines ‘bonding’ as forming close ties with people with whom a person has things in common, ‘bridging’ is the act of building connections with certain groups. These are groups with whom an
individual might have something in common, such as an identity marker (e.g. ethnicity) (Ryan 2011). Bonding is more personal and central to forms of personal support, whereas bridging is more practical and opportunistic. In evaluating how these two terms are conceptualized and applied in research on migrants’ social ties and social capital, Ryan argues that “focusing on the relationship between the actors, their relative social location and the available and realisable resources” (2011:708) is key to understanding the nature of these networks. Meanwhile, according to Robertson, student-migrants’ negotiations of belonging and identity are more complex just than common practices of ‘bonding’ or ‘bridging’ when it comes to developing social networks (2018:550). This is because of the added dimensions of transnational movement and maintaining transnational connections which shape student-migrants’ experiences, perspectives, and senses of self. This framework will be useful in my analysis of Brazilian student-migrant turned (im)migrants’ social ties and the different purposes that they serve.

While inclusion and exclusion has been examined in the context of non-migrants assisting migrants—often through institutional or government service provision, as seen above—migrant-to-migrant assistance and support for settlement and integration also occurs. In a case study in Spain, Fauser describes the ways in which migrant organizing and group formation have emerged to support migrants upon arrival and assist with settlement and incorporation into the community (2011:145). According to the Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership’s (OLIP) literature review on “settlement” and “integration”, these two concepts can be defined as ongoing processes rather than singular events or ultimate aims (2010b:11). The review also asserts that a number of factors contribute to different immigrant needs (OLIP 2010b:13,15). In her seminal work on immigration and policy in Canada, Freda Hawkins argued for the importance of both information and service provision to new and settled immigrants alike, as well as the need
for attentiveness to all types of immigrants to Canada (1972:359,360). Today, almost 50 years after Hawkins’ work was first published, the literature shows that these claims still hold true.

Despite the individual contributions of these works, differential access to support for (im)migrants to Canada and the impact of this on settlement, feelings of inclusion or exclusion, and thus the development of new (transnational) identities, are still underexplored in the literature. This is particularly the case in studies on the experiences of student-migrants turned immigrants to Canada. The literature on Brazilian immigration to Canada has examined push factors for leaving, reasons for immigrating to Canada, socioeconomic and education levels, and the recent increase in Brazil-to-Canada immigration (Barbosa 2009; Goza 1994, 1999; IRCC 2015). However, there is a separation in the literature between (im)migrants’ transnational identity formation and settlement experiences or issues in Canada; therefore, attention has not been paid to the relationship between them. Beyond looking at experiences relevant to identity formation that occur once (im)migrants arrive in the host society, (im)migrant experiences during the planning stage and the travel stage of migration also contribute to the process of identity formation and require examination. This research project will provide an opportunity to contribute to these gaps in the literature by examining Brazilian student-migrants turned (im)migrants’ experiences of seeking information and accessing support, feelings of inclusion or exclusion during settlement in Canada as students and as returnees, as well as their decision-making processes throughout the (im)migration journey to Canada.

2.5 – Policy, Discourse and Immigrant Integration

Canada has generally been considered a pro-immigration country (Skeldon 1997:78), and immigrants have been fundamental to Canada’s history and identity as a nation (Knowles 2016). Over the years, Canadian immigration policies have been implemented and modified to reflect
the government’s changing emphasis on different types of immigrants and immigration (Gogia 2011; Knowles 2016), often depending on the priorities and concerns of the political party in power at the time as well as labour market needs (Knowles 2016; Satzewich 2015:39). Indeed, a key example of this approach occurred not that long before the rapid growth of immigration to Canada in the 1990s. In 1978, just as Canada was about to enter into a period of recession, the Canadian government established a Business Immigration Program as part of its efforts to meet “Canada’s changing economic needs” and worked on expanding it in the following decade (Harrison 1996:11). Under the federal leadership of the Conservative Party, the 1980s marked a period of focus on immigrant contributions to the Canadian economy (Knowles 2016; Harrison 1996; Walsh 2008). Family class immigration had been a popular pathway to Canada as well, until the 1990s when the government presented a new five-year immigration plan. This plan called for significant modifications to reflect the changing needs of the Canadian economy, particularly at a time of recession and concern over the aging working-class (Knowles 2016:236-237). The aim of the plan was to significantly increase overall immigration numbers to meet labour market needs, a prioritization which also meant reducing the number of family reunification applications to focus on processing more economic immigrant applications (Ferrer, Picot and Riddell 2014; Knowles 2016:237).

The decision to welcome an influx of immigrants at a time when Canada’s economy was weak was not viewed favourably by all (Knowles 2016:237). Scholars have examined issues of economic and labour force integration for skilled workers and other immigrants, noting the relevance of pre-immigration Canadian experience (Beach, Green and Worswick 2011) as well as the underutilization or devaluation of immigrant skills (Gogia and Slade 2011:65; Huot et al. 2013; Reitz 2005; Sweetman and Warman 2014). At the time of the business class program
expansion in the 1980s, the number of European-born immigrants to Canada was already on the decline as the number of immigrants from Asia as well as other non-European countries continued to grow (Knowles 2016:230-231). Despite the recent 2008 recession, more than half of all immigrants—permanent residents— to Canada have continued to fall within the economic class category (Ferrer, Picot and Riddell 2014:847; IRCC 2018d). There is now a significant and increasing number of skilled workers and student-migrants coming to Canada from developing countries (IRCC 2018c; Statistics Canada 2016; Takagi 2019). The Canadian government has established new immigration policies and immigration pathways including access to particular types of visas and different PNPs that target skilled workers and student-migrants. This speaks to the ways in which government support for migration-for-development policies and programs, such as the Brazilian SWB program, strategically fits within government efforts to globalize and internationalize Canada’s workforce and education system, to address labour shortages, and to promote Canada’s identity as a welcoming and inclusive society.

Whereas immigration policy under the former Conservative Party leadership was more restrictive⁴, the Liberal Party’s federal leadership since 2015 has promoted Canada as a compassionate country that is dedicating more resources to processing immigration applications and welcoming immigrants with open arms (Hadfield 2017). According to Hadfield, under Justin Trudeau, the “policy of choice is migration” (2017:26), which is reflective “of domestic attitudes

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⁴ In the last 50 years, there have been two significant periods of federal leadership under the Conservative Party of Canada. The first, from 1984 to 1993, was when the previously mentioned expansion of the business class immigration program took place. The second, more-recent period was from 2006 to 2015, when Stephen Harper was Prime Minister of Canada. As journalist and political writer John Ibbitson has noted, under Harper’s leadership, “the Conservatives […] made immigration and refugee policy less compassionate and more economically focused than it was under previous Liberal governments” (2014). Researchers contend that immigration policy during this time greatly compromised Canada’s international reputation as an inclusive, welcoming country for all immigrants (Ibbitson 2014; Lenard 2015).
towards inclusiveness” (2017:26). Given the Liberal Party’s historical stance on matters of migration, the recent implementation of pro-immigration policy changes is perhaps unsurprising; however, the matter has not been met without critique, and concerns in some quarters over a changing national identity (Nimijean 2018) and the long-term sustainability of pro-immigration policies (Hadfield 2017) have been expressed.

Hall notes that identities are constructed through difference and within the dynamics of specific power structures and discourse (1996:4). He asserts that it is imperative to “understand [identities] as produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies” (1996:4). In her examination of national identity-building through government policy at the time of Canada’s 125th anniversary celebration in 1992, Eva Mackey focuses on the ways in which “inclusion, exclusion and belonging in the Canadian nation” are defined by the use of key terms and ideas such as “the people” and “multiculturalism” (1997:105). More recently, Glynis George and Erwin D. Selimos (2017) argue that changes made to Canada’s immigration policy over the decades have led to the politicization of inclusion and exclusion based on a variety of factors. They claim that a “person-centered approach” is necessary to understand the unique experiences of inclusion, exclusion and belonging as faced and felt by immigrants (George and Selimos 2017:2,3). Indeed, Li (2003) advocates for a more inclusive approach in the immigrant discourse that extends beyond considerations of integration based on the opposing categorizations of being either more similar to or different from Canadians. Variables measured in analyses on the topic have included language characteristics, religion, and residential patterns, while recently arrived immigrants have been found to express more distinctive behaviours than their more established counterparts (Li 2003:326). Li argues that such limited conceptualizations of integration fail to consider the
ways in which migrants’ differences might contribute or add to Canada rather than destabilize its established characteristics and thus its identity (2003:330).

In the introductory chapter of their edited volume, *Immigration and Integration in Canada in the Twenty-first Century* (2008), John Biles, Meyer Burstein and James Frideres set out to identify the shortcomings in current research on immigrant integration and to suggest possible ways for measuring it. In his own chapter contribution, Frideres stresses the importance of diverse social interactions in facilitating social integration for (im)migrants, specifically pointing to local and regional neighbourhoods as central for (im)migrants’ ability to build this type of social capital (2008:96). The intention of this edited volume is to not only address policymakers, but also to contribute to popular debate and the public understanding of issues related to immigrant integration (Biles, Burstein and Frideres 2008:3). As part of a special collection on anthropology, policy and transnational migration in the journal *International Migration*, David Haines argues that it is possible to link “the academic and the practical” when examining public policy through anthropology, noting the potential role this might play in considerations of migration policy (2013:78). The aim of Haines’ work and other contributions to the collection is to see “policy from the points of view of people that policy claims to address; in this case, people who have experienced transnational migration first-hand and those who have aspirations to do so in the near future” (Baba 2013:5). Indeed, sociologist Margit Fauser has suggested the potential value of policy frameworks in their capacity to provide “new opportunities and resources for transnational activities” (2011:135).

Whether immigration policy acknowledges transnational individuals, how the different types of (im)migrants and (im)migration are defined, how different (im)migrants are perceived by the public, the diverse settlement needs and preferences of different (im)migrants, and the
impact this has on (im)migrants’ transnational identity maintenance or formation are important concerns that have not been examined, in terms of their intersections, in the literature. This research project will contribute to studies on migration policy and the public discourse on (im)migration by exploring the ways in which Brazilian student-migrants turned (im)migrants to Canada have had to negotiate their transnational identities in response to the immigration policies of today.

2.6 – Conclusion

In this thesis, I draw on these bodies of literature to examine and better understand the development and negotiation of transnational identities for a specific group of student-migrants turned immigrants to Canada. Scholarly work on transnationalism in migration studies has pointed to the dynamism of identities and experiences, with an emphasis on the role of social networks and social inclusion as part of a process of negotiation. Previous research on graduate migration and student-migrants has explored the factors affecting (im)migration-related decision-making processes; however, considerations of the relation between such decision-making and transnational identity formation is still an underdeveloped topic in the literature, warranting further research. In reviewing the literature on immigration policy and immigrant discourse in Canada and its relevance to inclusion, belonging, integration and identity, it is possible to recognize that these structures bear an impact on all types of (im)migrants to Canada. Where, exactly, student-migrants turned (im)migrants and transnational identities fit into the discussion is still unclear. Through examining participants’ experiences of belonging, decision-making and navigating challenges, this thesis will endeavour to add to these existing threads.
CHAPTER 3: Research Methodology and Ethics

3.1 – Methodology and Research Design – An Overview

This chapter discusses the methodology and research design for this study. The two research questions I presented in chapter one are: What factors have contributed to the transnational identity formation experiences of Brazilian student-migrants turned (im)migrants to Canada; and, in light of these factors, how have their identities been maintained or transformed throughout the different stages of their (im)migration journeys? In this research, I used a qualitative approach and conducted semi-structured interviews with each participant. Throughout this chapter, I discuss the decisions behind my research design in further detail, grounding them in the existing literature on qualitative research methods.

In the following sub-sections, I provide details about my research design beginning with the required data to answer my research questions and the inclusion criteria. I then present a discussion of the recruitment process for selecting research participants and how I obtained the required data by conducting semi-structured interviews. Following this, I outline the research schedule for the different stages involved in this methodology, as well as the process of data analysis. Finally, I discuss some ethical considerations and reflections on the methodological challenges that I encountered.

3.2 – Defining the Required Data

To answer my research questions, I needed to collect data relevant to the broader life experiences of research participants from the beginning of their participation in the SWB program until the present day. The data I required included internal state variables, such as personal views, attitudes or beliefs. It also included social or environmental variables, such as the forms of support and opportunities participants have had access to, as well as time and space
variables. How beliefs or values change over time and/or depend on place is an example of these kinds of variables (Bernard 2011:557). More specifically, these are all data about content and process. As noted in the methods literature, qualitative research methods should be used when collecting this type of data as it involves asking the question ‘how’. In comparison, quantitative methods are more useful for estimating parameters or proportions, or in other words, for producing specific numbers (Bernard 2011:174-175). While they are practical and efficient for obtaining short and/or predefined answers, such as yes/no or multiple choice questions that make use of existing measures, quantitative surveys do not provide an equally efficient means for gathering detailed information that reflects unique, individual personal views (Creswell 2007:40). Additionally, an opportunity for in-depth questioning, when appropriate or necessary to collect specific data, is not similarly achievable when conducting quantitative surveys.

The specific data I required included information on research participants’ resource and support-seeking strategies, such as the ways participants go about finding information and services they can access to help meet their settlement needs. I also needed information about their social network development and the migration-related decision-making processes of participants. Variables of where (Corcoran and Faggian 2017), how (IRCC 2019), when, and why are important considerations in migration-related decision-making. Decisions about where to settle might include not only what country, but also what province, or city. Decisions about how to settle might include considerations of what visa to obtain or how to enter the country. For participants in this study, considerations about when to return might include deciding to first obtain more work experience and saving money in Brazil, for example, or deciding to return as soon as possible. Also important to understanding migration-related decision-making is an examination of the reasons for returning, such as what specific push or pull factors may be
influencing the movements of these individuals (Arthur 2017). Additionally, I needed data on research participants’ perceptions of the social inclusivity of Canadian society, the presence (or absence) of resources for them to access, and their sense of national or transnational belonging over the course of their migration journeys.

3.3 – Defining Inclusion Criteria

I had originally envisioned a project where I might be able to speak with a few individuals who had participated in SWB, but were at different stages of the process of returning to Canada. For example, I had thought of recruiting four or five individuals who had started the visa application process to return to Canada, but were waiting for the results. A second group for recruitment would include a similar number of individuals who had received their Canadian visa approval, but were in the process of planning and preparing for their return. Additionally, a third group would include a few individuals who had landed in Canada within the past year. Lastly, I had intended to recruit a fourth group that would include a few participants who would be considered more settled (im)migrants, having been in Canada for a period of about 18 months or longer. In order to keep the scope of the project manageable, I ended up limiting the inclusion criteria to former SWB participants who had actually physically returned to (or possibly stayed in) Canada. It was necessary for the research design to be as feasible as possible within the timeframe of my Master’s program, especially given the fact that there were to be some expected challenges with recruitment due to the population not being tied to specific locations (Bernard 2011:147).

While research has been done on Brazilian SWB students who came to Canada while they were participating in the SWB program (Grieco 2015; Sarmento et al. 2016; Thibodeau 2015), to the best of my knowledge, this is the first study of SWB participants who have returned
to Canada after they completed the SWB program. As long as research participants met the two criteria required for participation – having participated in the SWB program and having decided to (im)migrate to Canada after the SWB experience was over – then their experiences qualified them as knowledgeable for the purpose of this study (Bernard 2011:154). As knowledgeable research participants, the information they shared during semi-structured interviews enabled me, as the student researcher, to obtain the information necessary to answer my research questions. It is worth noting that three of the research participants in this study had completed their SWB program in countries other than Canada. Two went to a country in Asia during SWB and one went to the United States. Additionally, the last participant to be interviewed expressed an interest in participating in this research project, but he was initially unsure of when or how he would return to Canada. This participant heard about my research project through a mutual contact. Through this mutual contact he expressed an interest in participating in my project and I explained that participation was limited to former SWB students who had already returned to Canada. During the second phase of recruitment, after this particular participant received a recruitment email about this study from the academic institution in Ontario where he studied during SWB, he reached out to me and expressed an interest in participating. At that point, he met the eligibility criteria because he would be arriving in Canada in the fall of 2018 (see sub-section 3.5.1 for a discussion of the recruitment procedure).

3.4 – Research Participants

In total, 16 research participants were recruited for this study. Five of the research participants served as key informants, a role which is described in the sub-section that follows. All 16 research participants were in their twenties at the time of the SWB experience and 15 of the participants were married/partnered at the time of the interview. Nine participants were male
and seven were female. While the ratio of male to female participants in this study is almost equal, it is unknown if this is reflective of the male to female ratio of participants in the SWB program overall, let alone in the specific ‘Graduate Sandwich’ stream that most of this study’s participants took part in during SWB. In 2015, the Brazilian Secretary of Transparency released an official evaluation of the SWB program. However, the statistics it includes are only representative of the survey respondent’s answers and do not provide statistical information about overall participation in either the SWB program or any of its specific streams (Secretary of Transparency 2015). It is possible that investigator effect was a factor, as perhaps women felt comfortable responding to my invitation to participate in the study since I am also a woman (Bernard 2011:175). Although gender parity emerged from the responses received during the recruitment phase, gender was not a relevant factor in the inclusion or selection criteria. Only of the participants noted being racialized and therefore a visible minority in Canada; in the part of Brazil where this particular participant is from, the majority of residents are racialized individuals, which is very different from the Ontario city where this participant now resides.

The participants in this study come from hometowns spread across six different Brazilian states—Ceará, Pará, Bahia, São Paulo, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande do Sul—and the Federal District, Brasília. While the majority of participants came from major cities, about a third of them came from smaller, more rural hometowns. All participants except for one attended a public institution in Brazil during their undergraduate studies. Due to the urban location of the university campuses, all participants had had some degree of urban living experience before coming to Canada for the first time. Participants were not asked questions specific to class background or socioeconomic status. As previously mentioned in section 1.5.1, tuition is typically free at public institutions in Brazil, and there may be small scholarships available to
help students with living expenses or any research-related costs. In Brazil, class background is more likely to have an impact on the accessibility of quality education during students’ primary and secondary school years, which is important for helping students to prepare for and pass public university entrance exams. All participants expressed concerns about the costs of returning to Canada to some degree, but all of them desired and worked toward being financially stable and independent in returning to Canada. Some participants indicated that they could rely on their families in Brazil for financial support if they needed to when they returned to Canada, although this was not the goal for them and for several participants was not even an option.

The 13 participants who had come to Canada during their SWB experiences attended one of four different universities in southern Ontario during their SWB participation. Of the 16 participants, 11 had engaged in graduate studies upon returning to Canada, although all participants except for one had expressed a desire to pursue graduate studies in Canada at some point. For the 11 participants who returned Canada as graduate students, wherever they were able to find a supervisor and open program with funding determined the city in Canada to which they would return. For the other five participants who did not return to Canada as graduate students, the communities they chose to reside in depended on where their spouses or partners were living in Canada at that time.

3.4.1 – Key Informants

Key informants “are experts in the social complexities of their culture” (Fedorak 2017:5) who have a good understanding of the research project and information needed to answer the research question (Bernard 2011:150). Additionally, they are comfortable and willing to share this information, or to help researchers obtain the necessary information through other means, such as looking for and collecting it on their own, using their own networks (Bernard 2011:150).
All 5 of the key informants were known to me prior to conceptualizing this research project and they were part of the existing networks I used during the initial phase of recruitment. These five key informants were the participants whom I first recruited for this study, whom I first interviewed, and whom I consulted about the interview schedule. They also assisted with the recruitment of additional participants for this study.

3.4.2 – SWB Participants

The research participants in this study were all former participants in the Brazilian SWB migration-for-development program. All of the research participants had completed their involvement in the SWB program at the time of their interview for this study. Additionally, all of the research participants, except for one, had participated in SWB during their undergraduate studies while they were students at public universities in Brazil. The one exception was a research participant who had participated in the SWB program over a 4-year period as a doctoral student at a Canadian institution.

3.5 – Data Collection Methods

3.5.1 – Contact and Participant Recruitment Procedure

Žikić notes that an opportunistic approach to sampling is usually the most feasible and practical method to begin with. This means choosing the easiest methods for recruitment and recruiting the “most available individuals” (2007:129). Members of the particular research population that I wanted to interview are dispersed across Canada, and so participants were difficult to find. Given the recruitment challenge this posed, I used the existing personal networks I developed living in Brazil from 2015 to 2016 and those I already had established here in Canada to enable me to locate potential participants. Snowball sampling was used as the most
appropriate and efficient method of recruitment (Bernard 2011:147). Using this method, I intended to recruit 10 to 15 SWB participants as well as up to 5 key informants. In fact, I recruited 5 key informants and an additional 11 research participants. According to H. Russell Bernard (2011), a sample pool of this size, between 10 and 20 “knowledgeable” individuals, can be sufficient “to uncover and understand the core categories in any well-defined cultural domain or study of lived experience” (154). Twelve of the 16 participants were recruited during the initial recruitment phase, in which I used my existing personal networks for connecting with potential research participants in addition to snowball sampling and respondent-driven sampling. Three other participants were recruited during the second phase, when I reached out to international departments at post-secondary institutions in Ontario that had hosted SWB students, asking them to send out recruitment messages about this study to their former SWB students. During the second phase I also posted recruitment messages in Facebook groups with SWB student members. As previously mentioned, one other participant had expressed an interest early on in the recruitment process but was the last to be recruited due to the requirement of meeting the inclusion criteria.

In the first phase of participant recruitment, I utilized my existing networks, which included personal contacts, individuals I knew with possible SWB contacts, and the key informants in the search for potential participants. Back in 2012, when I had worked as the Peer Mentoring Program (PMP) Coordinator at the university where I completed my undergraduate studies, I met the first SWB cohort to attend a nearby academic institution. The majority of participants in this first SWB cohort were taking English classes at my academic institution before starting their one-year SWB exchange experience at their host institution. At the time, in my position as PMP Coordinator, I showed these students around the campus on their first day. I
formed personal relationships with these SWB students, relationships that endured after I left the PMP Coordinator position. These relationships expanded when subsequent groups of SWB students arrived at the nearby university in 2013 and 2014. These later cohorts of SWB students were much bigger than the first cohort that I had previously met. I also met SWB students who were studying at another academic institution in Ontario during this time. During the first phase of the recruitment process for this study, I asked these contacts if they knew of any SWB participants who had returned or were planning to return to Canada since their participation in the SWB program had ended. As mentioned, twelve of the sixteen participants in this study were recruited during this initial phase, using this method.

Throughout this recruitment process, I did not have access to a sampling frame, which is a “list of units of analysis from which you take a sample and to which you generalize” (emphasis in original; Bernard 2011:115). For instance, I did not have a complete list of all SWB students who studied in Canada as participants in the SWB program, let alone a list of all of the former SWB students who had returned to Canada afterwards. My intention with the second recruitment phases, further described below, was to make use of the information held by academic institutions that could serve as a sampling frame by extension. I was familiar with institutional email lists or ‘listservs’ for email communication, having used them myself, and I expected that the international departments responsible for communicating with SWB students were likely to have access to a listserv for former SWB students.

In the second phase of participant recruitment, I modified and resubmitted the ethics protocol for this research to the REB at the University of Guelph so that I could also recruit potential participants through online platforms as well as academic institutions. I sent emails to the international departments at 13 Ontario Universities and 9 Ontario Colleges and asked them
to distribute recruitment messages to former SWB participants who had attended their institutions. Additionally, I posted recruitment messages on two Facebook groups with members that included former SWB participants. Before doing so, I first sought the permission of the group administrators. One of these groups I already belonged to (due to my existing networks mentioned above) and the other one I had heard of and knew members of, but had not accessed it before. I did not initially send emails to all Ontario institutions, such as those that were quite far away (in Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, and Ottawa, for example); but if the additional recruitment had not been successful then I would have contacted these more distant institutions as well. Furthermore, I also received ethics clearance to ask institutions to post recruitment messages or a recruitment poster (see Appendix C) on their Office of Research webpages. I opted not to do this once the second phase recruited a sufficient number of participants. Had additional potential research participants reached out to me later on, after I was no longer actively recruiting participants I would have gladly included them in the study if they had met the inclusion criteria.

3.5.2 – Research Schedule

The schedule for this research involved five stages. During Stage 1, from March to April 2018, I reviewed the relevant literature and theoretical work on the topic and submitted my thesis proposal to the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Guelph. I also submitted a Research Ethics Board (REB) application—an important measure to take in the safeguarding of human subjects’ well-being (Lune and Berg 2017:52)—in order to obtain REB approval to begin the next stage of the research project by the end of the winter semester. Both my thesis proposal (submitted to the Sociology and Anthropology department) and my Research
ethics application (submitted to the REB) were approved before I proceeded to the next stage.

Stage 2, from the end of April until early May 2018, involved the recruitment of participants.

Stage 3, from early May until the end of August 2018, involved data collection, transcribing, preliminary analysis, and additional participant recruitment.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which were conducted over the summer. Three interviews were conducted in May, four at the end of June, five in early July, and two in early August. One of the interviews conducted in August was done in person, during a trip I took out-of-province. Although it was a personal trip that I had planned prior to beginning the data collection for this study, learning that I would be visiting a destination near to this particular participant’s location provided an opportunity to meet in person. While conducting the interview over Skype was an acceptable option for this research participant, we were able to find a time in our schedules to meet in person and decided to do so during my trip; however, due to time constraints, the interview was only half-completed when we met in person and had to be split into two sessions. At the start of September, I conducted the second half of this particular interview with the research participant via Skype. In mid-June, I decided to expand my recruitment strategies to include online and institutional outreach, and an ethics protocol modification request was sent to the REB at the University of Guelph. The request was approved two days after it was submitted. Stage 4, starting in September 2018 and lasting throughout the fall semester, involved conducting the last interview, which had been scheduled for when the final research participant arrived in Canada. This stage also included further transcribing and data analysis. Stage 5, from January until April 2019, involved writing up the findings, producing a draft of the thesis, as well as making revisions and preparing the final version of the thesis for submission to the Examination Committee ahead of the final examination.
3.5.3 – Interviews

In-depth semi-structured interviews focused on a list of specific topics, but were also open-ended (Bernard 2011: 155). Interviewing “focuses on the understandings and significance that people give to their life experiences, in regard to the main topic of study” (Žikić 2007:27). The aim of this research and these methods was to collect personal, subjective accounts focusing on participants’ (im)migration journeys and experiences in order to answer my two research questions. These accounts included participants’ experiences of accessing information and resources for settlement in Canada at different stages of the migration and immigration processes, and how or if these experiences influence feelings of inclusion in Canadian society, participants’ sense of belonging to Canada and/or Brazil, and the (re)shaping of (im)migrant identities. Interviews were conducted in English, as all interview participants were proficient in English. (English proficiency was a requirement for their participation in the SWB program.)

All of the interviews, with two exceptions, were conducted in-person. Advantages of in-person, face-to-face interviews include being able to clarify any questions if a participant does not understand, and being able to probe participants if they do not provide full answers to a question (Bernard 2011:190). Further, with face-to-face interviews it is possible to verify who is responding to questions, and aside from time restrictions they can last longer than self-administered questionnaires or phone interviews (Bernard 2011:191). One of the disadvantages of face-to-face, in-person interviews is that they can be intrusive. To account for this, I made an effort to remind participants that their answers were voluntary, that they had no obligation to answer any or all questions, and that they could ask me to rephrase any questions or for clarification (Sin 2005:286). Additionally, I took steps toward reducing the potential for feelings
of intrusion to emerge by ensuring the interview location would be as comfortable as possible for each participant.

In all cases, I first asked research participants where they would prefer to meet for the interview and I asked them to keep in mind the personal nature of the questions that they would be asked. I suggested that meeting for the interview in a private space would more likely secure a safe and comfortable environment in which they could share personal stories and information about their experiences, to the extent that they wanted to (Gagnon, Jacob and McCabe 2015:211). As some of the relevant experiences shared by participants may have caused them to feel shame, sadness or other negative emotions (stemming from experiences of exclusion, for example), suggesting or providing participants with a private space in which to share was a way of minimizing some of this risk. Conducting interviews in a private space also minimized the risk of distractions or interruptions during the interview (Creswell 2007:133). This more easily enabled me to obtain an audio recording of the interview that was less likely to have its sound quality affected by undesired noise.

Ultimately, some interviews were conducted in private environments, while others were conducted in public environments. In all cases, the meeting location was agreed upon jointly by the researcher and participant. Deciding where to meet depended on the environments each participant had access to in the cities where they worked or resided, and if they would be comfortable meeting for interviews in these spaces. For 8 of the interviews, I met with research participants in their homes or their work environments. In cases where research participants did not have any locations to suggest, I searched for private spaces in public environments in the cities they were in or near. For 4 of the interviews, I booked study rooms at a library or an academic institution. As mentioned in sub-section 3.7 in the discussion of ethical considerations,
not all interviews were conducted in private spaces. For 2 of the interviews, I met with participants in quiet areas of public outdoor spaces.

There were two exceptions to in-person interviews. The first exception was the thirteenth interview, which was conducted entirely over Skype. This particular research participant was in a different province and preferred this option. The second exception was the fourteenth interview, which was conducted half in-person, half over Skype. This participant was also in another province and I was only in their city by coincidence for a short period of time, as mentioned in section 3.5.2. For all other interviews, I travelled by car to the cities in which the participants were either living or working so that any potential temporal, spatial, or financial inconvenience (such as travel costs) that participating in the interview may have caused to participants was reduced. While a disadvantage of face-to-face interviews is that the costs of conducting them can add up in terms of time and money (Bernard 2011:191), I made sure to budget financially in advance for any expected interview-related expenses. I also made sure to budget sufficient time for each interview during the data collection period.

Data was collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews that were conducted one-on-one with each of the research participants; however, the very first interview I conducted, in May 2018, was with two participants, a couple. I had recruited one member of this couple as a key informant and, at the time of the interview, this individual and their partner asked if they could both participate in this study together. Interview participants were invited to participate in an interview session of 1 to 2 hours in length, although a few of the interviews lasted beyond two hours as the participants were provided with as much time to share as they wished. The shortest interview was one hour in length and the longest was two and a half hours long. For all of the interviews conducted in-person, participants were provided with food and drinks.
Participants were asked for permission to use an audio recording device during the interview, which they were able to deny without compromising their participation in the study. Memories fade and may not always be accurately recalled, so the use of audio recordings is helpful (Bernard 2011:170). Audio recordings help with obtaining a more complete record of not only what was said by participants, but also the ways in which they said it. For example, changes in tone and emotion are more easily caught and distinguished when the audio is recorded and can be listened to again. I also took detailed notes in my notebook about what was said during each interview, as well as other relevant details that might not have been captured in an audio recording. For instance, I recorded notes about the environment where the interview took place, any changes I noticed in the participants’ mood or mine, and any interruptions that occurred (Bernard 2011:171). While it is important to put a lot of care into planning the timing and sequence of the different stages of a research project, remaining flexible and ready to adapt as needed once the project begins is also imperative (Lune and Berg 2017:33). One interview was scheduled per day during the data collection period to allow for sufficient time to type up written notes from the interview, to begin transcribing the audio recording of the interview, and to account for any possible changes in scheduling. On one occasion, two of the interviews were conducted on the same day, each in a different city. Although it was a busy day, this arrangement worked well with the scheduling I had planned.

3.6 – Data Analysis

The data collected through semi-structured interviews with research participants was qualitative in nature. Analyzing the collected data included a line by line analysis of the recorded responses that were provided by research participants during the interviews. Keywords or themes were highlighted in a colour-coding process whereby similar themes were coded in the same
colour, and different themes were represented by distinct colours. These themes were extracted and grouped together in a second Microsoft Word document as part of the coding process (Bernard 2011:304). Once I had determined the dominant themes that emerged from the data, I searched for and reviewed the relevant academic literature in order to ground these themes in the existing literature as well as in the findings in my own research.

3.7 – Ethical Considerations

The scholarly literature on methods notes the contemporary preference for considering ethics in relation to other elements of the research process, rather than as separate concerns (Sin 2005:278). This holistic perspective is appropriate given that “ethical issues are inherent in all research designs involving human respondents owing to an intrinsic tension between the needs of the researcher to collect personal data on which to base generalizations and the rights of the participants to maintain their dignity and privacy” (Žikić 2007:129). In considering the ethical concerns relevant to conducting this study, it was important to be aware of my role as the student researcher and its relevance to risk for those involved in the research. According to Iosifides, “ethics and ethical judgements have both subjective and objective dimensions and […] only an acknowledgement of this fact allows for engagement in genuinely critical scientific inquiry” (2011:219). To further my training in and objective knowledge of the ethical considerations pertaining to research methodology, I completed TCPS 2 CORE training as well as a graduate-level course in qualitative research methods prior to conducting this study.

Recognizing that my own personal experiences of emigrating from and returning to Canada were likely to influence any expectations I might have had about the answers research participants would provide, I made a conscious effort to be aware of and minimize any bias in
order to maintain integrity during data collection and at all other stages of the research process. I did this when engaging with the existing literature, interacting with research participants, and analyzing the data by keeping track of any personal reflections I had and recording these personal thoughts as distinct notes (Ortlipp 2008), separate from my data. Recording my personal thoughts separately from the data I collected helped me to distinguish between any preconceived thoughts or ideas I might have had, and the thoughts and insights that I developed when exploring the literature and analyzing the data. Additionally, the open-ended nature of my questions provided research participants with an opportunity to share about topics or specific experiences that I might not have thought to ask or account for, perhaps due to biases from my own personal experiences.

The potential risks involved in this study were minimal and were social, psychological, and economic in nature. Risks during the recruitment process included participants feeling uncomfortable or embarrassed while reading the email recruitment message and/or replying to me by email if someone else happened to be standing near the computer they were using. During the interviews, none of the participants voluntarily expressed to me that reading over the information and consent letter (see Appendix B) had caused them discomfort. However, I did not specifically ask if they had been uncomfortable the first time they read the information and consent letter on their own, and it is possible that participants did not think or want to disclose it to me if they had been. During the recruitment of participants for this research, it was possible that potential participants may have come to believe that I was affiliated with some type of formal service provider or organization due to the nature of the questions that I asked. I made sure to go over the written information letter with participants in which it is detailed that I am a graduate student researcher and that this study is to be my Master’s thesis project, therefore
providing full disclosure (Iosifides 2011:215; Sin 2005:286). Additionally, as participants were recruited through my personal network, potential participants may have felt a sense of obligation to participate in order to please the individual who recruited them. I have known the key informants for five years, after first meeting in both academic and social environments. Key informants may have felt obliged to participate in this study due to the pre-existing relationships between myself and them. So, I reminded the key informants and participants that they should not feel any pressure or obligation to participate in the study, and every effort was made to ensure that the consent procedure was free of coercive influences (Sin 2005:279). Each participant confirmed to me verbally, in-person prior to beginning the interview, that they had understood the information letter and if they had any questions were able to ask me at that time or any time during or after the interview, as questions arose.

Risks during the semi-structured interviews included participants feeling embarrassed to share details about their experiences (Sin 2005:279) of accessing certain resources or services for assistance, as well as situations of exclusion they may have experienced. When emotional moments did occur for participants, as happened on a few occasions, I took steps to respond to the situation in a sensitive and responsible manner (Sin 2005:288). The interview and recording were paused while I checked with the participant at the time to make sure they were okay and if they needed anything to help them feel more comfortable. After each of these instances, the interviews resumed and continued smoothly. Participants may have felt their privacy was breached in cases such as when other people entered into the interview location or when unexpected levels of noise entered the chosen interview location. Two of the interviews were conducted outdoors in green spaces, with the location being selected in agreement with the participant in both cases. These environments were not free of noise nor the presence of other
people; however, in both cases, the participants confirmed that they were still comfortable to continue the interviews in the same spaces as selected. Participants were provided with the option of changing the interview location to a space where they would more comfortable, if they wished. Throughout all of the interviews, I continuously monitored participants’ body language for signs of discomfort and at appropriate times asked participants if they wanted to skip a question or take a break.

After the interviews were conducted and the data collected, there were still some possible future risks to participants. One of these is the risk that participants may experience social consequences if information is disclosed that embarrasses them and/or damages their social reputation, such as the reasons behind their decision to immigrate and the types of services they access. Participants may have precarious status in Canada and even if they have permanent residency (PR) status this can be revoked or lost. Having precarious status makes participants vulnerable. In the course of answering interview questions, participants may have intentionally or unintentionally revealed information about their legal status situation in Canada.

In order to minimize the potential for these risks to occur, I informed participants of potential risks and obtained informed and freely volunteered verbal consent from participants (Lune and Berg 2017:98). Informed consent is “the knowing consent of individuals to participate as an exercise of their choice, free from any element of fraud, deceit, duress, or similar unfair inducement or manipulation” (Lune and Berg 2017:46). Participants were verbally advised to avoid discussing legal status in Canada to the best of their abilities. Verbal consent was obtained from participants who agreed to the interviews being recorded using an audio recorder, which all participants agreed to. Participants were informed in writing during the recruitment process of their right to withdraw from the interview (Lune and Berg 2017:98). Participants were also
informed of their right to withdraw from the interview verbally and in writing during the consent process before each interview began. Participants were reminded that they have the right to refuse to answer a question(s) or withdraw from this study at any time during the interview. As consent is “constantly renegotiated and cannot be taken for granted at any stage of the research process” (Sin 2005:285-286), participants were instructed to inform me verbally, during and after the interview, if they wanted to withdraw. They also had the option of emailing or calling me to withdraw from the study up until December 1, 2018. While none of the research participants who participated in interviews notified me of their wish to withdraw from the study, one potential research participant withdrew from the study before the scheduled interview took place due to personal circumstances. To protect the privacy of research participants, all participants’ identities will remain confidential and separate from the data (Žikić 2007:129) as I do not use direct identifiers in this final report.

To ensure adequate protection of the privacy of the participants and the safety and security of the data and information that was obtained, I followed the following set of procedures: Notes were taken on paper and audio recordings were made during the interviews. Separate notebook papers were used during each interview to avoid one participant seeing data from another's interview. After the interviews were conducted, the notes from each interview were stored in a file in a locked cabinet. At the end of each interview, the audio recordings were transferred directly to my encrypted computer, which was kept in my home in a locked cabinet. The files on the audio recorder were promptly deleted after each interview. During analysis, data
on paper files were transferred to Microsoft Word files on my encrypted\(^5\) laptop computer. All analysis was done on this computer. All research participants and any individuals they referred to during the interviews were provided with pseudonyms when I typed up my interview notes. As the researcher, it was my responsibility to include the participants in this decision and I asked each of them if they had any preferences for a pseudonym to be used to protect their identities (Žikić 2007:130). Only one research participant suggested his own pseudonym, and I randomly assigned all other pseudonyms. Now that the project is completed, all the data will be stored on my secure University of Guelph Microsoft OneDrive account. Should I decide to link this data to another data set obtained during future research (such as a dissertation project) I will contact all research participants at that time to obtain their consent to be able to do so. If not, after a period of ten years has passed, I will decide if the data set will be useful in any future research or if it should be destroyed.

The potential risks involved in this study were balanced in relation to the anticipated benefits to the research participants. Participants may have found it positive to share their experiences of accessing resources and services for settlement assistance and how this has influenced their sense of identity. My sense from each of the interviews is that it provided participants with an opportunity to reflect upon their experiences, and to make new connections or discover new perspectives about their experiences. In sharing about their own successes and challenges, some participants felt that this information may in turn be used to assist future student-migrants or other types of (im)migrants in their (return) journeys to Canada. In fact,

\(^5\) In February 2018, the Department of Sociology and Anthropology’s IT Coordinator at the University of Guelph performed a full disc encryption on my laptop. I made this request so that I would be able to use my laptop as a secure device for analyzing the data.
when asked what contribution(s) the results from this study might be able to make (see Appendix A, question 17), helping other immigrants and Canadians to better understand the challenges faced during the immigration process was a commonly provided answer given by participants. I followed this question up by asking participants if they would like me to send them a brief report of the findings of the study so they could read it (Žikić 2007:130), to which the majority of them replied affirmatively.

3.8 – Methodological Challenges and Reflections

There were some methodological challenges I faced during the research design process. One main advantage of collecting data through semi-structured interviews is that this allowed me to collect data on specific topics relevant to my research question. Additionally, through the sharing of subjective experiences, perceptions, and opinions on topics of particular importance to individual participants, I was able to gathering information indicating possible new topics to explore (Bernard 2011:156). One disadvantage of this research plan is that relying solely on semistructured interviews with individual participants required a greater amount of time than other methods, such as conducting focus groups (Creswell 2007:133); however, schedule coordination with research participants was easier to achieve when interviewing a single participant at a time. Furthermore, conducting focus groups with participants who were widely dispersed would not have been feasible. Žikić (2007) advises that interview “questions have to be open, in order to generate the discussion, with prompts, aimed to help facilitating the discussion” (127-128). The open-ended nature of the questions led to the collection of data that is not all easily comparable (depending on the particular experiences participants have faced and feel inclined to talk about), but interview questions were carefully considered with attention to wording and probes. Sample questions can be found in Appendix A.
There were also some methodological challenges I faced during the process of recruiting research participants. Specifically, the population I was aiming to recruit was dispersed, and their whereabouts in Canada unknown by me at the outset. For two of the interviews I conducted, conducting the interviews in-person would have proven challenging due to distance and/or availability; fortunately, the participants did not express any dissatisfaction about conducting their interviews online. In fact, I had offered to travel out of province to meet with one of research participants, but they advised me that they would prefer to do the interview over Skype. There were a few cultural considerations regarding timing and scheduling which I expected might come into play (Bernard 2011:285), based on my own experience of living in Brazil as well as interacting with Brazilian cultural patterns on a regular basis in my personal life, both in Brazil and in Canada. For instance, a common Brazilian cultural pattern is for meetings or appointments to begin later than the scheduled time. Aside from one instance of two interviews being conducted on the same day, I made sure to allocate an entire day for a single interview, accounting for possible delays in meeting at the scheduled time. Additionally, I scheduled no more than three interviews in a given week to account for the possibility of needing to reschedule if the original time or date was no longer feasible or if an interview was missed. Being aware of and planning for these possibilities was precautionary, but ultimately the scheduling of all interviews proceeded as planned. In terms of communication with potential participants, contact with them was established through email, Facebook, or Whatsapp, whichever of these options potential research participants preferred. In the Brazilian context, Whatsapp is the mode of most personal and professional communication. The challenge with this was more personal, in that I had not used social media or online platforms such as Facebook or Whatsapp for research purposes before. In retrospect, I now feel that having more options for communication with
potential research participants was a positive aspect as it increased accessibility to me, the student researcher, and to them.

During the recruitment process, many former SWB students who wanted to return to Canada expressed an interest in participating in my research project; but they had not begun or completed the return process and so did not meet the second inclusion criterion, namely having returned to Canada. I received emails about this directly and my key informants, who were helping with participant recruitment, also mentioned interest from several individuals in this particular situation. Additionally, some potential research participants expressed interest in participating to me over email but they never followed through. Furthermore, one participant I had scheduled an interview with was unable to participate in the end due to personal circumstances.

Once I began the second phase of participant recruitment, some of the replies I received from international departments at academic institutions in Ontario expressed an inability or unwillingness to help with the recruitment process. This included explanations that the department did not have information about SWB students who attended their institution, or that the person responsible for the SWB program at their institution was not there anymore. In one case, a reply I received explained that they had never had the SWB program at their institution, which I knew to be untrue. Despite these types of replies, some academic institutions I reached out to were able to help with the recruitment process. There were also some institutions I contacted that did not reply at all.

3.9 – Conclusion

This chapter outlined the methodology and research design utilized in this study. In it, I demonstrated how my research design decisions relate to principles and issues identified in the
qualitative methods literature. After discussing the required data, inclusion criteria, and participants recruited, I provided an explanation of my data collection methods design, drawing upon the methodological literature. To review some main points, collecting information about subjective experiences and perspectives as data for analysis requires some flexibility in the questions posed to participants. Therefore, I designed an interview schedule with open-ended questions and a semi-structured approach. The information that participants shared was also used as a basis for asking additional follow-up questions that could lead to the collection of additional data. Following this discussion in the chapter, I provided information about the steps involved in the data analysis as well as the ethical considerations when planning, conducting, and writing up this research. Lastly, on methodological challenges and reflections, I presented concerns that I faced during recruitment and data collection, such as when locating potential participants, scheduling to meet, and communicating with participants.

The first three chapters of this thesis provided background, theoretical and methodological context for the study. In the chapter that follows, I discuss and analyze the research findings while drawing connections to the information provided in these earlier chapters.
CHAPTER 4: Findings and Discussion

4.1 – Introduction

To remind the reader, the research questions that I set out to answer in this study are:

What factors have contributed to the transnational identity formation experiences of Brazilian student-migrants turned (im)migrants to Canada? And, in light of these factors, how have their identities been maintained or transformed throughout the different stages of their (im)migration journeys? The argument guiding this thesis is that, by examining the factors that affect the development of transnational identities for (im)migrants, we can better understand the different routes that (im)migrants take and why. I addressed the significance of this argument in the literature review in chapter two, and noted that studies of student-migrants turned (im)migrants warrant further research in the anthropology of immigration, migration and transnationalism. In this chapter, I will now describe, analyze and discuss the research findings for this study.

During my analysis of the data collected through interviews with research participants, three major themes emerged. These are, first, the significance and types of challenges faced by participants throughout their (im)migration journeys; second, the relationship between participants’ access to information and different forms of support, (im)migrant agency, and decision-making; and, third, belonging and identity. As I went through the data in the coding process, I coded all topics that participants discussed. These coded topics became the sub-themes of one or more of five broad categories, depending on the context(s) of each defined topic. The five categories were: information acquisition, sources of support, challenges and disappointments, (im)migration-related decision-making, and inclusion and belonging. Due to overlap between the sub-themes in some of the five broad categories, I combined the categories of information acquisition and sources of support with (im)migration-related decision-making.
My analysis therefore resulted in the emergence of three main themes, all of which are interrelated and serve as the focus of this chapter.

On the first theme, academic discussions on the challenges faced by transnational migrants have considered the impact that migrants’ legal status, language skills, social networks, forms of support, cultural or identity markers, and skillsets (Huot et al. 2013; Margolis 1994, 1995; McCrone and Bechofer 2008; Robertson 2013) have on their (im)migration experiences. In particular, there has been a focus on how these factors impact migrants’ experiences of settlement support as well as economic and social integration. Challenges faced by transnational migrants might depend on how migrants feel they relate to the cultural perspectives and/or people in a given environment (Robertson 2018), and might also depend on their previous experiences there. Therefore, in this study, I also expected findings to indicate that participants faced various challenges throughout their (im)migration journeys, and that these challenges and their responses to them varied depending on the stage of the journey as well as on participants’ previous experiences and their social relationships.

On the second theme, social science research on (im)migrant settlement and integration emphasizes the importance of access to information, services, and support (Arthur 2017; Fauser 2011; Hawkins 1972; Omidvar and Richmond 2003). It also proposes that both settlement and support provision are ongoing processes which are affected by (im)migrants’ previous experiences in addition to their social networks. New avenues for graduate migration have emerged through PNPs established by current immigration policy (IRCC 2019b; Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade 2019a), although discussions of transnational (im)migrants are not present in the policies and immigration discourse of today. I found that participants exercised their agency in not only the ways in which they decided to (im)migrate to
Canada after their SWB opportunity, but also in their strategies for accessing and drawing upon different forms of information, services, and support. Research on the development and maintenance of migrant social networks has examined strategies of ‘bonding’ and ‘bridging’ and the different purposes that these networks serve (Ryan 2011). Furthermore, research on the migration-development nexus posits that, from the local to the global, migrant agency is central to personal and social transformation. In alignment with these bodies of literature and previous studies, I also found that the factors affecting student-migrants’ connections to different people and different places are relevant to the (im)migration-related decisions they make. Corcoran and Faggian (2017) note that various factors influence the rationalization, motivation, and outcomes of graduate migration decision-making. Similarly, in this study, I found that participants’ previous experience in Canada, navigation of social relations, and maintenance or negotiation of different identity categories (e.g. student, partner, etc.) has impacted how they assert their agency, seek information, and respond to challenges.

On the third and final theme, understanding the connections that align with how participants see and wish to position themselves across multiple social worlds is an important consideration when exploring conceptualizations of belonging and identity. As Levitt and Glick Schiller note, “[w]hen people explicitly […] highlight the transnational elements of who they are, then they are […] expressing a transnational way of belonging” (2004:1011), and are therefore assuming this belonging as a part of their identity. Similarly to these bodies of literature that examine transnational migration, I found that participants’ economic, political and social ties, which extend across borders play a role in participants’ sense of connection and belonging, and therefore how they view their identities (De Lima 2012; George and Selimos 2017; Robertson 2018; Vertovec 2001). In her study on student-migrants in Australia, Robertson found
that belonging or not belonging “often becomes part of emplaced negotiations of the translocal self in relation to old and new friends” (2018:550). Moreover, as George and Selimos note, (im)migrants’ personal accounts “convey how social identities, expectations, and aspirations are modified and re-shaped in relation to the barriers and opportunities that inform immigrant belonging” (2017:4). Similar to Robertson’s (2013, 2018) work on student-migrant experiences in Australia, I draw on student-migrants’ voices and experiences to consider the connection between participants’ changing social networks and their self-perceptions of identity and belonging (Tajfel 1974) to one or more places. My findings indicated that belonging is an important factor which affects the maintenance or neglect of transnational interconnections for student-migrants turned (im)migrants to Canada. Additionally, findings indicated a link between participants’ sense of belonging and the ways in which they negotiate their transnational identities in daily life, both when facing challenges and when making (im)migration-related decisions.

All three themes presented in this chapter are relevant to the development of transnational identities throughout participants’ experiences of becoming student-migrants to Canada, return migrants to Brazil, then return (im)migrants to Canada. My objective in using a transnational lens in this analysis is that it allows for an understanding of transnationalism and student-migrant experiences as part of a multidirectional, ongoing process. It is also a useful way to describe the social practices of the student-migrants turned (im)migrants examined in this study (Robertson 2013), and their relevance to what I describe as the formation of participants’ ‘transnational identities’. In the sections that follow, I elaborate upon my analysis of the stories shared by this study’s participants and build upon this discussion of the three central themes. Vertovec’s conceptualization of transnationalisms in the plural looks beyond simple generalizations (2001),
and in my analysis I found that transnationality was felt and expressed as a part of participants’ identities in different forms and to different degrees throughout their movements between Brazil and Canada.

4.2 – Challenges, Transnationalism and Negotiating Identities

The first theme to be discussed in this chapter is the experience of various challenges for participants. The discussion of the findings and analysis of challenges is divided into two sub-sections. In the first, I address the main challenges identified by participants. In the second, I then consider the nature of the challenges in relation to the different stages of the (im)migration journey and how they were addressed. The findings make evident that the challenges (im)migrants perceive or face and how they respond to them influences one’s sense of selfhood and identity.

4.2.1 – A Typology of Challenges

An analysis of the different but common challenges that occurred throughout participants’ immigration journeys is helpful for gaining a better understanding of the nature and range of participants’ experiences. It was expected that, no matter the group being examined, different people will face a relatively unique set of challenges that will also depend on the timing of events and location. In this study, some challenges were experienced by most if not all participants, such as establishing and building interpersonal relationships, social networks and support systems in Canada, while others were the product of a given participant’s unique circumstances. I will begin this section by examining the challenges relevant to participants’ experiences during their time in Canada, whether during SWB or since returning to Canada afterwards, followed by an examination of the challenges they experienced upon their return to
Brazil after SWB. The types of challenges experienced by participants in Canada can be grouped under the themes of emotional/social challenges, emotional/psychological challenges, professional challenges, personal challenges, and settlement challenges. Meanwhile, the types of challenges experienced by participants while in Brazil dominantly fall under the themes of personal safety and security, as well as bureaucratic challenges.

One of the most commonly identified challenges that participants faced since coming or returning to Canada is the process of building and maintaining connections with Canadians. A recurring perception among participants was that Canadians are friendly and welcoming, but hard to get to know and become close to. As one participant, Jessica, described:

“[I] do find [it] harder to connect with people in Canada, than in Brazil. So it’s much harder for me to have, like, close friends here, that I could, like, hang out [with] whenever I want and, uh, but in Brazil, like, it’s very easy to make friends. People are always interested in connecting. But everybody here is much more...private, I would say. So you have, like, to grab a few coffees, have a couple conversations to have some real connection, but in Brazil everybody’s very opened up. Like, you don’t even know their name but you already know, like, the name of their mom, their dog, where they study, where they work. [...] Mmm...there’s also like, some sort of human heat. I don’t know if you say that, but, um, I feel like Brazilians are much warmer. Um, and, that’s something I miss. Because, so, now I’m very used to it, but in Brazil you’re very touchy. You’re talking to people and you’re touching them. It’s not intrusive, it’s just a way of connecting.”

From this quote, it is possible to see that Jessica has found connecting with people and developing personal relationships more challenging in Canada than in Brazil, and this challenge was a new experience for her. This idea of Brazilians being ‘warmer’ than Canadians was expressed by other participants, too. Jessica recognizes that her previous experiences of connecting with people in Brazil are different from the way people form connections in Canada, and she also demonstrates an awareness and acceptance of the steps a person might take toward building connections in Canada (e.g. meeting for coffee several times, respecting personal space,
etc.). Despite the challenges she has felt from trying to connect on a personal level with Canadians, she also learned not to take the ‘lack of warmth’ personally. Jessica found that she, herself, had developed certain ‘Canadian behaviours’ when interacting with others, as is evident in what she went on to say:

“But here, in the beginning, it was really hard because nobody touches anyone and you just feel like, am I not good enough? Like, that’s why, like, you don’t wanna touch me? Like, you think I’m dirty or something? But then, after some time you just realize that, it’s just, it’s just how it is. It doesn’t mean, it’s not up to the, it’s not like the receiver but it’s the, the person that’s sending the signals, right? So you just have more, like, this personal space thing, and then you just get used to it then. And, actually, at this point, if I have, even when I go back home [to Brazil] and I have people just hugging me and touching me, I, I feel weird. Because I’m used to…the personal space.”

Similar to Shui, the participant in Robertson’s (2018) study referenced in chapter two, Jessica’s ability to relate to people in her home country had been affected by her exposure to different cultural perspectives and ways of forming personal connections in Canada. Jessica’s discussion of building and maintaining connections with Canadians will be further examined during my analysis of the second theme, as she also identifies having connections and personal support as important factors in (im)migration-related decision-making. The challenges participants faced in building and maintaining support networks are also relevant to the discussion of the third theme that is to come, given the importance of social networks for establishing one’s social identity and a sense of belonging (George and Selimos 2017; Robertson 2018; Tajfel 1974).

Other specific challenges participants encountered included needing Canadian experience and being able to find employment, as well as having to leave people and personal belongings behind in Brazil. At times, participants felt pressure to make decisions, felt indecisive, or did not feel prepared or motivated enough to take action. For instance, Peter and Nathan acknowledged
feeling too lazy at times to go out and socialize with different groups, even though it might provide them with benefits such as practicing their English conversation skills. Having poor supervisor relations, a lack of freedom or happiness, and feeling dependent on others were other challenges participants described. As SWB students, participants experienced certain restrictions due to the terms stipulated in their SWB contracts, such as having to take courses and to complete a supervised internship or research project. However, even in returning to Canada after SWB, experiencing poor supervisor relations and feeling dependent on others were persistent challenges for some participants. For example, Kevin, one of the participants who returned to Canada as a graduate student, felt that the poor relationship he had with his academic supervisor due to a lack of sufficient support was one of the biggest disappointments he faced.

In terms of settlement, challenges included gaining access to affordable healthcare, housing and transportation, as well as accessing sufficient funds to cover the cost of living and tuition. Being located in a less desirable or more peripheral part of the city due to the availability or affordability of housing, or the proximity to one’s workplace, was another challenge some participants experienced. Some participants were concerned about how their legal status impacted their ability establish a basic foundation for financial security, such as getting a credit card to develop favourable credit scores. They also worried about losing their passports and being unable to obtain government-issued ID (such as an Ontario photo card). Less common, but perhaps more severe challenges included facing serious health problems, being hit by a car, and falling victim to a job scam. Additionally, participants noted other challenges, such as having to learn about and contribute to the Canadian tax system and being unaware of the university support they had during SWB early enough to take advantage of it.
Participants also identified Canada-specific challenges related to having sufficient support. These included the maintenance of their connections in Brazil while abroad and feeling alone in Canada. As Colleen shared, in returning to Canada, she “didn’t really have any immigrant friends…around” who could support her by going through the same experiences and facing challenges together. Colleen felt she “was doing everything from scratch”, meaning that she had to be self-sufficient and learn by doing things for the first time. It also meant going through experiences alone since she had no one else to rely on for support or advice on facing challenges as an immigrant. Participants encountered a host of unhelpful individuals through interactions with the police (when Tiffany fell victim to a job scam), academic supervisors, office-mates, employers, and university staff, including SWB advisors. For example, Brandon shared that he had asked his supervisor and office-mate—both Canadians—about housing, but they did not have much help to offer. He found that if he asked them about something specific, like a housing option he had come across, then it was more likely they would share their opinion than if he was to ask for general advice. Moreover, the timing of support was crucial for participants, particularly when they first arrived in Canada. Brandon shared that everything happened so quickly. He only had an Airbnb rental for one week upon arriving and then needed to find somewhere more permanent to live. While Brandon found himself having to do things quickly, another participant, Samantha, found that certain opportunities were missed because she had access to them too late. For example, it was only towards the end of her SWB experience that she found out about certain forms of university support that she had access to. Additionally, although she had signed up to be connected with a LINK\(^6\) partner at her institution—a fellow

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\(^6\)LINK is not an acronym, but the name of the program: LINK Program (University of Guelph n.d.). The use of the word ‘link’ to describe the program seems to refer to the establishment of a connection, in particular ‘linking’ new international students with current university students at the institution.
student who would offer their support to Samantha as an international student—her entire first semester passed before she was connected with one. By then, she felt that having a LINK partner was “useless”, as she had already had to navigate some of the most immediate challenges she would face and learned how to handle them on her own.

In my analysis of their responses to these challenges, I will consider how the strategies they used contributed to the active construction of their transnational identities. Before doing so, however, I will now examine the variety of challenges participants identified in relation to their experiences of returning to Brazil. Some of these challenges were experienced upon participants’ return to Brazil after SWB and before returning to Canada, and/or during return visits to Brazil which participants took once they had already returned to Canada after SWB.

Key challenges participants faced upon their return to Brazil included the daily risk to their personal safety, which was accentuated for them after having lived abroad during SWB. For many participants, the culture shock they experienced after returning to Brazil was much more significant than any culture shock they might have experienced in coming to Canada, whether during or after SWB. As Peter shared,

“it was really a, a culture shock. It was more, more, like, a shock when I was going from Canada to [my hometown] than from [my hometown] to Canada [...]. Because I was used to [Canadian] culture, when I came back it was...really different, you know? It took like one month to get used to [being in Brazil] again”.

Living in Brazil had meant always maintaining an awareness of the environment one is in, since theft and violence are common occurrences there. In Canada, participants did not have the same concerns and were more free to move around in public without the same fear of theft or violence. It was possible to let their guard down, so when returning to Brazil they had to re-adapt to the environment and accept the loss of being able to move around quite freely. While the
environments they returned to in Brazil had not drastically changed, at least not according to the
details they shared, it is clear from participants’ accounts that they themselves had changed as
had their relationship to the place which they previously called home (Robertson 2018). Peter
related to his hometown differently because the person he returned to Brazil as was no longer
just ‘Peter’, but ‘Peter who has lived abroad’. Peter had to negotiate his identity and how he
interacted with the people and environment around him, a process which took him about a
month. Given that his time in Canada during SWB was only 16-months, one month to re-adjust
to living in Brazil again seems like a significant amount of time. In the details participants shared
about returning to Canada after SWB, they indicated that their return to Canada did not involve
the same culture shocks as their returns to Brazil, despite the various challenges that they have
continued to encounter throughout all stages of their (im)migration journeys. Participants’ sense
of belonging had therefore begun to evolve during the SWB experience, a point which I will
come back to during the discussion on the third theme of belonging.

Another challenge for participants in returning to Brazil was the comparatively weaker
lab infrastructure they had to work with, as Tracy described, for conducting academic and
scientific research. Moreover, another participant, Nick, noted that having to produce articles in
Brazil to be published in Portuguese (a requirement of his program) meant that the audience his
work could reach and the impact it could have would be less than if he were able to publish in
English. Other challenges that participants faced upon their return to Brazil included dealing with
more dangerous driving behaviours, which was another risk to their safety, as well as poorer
living conditions and a poorer quality of life due to these conditions and the violence. All of
these various challenges made the daily reality of being in Brazil after SWB more difficult for
participants to cope with.
In addition to challenges that were identified as specific to the condition of being in Brazil or returning to Canada, participants noted experiencing challenges that were more structural in nature. This included fulfilling the return obligation as outlined in the SWB contract, as well as the timing and details of the SWB and/or visa application processes. As previously discussed, returning to Brazil presented participants with new challenges to face. The conditions of the return obligation in the SWB contract further complicated these experiences by obliging participants to stay in Brazil for a minimum period of time, and also (at least, physically) disrupted the connections that they had begun to form while abroad during SWB. Furthermore, the visa application processes for participating in SWB and returning to Canada afterwards were both timely and costly, and for some participants there were delays in obtaining their visas. In spite of the challenges participants faced during SWB and after SWB, both in Brazil and in Canada, in recounting their experiences participants also offered some of the strategies they had employed for navigating these situations.

4.2.2 – Challenge-Facing Strategies and Possible Solutions

Whether or not it was an explicit part of the experiences participants recounted, decisions had to be made concerning all of the challenges they encountered. The types of challenges participants faced were both an outcome and a cause of their agency and the development of their transnational identities. The strategies they used to respond to various challenges were therefore also relevant to the process of negotiating these identities.

On her experience of trying and failing to obtain a Canadian credit card, Jessica shared the negative impact it had on her:

“I was trying to get a credit card. And, because you have like a temporary, um, S-I-N […] banks just don’t give the credit card to you. And, without a credit card you can’t build your credit score, which was […] just inconvenient. And
then I remember, that I didn’t expect that it would be so hard. And it really upset me because, I guess, maybe that would be a moment that I felt like I was, I didn’t belong. Because it’s just, like, I wanna, I have to build my credit score in order to have a credit card, but nobody ever gives me a credit card. How am I gonna build my credit score, type of thing. Well, [...] eventually I got one, but [...] It’s like confidence, you just take a hit. And then, with time you recover, but...I don’t know. I just always try to make sure I read the [...] eligibility criteria for everything because I don’t wanna disappoint myself in thinking, oh, I can, I can do this! And then I get there, oh no, you can’t, because you don’t have your status X or status Y, and stuff like that, you know? So, I think, if you, your expectations are low, then you’re not gonna get disappointed.”

While Jessica did eventually obtain a credit card, the account she shared here demonstrates her disappointment with not being able to achieve something that she felt she was eligible for. Prior to expressing her disappointment in the quote above, Jessica shared that this had been an unexpected experience for her as she had lived in Canada before and “kind of [knew] how everything works”. This perspective reflects a sense of knowing and belonging to a place, and therefore eligibility for opportunities that membership in a society provides, such as applying for a credit card. However, the quote above also demonstrates Jessica’s resilience in the face of unexpected challenges. Her approach is that, if something happens differently than you expected or you wanted, it might make you feel bad, initially, but change your mindset, try again, and be more prepared in the future. This response to challenges by using negotiation—negotiating one’s perspective and one’s sense of self—was echoed in accounts shared by other participants as well. For instance, despite becoming the victim of a job scam almost immediately after arriving back in Canada and then supporting her husband through a serious health problem shortly thereafter, Tiffany focused on the positives in her experience. She shared that her job was her “something good” and “something that [she] conquered” because it enabled her to contribute financially to her household, which influenced the support and sense of belonging she has been able to experience.
Although having more information about credit card eligibility and the risk of job scams might have facilitated Jessica and Tiffany’s settlement experiences, they both responded to these challenges as opportunities to learn and negotiate their sense of self and belonging to a place. Moreover, in these two cases, the circumstances that Jessica and Tiffany experienced were not particularly common ones. I think that even a long-term resident of Canada would hardly expect to face these challenges or to be fully prepared for them. On mediating the challenge of accessing information related to settlement, another participant, Richard, suggested that “the perfect thing would be […] a phone number that [he] could call and they could answer […] everything without [redirecting him]; however, he acknowledged that this is “something that will never happen”. As participants undergo new experiences as part of their ongoing (im)migration journeys, new challenges are bound to arise as well. In rationalizing the challenges faced in relation to the achievements made, participants demonstrated the ability to navigate various obstacles while negotiating their sense of belonging to the society they had become a part of in Canada.

4.3 – (Im)migration-related Decision-making

In analyzing the various challenges that participants reported encountering throughout their respective (im)migration journeys, findings also emerged on the relationship between responding to challenges and (im)migration-related decision-making. Participants were asked to provide a general timeline of key events and activities in their lives, beginning from the point at which they first learned about SWB until the present day (see Appendix A, question four). The information participants shared when they provided their timelines was complemented by the responses they provided in later interview questions. In my analysis, I found that the experiences and opportunities that participants outlined in each of their accounts served as either the
motivation for or the outcome of participants’ decisions throughout their respective (im)migration journeys. In the sub-sections that follow, I will discuss the importance of (im)migration-related decision-making as a process of negotiating transnational identities while navigating diverse social worlds. This discussion will describe findings on the motivation and relevant factors for making certain decisions related to participants’ (im)migration journeys. I will also consider the role of access to information and services in participants’ decision-making processes and how this evolved during the different stages of their (im)migration experiences. Additionally, I will analyze the different types of support and social networks participants identified as significant to the choices they made.

4.3.1 – Motivation, Relevant Factors and their Order of Significance

Not all participants in this study knew that they wanted to return to Canada right away. Indeed, as Jessica shared, being able to connect and build relationships with people is “a huge factor” when it comes to (im)migration-related decision-making. She elaborated that “I think that was one of the reasons why I didn’t consider coming back, because I thought it was […] hard to connect with people. So the fact that I already had somebody [a significant other in Canada] that I was connected to was the reason I came”. Later on, Jessica clarified that her partner “wasn’t like the main factor that made me decide to come” and that “profession and security” were the main factors that influenced her. However, having established personal connections meant that she would have a guaranteed support system in returning to Canada.

For some participants, personal relationships were the main motivation for returning. For others, opportunities arose for returning and they decided to take advantage of them, usually after much deliberation. In all cases, participants expressed that they had the support of their parents and/or other family members back home in Brazil in their decision to (im)migrate back to
Canada. The discussion that follows will consider the commonly identified push factors for leaving Brazil as well as the specific pull factors for returning to Canada. I will also explore the other personal factors affecting participants’ motivation to (im)migrate, as well as the order of significance for the factors most commonly identified by participants. Lastly, I will examine participants’ reflections on the compromises that they felt they made in making their decisions.

The relevance of push factors in determining participants’ (im)migration-related decisions came more into focus for participants only once they had completed the SWB experience. As noted in the analysis of challenges in section 4.2 above, in going back to Brazil, participants developed perspectives on the daily realities of their homeland that were different from the views they held before they had ever lived abroad. Participants expressed being more aware of or influenced by the challenges they faced, such as the high threat to personal safety, as well as by state of Brazilian politics that was affecting the economy and the job market. This led to an increase in more negative views of their sending society. Some of the concerns that participants noted include the level of bureaucracy that was inherent to activities in daily life, the lower quality of life relative to the cost of living, and the very tangible concerns over safety. Additionally, participants mentioned the poorer infrastructure and conditions of both the cities they returned to and the academic institutions they attended. Ultimately, personal safety is what stood out in the majority of interviews as the overall most significant push factor, a concern mentioned before in the analysis of challenges.

While participants identified significant push factors, such as concerns over safety and the violence in Brazil, a larger variety of pull factors for returning to or staying in Canada were presented during the interviews. One of the pull factors mentioned was the lesser degree of bureaucracy in Canada. An example participants provided was fewer line-ups to contend with
when accessing a service, like when going to the bank, or being able to order lab supplies and have them delivered the next day, rather than days or weeks later. Also mentioned was the cost of living in Canada, specifically in relation to the opportunity to earn a higher salary. Participants also cited the potential for a higher quality of life in terms of safety, freedom, equality and the inclusivity or tolerance toward immigrants and individuals who are gay. Additional pull factors mentioned include the fact that Canada is a developed country with good infrastructure, a (more) stable political environment, and strong education and health care systems. The diversity, friendliness and welcoming nature of Canadian people were also cited as pull factors, as was having personal or professional connections in Canada, and specifically having family in Canada. Participants also mentioned opportunities for them to return, the convenience of having more support and an easier life, as well as the change in environment. Some participants identified being able to speak the language and capitalize upon this in their career advancement as pull factors. Other factors mentioned include the greater professional, and academic opportunities there are, including those for research.

It is worth noting that while some pull factors can be interpreted in direct relation or opposition to some of the key push factors that participants stated, other factors are ones which participants identified as unique to Canada. Moreover, being exposed to positive views of Canada from other people also shaped participants’ perspectives. For instance, Tiffany shared that she

“didn’t have much contact […] with anyone that actually worked in Canada, like a Brazilian that came and found a job because I was, more in like, the university environment…but I knew that I was like, wow, based on everything that I have heard and people that actually, you know, come here and have good jobs and live well [like her Brazilian landlord], that was kind of, um, when I had that breakthrough, [and decided that] I would go and try it”
Further, more personal factors that affected participants’ motivation for (im)migrating back to Canada include their first impressions of Canada, and the fact that the SWB exchange was their first time learning about or living in another country as well as a positive experience. Additionally, for those who had the opportunity, their homestay experience was an important factor. Participants’ decision to put their personal relationships first was also significant, whether that meant returning to be with a partner or choosing to (im)migrate in order to improve their quality of life together. It was also important to participants to have the support of their families and their partners in their decision to return to Canada. Moreover, the opinions of others influenced participants, such as the opinions of their supervisors and other individuals whom participants relied on for support. Other factors included the timing of when or how participants would (im)migrate back to Canada, their desire and plan to remain in Canada in the long-term, and wanting to maximize their career or academic opportunities.

Only one participant, Nick, discussed the SWB experience in detail in terms of it being a migration-for-development program. Moreover, in returning to Canada, he noted that this would, in fact, provide more opportunity “to give back to Brazil” given the previously mentioned factors such as improved infrastructure, academic research potential, and opportunities to publish in English and reach a wider audience. He stated that “even though I’m in Canada, my research can help Brazil, in a way [...] [and I do] not necessarily [...] have to be in Brazil to help Brazil”. Nick also shared that, according to popular newspapers in Brazil, former SWB students who had returned to Brazil were finding themselves unemployed, having to take “alternative jobs just to pay off the bills”, such as bartending. Just as Corcoran and Faggian (2017) noted in their work on international and regional graduate migration, the skillsets participants developed during their post-secondary studies and while abroad as student-migrants provided them with linguistic,
social and cultural capital, thus facilitating their ability to resettle in Canada. Having previous knowledge of and experience living abroad certainly influenced participants’ preferences, providing them with opportunities to evaluate life and career options beyond those available in their home country. As seen in Nick’s previous comment, the market demand and availability of jobs in Brazil, let alone in participants’ specific STEM fields, was recognized by participants as far from promising and this was a motivator for looking for career path options abroad. The decision-making processes of participants in this study were also influenced by the social networks—specifically, the transnational networks—they maintained. In particular, being able to maintain connections and access to their various support networks across borders facilitated the prioritization of what participants’ felt were the most important factors in decision-making. Needing additional support was therefore not a main concern or limitation expressed by participants when it came to discussions of their (im)migration-related decision-making, although it did have implications for their sense of belonging to a place.

The principal and most important factor that participants in this study identified as motivating their decision to leave Brazil and (im)migrate to Canada was their concern over personal safety. Kevin explained that “safety, it’s like by far the biggest concern […] once survival is threatened, like daily, it’s a terrible feeling, a terrible experience and everything”. In evaluating the main frustrations he experienced in each country, James noted that “comparing safety [in Brazil] with [his frustration over] commuting [in Canada]…like, that’s no really like way to compare them”. Jessica shared that, even if she did not end up staying in Canada in the long-term as she had planned, it “would be a win-win situation because [she] will have this degree from [an] international institution”. This idea of a “win-win situation” in returning to
Canada can be seen in the data to represent the overall attitude participants’ held when it came to their (im)migration-related decision-making processes.

This analysis of the findings and discussion on decision-making is in no way meant to minimize the significance of challenges participants faced when coming to certain decisions. Feelings of having to compromise were expressed by participants who felt, at times, indecisive, and that they would have to give something up in the process. For Tiffany, deciding to (im)migrate back to Canada involved making sacrifices. She shared that,

“when I left Brazil [and had] presented my final project, I had my Master[s] ready for me. They offered me that. So, it’s not like I left nothing in Brazil, I did have something, too. So, I think that might be the reason that I...I second-guessed if I should’ve come. Like, oh, it’s not like I would be just, um, doing nothing in Brazil”.

Tiffany recognized that she was leaving opportunities and people behind because of the most important factor, her relationship with her partner, as well as her long-term focus. Additionally, in order to find a job quickly upon returning to Canada, she felt she had to change careers and put furthering her education on hold. For Richard, his decision-making was shaped by the feeling that he was unable to fully know what returning to Canada would entail; but he also recognized that if he did not act soon, “the [express entry] score can go high and [he and his partner] won’t be able to immigrate again”. His difficulties deciding stemmed from not knowing how things would turn out. So deciding whether or not to stay in Canada was a “really tough decision” for him. Despite being unable to know exactly how a decision will turn out, based on the scholarly literature on settlement and integration (Huot et al. 2013; Omidvar and Richmond 2003), one might expect that sufficient access to settlement information, services and resources would be a relevant factor in participants’ (im)migration-related decision-making. However, as I will
elaborate upon in the following section, this was not necessarily the case for the participants in this study.

4.3.2 – Accessing Information, Services and Resources

When participants were asked what the terms ‘resources’ and ‘services’ meant to them as (im)migrants, Richard responded that he sees resources as a “right”. Alternatively, Nick defined resources as “materials […] like housing, […] and] like clothing”, whereas services include “talking to people, interactions, and [the provision of] information”. Participants were asked about the specific types of information they had looked for, such as information about transportation, banking, housing and so on (see Appendix A, question five, for a list of the suggestions and probes used to help participants recall the types of information they might have needed to consider). During the data analysis, two distinct patterns emerged. The first of these concerns the sources from which participants accessed settlement information, resources or services (the ‘who’ or the ‘where’), while the second concerns the ways in which participants sought out or obtained information from these different sources (the ‘how’).

The primary sources of information that participants accessed included websites, such as government, institutional or community pages, as well as online reviews. Some participants used ‘apps’ or applications on their phones, such as using the Indeed app to finds jobs or Google maps to locate organizations. Less common was their use of newspapers or flyers, which is how Leanne learned about not only the free gym membership being offered for newcomers in her city, but also the existence of the local YMCA Newcomers’ Office and Employment Centre. Several participants identified the university they attended in Canada as a main source of information and service provision, particularly as SWB students. Participants looked to universities for information on scholarships, filing taxes, finding jobs or Teaching Assistantships,
housing, mental health, immigration, and other settlement needs. Other, non-academic, public services or institutions that participants accessed for information included the YMCA Employment and Immigrant Services and government offices in either Brazil or Canada (including Service Canada, Service Ontario, the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), or Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)). Additionally, some participants looked to private companies for tax filing services and academic credential assessment. Other sources of information that participants reached out to were the people in their lives. This meant turning to friends and acquaintances in Canada, family in Canada, family in Brazil, students or friends in Brazil, other Brazilians in Canada, participants’ employers in Canada, Master’s supervisors, and even other students in Canada who served as a “hub for exchanging information”, as Kevin described.

Findings also indicate that there were several key ways in which participants searched for the information, resources or services that they required. Most often, participants began their search online. This included exploring university websites for information about academic programs as well as about provincial health card and student ID acquisition. It also included using a search database like Google to find information about scholarships, jobs, housing, banking, taxes, health care, obtaining a driver’s licence, phone plans, groceries, social activities, pets, public services, immigration, and other settlement needs. Alternatively, when participants required specific information from government departments that was inaccessible online—such as information about filing taxes or information about immigration from IRCC—they sometimes opted to make their enquiries over the phone. Depending on the circumstance, participants also chose to visit service providers such as government offices in person (e.g. Service Canada) because that was the only way of obtaining what they required (e.g. requesting a SIN), or
because speaking directly with a person was a more efficient way of obtaining information than searching online or attempting to get through over the phone. Additionally, as James noted, seeking information by visiting places in person meant the possibility of finding out “some extra information that you don’t get through the phone”.

Throughout the process of searching for and obtaining information, services and resources, participants’ agency played a significant role in determining the ways they went about doing so and the success they achieved. The combination of their previous experience in Canada and the tendency to start by Googling and planning their search for information independently was very much a common component of participants’ information-seeking strategies. For instance, Kevin attributes his way of doing things and accessing information to his personality and the importance of their “Canada plan” to him and Susan, which he has “taken seriously”. By “Canada plan”, Kevin was referring to the sum of all of the planning and goals he and Susan had set for themselves in deciding to (im)migrate to Canada after SWB. When searching for the insights of other resource or service-users, some participants elected to first get the opinions of people already in their social networks before relying on online reviews. Kevin and Susan provided the example of taking these steps before deciding to invest in a new piece of technology, and that doing so allowed them to be “picky” in making a decision. Participants’ personal networks helped them to obtain the information, resources and services they needed throughout their (im)migration journeys, such as during the different stages of planning, departing, arriving, and settling. In this sense, information acquisition was largely a personal experience for participants that varied by individual. As Richard noted, it was only possible to find out some of the new information he obtained once he had arrived back in Canada. Overall, participants shared the perspective that the information they needed is accessible and has not
been a dominant factor in their decision-making; however, a lack of access to information could be a deterrent, according to Tiffany and Nathan. Had participants been unable to find information about settlement that they felt they required, it might have led them to second-guess their confidence in the (im)migration-related decisions they were making. Ultimately, the importance of participants’ agency and the support and social networks they had to rely on and identify with was found to be significant in accessing information.

4.3.3 – Support and Social Networks

The main sources of support that participants identified can be categorized into three central groups, namely participants’ personal networks, institutional networks, and community networks. The first category, personal networks, comprised of participants’ families in Brazil or their “main pillar” of support, as James put it. Participants’ personal networks also included any family they had in Canada, including their homestay or host family for the participants who had had this experience. Friends and acquaintances in Canada, as well as landlords, employers and pets in Canada were also part of participants’ personal networks. For Colleen, this meant that her cat, who was always by her side, was an important part of her support network. Participants also indicated a reliance on themselves for providing or accessing support when they needed to face challenges. The second group, participants’ institutional networks, included departments of both the Canadian and Brazilian governments, such as the CBIE as well as various university actors. This included university clubs such as the peer guide program, staff in the university’s international department, participants’ academic supervisors during SWB and/or their Master’s programs upon returning to Canada. The third group, participants’ community networks, consisted of church groups that participants belonged to, as well as communities where they had
opportunities to practice their English language skills with others, whether it was somewhere on
campus or with individuals they met through personal networks. Other community networks
included participating in a mentoring program for newcomers, the online groups and forums
participants’ joined or contributed to, and any other public communities where participants had
interactions with other (im)migrants to Canada.

Participants’ feelings of independence and self-sufficiency were, in part, enabled by the
key forms of support they had in place, reducing their need to rely on other less immediate
groups or forms of community membership for support. This connects back to the importance of
people and one’s social or group networks for establishing and developing a sense of belonging
(Tajfel 1974). To provide support, it was not necessary for participants’ support networks to be
located in the same place as them. For example, in (im)migrating back to Canada, participants
left their biggest supporters—their family members—behind in Brazil.

Although participants were not explicitly asked to discuss matters pertaining to their legal
status in Canada, a discussion of the visa options available to them was a natural part of
recounting their experiences. All different visa options available to them based on their eligibility
required the support of other individuals, whether it was a partner sponsoring them via family
class sponsorship or a supervisor willing to take them on as a graduate student leading to the
procurement of a student visa. Without adequate support, the visa application process might have
proven to be one of the most significant challenges participants faced. This finding indicates that,
in addition to the various other factors previously mentioned, many (im)migration-related
decisions made by graduates are also highly dependent on the pathway(s) for (im)migration that
these intended (im)migrants have access to (Corcoran and Faggian 2017; Robertson 2013).
In the accounts that participants shared regarding the three different types of social or support networks they relied on, it was generally found that participants’ Canadian partners and their partners’ families became increasingly supportive of participants over time. Moreover, the relationships participants maintained with their supervisors, for those who embarked on graduate studies once they returned to Canada, were variable; supervisors either served as a primary source of support for participants, as was the case for each James and Tracy, or failed to meet participants’ expectations, as was the case for Kevin. Aside from the participants who sought out and became active members of church communities, such as Leanne and Nick, community groups were not identified as a dominant source of support for participants to the extent that it had an impact on their (im)migration-related decision-making. Moreover, although all participants mentioned having social or support networks they could rely on, their experiences of having sufficient support was not without it challenges, as Kevin’s disappointing relationship with his supervisor indicates.

The different types of support and social networks participants identified as significant to the choices they made were directly relevant to their responses to challenges as well as to their sense of inclusion and belonging to a place. The influence of a sense of belonging on the development and negotiation of participants’ transnational identities was another dominant theme to emerge from the data and will be the third set of findings to be discussed in this chapter.

4.4 – On Belonging

The third and final theme I will discuss is the relevance of belonging to understanding transnationality and identity(ies) as they developed for the participants in this study. Findings on this theme will be broken down into five related discussions. The first of these is an analysis of
participants’ views on what it means to belong. In the second discussion, I focus on the factors identified by participants as shaping belonging. The third discussion is where I consider the location and evolution of participants’ sense of belonging over time. In the fourth discussion, I examine the ways in which inclusion contributes to a sense of belonging. Then, in the fifth and final discussion, I analyze the importance of belonging for identity. Together, my analysis of these five sub-themes will address how participants actively constructed transnational identities through various strategies and responses to challenges that include how they think about belonging.

4.4.1 – Defining a Sense of Belonging

In chapter three, I provided information about the type of data that I needed to collect to be able to answer my research questions. Participants’ perceptions of what it means to belong and where they feel they belong were important for the type of data required to answer my research questions; however, I was aware that asking about such a central and personal perspective too early in the interview might influence participants to think that their sense of belonging must be significant in some way to all of the answers that followed. To frame the questions on belonging more indirectly, I first asked participants about their understandings and perceptions of inclusivity in more general terms. Even before that, I asked participants about the factors that had impacted the decisions they made over the course of their (im)migration journeys (see Appendix A for the specific questions and order in which categories of questions were asked). My aim in doing so was to start the discussion of these topics on broader terms before leading to more specific questions.

All participants had certain experiences and parts of their identity in common, such as their Brazilian nationality, their age (under 30), their ability to speak more than one language,
their attainment of a post-secondary education, their participation in the SWB program and their decision to (im)migrate to Canada afterwards, to name a few. Prior to participants’ experience in the SWB program, thirteen out of sixteen of them had never travelled outside of Brazil. The exceptions include one participant who had previously visited two other South American countries for leisure and two other participants who had been in Canada previous to their SWB experience. One of them had completed a Master’s degree in Canada before SWB as an international student and the other had spent three weeks visiting and taking an English course in Vancouver before beginning his undergraduate studies in Brazil. Despite the commonalities, it is important to recognize that there may be differences in participants’ unique perceptions of belonging as other factors most certainly have an effect on their perspectives.

The participants in this research were all less than a decade into their respective (im)migration journeys at the time I met with them and conducted the interviews. In fact, a few of the participants had only arrived back in Canada a few months or mere weeks before the interviews took place. Given the likely transiency of their positions at the time the questions were being posed, the possibility existed that this would affect the ways they would define belonging, particularly if they were to do so in relation to their immediate state. I introduced the topic of belonging in the interview questions by asking participants how, specifically, they would define what belonging means to them. To obtain a more generalized conceptualization of belonging, probing was done to elicit ‘crucial elements’ for what it means to belong somewhere from a given participant’s perspective (see Appendix A, question thirteen).

Common elements identified by participants as important for defining a sense of belonging included being comfortable with a society’s common customs or cultural patterns, as well as experiencing acceptance, respect, having freedom and the ability to be oneself. For
example, this might mean feeling comfortable with the way people greet each other, display affection toward others, or interact with each other when playing a team sport. Belonging was defined by some participants as feeling “at home”, “at peace” or comfortable in a place. For example, Kevin offered the expression “home is where the family is”, to which his partner, Susan, partly in jest, added and “where the WiFi connects”. Given the importance of WiFi to the online maintenance of transnational connections and communicating with family abroad, I think Susan’s comment is imbued with significant meaning, whether or not this was what she intended. For Thomas and Nathan, a sense of belonging includes learning and knowing about the local politics. Others, such as Samantha, shared that having memories from a place were important for a sense of belonging. Another participant, Brandon, identified needing or having a purpose as an important component of belonging. For Tracy, belonging is not necessarily about where you come from. Considering the variety of elements offered by participants in their responses, it is clear that there is no precise formula for belonging; however, as Susan’s comment notes, the notion of ‘connection’ is important (Robertson 2018; Vertovec 2001). Generally speaking, for participants in this study, a connection of some form must exist for a sense of belonging to take root and be maintained. The dynamism of belonging was further expressed in the variety of factors that participants identified as important to the strengthening or weakening of a sense of belonging to Canada or Brazil.

4.4.2 – Factors that Affect Belonging

As with participants’ conceptualizations of what it means for an individual to belong to a group or a place, participants identified a range of different factors that were found to be significant for their impact on one’s sense of belonging. The six broad categories into which these factors were organized are: professional and/or community belonging; people and
belonging; customs or cultural dimensions of belonging; experiences and belonging; states or conditions that affect belonging; and, feelings that affect belonging.

*Professional and/or community belonging*

A common goal for participants in returning to Canada was either to pursue graduate studies or to seek employment, and in most cases, being able to do both was important for participants. For some participants, being successful in the search for a job signified a validation of their skills and ability to belong to the Canadian workforce (Huot et al. 2013); however, it was not just a validation from participants’ own perspective, but from the point of view of others, too. As Susan shared, finding a job in the Canadian workforce depended more on your Canadian experience (Beach, Green and Worswick 2011) than your training. She explained that,

“*when I tell Canadian people that, that I couldn’t find a job because I, I didn’t have Canadian experience they would always be like ‘But that doesn’t exist, this doesn’t count’. And like, oh, it counts.”*

For others, such as Tiffany, obtaining a job allowed her to contribute financially to her household in Canada, which was particularly important for some participants whose households included a significant other. Some participants, including Jessica and Nick, felt that it was important to find a place for themselves in academia and having a sense of academic belonging resonated strongly with how they viewed themselves and where or how they wanted to belong. As Jessica shared,

“*when you reach at this point of education, if you don’t deserve to be there, if you didn’t work hard enough, you’re just not gonna be there. So, I, I see myself as just as, um, deserving as my colleagues. And I, and I think of them the same, so, that’s how I, I hope they feel about me as well, right? Um, and then there’s like, I’m really into the academia culture where there’s this hierarchy of mentoring and peer support. And that, I think, really helps for you to just feel like you’re a member of the community”.*
As can be seen in these personal accounts, the importance of feelings of deservingness for academic belonging is similar to those that come from contributing financially to the family. This finding is specific to the experience of student-migrants, and perhaps scholarly professionals who (im)migrate as economic migrants (Huot et al. 2013). For student-migrants like the participants in this study, belonging to a scholarly, professional community maintained a position of importance as much as other kinds of belonging. These feelings were also expressed by participants in the way they described the importance of contributing to the community by being involved and engaged (Freiler and Zarnke 2003:ix). For example, they could do this by volunteering, by helping or giving back to the community through their work, or by participating in social groups or clubs. It is worth noting that giving back through their work meant that participants had the ability to choose which community(ies) they were giving back to, and could therefore exert their agency. For example, for Nick, this meant the findings and dissemination of his research would be relevant to his participation in the academic community in both Canada and Brazil. Additionally, the practical application of the knowledge he produces will enable him to give back to the communities in Brazil to whom his research is relevant, which in itself will be a reinforcement of his belonging to the academic community. Although not expressed as a primary concern for the majority of participants in this study, giving back to the communities in Brazil was a consideration that Nick identified as important to him and it also meant fulfilling the objective of the SWB migration-for-development program.

**People and belonging**

Just as feelings of membership in professional or academic communities are important for a sense of belonging, so, too, are interactions and relationships with individuals and other groups (Tajfel 1974). In this category, the dominant theme that emerged in participants’ accounts
was the significance of building and maintaining connections with Canadians or locals, which is an important part of building connections to a place (George and Selimos 2017:6; Robertson 2018). In addition to this, having family already in Canada, including the families of participants’ significant others, shaped the ways and with whom participants spent their time. Not all participants were in a position to physically be with relatives while in Canada. Whether participants’ main social and support networks were in Brazil or Canada had a significant impact on how they felt connected to one place or another, or both. As Tiffany shared, “even though Canada is all of that [and has many positive things to offer], the reason I came is [for her husband]”. Samantha shared that Brazil still feels more like home “because of [her] family […] and […] friends” there, but thinks that “once [she] start[s] to build [her] own family here, [she] will feel that home is here”.

For the participants who identified as being religious, having the support and friendship of other religious SWB participants and church communities, during and after their student years, added to their sense of belonging. So, too, did their interactions with other Brazilians living in Canada and the ability to join and participate in online groups, blogs and forums for Brazilians in particular Canadian communities. The online communities which participants have had access to vary in scale and function. Some range from very broad inclusion criteria for group membership (e.g. Brazilians in Canada) to more specific groups (e.g. Brazilians in Toronto). Participants shared that group members can ask questions about housing or other settlement needs and advice, or the groups might serve the additional function of meeting people, or buying and selling goods and services. Such types of online groups meant that belonging to a community of Brazilians in Canada did not necessarily entail being in Canada at the same time, and thus participants’ connections and sense of belonging could be maintained across
transnational social worlds. Furthermore, membership or participation in these groups provided a way for participants to stay connected to this part of their identity during the period of time after SWB and before returning to Canada. For example, once back in Brazil, Peter accessed Facebook groups online to learn about graduate opportunities in Canada. He also used the website and discussion platform Reddit to learn about the universities he was researching and the cities where they were, noting that he found lots of information and opinions there.

Similarly, having interactions with and support from other (im)migrants, or being able to connect with and/or help other (im)migrants themselves, provided participants with opportunities to engage with other migrants who were also navigating multiple social worlds with their transnational identities (Fauser 2011). For example, while Richard was completing his second semester of academic courses during SWB, he visited the English Language Program (ELP) where he had participated during his first semester. Richard then began volunteering there as a Student Ambassador, helping with different programming which included attending a winter camp with ELP participants. For Richard, participating in the ELP and then giving back to it was a very significant part of his SWB experience and added another layer to his sense of belonging to the community.

**Cultural dimensions of belonging**

Certain cultural or national customs arose in participants’ accounts as factors that affected their connection to a place. These include how they feel about the food, climate, language, diversity, and some common cultural behaviours or customs such as body language and displays of affection. Leanne shared that belonging takes root “when you feel at home. And, when you know […] socially, what to do […] you understand all social cues, and… I think food is a big one, too. When you like the food and when you can cook the food”. James and Richard
expressed the same views as each other on their sense of belonging and connection to Brazil; namely, what mattered most in maintaining the connection to their homeland was, first, their friends in Brazil and, second, the Brazilian climate. The diversity in Canada was regarded positively by several participants and, as Richard offered, “Canada has a culture of open mind[s] to immigrants, and that’s very important”, otherwise “it would be completely hard to live in a place that you don’t feel welcome”. However, the diversity of a place can also present some barriers to belonging. For example, toward the end of his SWB experience and upon returning to Canada, James resided in a city within the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) known for its diversity and significant immigrant population. James noted experiencing feeling excluded when he found himself in environments where other people around him chose to speak their native tongue rather than English. Therefore, interactions with other people, diversity and language are some of the various factors that serve both to strengthen or weaken participants’ sense of belonging and integration (Arthur 2017; Huot et al. 2013), depending on the circumstance.

While Samantha noted that her sense of belonging was tied to where her family and friends were, she also explained that her sense of belonging depended on other factors as well. According to Samantha, there are “some things [she] cannot relate [to] in Canada [or] in Brazil”, meaning that her sense of belonging based on relatability to customs and shared experiences is divided between the two countries. For instance, when talking with her partner’s friends in Canada, the conversation will sometimes focus on topics she cannot relate to, such as certain television programs that her partner’s friends watched during their childhood. Other participants, such as Thomas, expressed similar views of belonging to both countries in terms of the ways in which he does or does not relate to cultural stereotypes about people in Brazil and Canada:
“[E]veryone say[s] that Brazilians are friendly and they are open and [...] you can actually feel that, if you go there [...] it’s easier to approach people, I think, and uh, make friends and stuff. [...] But, I never, uh, thought about myself as being friendly and open and...well, I think that’s part of why I don’t feel that I belong there. Because when I’m there, I don’t think I’m as [...] friendly as them. [...] So let’s say, like, if you are sitting on a plane and there is a Brazilian person beside you, they will probably talk to you and start a conversation because they are friendly and more open. I don’t think if you sit beside a Canadian they would talk to you just because. [...] I identify more with the Canadian version than the Brazilian version. I don’t think I would start a conversation with someone just because I’m sitting next to them. So...I don’t know. Like, [...] it’s a stereotype, but I don’t think I fit the Brazilian stereotype. I think I fit more the Canadian stereotype.”

As can be seen in the stories that participants provided, certain expectations based on cultural stereotypes or common personal experiences played a visible role in determining participants’ sense of belonging. Some of these perspectives stemmed from isolated situations, while others were relevant to larger experiences throughout their (im)migration journeys. This will be further discussed in the next section.

**Experiences and belonging**

As noted in chapter three, participating in the SWB program provided the majority of participants in this study with their first experiences of going abroad. In addition to being a new experience geographically, the SWB program provided participants with opportunities for developing capital in various forms. The word “capital” refers to the different skillsets, types of knowledge and experiences that provided some long-term advantage or assistance to participants—as advocates of migration-for-development argue will happen (Faist 2010; Glick Schiller 2010; Skeldon 1997)—throughout their (im)migration experiences. This includes social capital by means of the cultural awareness, different worldviews, and relationships participants built throughout the (im)migration journey. It also includes educational capital, by means of the knowledge and practical experience participants gained through either an internship or research
project during SWB. Additionally, participants acquired economic capital in the form of financial support provided by the Brazilian government through CAPES, a funding body of the Ministry of Education (IIE 2019), or the National Council of Technological and Scientific Development (CNPq) (Canada 2015). While participants were not paid for the internship or research project they worked on during SWB, the stipend they received to cover the cost of living expenses during SWB allowed for the possibility of saving for return, or future ‘investment’ in Canada. Moreover, these forms of preparation and support laid the foundation for potential future opportunities to strengthen and build upon this capital, as both return migrants to Brazil and then again as return (im)migrants to Canada.

Participants described their experiences during SWB as both formative and self-informed. In response to a question she was asked about what, if anything, could have made her experience of returning to Canada easier, Leanne explained that she felt she was not ready for some experiences during SWB that she discovered would become important to her later on. Specifically, she felt not ready to go to church or to network with professors as a pre-cursor to pursuing graduate studies. By not being ready, Leanne meant that, during SWB, she did not have the same motivation for wanting to look for a church or trying to network with professors. It was only after SWB that she began attending church with her partner, and only once she began looking into Master’s programs did she realize how important networking was for finding a supervisor. Despite these experiences that she had not initially considered during SWB, Leanne shared that “it was important to have the experience that I had, um, during Science Without Borders. I think I am who I am now because of it. […] I think that everything happens for a reason and everything has its time to happen”. On the one hand, the institutional framework of the program meant that, despite the bureaucracy involved in applying for visas or sourcing
information about housing or funding, a structure was in place that set guidelines and expectations for participants. The SWB contract outlined the length of students’ exchange, the forms and amounts of financial support they would receive, and the obligations they had to fulfill. During SWB, participants belonged, at least in part, to the program. On the other hand, participants had the agency to decide how they wanted to spend their free time, the people they wanted to engage with, and, to some degree, what skills and types of knowledge they wanted to develop beyond the context of the university courses they were taking. Having had experiences and memories connected to a particular place was identified by participants as an important factor for a sense of belonging to develop.

**States or conditions that affect a sense of belonging**

Beyond having location-specific memories, participants identified other important conditions for feeling that their needs were sufficiently met and that they belonged in a particular place. Leanne shared that, after SWB, she felt that she belonged in Brazil; however, when she visited her family there in December 2017, after she had already moved back to Canada, she felt like a visitor. She explained that before it was a space where she was “back home”, but when she returned to visit in late 2017 her nephews had moved into her bedroom and she no longer had a space there. For Leanne, this was the loss of a state or condition that previously existed for her. Other states identified by participants as important for a sense of belonging were ones that they had not (yet) achieved, such as a certain legal status.

In addition to sharing his views on the importance of knowing about and understanding the politics of a country for a sense of belonging, Thomas brought up being unable to vote in the June 2018 provincial elections, which had happened just two weeks before we met for the
interview. Besides being unable to vote, Thomas found it was difficult or simply not possible to discuss the topic with his colleagues at work. As he shared,

“There was elections a while ago, for the Premier of Ontario […] I couldn’t vote, because I’m on a PR and not a citizen, so I can’t vote…um, but uh, I asked, like, my co-workers, ‘Are you gonna vote? Who are you gonna vote for?’ And they said, ‘oh, you can’t ask that, it’s not polite’. And then, like, they couldn’t share any sort of information and it was a shock for me. Because in Brazil, we talk about that openly. So, I’m gonna vote for them, I’m gonna vote for them…why are you gonna vote for them? And then we start a discussion. So, that was actually something that I didn’t like, about the way things work here. ‘cause I think it’s healthy to…discuss about politics. So if you don’t tell me who you are voting for, how can I argue with you? And then, if I don’t argue with you, how are we gonna shape our decisions? I think it’s healthy to have this kind of discussion.”

For Tiffany, having voting rights was a less significant factor for her sense of belonging. When she returned to Canada and entered the country with her newly received PR status, the border patrol officers she met told her that she had the same rights as all Canadians but could not vote. It is possible that Tiffany’s reaction to this news was positive mostly because she did not encounter any problems, as she might have expected to; Tiffany shared that it “made [her] feel like ‘you’re doing good, come here [come to Canada]’”. While Thomas felt the absence of voting rights, Tiffany felt satisfied with the other rights her status entitled her to. Other participants, such as Leanne, noted the risk of illegality she would face if she had decided to work or volunteer in Canada when she came back during her first post-SWB visit on a visitor’s visa. Although she would have liked to network with people and gain Canadian experience, she recognized the limits that were imposed on her due to the visa restrictions because, otherwise, engaging in such activities “might be taking the opportunity [...] from a Canadian person”. This observation was not an explicit statement of feeling excluded; in fact, Leanne demonstrated both her knowledge of the law and her desire to obey it, which is important for perceptions of group membership
(Mangum and Block Jr. 2018). It therefore also acknowledges that, without full legal citizenship status, achieving full membership or a sense of belonging was limited.

**Feelings that affect a sense of belonging: exclusion and displacement**

Leanne’s experience did not deter her from returning to Canada again at a later date—notably with a change in her legal status—and it does not appear to have had any long-term impact on her sense of belonging. However, there were other more significant factors or feelings that participants identified which can be understood as having an impact on their sense of belonging, at least at some point in time. These factors are related to exclusion and displacement and include feeling out of place, lost, excluded or homesick at different points throughout their (im)migration journeys. Additionally, some participants noted feeling commodified, being aware of their difference and status as a visible minority, or being made to feel that their worth was inherent to the money they were contributing to an institution. As Kevin noted, when seeking information at one of the academic institutions he had applied to, “the feeling was that every single question that I would make would be surrounded by […], the validation that I was willing to complete my period of research or studies. Because I was kinda like a money bag for them”.

As examined in the discussion of this chapter’s first theme, participants experienced some challenges that come with culture shock, particularly upon returning to Brazil and having to adapt to or accommodate different customs. Other factors that affected participants’ sense of belonging include experiencing inauthenticity in their interactions with others, as when people only pretended to care about who they were in order to be polite or made minimal efforts to maintain the dialogue. Similarly, Kevin and Susan felt that the inability to establish close bonds and become like “brothers and sisters” with any Canadians was another factor that affected their
sense of belonging. Facing systematic barriers was another factor for participants, or as David described, “Canadians […] may be willing to connect, but if there isn’t much in common, then [it is challenging]”. Moreover, having to change careers or professional identities due to the inability to find a job in a given field or at a certain level of experience was a reality that some participants, like Tiffany, faced. Another factor affecting participants’ sense of belonging was experiencing or lacking a feeling of safety in a given environment.

These factors and other aspects relevant to belonging have been part of the broader life experiences of research participants from the beginning of their participation in the SWB program until the present day. While some factors may have been singular or less frequent experiences, such as being made to feel commodified, the impact of other factors on participants’ sense of belonging likely had longer-term effects. Building on this discussion, next I will analyze participants’ perspectives on belonging as a process.

4.4.3 – Belonging as a Process

Questions concerning the where, when and why of belonging arise when considering participants’ views of belonging as evolving over time. To elicit information concerning participants’ views on the relationship between place and identity, I asked participants where they felt that they belonged. Half of participants immediately responded by stating that was a “hard question”. Moreover, the answer provided by any participant at a given point in time could either reflect their current sense of belonging, or could reflect previous feelings of belonging they had experienced but which might no longer hold true.

Having gone through the various stages of their (im)migration journeys, some participants, such as Nathan, felt like he had become a “citizen of the world”; however, other participants—such as Jessica, Leanne, Samantha and Richard—expressed feelings of belonging
nowhere completely. Meanwhile, for Thomas, maintaining a sense of belonging seems to come down to a balancing act of the different elements of one’s identity. For instance, Thomas gave the example of the tendency of drivers in Brazil to run a red light, although the traffic law for this there is the same as in Canada, making it illegal. Thomas shared that he likes to follow rules more than the average Brazilian, but in Canada he feels he respects the rules a little less. Essentially, his preference to abide by the laws and social rules, which he implies is part of his ‘Canadian’ identity, tends to dominate when he is in Brazil. At the same time, he has become more aware of his Brazilian identity since returning to Canada and feels more comfortable to display his ‘Brazilianess’ here. He can do this by wearing his Brazil soccer jersey during the World Cup series which demonstrates that Brazil is still a part of his identity, even though he is in Canada and comfortable being here instead. Similarly, Nathan offered his view that “I am becoming more Canadian, but I am still attached to Brazil”. Although participants did not provide an explicit definition of what it means to be ‘Canadian’, they referred to common stereotypes of Canadians being friendly, inclusive, and welcoming. As previously noted, having a sense of connection to people and to a place are important for a sense of belonging, and I understood Nathan’s expression of “becoming more Canadian” to mean feeling a more established sense of belonging and connection to the country and its people.

Furthermore, Tracy shared her view that belonging is not necessarily about where you are from, a perspective which resonated with other participants’ responses including Nick’s observation that

“it’s a process [...] Like, once you grow old, you have different experiences, it grows into you, [these] feelings and this view about your country. Once you’re out of the country you also learn to, to look at Brazil [...] from a different perspective. So you see good things and bad things, and you see yourself; things that you want for your life and things that you’d...rather not have in your pursuit. So I think [...] it takes time for you to realize that stuff. It’s not something that when I was...18 years old, I would have the same view of it. So it’s a different view.”
These ideas or views of belonging allude to the nature of belonging as a process, not a state. Indeed, belonging can be understood in terms of the importance of timing for establishing and maintaining some of the connections deemed necessary by participants to belong, as well as the evolution of where, when and why it has meant for them to belong as individuals to a given group or place.

Participants recognized that developing a sense of belonging is a process and a fluid one at that (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004). While it often takes time for belonging to become a tangible feeling, this is not always the case. As the previous discussions of the relevant factors for belonging indicate, it is an inevitably subjective experience despite the commonalities among participants’ experiences. Moreover, some participants conceptualized the evolution of their sense of belonging in terms of addition rather than change. Nathan, for example, shared that “becoming more Canadian” is “adding [to], not like subtracting anything” from his Brazilian identity. This notion of the fluidity and expansion of one’s identity based on ways of belonging (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004) was evident in Tracy’s observations, too. She shared that her sense of belonging

“expanded a lot, because [...] I had never lived by myself, and I was alone in a different country [...] all by myself. [...] I think you start to see that, uh, you don’t belong just, like, one place. You can belong to different places [...] I think that’s it because [...] if you never have, like, uh, different experiences like this, I think you’re always just stuck with the idea that [...] your life is...that way, and it will always be that way, and you have to be that way, but [...] experiences like this, I think, help [...] you see that, like, there’s a world of possibilities for you to...to try [...] I think, to find your [...] place”.

The perspectives participants shared on the evolution of their sense of belonging over time can be more easily considered and discussed in terms of the different key stages of their (im)migration journeys. In the accounts participants shared, views were expressed that included
feelings of belonging more to Canada during SWB than when they (im)migrated back to Canada after the SWB program had ended and they had gone back to Brazil. Some participants expressed feeling that they now belonged more in Canada than in Brazil, since (im)migrating back to Canada. Meanwhile, other participants shared feelings of being more attached to Brazil now, even after (im)migrating back to Canada, although the reasons for feeling attached to Brazil have changed. Additionally, some participants expressed feeling that they maintain dual ties to both Canada and Brazil.

Richard described feeling that he belonged more to Canada during the SWB program than when he returned to Canada. He explained that, during SWB, when he was with his friends and had few responsibilities, he just got “the good sides of Canada”. Richard elaborated upon this point by noting that Toronto is an “amazing city” and he had very close friends with him at that time as he was living with a group of Brazilians, one of them being his best friend from back home. When Richard (im)migrated back to Canada later on, a specific opportunity through a contact he made led him to a different city. Furthermore, during his return journey he did not have his close friends to accompany him. These factors have undoubtedly had an impact on Richard’s sense of belonging and how he compares his initial and subsequent experiences of living in Canada. For Leanne, the loss of physical space at her family’s home in Brazil once she had (im)migrated back to Canada signified the loss of a sense of belonging to Brazil. Comparing her experience of living in Canada and the space she built for herself here to what remains for her in Brazil has shaped her sense of belonging. Moreover, her partner and his family have worked to help establish this sense of belonging for Leanne here in Canada.

David is another participant who, like Leanne, shared that he feels he may now belong more to Canada than to Brazil. Having his partner and partner’s family as main supports in his
life has played a significant role in him coming to feel this way. At the same time, he shared that “freedom’s part of [belonging], but, um, also, um…having people who understand where you’re coming from and who share […] the same […] view of the world. […] You know, the people who are, who come from where you come”. David went on to explain that he feels that he belongs to his hometown in Brazil, but now he has a mix of both values, those from his hometown and those from Canada, and he does not identify the same way anymore. This sentiment of maintaining dual ties to both countries since (im)migrating back to Canada was also expressed by other participants, including Samantha, Tiffany, Colleen, Thomas, James and Nick.

For example, Colleen noted that she belongs

“in both places. For sure, it’s like half-half. Half of me is in Canada, half of me is in Brazil. I would say now it’s more in Canada, just because I’m building my life, and it’s been a little while since I left. So, it’s been like if you see, 3, 4 years, that I’m living in Canada…something like that, I don’t remember, the math is complicated. But, so my life is becoming more Canadian right now. So I, I am independent, I’m living by myself, I pay my bills, I have my cat, I have my boyfriend, I have my friends, my routine, my job. So things are turning in a way that I’m getting settled in Canada. So everything that I have from Brazil is always nostalgic […] because I’m not really living there anymore to see what is going on. I’m missing, like, um, I am missing a lot. So, I still miss Brazil, but really, I still am, I am understanding in my own mind that I don’t live there anymore.”

As Colleen’s explanation reveals, participants’ views on the temporality of their experiences at a given stage of the (im)migration journey was relevant for developing a sense of belonging.

Colleen had invested several years into building her life in Canada upon her return, indicating her long-term focus and plans to stay in Canada. Other participants also reflected on their experiences in Canada according to temporality, focusing on the temporary aspect of SWB rather than the permanence associated with their decision to (im)migrate back to Canada. Some participants, such as Jessica and Richard, explained that their awareness of SWB as a
temporary experience provided them with a sense of freedom to enjoy the exchange period in Canada without (immediately) worrying about long-term factors. Indeed, Jessica shared that,

“it’s easier when you’re in the exchange program, because you know it’s gonna end, so you kinda know...okay, I have 5 months to go, I have 4 months to go. So, when you have, like, you’re feeling depressed, depressed or sad, just...homesick, it’s easier, because you know it’s gonna end and that’s it, you just have to push it through. But, of course, it’s like, good days and bad days, right? Most of the time it was good. We were always, like, going out with friends and going to school. So it was fine”.

Additionally, Richard commented that the “when you’re in a place for the second time, it’s not the same magic as when you go to a place the first time. [...] But, that’s a good thing, I think. Like, it means that I feel at home [in Canada now].”

The self-awareness participants expressed concerning the dynamic development of their sense of belonging and the factors that affect it demonstrate the daily presence and ongoing negotiation of their transnational identities across social worlds. One factor in particular that stood out in their accounts and warrants further discussion on its own is the significance of inclusion for the impact it had on participants’ sense of belonging.

4.4.4 – Perspectives on Inclusion

In the review of the literature provided in chapter two, I noted the five key dimensions of social inclusion identified by the Laidlaw Foundation and drawn on by Omidvar and Richmond in their study on immigrant settlement and social inclusion (Frieler and Zarnke 2003). The first of these is valued recognition, which means recognizing and respecting the needs and values of both individuals and groups. For example, universal health care aims to recognize the common worth of all individuals in a society. The second dimension, human development, means “nurturing the talents, skills, capacities and choices of children and adults to live a life they value
and to make a [worthwhile] contribution […] through opportunities for learning and development” (Freiler and Zarnke 2003:iix). An example they provide is having childcare programs that go beyond supervising children to also encourage growth, learning and development. The third dimension, involvement and engagement, means having support but also the independence to make decisions oneself to participate in community life, such as through political participation. The fourth dimension, proximity, means having access to public and social spaces of diverse or mixed classes and people. Such spaces include libraries, parks, integrated schools and neighbourhoods with mixed incomes (2003:iix). Lastly, the fifth dimension of material well-being means having access to sufficient material and economic resources to live safely and securely, such as stable housing (2003:iix). In asking participants about their perspectives on inclusivity and particularly their experiences of inclusivity or the lack thereof in Canada, several key ideas and experiences emerged that closely align with two of the Laidlaw Foundation’s five categories (Freiler and Zarnke 2003), specifically the first and fourth dimensions.

In terms of valued recognition and respect, participants felt that this meant experiencing acceptance, tolerance and understanding from the individuals they interacted with. It also meant being open to learning about each other or showing an interest in the other person, leading to authentic relationships of a reciprocal nature. Participants shared that when others are friendly and show an interest by asking questions and trying to find commonalities on which to form connections with them, this helps them to feel welcome and comfortable. Recognizing that this is not always an easy task and that barriers might exist, due to language differences or otherwise, Peter offered that “if you have a problem [understanding someone], just ask, you know. […] Sometimes you feel that people are […] judging you, when they are not saying anything. Just be
patient and […] don’t be afraid of asking questions. […] I want to learn, as well. I want to learn this culture, this Canadian culture”. Indeed, as James stated, “don’t do something to others that you wouldn’t like for them to do [to you]”.

In terms of access to public and social spaces of diverse or mixed classes and people, some participants noted that there are differences between inclusion experienced in personal relationships versus in society in general, such as in public spaces. Another distinction was made between inclusion as experienced in the workplace versus in larger society. For Samantha, who experienced being incorporated into her husband’s social circle with his group of friends, “in general, like, in society, [immigrants] feel included, but I don’t see that much interaction, like, in personal relationships, like… […] people tend to be with […] people with the same background”. Colleen offered that, overall, she also feels that Canadian society is inclusive, but as for her experience as a worker or co-worker, she does not feel the same. The community where Colleen was working at the time of the interview was part of a township in Ontario that was much smaller than the city where she was living. As Colleen explained, where she works, the workers and residents are very

“Canadian, Canadian, Canadian […] They complain about […] how the government is […] letting more internationals come into the country, how the country is becoming miscellaneous and international. […] They have the very, very old thinking. Not progressive at all, like, that…things have to be the way they are, since they were twenty years old. [And] anyone else that I’m talking [to] that is older, like above 60, they will have a very similar thinking, too. They are not open to changes, they are not open to anything. It’s just the things the way they are, period.”

Given this dynamic, Colleen feels that no one else at her workplace really knows about immigrant experiences. She explains that “if you’re not in an immigrant group, you have to do everything from scratch. Which is fine, but maybe you don’t find the right answers or maybe you go to the wrong way, so you…it’s a hit and miss”.

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In analyzing these accounts, it is clear that what the dimensions identified by the Laidlaw Foundation (Freiler and Zarnke 2003) involve depends on each individual (im)migrant’s situation and needs, and that some dimensions in particular may resonate more strongly with certain immigrant populations than others. Moreover, some participants found it easier to respond to questions on inclusivity in terms of being excluded rather than pinpointing particular experiences of feeling included. For example, Colleen noted that certain actions can be interpreted as overtly exclusive, such as the way people are “looking at you [in a “weird” way] and trying to understand you, because you are international”, but it is not clear whether it is because of the way you look, your accent, or something else.

Going back to the discussion on the importance of social relationships for establishing and maintaining a sense of belonging, the general feeling that participants expressed was that inclusivity in social relationships matters more than society’s inclusivity. As Kevin shared, “my bubble is what matters”. This reiterates the finding that a connection of some form must exist for a sense of belonging and social identity to take root and be maintained (George and Selimos 2017; Tajfel 1974).

4.4.5 – Belonging and Identity

Tajfel’s social identity theory (1974) maintains that an individual’s sense of belonging and identity is shaped by experiences of group membership. In this study, I examined the factors which have had the greatest impact on participants’ sense of belonging and feelings of inclusion. I also considered how these factors are related to the development of personal identity(ies). In the findings, it was clear that participants’ sense of belonging to particular places and groups is indeed key for their perceptions of who they are as individuals. While most participants have found that they belong to Canada in some way now, even if only in contrast to Brazil, there was
a common understanding among participants that belonging is a dynamic, fluid process. Participants’ self-perceptions of their Brazilian-ness and Canadian-ness are constantly being reaffirmed, challenged or negotiated. What it means to be a Brazilian in Canada versus a Brazilian in Brazil, or what it means to be a Brazilian in Brazil but one who has lived in Canada, are all facets of participants’ transnational identities that they have to contend with when navigating their various social worlds.

4.5 – Conclusion

“However termed, the multi-local life-world presents a wider, even more complex set of conditions that affect the construction, negotiation and reproduction of social identities. These identities play out and position individuals in the course of their everyday lives within and across each of their places of attachment or perceived belonging.” (Vertovec 2001:578)

This chapter discussed three central themes that emerged from the data which were relevant to the manifestation and development of transnational (im)migrant identities for this population of Brazilian student-migrants turned (im)migrants to Canada. Findings revealed how participants conceptualized belonging and identity in ways that reaffirmed the central claim of social identity theory (Tajfel 1974), being that groups and group membership are responsible for instilling a sense of belonging and identity in individuals. Indeed, participants’ personal relationships, the types of support and social networks they had access to, their previous experiences in Canada, as well as their fears over personal safety upon returning to Brazil were the most impactful factors in determining the decisions participants made and how they viewed their own sense of belonging. In concurrence with perspectives on migration-for-development on the potential for social and personal transformation, participants’ social relationships with migrants and non-migrants alike were found to be a significant component of their experiences during SWB. These relationships and the connections participants formed to particular places
indicate the significance of migration-for-development beyond the economic impact that it brings, whether it be in the form of economic gains to the participants as SWB students or to Brazil in terms of the more skilled labour force it produces through SWB. For participants, such relationships impacted not only their social network development, but also their feelings of social inclusion and sense of belonging. Moreover, the underlying power structures of local institutions—specifically universities—played a role in the ways in which participants’ felt they were provided or not provided with adequate support and resources. These factors did more than just shape participants’ SWB experiences, they also contributed to the formation of their transnational (im)migrant identities.

The particular social, political and economic contexts of sending and receiving countries inevitably shapes migrants’ experiences and transnational activities throughout the course of their (im)migration journeys (Corcoran and Faggian 2017; Gmelch 1980; Morawska 2009; Skeldon 1997). Findings from this study demonstrated that participants’ experiences have also been shaped by the manner in which they embarked on their (im)migration journeys—namely, arriving in Canada on a funded migration-for-development program, which provided participants with certain resources and support. While not an explicit part of participants’ discussions, technology also had an impact on participants’ experiences in the way it facilitated the maintenance of transnational ties. Mostly everyone with whom participants’ wanted or needed to get in touch or the information they wished to obtain could usually be accessed online. The findings from this study demonstrated that access to and use of settlement resources and services was less significant than initially anticipated. Indeed, the key finding that emerged in this study was the importance of the different stages of participants’ (im)migration journeys and the significance of personal relationships and support. Each stage of their journeys presented
participants with new experiences and opportunities that required facing a variety of challenges, responding to these challenges while simultaneously making (im)migration-related decisions, and re-evaluating one’s sense of selfhood, identity, and sense of belonging to different places. Therefore, the SWB program and subsequent experiences of returning to Brazil and then again to Canada both required and allowed participants to exert their agency as migrants, and to negotiate the development and/or maintenance of their experienced, transnational (im)migrant identities.
CHAPTER 5: Conclusion

5.1 – Reflections on the Findings

“The student-migration experience is not homogeneous but all student-migrants in some ways follow the same trajectory, if they are successful, from transient to permanent belonging” (Robertson 2013:8).

The development of this thesis was directed by the argument that we can better understand the different routes that (im)migrants take and why they take them by examining the factors that affect the development of transnational identities for (im)migrants. The two research questions that I posed in this study were: What factors have contributed to the transnational identity formation experiences of Brazilian student-migrants turned (im)migrants to Canada? And, in light of these factors, how have their identities been maintained or transformed throughout the different stages of their (im)migration journeys? Much like the quote above, in my research findings, I found that each participant went through their own unique experiences but common patterns emerged. First, the challenges participants faced were a reflection of their unique circumstances and collective position as former student-migrants turned (im)migrants to Canada. Second, in facing and responding to challenges, participants drew on their past experiences as student-migrants and return migrants, as well as the service-, resource- and information-seeking strategies they had developed throughout their (im)migration journeys. Third, in doing so, participants not only navigated challenges, but also asserted their agency while negotiating their identities and sense of belonging to both Canada and/or Brazil.

In revisiting some of the aims of the thesis, I will review some of the contributions that this thesis makes. To begin with, by drawing on the approach used by Robertson (2013, 2018), I found that using a transnational lens did indeed allow for an understanding of transnationalism and student-migrant experiences as part of a multidirectional, ongoing process. It was also a
useful way to describe the social practices of the student-migrants turned (im)migrants examined in this study, and its relevance to the formation of their ‘transnational identities’ (Robertson 2013). Additionally, by drawing on student-migrants’ voices as the foundation for the data I collected and analyzed, I was able to examine first-hand accounts of experiences that were relevant to participants’ changing social networks and their self-perceptions of identity and belonging to one or more places (Robertson 2018). This allowed me to consider the connection between these elements and to find that participants’ transforming social and support networks do, in fact, have an impact on their sense of self and belonging.

Recent research on graduate migration includes Corcoran and Faggian’s (2017) exploration of the factors influencing the rationalization, motivation, and outcomes of graduate migration decision-making. One of my aims was to build on their findings that pointed to graduate migrants’ social networks, skillsets, personal preferences, and labour market demand at the time of graduation as important factors in graduate migrant decision-making. In examining a particular population of student-migrants turned (im)migrants to Canada, particularly from a Global South country, I built on their research in a very specific way. My findings indicated that, for this particular population, participants’ social and support networks stood out as one of the most significant factors in decision-making, facing challenges, and developing a sense of belonging and identity(ies) (Robertson 2018; Tajfel 1974). Moreover, an aim of this study was to examine the impact of migration-for-development on personal transformation, which it achieved, but it also brought broader migration-development nexus perspectives into conversation with the research on graduate migration and decision-making.

An additional aim of this study was to consider the impact of not only participants’ social networks, but also their economic and political ties that extend across borders for the role they
play in participants’ sense of connection. As identified in the literature, an understanding of the multiple ties that align with how participants see and wish to position themselves across multiple social worlds is an important consideration when exploring conceptualizations of identity (De Lima 2012; George and Selimos 2017; Robertson 2018; Vertovec 2001). I achieved this aim in finding that participants’ various transnational ties do indeed contribute to a sense of connection and belonging, and therefore how participants viewed their identities. Moreover, by exploring the ways in which Brazilian student-migrants turned (im)migrants to Canada have had to negotiate their transnational identities in response to the immigration policies of today, my aim was to contribute to studies on migration policy and the public discourse on (im)migration that focus on the challenges and importance of immigrant integration (Biles, Burstein and Frideres 2008; Frideres 2008; George and Selimos 2017; Li 2003). Although discussions of transnational (im)migrants do not yet exist in the discourse or policies in explicit terms, participants in this study used the various opportunities for inclusion (Omidvar and Richmond 2003) and immigration pathways they had access to in order to achieve their goals while negotiating where they wanted to be, where they wanted to belong, and who they wanted to be.

Ultimately, findings indicated that participants chose to rationalize and respond to the challenges they faced through the decisions they made. Moreover, their strategies for doing so were directly related to the ways in which they undertook the negotiation and navigation of their transnational identities across multiple social worlds.

5.2 – Participants’ Perspectives on the Potential Results

The Public Issues aspect of my Master’s program influenced the approach I took and plan to take to make the research more accessible and collaborative. When I asked participants what contribution(s) they think that the results from this study might be able to make (see Appendix
A, question 17), helping other immigrants and Canadians to better understand the challenges faced during the immigration process was a commonly provided answer given by participants. Participants specifically expressed an interest in helping other (im)migrants through the sharing of their experiences and offered some other considerations and insights. For instance, participants noted that sharing the experiences of participants in this study could benefit any international students, not just those coming to Canada, and that it could provide a guideline of what to and not to do to help other people avoid making the same mistakes. Similarly, participants felt that sharing these results with any types of (im)migrants to Canada could benefit others by helping inform them about what to expect and perhaps how to better prepare for (im)migrating. As Leanne noted, it is nice to know that others are going through the same things as you and that you are part of a community. Samantha felt that sharing the results could help by raising future (im)migrants’ awareness of issues experienced during the (im)migration process, not to scare them, but to inform them and perhaps show them who or where to go to for help.

Some participants noted that this study could also be an interesting way to promote the inclusion of Brazilians and other (im)migrants in Canadian society. Leanne suggested that it might be able to help institutions (e.g. churches) recognize if they are being exclusive. James offered that, if a government reads a project about the challenges that (im)migrants face and the things that might improve their situations, perhaps the government can do something about it. Similarly, Thomas suggested that maybe reading the results of this study could help people understand the challenges and process of immigration, and which could then help with developing solutions to problems identified in this study that people might not be aware of. Nick shared that he thinks the results can contribute to how researchers think about immigration, specifically Brazilian immigration to Canada. He thought it could also contribute to how people
compare different perspectives, such as migrating when funded by your government, then
(im)migrating again when funded differently or on your own. Similarly, in sharing “please talk
money with us, it’s an important thing”, Susan suggested that being more prepared for the
financial considerations that come with (im)migrating to Canada is something she would have
liked for herself as an (im)migrant and for others in similar situations as her. David indicated that
he thought it would be helpful for international students to access information or get information
elsewhere besides the university, to be able to better judge the economic value of their situation
and their decisions. He felt that international students need a more holistic view as there are more
impactful decisions to make that are not just limited to the experience of studying, and it would
be great for student-migrants to be able act independently.

These are all interesting perspectives and possible ways that sharing the results of this
study might be of benefit to multiple members and intended members of Canadian society. With
this thesis project completed and defended, I will explore this idea further with my supervisors
and participants. It will be necessary to consider the types of public documents that it is possible
to create and who the intended audience(s) might be. That will help to determine the specific
types of information to include in the document(s), in what format to disseminate it (e.g. online,
in a pamphlet), and what steps are required to make the document(s) as accessible as possible.

5.3 – Limitations

The limitations of this research project included various methodological considerations.
On the research design, utilizing a mixed-methods approach which included an initial
quantitative survey might have allowed for a larger sampling pool. While the scope of the project
required limiting the inclusion criteria to only former SWB participants who had returned to
Canada, it would have been interesting to compare the transnational identity formation
experiences of former SWB students who were at different stages of their return journeys to Canada. Additionally, limiting the inclusion criteria also meant excluding potential participants who had expressed an interest in participating but had been unable to return to Canada—at least not yet. Given the limited time in which to complete my thesis project, it was not possible to conduct a longitudinal study. All participants were recently returned (im)migrants to Canada, which limited the potential for comparing the experiences of more-established returned (im)migrants to the experiences of those who had more recently arrived. Moreover, as the range of participants in this study did not include any more-established, long-term (10 or more years) returned (im)migrants to Canada, I was unable to analyze of the formation and negotiation of transnational identities beyond the early stages of resettlement. Being able to do so might have led to findings that it is too early to predict based on current and previous studies in the literature.

The interview questions posed in this study did not ask participants about their legal status or citizenship, or explicitly about their views on having legal status and/or citizenship. While this decision was made in order to minimize the risk to participants who might have experienced precarious status, a more thorough consideration of the implications of legal status in the development of transnational identities might have led to new and significant findings. Additionally, I did not explicitly ask participants about their social class or their perceptions of their social class, nor did I ask about the social, economic or educational customs or opportunities available in participants' cities or states of origin. In a preliminary review of the literature drawn on in this study and in consideration of the data required to answer my research questions, these factors were not identified as significant for the focus of this research.
5.4 – Suggestions for Future Research

As mentioned in the methods sections, in order to minimize risk to participants, an explicit discussion of legal status was avoided; however, it is reasonable to expect that the participants in this study, just like various other types of (im)migrants with transnational identities, have gone through multiple visa application processes which have shaped their (im)migration-related decision-making and the opportunities they have had access to. Exploring the ways in which perceptions of legal status affect one’s sense of belonging and sense of identity is relevant to understandings of transnationality as experienced by populations of student-migrants turned (im)migrants. Although it was outside the scope of this study, this is a topic worthy of future examination. Another question for future research on this topic is why could these particular former SWB students return to Canada, but others who wanted to could not? More specifically, what were the key barriers for other former SWB students who have not been able to return to Canada and/or go abroad elsewhere again?

In chapter three, I mentioned some additional details about participants, such as where they were from in Brazil and where they studied in Canada. The participants in this study come from different hometowns across six different Brazilian states – Ceará, Pará, Bahia, São Paulo, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande do Sul – and the Federal District, Brasília. There is potential for many possible discussions and questions to emerge from some of these details, particularly ones related to socio-economic class and opportunity, but this was beyond the scope of the project. While the ratio of male to female participants in this research was almost equal, examining gender differences among experiences of transnational identity formation might further build upon this study. Additionally, race, ethnicity, gender and class are elements of one’s identity that impact daily experiences and interactions with others; it is unclear to what extent they affected
Brazilian students’ ability to be eligible for and successful in applying to the SWB program. An intersectional approach would be useful for this possible future line of inquiry and for exploring these topics further.

Findings indicated that the role of access to services was not a significant factor in the identity formation process for participants, which leads to the question of how research on access to settlement services and information might overlook more specific experiences of accessing these services, particularly the experiences of (im)migrants who have moved multiple times throughout their immigration journeys. Omidvar and Richmond (2003) have pointed out how research on access to settlement services has tended to focus on more newly arrived (im)migrants; as we know, (im)migrants’ needs in terms of support and service provision vary and evolve over time, as do the ways in which they access these services. Moreover, public opinion on (im)migrants’ needs and use of settlement services might also change over time, and is an important consideration given the impact it might have on public attitudes of inclusion or exclusion toward (im)migrants. Therefore, a question for future research might be: How do (im)migrants’ access to and use of services and support relate to current ideas in the discourse on immigrants and immigration to Canada? Additionally, in considering the findings on (im)migrant inclusion and exclusion more closely, another question to ask might be: How can we better acknowledge their experiences and diverse trajectories in our daily interactions, our efforts for (im)migrant incorporation, and through the policies we establish?

With migration-for-development programs, the participants are individuals who are part of—or training to become a part of—a skilled labour force. There is always the risk that the skills they acquire may be self-serving in that they will follow and serve the individual, not the groups that implement, fund or support the migration-for-development programs. Although this
was not the focus of my research, I do think it is a topic that is timely and important to explore. Specifically, what are the successes and failures of SWB as a migration-for-development program? And, what impact do these successes or failures have on the development of transnational identities for former participants? Indeed, only one participant, Nick, discussed the idea or purpose of the SWB program in detail, which was for participants to build skills and knowledge to then transfer back to Brazil. In fact, what Nick shared on this point demonstrated that he had thought carefully about this and in returning to Brazil after SWB he realized that the infrastructure and certain factors about the institutions there meant that his potential for helping to develop his country would not be as efficient as it could be. On the contrary, if he were in Canada where his skills and knowledge could be further developed in programs or industry with better infrastructure, then he could take the environmental science research that he was doing in Brazil to a higher level with more support and also disseminate his findings to a wider audience.

This perspective leads to additional future research considerations on the nature of migration-for-development programs. For example, possible future research questions might include: How are the successes and failures of migration-for-development initiatives measured in terms of their short-term and/or long-term goals? What types of outcomes from these initiatives are considered forms of ‘development’? In bringing the scholarly research on the migration-development nexus together with the research on graduate migration decision-making, another line of inquiry to explore might be the impact of decisions made by participants in migration-for-development programs, like SWB, on various scales of social transformation in both sending and receiving societies. Additionally, Canadian authorities’ and institutional actors’ motives for, and understanding of, the SWB program warrant closer examination, as do the ways in which the Brazilian government negotiated SWB with Canadian authorities and institutions. An
examination of who the key actors are—whether it be the federal government, provincial
governments, university presidents’ associations, and/or other groups—would also be relevant to
this line of inquiry.
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APPENDIX A

Interview Guide:

1. In what province or state and country did you participate in the Science Without Borders (SWB)/Ciência sem Fronteiras (CsF) program?
2. When did you participate in the Science Without Borders (SWB)/Ciência sem Fronteiras (CsF) program?
3. Prior to your participation in the Science Without Borders (SWB)/Ciência sem Fronteiras (CsF) program, had you lived and/or studied abroad elsewhere (out of your home country)?
4. Can you describe to me a general timeline of your major life events and activities, beginning with your participation in the Science Without Borders (SWB)/Ciência sem Fronteiras (CsF) program until the present day?
5. When I use the terms “resources” or “services” what do they mean to you as an immigrant?
   - Probes:
     - What types of things have you needed help with or information about as an immigrant? Who or what has been there to help with these things?
     - Are there resources or services in your hometown? What about in the city where you lived during your SWB experience? What about resources or services that can be accessed anywhere (online, phone applications, communicating with people)?
     - What are some of the different kinds of settlement resources or services that exist that you know about?
6. What type of people or organizations did you go to for information and/or assistance during your SWB experience as a student migrant?
   - Probes:
     - Did you seek out information about settlement resources, such as information and support about employment, education, finding healthcare providers, housing, banking in Canada, how to do taxes, public transportation, language skills development, community support, or participating in social/community or group activities?
7. Since deciding to return to Canada, which government offices have you visited to get help?
   - Probes:
     - Were there specific experiences or challenges that you faced?
     - What factors might have motivated you to access the services that you did?
     - Did you receive the help you had expected or hoped to get?
8. Who have you relied on when you needed support in your capacity as a student migrant to Canada?
   - Probes:
     - Did you reach out to your family or friends for any kind of support during your experience as a SWB participant? What about during the experience of planning
and/or beginning your return to Canada after your time as a SWB participant was
completed? What types of
- support did you seek or did they offer?
- Were you aware of any formal/government services that may have been able to
address your needs? Were you aware of whether you could or were entitled to access
any of these formal/government services in your area? Did you attempt to access any
of the available services? Why or why not?
- Were there community groups or organizations in place that could assist you? How
did you learn about them? What types of things were they able to assist or support
you with?

9. Who have you relied on when you needed support in your capacity as an intended
(im)migrant to Canada?
- Probes:
  - Did you reach out to your family or friends for any kind of support during your
experience of returning to Canada? What types of support did you seek or did they
offer?
  - Were you aware of any formal/government services that may have been able to
address your needs as a new (im)migrant to Canada that may not have been available
to you as a student migrant? Were you aware of whether you could or were entitled
to access any of these formal/government services in your area? Did you attempt to
access any of the available services? Why or why not?
  - Were there community groups or organizations in place that could assist you? How
did you learn about them? What types of things were they able to assist or support
you with?

10. Can you tell me about the factors that most influenced the (im)migration-related decisions
you made?
- Probes:
  - Why did you decide to return to Canada?
  - How (what type of visa) and when (how soon after completing the SWB experience)
did you decide to return? Why were these the chosen method and means of returning
to Canada?
  - How influential was your first experience in Canada in your decision to return? How
important were the opinions and actions of others in your decision to return and
whose opinions or actions were they?
  - How significant of a factor was Canadian culture in influencing your decision to return? What specific or related aspects were significant in this decision (Canadian
people/the culture, transportation, safety, cost of living, healthcare system,
educational opportunities, professional opportunities, entertainment opportunities,
social networks like family and friends, etc.).?
  - How significant of a factor was the ability to access resources and services, whether
formal (governmental) or informal (community-based), to assist with your settlement
in influencing your decision to return?
11. What does it mean to you for something, such as a society or a group, to be inclusive?
   - Probes:
     - What does it mean to not be inclusive, or exclusive?
     - Have you experienced feelings of being included or excluded during your time in Canada as either a student migrant or returning (im)migrant? If you are comfortable, can you share some details about these experiences including how it made you feel and how you responded
     - to the situation?

12. What are your impressions on the inclusivity of Canadian society?
   - Probes:
     - How does the presence or absence of resources or services and/or your access to them affect your impressions on how inclusive Canadian society is?
     - What are some of the opportunities to participate in society that you would or would have like to take part in? Did you participate in any of them? Why or why not?

13. Where do you feel that you belong?
   - Probes:
     - What does it mean to you to belong somewhere – what are some crucial elements for belonging, in your opinion, and why?
     - Is there a place or more than one place where you feel that you are able to participate and contribute? Are there specific groups, cities, or countries that you feel this way about? Why or why not?

14. How has your sense of belonging changed over the course of your (im)migration journey?

15. What are the challenges or disappointments you have faced during the process of returning to Canada – during the planning stage, the travel stage, and the arrival or settlement phase?
   - Probes:
     - Were there unexpected events or situations that arose which you were unprepared for? Where and when did they happen?
     - How did these challenges or disappointments influence the decisions you made from that point onwards?

16. What do you think could have made your experience of returning to Canada easier in some ways?
   - Probes:
     - Is there something that delayed your return and made the process longer? Could this have been avoided?
     - What step or stage of the process took the longest to complete? Could the time it took to complete have been reduced?
     - How could you have been more prepared to return to Canada than you were at the beginning of the process and than you are now? What do you think would be or is necessary to help you be sufficiently prepared?
17. What impact would you like the results of this study to have?
   - Probes:
     - In your opinion, what contributions can it make and who can benefit from the results?
     - In your opinion, what impact will the results of this study have on you and others in a similar position (student-migrants turned immigrants to Canada)?

18. Would you like to receive a summary of the results of this study?
APPENDIX B

Information and Consent Letter

Project Title:
The Role of Access to Services in Identity Formation for Brazilian (Im)migrants to Canada

Dear former Science without Borders (SWB)/Ciência sem Fronteiras (CsF) participant,

My name is Alexandra Mirowski Rabelo de Souza, and I am a graduate student in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Guelph. You are invited to take part in my research project on the experiences of former Science without Borders (SWB)/Ciência sem Fronteiras (CsF) participants who have returned to Canada after their participation in the SWB program. I will ask interviewees in this study some questions about the types of settlement services they accessed for help when they returned to Canada (for example some settlement services provide information about housing, banking and healthcare in Canada) and some questions about their opinions and experiences of how inclusive or exclusive Canadian society is. The aim of my research is to see if there is a connection between the types of services individuals access, how included they feel in Canada society, and how these factors affect individuals’ sense of identity.

The purpose of this message is to provide you with the information you require to make an informed decision about participating in this research. The information I am collecting from interviewees will be used in my MA thesis project.

The research for this study is being conducted during summer 2018 (during June and July, if possible) and I am looking for ten to fifteen participants who have both participated in the Brazilian Science without Borders (SWB)/Ciência sem Fronteiras (CsF) program, and who have returned to Canada to live, work, or study after the initial SWB experience was completed.

If you are interested in participating in this project, please contact me using the email address provided below. I am planning to complete my interviews by the end of July 2018. Participation in this project is voluntary. Should you have any questions regarding the project, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Alexandra Mirowski Rabelo de Souza

Student Investigator: Alexandra Mirowski Rabelo de Souza, Master’s student, Department of Sociology and Anthropology University of Guelph, amirowsk@uoguelph.ca
Should you have any concerns regarding this project, please contact:

Principal Investigator: Dr. Belinda Leach, Professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Guelph, bleach@uoguelph.ca 519-824-4120 X 52699, Office: 105A Macdonald Institute

Detailed information regarding this project:

What will I be asked to do?

We will meet at a private place that we both agree upon in either the city where you live or work/study. Examples of possible locations include your work office or a conference room booked out at a local institution. We will decide on a place where you feel comfortable and where we will discuss your experiences in accessing services and information related to your settlement in Canada and any challenges you may have experienced. I would like to audio record this conversation, but of course, this is up to you, and I can take notes instead.

If you are outside of Ontario and it is not possible for us to meet in person for the interview, we will conduct the interview online using a platform called Slack which is similar to Skype. I will conduct the interview from my home, a private environment, and I will ask you to select a private location where you feel comfortable to participate in the interview, such as your home or work office.

I will ask you 15-20 interview questions on this topic. As this is a semi-structured interview, I will interact with you during the interview by, for example, asking you to elaborate or come up with a specific example. Please understand that you are under no obligation to answer any question, or to take part in the interview.

Will I be paid?

I will provide snacks and refreshments during the interview. This study involves no other payments, incentives, or reimbursement for participants.

How long will it take?

The interview is expected to take up to 1 hour of your time, or more if you find that you have lots to share given the topic of the research. If you choose to receive a summary of the results of this research, I will email it to you once my thesis project has successfully been defended (the expected date for this is spring 2019).

What are my rights and responsibilities as a participant?

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty and no effects on your relationship to the person who contacted you about participating in this study or your relationship with the student researcher. If you wish to withdraw from this study or have your data withdrawn, please let the student researcher know verbally during the interview or by email afterwards (until December 1, 2018).
Risks and Discomforts:

There may be minimal social and psychological risks to your participation in this study. It is possible that participants may feel embarrassed to share details about their experiences of accessing certain resources or services for assistance. Participants may also be embarrassed if information becomes known to others. Interview participants will be asked not to disclose any information about their legal status in Canada. If participants do, in fact, share information relating to their legal status in Canada, I will inform them of this at that time. I will not record any information about participants’ legal status in any document or audio file and audio files will be deleted as soon as possible once they have been transcribed. Although measures will be taken to ensure interviewees’ confidentiality in the written report, anonymity cannot be guaranteed. Participants are allowed to refuse to answer any questions they do not want to answer and still remain in the study or withdraw from the study at any point during the interview.

Benefits:

There are no direct benefits for participants in this study; however, participants may find the opportunity to share their experiences of accessing certain resources and services for assistance with settlement to be positive. It may provide participants with an opportunity to reflect upon their experiences and to develop new perspectives about their experiences. Additionally, by sharing their own successes and challenges, participants may feel satisfied to know that this information may in turn be used to assist future student migrants to Canada who one day want to return to Canada.

The information produced by this research will contribute to the public discussions on access to services and social inclusion for immigrants and international migrants to Canada.

Status: This research is funded by an Ontario Graduate Scholarship.

Conflicts of Interest:

There are no reasonably foreseeable real, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest.

What will happen to the information collected for this study?

The results of the study will be used in my MA thesis project. In addition, I will present the results at a student conference or in a poster presentation. Some of the material analyzed in this project may be published in an academic journal as part of a linked larger project in the future. A brief research report containing a summary of the results of this study may be provided to participants should they wish to receive them. Individual participants in the results will not be identifiable.

Privacy and Confidentiality:

What types of information will be collected?
Your name and email address will be collected for communication purposes as well as information about your experiences of accessing services and resources for settlement in Canada and the feelings of inclusion or exclusion you experienced during this process.

**How will the information be stored?**

The information you provide will be stored in my password-protected encrypted (University of Guelph full disc encryption) personal computer. Full disc encryption encrypts and secures all of the data on the hard-drive so that it is only accessible to an individual with the password required to access it. I will be the only person with access to this password. The audio recording of your interview will be immediately downloaded to my password-protected encrypted personal computer from the digital recorder, and the voice file on the recorder will be deleted as soon as the downloading of the file is complete. Please note that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed while data are in transit over the internet. The data collected from this research, including a master list linking participants’ identities to the data, will be kept for ten years and stored by the Principal Investigator. The data set may be used for future research within the next ten years. If you do not consent to the long-term (ten year) storage of your identifiable information in the master list (your name and email), which links your information to the data collected, please let the student researcher know verbally during the interview or by email afterwards (until December 1, 2018).

**How will the information be used?**

In my thesis project, your name will not be used and no information that discloses your identity will be released or published without your specific written consent to the disclosure.

**Who can access the information?**

The information you provide will be available only to the researchers (i.e., the primary investigator and co-investigator who are the student investigator’s co-advisors, and the student investigator herself), to the extent allowed by law.

*If you have questions regarding your rights and welfare as a research participant in this study [REB#18-04-002].*

Please contact: Director, Research Ethics; University of Guelph; reb@uoguelph.ca; (519) 824-4120 (ext. 56606). *This project has been reviewed by the Research Ethics Board for compliance with federal guidelines for research involving human participants.*
APPENDIX C

Recruitment Poster:

Study on the experiences of former Science without Borders (SWB)/Ciência sem Fronteiras (CsF) students

Call for Participants

- Did you participate in Brazil’s Science without Borders (SWB) / Ciência sem Fronteiras (CsF) program?
- Have you returned to Canada to live, work, or study since your participation in Science without Borders ended?
- Are you willing to share about your experiences of returning to Canada in an interview expected to take only 1 hour of your time?

If you answered yes to these three questions and would like to participate, or for more information, contact Alexandra Mirowski Rabelo de Souza amirowsk@uoguelph.ca

Image source: ICTP Monitor / PanAmericanworld

REB #18-04-002