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International Student Mobility and Migration: Policy Pervasion and the Student Experience

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INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY AND MIGRATION:

POLICY PERVASION AND THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

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[1] "I wanted to participate as because I feel the study would help us, too. Let other people know, you know, there are unfair things or difficulties for us, and maybe we could improve on it… I think it's really helpful, that's why I wanted to participate so I'm also curious like why I decided." (Dee, China U1).

"I think people should know about this… we're so eager to tell these stories." (Brenda, Mexico U3).

"I'm actually glad someone is doing research in that kind of field." (Ziqi, China A3).

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on international student mobility and migration (ISM) policy in three case countries (Australia, Canada, and the United States). Through a multiple case study methodology employing interviews with 40 international students in the case countries, this study examines the effects of local, national ISM policy on the experiences of international students. This necessarily incorporates an analysis of the specific local ISM policies in place in the case countries, including the local policy context as influenced by cultural, political, and economic (CPE) factors and an international environment in which nations devise local ISM policies to meet their needs. Through a qualitative content analysis of policies and interviews, and subsequent presentation of excerpts from the same, three main findings are presented. The findings show (i) how ISM policy pervades many areas of students' lives (ISM policy pervasion), (ii) that employment-related considerations are especially salient in the policies and student experiences (labor and employment prominence), and (iii) how students contextualize their ISM policy experience within the local cultural, political, and economic policy environment of their host country (CPE connections). Throughout, these findings are contextualized within the literature and discussed as a possible foundation for future studies to go into more depth, in more countries, and with more student participants.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

"How useless, we said to ourselves, are frontiers when any plane can fly over them with ease, how provincial and artificial are customs-duties, guards and border patrols, how incongruous in the spirit of these times which visibly seeks unity and world brotherhood!"

—Stefan Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*

Statement of the Problem

Though not new, globalization processes are increasing in speed with the advent of new technologies and infrastructures for connecting people, places, and ideas (Bound et al., 2021; Brooks & Waters, 2011; Lechner & Boli, 2015; Sachs, 2020). This increasing interconnectedness of distant locations through greater transportation capacity pushes back on what Micklethwait and Wooldridge (2015) described as the "tyranny of place" (p. 15), facilitating new opportunities for individuals to surpass the bounds of their nation of origin to move across national borders for educational purposes. Prompted by this new pace of mobility, the growing global flows of internationally mobile students represent just one strand—though the most visible one (Banks & Bhandari, 2012)—of the internationalization of higher education (HE), one that is becoming increasingly pertinent to higher education organizations (HEOs) and students, and the nations in which both are situated (Riaño et al., 2018a; Rumbley et al., 2012).

The growing internationalization of higher education is accompanied by expanding numbers of mobile students attending institutions in an increasingly large number of countries across the world (IIE, 2018; Rumbley et al., 2012; Shields, 2013). According to the US Institute

for International Education (IIE), global student mobility rose from 2.1 million students in 2001 to more than 4.5 million in 2017 (IIE, 2018), an increase of more than 200 percent. The same IIE report shows that over these 16 years, the national distribution of students has changed with more students pursuing degrees in a wider range of countries, likely the result of a complex mixture of, among other things, changing local political and economic situations (Brooks & Waters, 2011), government and educational institutional initiatives to increase student enrollments (e.g., Anderson, 2020; Binsardi & Ekwulugo, 2003; Forbes-Mewett & Nyland, 2013; Levatino et al., 2018), and fluctuating student demand and choices (Glass et al., 2021; Hawthorne, 2012; IDP Education, 2019). Moreover, while individual nations may experience fluctuations in new enrollments due to such changing conditions, the overall trend across the globe has shown increasing numbers of students heading abroad to complete their degrees (IIE, 2018; IIE, 2019). Naturally, the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted, though by no means stopped, flows of students seeking a degree from outside of their home countries (see chapter nine).

Concomitant with the movement of students and scholars across national borders is the development of student-specific immigration or visa policies to control these flows. These policies, which I refer to broadly as international student mobility and migration (ISM) policies, delineate not only the criteria for students to gain entry through nations' borders to pursue an education, but they also outline requirements to which students must adhere while in the country as students. As such, ISM policy incorporates ideas from Hammar's (1985) explanation of both "immigration regulation" and "immigrant policy" (pp. 7-9), where the former indicates entry criteria and the latter regulates requirements for those within the country (see Van Puymbroeck, 2016).

My use of the term 'ISM policy' describes this combination of: (i) regulatory arrangements prescribing border ingress to study and (ii) in-country regulations for the duration of the degree program studies. How a nation views international students in light of their presumed value and hazards will thus be codified in ISM policies, so such policies function as a valuable means for understanding reified political approaches to how to control international student flows and activities within national borders.

Though by no means an exhaustive list, these policies may be utilized by host nations for any number of reasons including: (i) supporting the augmentation of national human capital stocks (Riaño et al., 2018a; Robertson, 2013; Tremblay, 2005; Woodfield, 2009); (ii) providing immediate benefits to the local economy and higher education sector (Banks & Bhandari, 2012; de Wit & Merx, 2012; Nyland et al., 2013); (iii) protecting the local labor market from foreign inputs (Banks & Bhandari, 2012; Crumley-Effinger, 2021; Bista & Foster, 2011; Jordan & Vogel, 1997; Robertson, 2013); and (iv) responding to security concerns associated with the entrance of foreign nationals into the country (Brooks & Waters, 2011; Crumley-Effinger, forthcoming; Marginson, 2012b).

The value of studying ISM policies lies not only in examining and seeking a more nuanced understanding of what they permit and proscribe in efforts to meet national needs, but also because they affect the lived experiences of those who choose to enter the host country as students and who will therefore live lives bounded by these national ISM policies (Lomer, 2018; Riaño et al., 2018a). International students are just one subset of actors[1] implicated in the

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[1] Other actors may include high education institutions, education ministries or departments, university-industry nexuses, exchange organizations and programs, immigration bodies, and more.

massively complex field of international education (Madge et al., 2015), yet they are central to many national and institutional internationalization and policy projects (Brooks, 2018). ISM policies may, for example, delimit access to the local labor market for students with severe financial need (Bista & Foster, 2011), or place strict limits on students' freedom to move across borders at various points during and after their studies (Robertson, 2011; Rose-Redwood & Rose-Redwood, 2017). The experiences of these students, then, are "mediated by noncitizen outsider status" (Marginson, 2012a, p. 207) as delineated by the local ISM policies of the host country.

An empirical study of the lived experiences of international students in their interactions with the host nation provides an avenue towards better understanding what Robertson (2013) calls the "intersection of the realms of the personal and the political" (p. 88) as it relates to students and ISM policy. This study is thus situated to explore these intersections through a qualitative multiple case study. This short introductory chapter includes a rationale for this study, outlining the need for an empirical examination of the lived experiences of international students as they interact with international student mobility policies of their host nations. The chapter then provides brief examples of ways in which (i) scholars have examined national ISM policy as reflections of national exigencies pertaining to international students, and (ii) scholars have approached the study of policy influences on the lives of international students' experiences. These examples provide context for the closing section of the chapter, which presents the research questions guiding this research.

Rationale for the Study

As is described in this study, the lived experiences of current international students' interactions with the host nation, and its policies is an area that deserves greater scholarly attention as it is an unfortunately understudied topic (Riaño et al., 2018a). This study seeks to address this gap in the literature through a qualitative study that combines qualitative content analyses of (i) ISM policy and (ii) interviews with international students in the selected case host countries. Furthermore, it responds to calls for more examination of "the politics of the international student experience" (Rose-Redwood & Rose-Redwood, 2017, p. iv), as well as more micro, qualitative neo-institutionalist studies in the field of comparative and international education (Wiseman & Chase-Mayoral, 2013; Wiseman et al., 2014). Terra Gargano (2009) makes explicit the need for this sort of student-centered inquiry:

> Although the cross-border education community continues to engage in research on a national policy level, efforts are needed to create and implement policies and programs not only based on data that reflects these national trends and figures, but also by taking into consideration the voices of students who engage in educational sojourns and who are impacted by these very policies, thereby requiring researchers and practitioners to step outside standardized practices to develop innovative programs and realize the potential of international student mobility. (pp. 332-333)

Noting that declarations of the reduced importance of the nation-state due to the growing influence of multilateral agencies and multinational corporations (e.g., see Strange, 2015) may be both premature and problematic (Brooks & Waters, 2011; Carnoy, 2006), ISM policy is arguably one of the areas in which the nation-state and local policies still hold significant sway over the lives of students (Brooks, 2018; Lomer, 2017). The context-dependent nature of national policy, as described in the cultural political economy (CPE) and institutionalist literatures (Meyer, 2006;

Sum & Jessop, 2013), points to the nation-state as maintaining considerable influence on the lives of international students through ISM policy.

First, this study seeks to understand the ways in which these policies affect the lives of students, it is, therefore, salient to explore *how* this is occurring and the *ways* in which these policies affect students' educational and social experiences in the host nation. For example, do these policies affect students' academic choices and performance? Or their career choices? Or their relationships with friends and family? Findings from this study provide personal, experiential insights from students to show the effects of policy on the individuals behind international student enrollment numbers, policies, and national objectives.

Second, since national policies are a response to local social, political, cultural, and economic realities and factors, the study explores how ISM policies have different effects on the experiences of international students in the various host countries. This is done through a locally situated study of students' experiences of interacting with national policies. Third, this study provides country-specific findings to highlight and examine the connections between the cultural political economy of the case countries, resultant ISM policy, and effects on the different international student populations. Additional information on the student sample and the chosen case host countries is provided in chapter four.

The first task of this study is to analyze, through qualitative content analysis, ISM discourses in policy documents active from 2010 to 2020. In the second, the larger part of the study utilizes interviews with international students to gather data on student experiences in three specific host countries. In the context of this study, international students are defined as those who are (i) enrolled in a higher education degree program (i.e., "diploma mobility" [Banks &

Bhandari, 2012]); (ii) non-citizens and not residents of the host nation (Brooks & Waters, 2011; Lomer, 2018); and (iii) permitted to engage in their study program by virtue of having procured a student-specific visa or study permit.[2] This operational definition precludes other student groups that may, depending on the context, fall under broader definitions of 'international students,' for example, permanent residents, undocumented or under-documented students (Gamez et al., 2017), or so-called 'third-culture kids' who may have citizenship in the host country but who have spent relatively little time in that country (Kenyon et al., 2012). While these populations are important to study and better understand, they are beyond the scope of this study. This constrained definition seeks to limit participation to those students who, by virtue of the so-defined status, are obliged to interact with the host government and ISM policy in a different capacity than those in the latter student populations.

Research Questions

Research has shown that examining national political activities is vitally important to the study of policies affecting the mobility of international students and that local ISM policies both reflect national discourses pertaining to ISM and may have significant impacts on students (Brooks, 2018; Forbes-Mewett & Nyland, 2008). Australia in the 1990s provides an apt example of how local political and economic factors contributed to transforming ISM policies. Seeing the potential for subsidization of higher education costs through increased enrollments of international students, Australian government funding was reduced by almost a third while migration restrictions were eased to entice these students, leading to greater international student

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[2] In the United States, for example, international students may undertake their studies by procuring a nonimmigrant F-1 or M-1 visa (SITS, n.d.k), among others, which have application, enrollment, and upkeep requirements that differ from other sorts of nonimmigrant visas, such as a tourist visa.

enrollments and an increased proportion of funding coming from high international student fees (Forbes-Mewett et al., 2009; Nyland et al., 2013). This push for international students had real repercussions in terms of student experience: the growth in enrollments was not reflected in the augmentation of support services to meet demand and, ultimately in this example, led to protests by students who felt that universities were "prioritiz[ing] profit over student welfare and safety" (Nyland et al., 2013, p. 664). Examining national ISM policies and the local discourses informing them is the express purpose of the first research question below (Brooks, 2018).

Studies explicitly focusing on student interactions with the state and its ISM policies appear to be relatively rare (Grimm, 2019; Brunner, 2022b; Riaño et al., 2018a). Robertson's (2011, 2013) research on the experiences of students transitioning to migrants (what is described as an "education-migration nexus") is one prudent example of this sort of infrequent study. Robertson (2013) found, for example, that government policies directly impacted student experience and showed how student attempts to transition from one status to another was accompanied by frustrations stemming from the fact that "government criteria for immigration could change during the course of their study" (Robertson, 2013, p. 2). Robertson (2011) also provided examples of migration processes born from these nexus policies affecting students' relationships, including the dissolution of romantic relationships due to tenuous, liminal immigration statuses. Looking at immigration and refugee policy in the United States, Mountz et al. (2002) show that government policies relating to individuals' temporary status can have profound effects on their lives, identities, and relationships. Uncovering and examining these sorts of intersections of policy and personal experiences, the second research question focuses on

the experiences of international students as they live with and are affected by ISM policy in their host countries.

In pursuit of a deeper understanding of the local emphases informing ISM policy and the effects of ISM policy on international students, and in an effort to contribute knowledge pertaining to this understudied component of the experiences of ISM policy and international students, my study was guided by the following research questions.

1. RQ1: What emphases are present in the ISM policies?

2. RQ2: How do ISM policies affect international students?

These are broad questions, but more granular specifics pertaining to the execution of inquiries to answer these questions are discussed in chapter four.[3] While both questions are important for guiding this study, RQ2 is at the heart of this study, that is, it is the primary purpose of this research. RQ1 provides important context for understanding the policy environment and how the local policy context affects the international student experience. Further discussion of the research questions can be found in chapters four and nine.

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[3] See chapter nine for a description of changes made to the RQs soon after the project began.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND

The advent of new technologies facilitating the movement of information and people at ever-increasing speeds has led to significant growth of the internationalization of higher education (Brooks & Waters, 2011); according to Banks and Bhandari (2012), "the global movement of international students across borders is… the most visible form" of this internationalization (p. 380). And the numbers of internationally mobile students have been growing steadily, moving from just over 200,000 in the 1960s to more than 3.5 million in 2011 and more than 4.5 million in 2017 (de Wit & Merkx, 2012; IIE, 2018).

National political and social perspectives on the movements of these masses of students vary considerably, alternating, for example, between (i) identifying concerns with labor market intrusions and security and (ii) harboring hopes for economic benefits, importing skilled labor, and public diplomacy advantages (Merrick, 2012). Student motivations for studying abroad vary as well, with some students, for example, choosing to study abroad to set themselves apart from peers, partake in an adventure, or develop their skills in a way that is not possible within their home higher education setting (Zainab et al., 2019). As such, this chapter provides an overview of international student mobility and migration (ISM) from varying perspectives, beginning with a broad introduction to the topic of ISM from the national perspective before turning to the individual student perspective.

An Historical Overview: International Student Mobility

Despite recent, considerable growth in the mobility of students across national borders, ISM is not a new phenomenon; in Europe in the Middle Ages and for many years after, the movement of scholars between institutions was limited to a small number of elites, but over time it grew through codification of national plans and strategies to attract students (de Wit & Merkx, 2012; Shields, 2013). Medieval Europe was home to a cadre of internationally mobile scholars learning in Latin in universities throughout the continent (Altbach, 2016). Altbach (2016) explains that Nalanda University in India, around 500 years before the development of European universities, hosted students "from all over the Buddhist world" (p. 73). These early examples of the movement of "international" students pre-dated the very idea of internationalization or inter-national movement, as there were at that time no nations as we consider them today (de Wit & Merkx, 2012).

Described as a sort of "academic pilgrimage" (de Wit & Merkx, 2012, p. 44), these sorts of exchanges began to wane during the 1700 and 1800s as nations began to define themselves as such (Altbach, 2016), in contrast to those outside of newly concretized, sovereign borders. At first, hindered by the development of nation-states resulting in these more restrictive borders, new initiatives, such as the creation of the Institute for International Education (IIE) in the United States in the early 20th century and similar endeavors in other countries signaled coming change (de Wit & Merkx, 2012).

The first and second world wars brought about a new awareness of international cooperation possibilities and suspicion of other nations, respectively, necessitating new approaches to interacting with foreign nations through educational undertakings (Adams et al.,

2012; de Wit & Merkx, 2012). In the 1950s and 1960s, economic issues and new human capital theoretical work beginning in the 1950s and 1960s saw ISM policies and visions directed towards meeting economic development goals (Banks & Bhandari, 2012; Cañibano & Woolley, 2015; de Wit & Merkx, 2012), while the Cold War era was accompanied by the pursuit of knowledge and skilled scientists to meet security goals (Altbach, 2016; Cañibano & Woolley, 2015; Tiger, 2007).

ISM Rationales

This study seeks to show the importance of the nation state both as a host to international students and in terms of the sponsoring of policies bounding the experiences of these students. Additionally, it asserts the importance of understanding students and their experiences studying in another country. As such, the remainder of this chapter is divided into two overarching sections outlining national and student perspectives on international student mobility and migration (ISM). The first section begins with a focus on national perspectives advancing or contesting arguments for ISM. I describe the importance of ISM in international education research and introduce a collection of pro-ISM perspectives followed by an examination of anti-ISM ideologies and frameworks from the nation-state perspective. The second section presents student perspectives on ISM and the ways in which studying abroad is perceived by those making the sojourn abroad. Each of these two sections is divided into smaller subsections that thematically examine the literature related to these topics.

National Perspectives of ISM

National perspectives on international student mobility represent an important part of the student mobility equation. Local immigration and education policies may affect the efficacy of

international student recruitment endeavors, and those policies will be affected by local perspectives on the perceived value of hosting foreign national students. According to Merrick (2012), "as far as government is concerned – the aspirations and intentions of individual students are secondary to their utility to the state in achieving certain ends in relation to immigration, security, finance, or social or cultural capital" (p. 35). Similarly, Lomer (2018) argues that national "international education policies subjectify students as a source of revenue, soft power, and a means to enhance educational quality" (p. 3). Such human capital theory ideas and their connections to ISM are discussed below and in chapter three.

Pro-ISM

In the early 1990s, nations in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) began making moves to "open their borders to highly skilled immigrants, [and] actively recruited top workers from around the world" (Brown and Tannock, 2009, p. 381), and subsequent ISM literature has identified an increasing trend in many nations to encourage migration upon completion of post-secondary and graduate schooling (Brooks & Waters, 2011). For many countries, "higher education is increasingly being perceived as a profitable investment and tradable item that can bring national income" (Lo, 2019, p. 262). Additionally, international higher education is viewed by some host countries as a valuable means of attracting skilled foreign labor (human capital) in an increasingly open and competitive market (Brown & Tannock, 2009; King & Raghuram, 2013; King & Sondhi, 2018).

Human Capital Augmentation

Promotion of ISM-friendly policies by nation-states is overwhelmingly founded on ideas of human capital theory (HCT) and the potential value of retaining highly skilled former students

"to promote national… socio-economic development" (Riaño et al., 2018a; Tremblay, 2005; Woodfield, 2009, p. 3). Robertson (2013) describes this as an "education-migration nexus" in which ISM may be viewed by both students and host nations as a path for highly skilled students towards future migration and entrance into the local labor market (Kratz & Netz, 2018). This movement from student to migrant ("student switching") in the literature is often focused on the host nation, though pro-ISM perspectives may also be shared by students' nations of origin (Robertson, 2011). That is, while host nations may see incoming international students as a source of potential future skilled labor should the students remain after completing their studies, students' countries of origin (sending countries) see the sending of students abroad as an opportunity to augment their human capital stocks upon students' post-graduation return home.

Discussion of ISM and subsequent migration, in relation to human capital theories of education, often touches upon the topic of "brain drain" (Barnett et al., 2016), though the effects of this concept are sometimes contested. According to Haupt et al. (2013), increased opportunities for studying abroad may actually result in the positive development of the education system in the country of origin and may also benefit origin countries through the return of highly skilled students who do not want, or are unable, to remain in the host country upon graduation (Cañibano & Woolley, 2015; Wells, 2014). Other scholars have described the value of "diaspora knowledge networks" that link migrated human capital (i.e., educated individuals) with the nation of origin, with positive benefits for the latter (Cañibano & Woolley, 2015).

However, much of the literature emphasizes the human capital benefits for the host nation (Lo, 2019), where proponents of ISM see competitive economic benefits in rejecting a talent

pool bounded by national borders (Banks & Bhandari, 2012; Brown & Tannock, 2009; Riaño et al., 2018a). National ISM policies, then, become central to the "global competition of highly skilled manpower" (de Wit & Merkx, 2012, p. 56), while students similarly make enrollment decisions in an effort to "maximize their global educational credentials" (Collins, 2008, p. 408). While one could point to the potential value of worker recruitment for meeting national and organizational human capital and skilled labor augmentation goals, recruitment of strong students is seen as a more lucrative endeavor as it provides these future workers "with the necessary professional, language and cultural skills" needed for the local labor market (Haupt et al., 2013, p. 1).

National ISM policy does not only focus on marketing national education to students and facilitating student enrollments in local institutions, but it may also entail adjustments to immigration systems to further entice these students to stay in order to accumulate greater human capital for the host nation (Lo, 2019). These immigration policy changes explicitly link international student enrollments in higher education with the local labor market (Banks & Bhandari, 2012). This is occurring in Australia (Riaño & Piguet, 2016; Robertson, 2013), Canada (Canada, 2014; Chakma et al., 2012); the European Union (EU) in general (Banks & Bhandari, 2012), and most recently with changes to the United Kingdom's (UK) historically anti-student-switching stance (Banks & Bhandari, 2012; BBC News, 2019; O'Malley, 2019). Confusingly, while the United States remains a primary destination for many international students (Rose-Redwood & Rose-Redwood, 2017), and despite a general understanding of these students as "prized human capital" for the country (Brooks & Waters, 2011, p. 39), the US "has no specifically targeted measures to encourage the settlement of its foreign students" apart from

modest and convoluted short-term employment and permanent residency schemes (Tremblay, 2005, p. 206), though new projects are in the works to respond to this perceived deficit (Fischer, 2021a).

Neoliberalism

As with other forms of capital, it may be beneficial for some to champion the uninterrupted flows of human capital between nations, especially for those that are in a position to advantageously accumulate more capital by enticing (future) highly education individuals from other countries. To facilitate these flows of people, neoliberal immigration policies can be fruitful. Though by no means an uncontested collection of complex political and economic ideas, neoliberal economics is based upon the general idea that markets should be able to function "without government interference" (Handelman, 2017, p. 288) and that neoliberal processes (Brooks & Waters, 2011) will entail "increasing infiltration of market-based logics, valuations and controls into the political realm" (Robertson, 2013, p. 46). Neoliberal logics, such as the importance of educational markets absent government intervention, are therefore evident in the pro-ISM literature (Shields, 2013; Deuchar, 2022). That is, neoliberal views may see liberal and open ISM policy as a method by which government intervention (e.g., through restrictive immigration policy) in the education market may be bypassed.

Neoliberal perspectives of ISM would suggest that in the so-called "global war for talent" (Brown & Tannock, 2009, p. 381), ISM policy must be adjusted to free industries from any restrictions that may reduce their competitiveness to entice skilled laborers. Furthermore, restrictive ISM policies may be seen as infringing on "market principles of a global free trade in labour" (Brown & Tannock, 2009, p. 380). From the neoliberal view, national ISM policies

should ensure that immigration policy does not interfere with the commercial and economic need for easy border ingress by future skilled labor (i.e., students; Collins, 2008). This was championed, for example, by the World Trade Organization's (WTO) push for "trade liberalization" of educational services (Nyland et al., 2013, p. 668) in the form of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) (Burgess & Berquist, 2012). GATS represents, according to Altbach (2016), an extension of "the principle of free trade to education" (p. 101) that seeks "to ensure open markets and protections for the owners of knowledge products" (p. 100).

Both private industry and national governments may champion the removal of political roadblocks to importing skilled labor and talented students to enhance national HC stocks (Marginson, 2012b; Nyland et al., 2013). When market logics facilitate the flows of students across borders, an idealized neoliberal vision of the higher education market might be the "borderless" world wherein HEOs are accessible, regardless of national location, for those students with the financial capital to access universities within any given nation (Middlehurst, 2001; Teichler, 2012).

Immediate Benefits to Host Nations

Consideration of the relatively immediate benefits of hosting international students is also prominent in the ISM literature (de Wit & Merkx, 2012). Among these benefits is the value of combining high international student fees with ISM policies to increase international student enrollments (Brooks, 2018). The national policy may allow fees for international students to be set at rates higher than funding provided by governments for each domestic student (Woodfield, 2009), and, for example in the United Kingdom, those funds can be used more flexibly than can

government higher education subsidies (Adams et al., 2012). International student fees may also be used to offset government spending cuts, as occurred in Australia in the 1990s (Forbes-Mewett & Nyland, 2008; Martin, 2017) where, seeing the potential for subsidizing higher education costs through increased enrollments of international students, government funding was reduced by almost a third, migration restrictions were eased to entice international students, all of which led to greater international student enrollments and an increased proportion of funding coming from these high international student fees (Nyland et al., 2013).

International students are also seen as providing valuable contributions to local economies: as consumers, they will spend in the local community (Banks & Bhandari, 2012), and as future skilled laborers, they may attract local industry investment (Brown & Tannock, 2009). In the United States, one valuation put international students' economic contributions at more than USD 13 billion per year in the early 2000s (Harty, 2005); more recently, in 2018, the US Department of Commerce estimated international students contributed more than USD 44 billion to the US economy (IIE, 2019). More generally, the OECD reckoned that "the net public return per student amounts to over USD $90,000 ($55,000) for a man (woman) in present value terms" (Haupt et al., 2013, p. 1). The contributions of international students to local and national economies are sometimes explicit components of national ISM strategies (Haupt et al., 2013), and are otherwise often used in arguments to advance liberal ISM policy.

The commodification of education for international students is also evident in national export policy. Though not a top destination for mobile students, New Zealand's ISM policy stance beginning in the 1980s emphasized the value of "'exporting' education for profit" (Collins, 2008, p. 401). Australia is a leader in presenting education as an export as well,

utilizing the ISM policy changes to enhance the desirability of their educational product in the eyes of prospective international students (Adams et al., 2012; Forbes-Mewett & Nyland, 2013). Additional immediate benefits considered in the literature include the positive outcomes for domestic students of English-language programs oriented to attract international students[1] (Banks & Bhandari, 2012) and the desirability of welfare and tax contributions from current and past students employed while in the country (Brooks, 2018; Haupt et al., 2013).

Additional Pro-ISM Rationales

Educational diplomacy serves as a strong argument for facilitating cross-border educational endeavors of students. Understood as an offshoot of public diplomacy and exertion of soft power (Jules, 2016), educational diplomacy is exemplified by pursuing transnational policy objectives through international education activities (Paradise, 2012). International students' current and future capacity to be and develop connections between the host nation and their home countries are seen as valuable benefits of hosting students (Adams et al., 2012; Collins, 2008). Enhanced ISM in Australia is codified in regional diplomacy plans, such as the New Colombo Plan (Byrne, 2016), through which it is understood that the "positive experiences of student mobility and the development of intellectual, commercial and social relationships can build upon a nation's reputation, and enhance the ability of that nation to participate in and influence regional or global outcomes" (Byrne & Hall, 2013, p. 419). In the UK context, Brooks (2018) explains that international students may be seen as "ambassadors" who "exercise 'soft power', to the UK's benefit, on return home" (p. 89). In the case of the United States, Harty

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[1] In the case of nations where English is not an official or primary language, e.g., Germany.

(2005) explained that "the goodwill visitors generate when they return to their home countries is impossible to quantify" (p. 27), while the US Department of Education suggests that it "supports education diplomacy through almost all of its international activities" (USDOE, 2021, p. 12). Though the examples of Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States represent major host countries, other nations, including in Asia and the Middle East, also rely on international education strategies, including ISM policy, to drive – at least in part – various education diplomacy objectives (Lee, 2015; Paradise, 2012).

Local (national and regional) projects also may necessitate or be oriented around pro-ISM stances (Brooks, 2018; Brooks & Waters, 2011). China provides a valuable example of national pro-ISM emphases in pursuit of greater shares of internationally mobile students (Paradise, 2012) and China's recent substantial growth as an international student destination points to the successes that these projects can produce (IIE, 2018). Regional higher education projects, such as the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific (UMAP), promote regional higher education offerings to improve international standing and intra-regional mobility through fee and credit mobility, respectively (Macrander, 2017).

Finally, national pro-ISM stances are also pursued in order to (i) engender local (host) education quality development (Haupt et al., 2013); (ii) provide avenues for productive international research (Banks & Bhandari, 2012; Deardorf, 2014); (iii) expand the world views of domestic (host nation) students interacting with visitors (Beelen, 2014; de Wit & Merkx, 2012); (iv) advance 'charitable' objectives wherein "student mobility is a means to assist those considered backwards, needing help, and seeking improvement" (Lo, 2019, p. 263; Stein & de

Andreotti, 2016); and (v) offset supply shortages for students from nations whose higher education systems cannot meet demand (Riaño & Piguet, 2016).

Contra-ISM

Despite the pro-ISM rationales described above, the complexity and pluricentric nature of national / regional educational and political policy-making entails competing perspectives on the value of ISM. Even considering industry and national foci on the potential value of increased human capital through post-graduation migration, some countries, such as the United States, have enacted anti-student-switching policies (Brooks & Waters, 2011). Protectionist migration and ISM policy may emphasize "controlling rather than facilitating the study-to-work transition of international students" (Riaño & Piguet, 2016, p. 17; Crumley-Effinger, 2021); furthermore, Brooks and Waters (2011) describe local interpretations of the types (and origins) of students who are seen as desirable and undesirable. This section describes a collection of anti-ISM sentiments uncovered in the literature.

Protectionist Labor Market Considerations

One of the primary sentiments pushing back on ideas of the value of policy to facilitate ISM concern a desire to protect local (national) labor markets from foreign participation. These sentiments were most commonly associated with the literature from Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom (though, as previously noted, the United Kingdom has recently made changes in this area). Past UK ISM policy restricted post-graduation employment opportunities, especially in response to financial distress from the 2008 recession (Banks & Bhandari, 2012). In some cases, international students, especially those who harbored desires to remain in the country after graduating, were seen as unwanted strains on the social and political systems in the

host country; in short, they represented to some "a threat to economic and social stability" (Robertson, 2013, p. 57).

References to suspicions of students' desire to take advantage of employment opportunities during the course of their time in the host country, under cover of entry into the country as a student, are relatively ubiquitous (e.g., Jordan & Vogel, 1997; Robertson, 2013; Rodan, 2009). For example, strict employment regulations in the United States delimit individuals' options for employment both during and after they have completed their studies (Bista & Foster, 2011; Grimm, 2019). Though technologies for preventing unlawful employment of students have changed in the years since their study, Jordan and Vogel (1997) noted that many students engaged in unauthorized work during their time studying in the host country.

Security

Despite being two of the most popular destinations for internationally mobile students, the United States and the United Kingdom have complex relationships with educational guests; that is, international students are seen "to offer both benefits and threats" (Marginson, 2012b, p. 16). Especially in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States, the value of ISM is often seen through the lens of fear of allowing security threats into the host country (Brooks & Waters, 2011; Crumley-Effinger, forthcoming). As such, ISM policy, for example in the United States, may be viewed warily and as necessitating an "appropriate balance… [of the] policy of maintaining secure borders and open doors" (Harty, 2005, p. 33). In both the United States and the United Kingdom, post-9/11 student immigration policies were enacted that more strictly limited the entrance of those deemed to be potential threats (Brooks & Waters, 2011; Crumley-Effinger, forthcoming), this was despite the fact that connections between terrorism and

international students were often quite tenuous (Brooks, 2018). Security anxieties connected to international students are not limited only to fears of terrorism, as recent government activities in the United States show an increasing concern with the potential for spying by international students—especially those from China—with unknown repercussions for future US ISM policy (Droegemeier, 2019).

Security concerns may be met with a diversity of responses, eliciting both border and internal security measures. The United States is an example of a country that relies on both border and internal control mechanisms, such as stringent Department of State visa processing requirements and the implementation of a nation-wide surveillance system called SEVIS, respectively (Brooks, 2018; Crumley-Effinger, forthcoming; Harty, 2005). The United Kingdom and Australia both lean upon their relatively disconnected geographical location combined with strict border controls (Jordan & Vogel, 1997), and they along with Canada employ additional systems for monitoring students (Brunner, 2022c; Crumley-Effinger, forthcoming). As part of the wider EU and Schengen area with relatively porous borders, Germany is an example of a country that utilizes internal control mechanisms (e.g., local registration requirements) to prevent infractions relating to unlawful presence (Jordan & Vogel, 1997). It is interesting to note that ISM-related systems may serve multiple purposes, such as the SEVIS system in the United States, which, while enacted as an anti-terrorism security measure (Crumley-Effinger, forthcoming; Romero, 2002), has been expanded to serve also in the oversight of international student employment to meet labor market protection demands (Crumley-Effinger, forthcoming).

Additional Anti-ISM Rationales

Having introduced two ubiquitous rationales for placing stricter limits on ISM, this subsection presents a collection of additional anti-ISM rationales. National concerns about the labor market ramifications and security threats of increased ISM are pervasive in anti-ISM arguments. Though often tied in complex ways to the rationales described above, additional topics warrant consideration. Some host countries are concerned about the possible strain of these students on social welfare systems (Rodan, 2009); Jordan and Vogel (1997), for example, describe concerns in the United Kingdom with immigrants taxing the healthcare system.

The United States and Australia have introduced policies meant to ensure that students have sufficient funds available to them during the course of their studies to prevent students from illegally entering the labor market or utilizing social welfare services (e.g., Rodan, 2009). These issues appear not only in national contexts, but also within the realm of policy for intra-regional mobility. Riaño & Piguet (2016) describe tensions arising from questions about who should pay for the educational costs of EU students undertaking study in a different country: "the home member state or the host member state?" (p. 16). Depending on the higher education funding model, different conceptions of education as a private or public good bring new questions to the fore in terms of who pays for incoming international students.

Anti-ISM perspectives may also look to prevent negative effects for domestic students due to increased international student enrollments. Nyland et al. (2013), for example, noted that some institutions in the United Kingdom had been "excluding eligible local applicants in order to enroll foreign students who have lower grades but are willing to pay higher fees" (p. 658; see also Tannock, 2013). Furthermore, opening up local educational opportunities to foreign students

pursuant to a neoliberal agenda may be considered by some to be "subversive of national authority" to control access to educational offerings (Marginson, 2012b, pp. 14-15).

Concerns about "brain drain," a human capital theory approach to describing the loss of educated and skilled talent through liberal ISM policy and subsequent migration, is commonly mentioned in the literature (e.g., Amazan, 2014; Cañibano & Woolley, 2015; de Wit & Merkx, 2012; Ritterband, 1970), though the impact of this concept has been questioned (Haupt et al., 2013; Wells, 2014). Finally, with an eye to supporting students, some scholars have identified exploitative activities by organizations and institutions as they seek to maximize profits, perhaps necessitating more strict ISM policies from host nations (Marginson, 2012a, 2012b; Nyland et al., 2013; Robertson, 2013). Discriminatory, racist, and xenophobic political stances may also elicit anti-ISM attitudes and may be directly tied to the aforementioned concerns about competition for employment (Brooks, 2018; Collins, 2008; Marginson, 2012b; Stein & de Andreotti, 2016).

Student Motivations and ISM

As has been noted, this study seeks to assert the importance of the nation state both as a host to international students and in terms of the sponsoring of policies bounding the experiences of these students. With that being said, the study is also pointedly focused on the lived experiences of these students in their interactions with the bureaucratic apparatus of the nation state as perceived through interactions with national policies. In other words, the aim is to understand how students experience national policies around studying abroad. The aforementioned rise in the numbers of students studying outside of their home country, from the student perspective, "is associated with an increased demand for technical, specialized,

postsecondary education that prompts students to go abroad in search of educational

opportunities" (Shields, 2013, p. 610). The study is thus centered on the intersections of state

policy and student experiences, setting it apart from the significant ISM literature that "primarily

focuses on globalization and internationalization of higher education efforts at the national,

sector, or institutional levels" (Gargano, 2009, p. 332).

Complementing the national perspectives outlined above, this section examines

scholarship that has explored student perspectives of ISM. Specifically, I focus here on student

motivations to undertake their higher education studies outside of their home country. The

literature heavily emphasizes what Lo (2019) describes as an "instrumentalist discourse"

pertaining to students' rationales for completing their degrees outside of their home country (p.

262). Findings highlighting instrumentalist student perspectives of the value of ISM focus on

things such as family pressure or influence, the accumulation of social and cultural forms of

capital, students' future mobility goals, credential accrual, and learning and skills development.

These five student rationales for study abroad are discussed sequentially below and, often

described as functional "push and pull" factors (Barnett et al., 2016), are ubiquitous in much of

the ISM literature (Lomer, 2018):

> 'Push' factors operate within the source country and initiate a student's decision to
> undertake international study. 'Pull' factors operate within a host country to make that
> country relatively attractive to international students. Some of these factors are inherent
> in the source country, some in the host country and others in the students themselves.
> (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002, p. 82)

Family Pressure or Influence

It must be acknowledged that family commitments are often tied up in the mobility of

individual students, both in terms of the decision-making process and in the funding of the

sojourn abroad (Martin, 2017). According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), "the choice of a host establishment by foreign students and their families may be viewed as the outcome of an assessment of the monetary and nonmonetary costs of studying abroad, and the monetary and nonmonetary benefits that students (and their families) hope to reap from it" (International Organization for Migration, 2008, p. 112). Sometimes the motivations come primarily from the immediate family, while for other students, the process of determining what and where one will study will include other family members (Baker & Hawkins, 2006).

Family involvement in the mobility project can be accompanied by "immense internal and external pressure to succeed" (Hanassab & Tidwell, 2002, p. 315), both in pursuit of academic credentials and, possibly, looking towards potential family mobility. Relating to the section below on migration goals, Brooks & Waters (2011) explain that in some cases, the "immigration of the whole family begins with the mobility of an individual student (p. 50), wherein student academic and professional successes abroad may facilitate future migration for family members to the host country.

Social and Cultural Capital Accumulation

An overwhelming majority of the literature emphasized or relied heavily on the importance of various theories of capital from the field of sociology of education (Aksakal et al., 2019; Beech, 2014; Binsardi & Ekwulugo, 2003; Findlay et al., 2012; Findlay et al., 2018; Lo, 2019; Lomer, 2018; Maria Cubillo et al., 2006; Moskal & Schweisfurth, 2018; Sondhi & King, 2017). Born from social reproduction theories, especially as explored by Bourdieu (2016), these theories describe collections of different conceptualizations of capital held by individuals and families to varying degrees (Brint, 2017). Cultural capital may be understood as the knowledge

and familiarity with local educational norms and institutions (Kleanthous, 2014). Social capital is understood as the collection of social connections and networks that can inform student and family decisions and facilitate educational undertakings (Bourdieu, 2016). Though I have separated this subsection from subsequent ones for clarity, social and cultural capital accumulation may be intertwined with other rationales below, such as mobility goals and credential accrual.

One common primary reason for choosing to study outside of one's own country is the perceived prestige of some host universities and the positive effects of that organization's name on the diploma (Binsardi & Ekwulugo, 2003; King et al., 2010; Kouba, 2019). Questions of prestige are not only limited to specific educational institutions but can also include the notions of the desirability of the host city (Findlay et al., 2012) or even more generalized perceptions of the prestige of entire national higher education systems (Brooks & Waters, 2011; Kouba, 2019; Maria Cubillo et al., 2006). While system or institutional prestige may be tied to factors such as touted program quality, rankings (Madge et al., 2015), or celebrity faculty, Lomer (2018) explains that national histories and global influence can also exert influences: "the power of a degree from a neo-imperial country is typically of greater symbolic significance and labour market value than a degree from a country with less historical status" (p. 3). Regardless of the source of the perceived prestige of the institution or national higher education system, the literature clearly identifies the allure of attending a "so-called 'world-class' university" as a motivating factor for many internationally mobile students and their families (Sondhi & King, 2017, p. 11).

Binsardi & Ekwulugo (2003) argue "students are not buying degrees… they are buying the benefits that a degree can provide in terms of employment, status, lifestyles, etc." (p. 319). As such, in relation to notions of social and cultural capital, students who decide to study abroad may seek the benefits of new networks of cosmopolitan peers (Beech, 2014), hope to evade a 'lackluster' domestic degree option at home to stand out among their peers (Findlay et al., 2012) and to "advance in the 'labour queue'" (Kratz & Netz, 2018, p. 380), or strive simply to improve their social status through an international education (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). Moskal and Schweisfurth (2018) explain that in their study, "the participants seem to be less concerned with the technical, specialised knowledge, and more concerned with the acquisition of generic life skills, personal development, social networks and incorporated cultural capital" (p. 102). These are described as the "soft currencies" or forms of capital that may not be explicitly embodied in the skills learned or the degree received (Moskal & Schweisfurth, 2018) and are understood by students and their families even if they are not described as comprising the accumulation of social and cultural forms of capital.

Importantly, social and cultural capital theories have been used by scholars to emphasize the reproduction of social and class privileges (Brint, 2017). The inherent inequality of access to international higher education driven in many ways by neoliberal logics means that ISM is also implicated, to varying degrees, in class reproduction through degree scarcity and inaccessibility. Even as ISM and access to international education opportunities increase, the draw and unequal access to the world's most prestigious institutions serve in many ways to maintain class difference and separation (Findlay et al., 2018). Increased opportunities for global mobility accompany decreasing travel costs and improved long-distance communication options highlight

the importance of "a HE system geared to the needs of the children of [elite groups]" who are able to casually and comfortably travel and thrive within diverse national settings (Findlay et al., 2012, p. 122). Finally, as the middle class expanded in recent years to facilitate increased access to higher education domestically, international opportunities were seen as a way in which "the elite and upper-middle classes could maintain their distinction" (King & Sondhi, 2018, p. 179) and bypass national bounds that might have previously limited their access to selective universities.

Future Mobility Goals

Robertson's (2011, 2013) valuable work on "student switchers" and connections between education and migration in the Australian context zeros in on the role future migration possibilities may play in student decisions to complete a degree abroad (Robertson, 2011; Robertson, 2013; see also Brunner, 2022a, 2022b). For some students, the decision to study abroad may include explicit or implicit notions of the educational experience as facilitating future migration to the host or another nation (King & Sondhi, 2018; King et al., 2010; Martin, 2017; Sondhi & King, 2017). This may or may not connect with familial migration objectives as described previously (Brooks & Waters, 2011). Seen as a potential "launch pad for later mobility" (Brooks, 2018, p. 89), studying abroad can be utilized as experiential, academic, and professional preparation for more permanent mobility. As aptly described by Findlay et al. (2012), "migrating to learn may be part of the process of learning to migrate" (p. 122).

The findings from a wide range of literature point to the ways in which student mobility cannot be simply disconnected from other forms of mobility. It can instead be considered, depending on the individual student, as intimately linked with other forms of mobility that last

beyond students' temporally bounded educational activities (Madge et al., 2015). Time spent studying abroad should, therefore, not only be understood as helpful practice or groundwork for migration, instead, in some cases, it can be used as a "deliberate immigration strategy" (Tremblay, 2005, p. 197). More cynical views of this sort of student planning are often tied to individual and national concerns about labor market protection and security (Rodan, 2009; Crumley-Effinger, forthcoming), as described in the previous section.

Credential Accrual

Though acknowledged throughout the literature, student motivations to study abroad do not appear to focus primarily on the collection of credentials (Collins, 2008; Lo, 2019; Schweisfurth, 2012; Tremblay, 2005). This points, perhaps, to the students' access to higher education domestically, meaning that they would be able to gain credentials at home, but their motivations for studying abroad stem from other rationales (as explored in this section). That said, credential-specific reasons for choosing to study abroad were cited in two important ways. First, some students see local credentials as carrying specific weight within the local labor market as employer familiarity with the degree program and institution might give them a leg up on other international applicants with a degree that is not from the host country (Collins, 2008; Tremblay, 2005). This is valuable for those students who hope for employment in the host country. Second, some students and their families understand that simply by earning one's credentials abroad, they may be perceived as more unique and hold greater value in the eyes of future employers (Brooks & Waters, 2011; Lo, 2019). These rationales fit closely with previously discussed future mobility goals and (embodied) cultural capital reasonings for choosing to undertake a degree abroad.

<u>Learning and Skills Development</u>

As may be expected, some students decide to study abroad in order to gain access to learning or skills development opportunities that are not possible at home, or at least are considered less effective there (Beech, 2014; Hanassab & Tidwell, 2002; King & Sondhi, 2018; Kratz & Netz, 2018; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). Some of the studies highlighted the value of international education for developing 'global skills' that are understood to be useful post-graduation (Maria Cubillo et al., 2006). International students in Germany, for example, described the value of their international education in learning how to access and assess knowledge and information in diverse contexts (Kratz & Netz, 2018), creating an overlap with cultural capital rationales for studying abroad.

Students also may look abroad when the higher education system at home does not meet their needs in terms of courses of study provided, or educational quality, or simply due to lack of spots available (Beech, 2014; King & Sondhi, 2018). In relation to this former rationale, students' mobility can be one response to bypassing the limitations of a higher education system that is unable to meet demand (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). A study by Mok et al. (2019) found that some Chinese students studying abroad had decided to do so because of the perceived quality difference of the educational programs, while another study showed that international students studying in the United Kingdom were drawn to specific programs that were seen as particularly strong compared to the opportunities in their home countries (Schweisfurth, 2012).

The global importance of English in many fields means that degree programs in English and English-speaking countries may be especially attractive to students considering studying abroad (Mok et al., 2019; Schweisfurth, 2012). The opportunity to study one's chosen subject in

English and an English-speaking environment is seen by some as having a value that surpasses a more limited situation in which one takes English language courses in addition to one's subject taught in a native or other languages. This subsection looking at student's motivations in the form of seeking learning or skills development while abroad is the student perspective that most closely aligns with the HCT perspectives outlined in the previous section where, "according to the [HCT] model, an individual decides to migrate if the expected returns exceed the associated costs. This cost–benefit assessment is considered to be influenced by an individual's ability and character traits" (Kratz & Netz, 2018, p. 379).

<u>Other Rationales</u>

This section has thus far focused on the 'instrumentalist' rationales for student choices to study outside of their home country, providing some similar reasonings to the HCT, migration, and labor market-oriented perspectives of the nation as described in the previous section. Concomitant with these instrumentalist findings of student motivations to study abroad, a smaller body of literature shows that more "'fuzzy' or intangible motivations" may induce students to complete their degrees abroad (Martin, 2017, p. 707). These are briefly discussed below.

A selection of the studies cited opportunities for adventure as important in some students' study abroad decisions (Beech, 2014; Sondhi & King, 2017). Outside of the educational and other activities resulting from their sojourn, students may see a chance for exploration during their post-secondary studies as well as greater travel freedoms associated with what is "seen as a desirable lifestyle attribute for middle-class youth" or a "rite of passage" (King & Sondhi, 2018, p. 178); King et al. (2010) suggest that this may even be a strategy to "prolong a carefree lifestyle and delay the onset of a career" (p. 27). The literature on short-term (credit mobility)

study abroad often notes student perceptions of study abroad as an adventure (Doerr, 2012;

Engle & Engle, 2002), indicating an important overlap between this and longer-term degree

mobility (the latter being the focus of this study).

A selection of literature deliberately sought to push back and provide counter-narratives

to the ubiquitous instrumentalist and pragmatic narratives of student motivations for studying

abroad, emphasizing the "non-material effects of investment in education" (Lo, 2019, p. 263). Lo

(2019) and Beech (2014) explain that international education can support students as they seek to

bypass the limitations of their home society. For example, Martin (2017) describes study abroad

decisions of Chinese women as a way to "counterbalance… structural gender disadvantage" at

home (p. 711). Through studying abroad, these students were also able to embrace a new

lifestyle that bypassed "social regulation" from family and society in China (Martin, 2017, p.

711) and even to "fundamentally transform the kind of person one is" (p. 712). Finally, some

students also sought various forms of 'interculturality' through their abroad experience,

anticipating changes in their general outlook as a world citizen as well as their communicative

capacity when encountering individuals from different backgrounds (Lo, 2019; Martin, 2017;

Moskal & Schweisfurth, 2018).

Here I have separated the various rationales encountered in the literature into different

themes, including setting a collection of "instrumentalist" rationales against "interpretivist" ones

(Lo, 2019). It is worth noting here that the borders between these student perspective themes are

permeable and disputable: I have simply sought to outline the various student motivations

discovered in the literature in a way that provides conceptual intelligibility, though readers may

note the significant overlap between some of the rationalities listed, especially in how they have been titled and presented as distinct from one another.

Taking note of the valuable studies explored above, with this study, I undertake empirical research that addresses an important gap in the literature on international students and international student mobility and migration policies. Previous studies often neglect the international student experience as intimately tied to the cultural political economy of the host nation, and the ISM policies that are produced in response to this national, political, and economic context. Before turning to my methodological approach to this study in chapter four, chapter three presents the conceptual framework informing and guiding this research project.

CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

This chapter outlines the theoretical context and frameworks informing the study's exploration of the cultural, political, and economic milieu of international student mobility (ISM) and the effects of ISM policy on students in higher education (HE). I examine and describe (i) the theory underpinning my understanding of the policy landscape and perspectives that affect the lives of international students in the case countries, and (ii) the theoretical framework chosen to conduct the study. As such, the chapter first provides an examination of the theoretical context that informs my understanding of ISM policy and student experiences globally, namely, human capital theory (HCT). HCT underpins many of the rationales of both individual and nation-state perspectives of the value of ISM.

Second, the chapter introduces and explores the theoretical framework for the study, utilizing cultural political economy (CPE), institutionalism, and regime theory. CPE is used to interrogate the local cultural embeddedness of political and economic ISM policymaking and the experiences of international students located within countries with unique, locally situated political economies. The second theoretical framework, institutionalism, is the overarching theoretical framework of the ways in which the human lifeworld is structured around social institutions, through which humans organize, and in which they embed, various parts of their societies. Therefore, the study is based on the understanding that institutions influence the lived experiences of individuals (e.g., students and policymakers) as they act within the bounds of

what is deemed feasible or normal by said social institutions. The third theoretical framework, regime theory, functions as an interpretation of the regulatory environment facilitating the development of differing yet compatible national approaches to ISM policy.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework Diagram
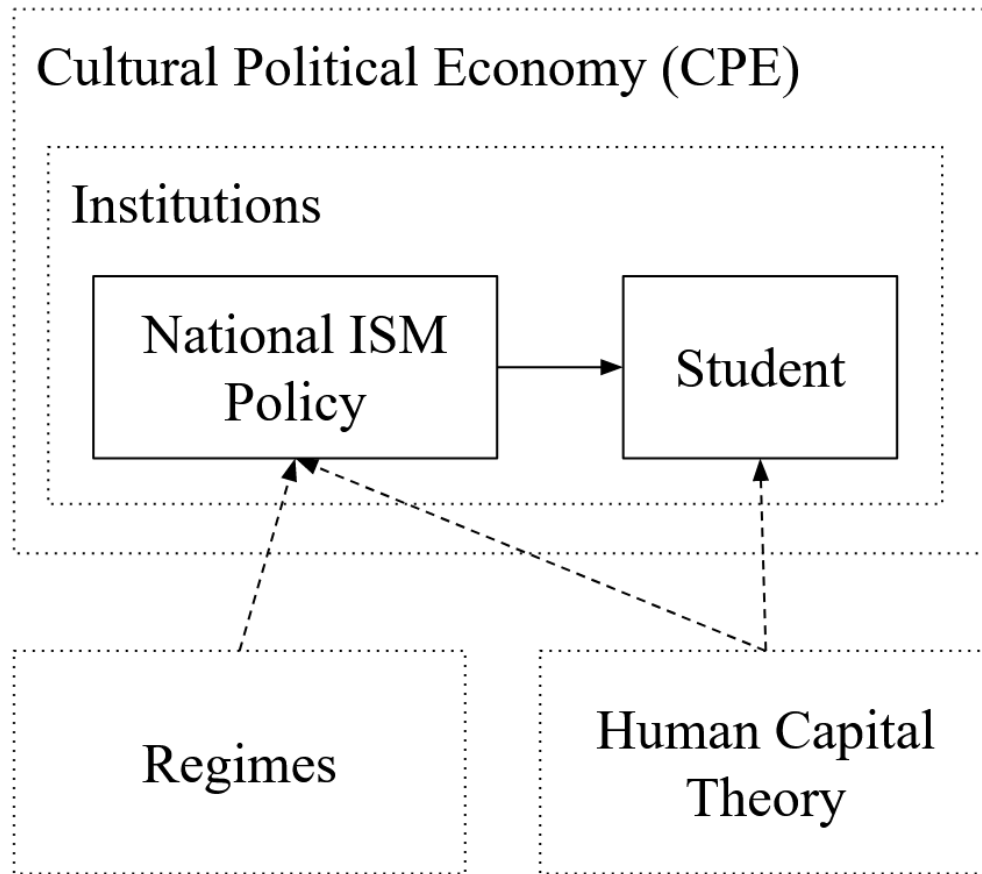
The interplay of this theoretical context and different frameworks with relation to this study is illustrated in Figure 1 above. CPE and institutionalism form the theoretical framework in which national ISM policy and the policy experiences of individual students are embedded. CPE more specifically highlights the relationship between national characteristics, ISM policy, and the student experience, while institutionalism has general effects on the student and the policy

environment. Regime theory, built upon the logic of institutionalism, affects ISM policy while also underpinning the host nation's ISM policy in relation to ISM policies in other nations. Finally, HCT affects both individual student rationales for studying abroad and nation-state rationales informing the development of local ISM policy. After an overview of these varied concepts, I will return to this diagram at the end of this chapter.

Theoretical Context

Human Capital Theory

Human capital theory (HCT) approaches education activities from a functionalist and economic vantage point, understanding education in terms of the potential for greater labor productivity for the national economy (Bae & Patterson, 2014). As noted in the previous chapter, it is also often intimately connected with ideas underpinning personal decisions to pursue further education abroad. With roots in the late 1700s through the work of Adam Smith, HCT's stature and theoretical utility grew through economics scholarship beginning in the 1950s and 60s (Brock & Alexiadou, 2013; Sweetland, 1996). Identified in relation to more "traditional" forms of capital, such as physical and financial capital (Nafukho et al., 2004), HCT ties the development of human capital (skills and knowledge) to educational processes positing that "the better educated a person is, the more productive they are likely to be" (Lauder, 2015, p. 491). HCT scholars, therefore, identify the accumulation of 'human capital' as the valuable collection of "human competencies, abilities and skills that are acquired through forms of training and education" (Brock & Alexiadou, 2013, p. 89).

HCT positions education as a primary means of developing human capital (Nafukho et al., 2004), which can benefit both the individual in terms of earnings from employment and the

nation in which the individual is contributing their labor (Brown & Tannock, 2009; Riaño & Piguet, 2016). That is, human capital is seen not only as developed through "the investment people make in themselves [to] enhance their economic productivity" (Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2008, p. 479), but it can also be conceptualized as something that national societies may have in varying amounts. Human capital can therefore be examined from the micro (individual) scale as well as from the macro (national) scale as educational investments in the labor productivity of an individual's skills or the labor force at large, respectively. As it developed, HCT has had different emphases, including national returns from education, human capital development as an investment, and education's role in developing individual human capital (Nafukho et al., 2004).

From the HCT perspective, educational activities may be assessed based on the perceived rate of return (ROR) based on the financial and time costs associated with educational gains (Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2018). Educational ROR as an economic measure of learning or educational processes is indicative of a relatively new economic imaginary exemplified in the "knowledge-based economy" (KBE) in which the "uses of knowledge have become increasingly subordinate to an 'economising' logic oriented to profit-and-loss calculation" (Jessop, 2008, p. 14). Individuals, from the HCT perspective, are considered relatively equal in their capacity for human capital development through education (Nafukho et al., 2004), but this economistic way of viewing individuals obscures much of the complexity of educational processes (Brown & Tannock, 2009) and does not necessarily take into consideration other socio-political factors that may inhibit equitable human capital development for individuals (Robeyns, 2006).

Despite these and other criticisms of HCT, it has proven an enduring theoretical and empirical approach to examining the development of nations' "physical and human capital

stock" through education based on state-level economic competitiveness emphases (Lauder, 2015; Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2008, p. 479; Tan, 2014). National strategies for the development of human capital are naturally centered around local educational programs and processes for the citizenry (Wiseman & Baker, 2006), but may also be tied to the national (and regional) importance of human capital growth through international student enrollments in local higher education (e.g., Robertson, 2010; Tremblay. 2005). The ubiquity of HCT in arguments supporting ISM and other immigration policy—especially considering new pressures in the competitive race for talent to meet the needs of the KBE requiring "an increasingly larger share of highly qualified workers" (Haupt et al., 2013, p. 1; Tremblay, 2005)—has been explored in the previous chapter, both in the 'National Perspectives' and 'Student Motivations' subsections. HCT is used in this study to acknowledge and pointedly examine the importance of human capital development goals as integral to both ISM policy and student motivations to study abroad. This is especially relevant to findings outlined in the final chapters.

Theoretical Framework

Using a comparative design—with HCT providing theoretical context—cultural political economy (CPE), institutionalism, and regime theory provide functional theoretical insights for examination of the ways in which local ISM policies affect "the capacity of various actors [i.e., international students]… to realize their goals through or within [institutions]" (Gale, 2008), as well as the cultural, economic, and political factors informing the development of the influential ISM policies.

Cultural Political Economy

With a lineage connecting to comparative education scholars emphasizing the importance of context, cultural political economy (CPE) provides a theoretical frame for examining the embeddedness of economic and political activities within societies' cultural and social spheres (Sum & Jessop, 2013). The scholarship describes this as a 'cultural turn' in the analysis of a range of topics within the more mainstream theoretical paradigms of political economy (Jessop, 2010; Robertson & Dale, 2015). The emphasis on the "social relations and subjectivities" inherent in political and economic decision-making and processes is (Robertson & Dale, 2015, p. 149), according to CPE scholar Jessop (2008), reliant on 'semiotic' processes of actors. That is, CPE "combines the analysis of sense- and meaning-making with the analysis of instituted economic and political relations and their social embedding" (Sum & Jessop, 2013, p. 1).

As a theory based on the context-specific, semiotic, and interpretive activities of social actors within particular localities, CPE draws upon institutionalist theory (Jessop & Oosterlynck, 2006). This institutionalist background reveals that a CPE analysis of a given case may provide valuable theoretical insights for understanding the institutionalized norms in a given society, including examination of the ways in which actors' interpretations and meaning-making activities (semiosis)—as bounded and influenced by those institutions—may yield an effect on political and economic decision-making, processes, and policies (Sum & Jessop, 2013). CPE is described by Robertson and Dale (2021) as "a nascent and broad interdisciplinary approach aimed at extending the traditional concerns of political economy to show how they interact with cultural processes of meaning-making" (p. 282).

By examining the ways in which individuals make sense of their surroundings, CPE provides a theoretical approach to understanding the institutionalized complexity reduction processes undertaken by individuals in which various components of a 'hypercomplex' economic totality are included or excluded "due to limited cognitive capacities and to the discursive and material biases of specific epistemes and economic paradigms" (Jessop & Oosterlynck, 2006, p. 1158). An example of complexity reduction lies in the creation of 'economic imaginaries' (Higgins & Novelli, 2020; Jessop, 2008; Jessop & Oosterlynck, 2006). These imaginaries are constructed as a result of the socially embedded and semiotic decisions made by researchers and policymakers (among others) about that which they can and will functionally conceptualize as discrete economic realities (Jessop, 2008). Concisely, "imaginaries are semiotic systems that frame individual subjects' lived experience of an inordinately complex world and/or inform collective calculation about that world" (Sum & Jessop, 2013, p. 165). Jessop (2008) explains that the KBE is an example of a reified 'economic imaginary' that has taken on considerable meaning in global discourses around education and human capital development.

Understanding policy development as based, at least in part, on a collection of local "social imaginaries" is useful for examining the ways in which the local context will affect policies (Higgins & Novelli, 2020; Sum & Jessop, 2013). Again, according to Sum & Jessop (2013),

> An imaginary is a semiotic ensemble (or meaning system) without tightly defined boundaries that frames individual subjects' lived experience of an inordinately complex world and/or guides collective calculation about that world. Without imaginaries, individuals cannot 'go on' in the world and collective actors (such as organizations)

could not relate to their environments, make decisions, or engage in strategic action. (p. 165)

With relation to the topic of (student) immigration and associated policies, it is possible to see imaginaries at play. As explored in the previous chapter's various discussions of ISM policy in Australia, we see a market imaginary as a way to conceptualize a way forward for a struggling Australian higher education sector. Turning to the logics of the market helped make sense of the complex Australian higher education environment, which was influenced by both local (cultural and political) and external (economic and political) factors, which paved the way for new government policies for higher education funding. These in turn, led to changing ISM policy to facilitate this new HE market orientation (see chapter two). As such, we see a theoretical, linear path moving from social imaginaries (to reduce complexity) to policy responses to these imaginaries.

This is described well by Higgins and Novelli (2020) using insights from Sum and Jessop wherein social imaginaries "have 'a central role in the… 'reproduction or transformation of the prevailing structures of exploitation and domination'" (pp. 6-7). This is a strong stance to take, but CPE does come from critical theoretical roots (Sum & Jessop, 2013), and it may be understood that state policies are manifestations of the coercive power of states and their monopolization of the "legitimate use of force" (Scott, 1998, p. 88). Coming back around, CPE—that is, an approach taking into consideration the cultural, the political, and the economic—is utilized when "deploying one or two of these categories… by themselves is inadequate to explain our world…" (Roberston & Dale, 2015, p. 150). The local complexity reduction processes, leading to social imaginaries, can thus provide rationales for the creation of

structures of domination (e.g., ISM policies controlling access to the higher education market of any given nation-state; see Crumley-Effinger, forthcoming).

This study's deployment of CPE is based on a conceptual-theoretical core of the approach: that is, that CPE can highlight "how economic systems, and their component parts, are products of specific human, technical, and natural relations" (Biebuyck & Meltzer, 2017). CPE is a growing theoretical approach to the study of a disparate range of inter- and multidisciplinary issues and areas, but it is this core understanding that informs this study. Despite the inordinate complexity of CPE itself, Higgins and Novelli (2020) provide valuable insights into the utility of CPE for examining discrete education-related phenomena. According to them, CPE's four "processes of selectivity" provide "entry points into understanding how the meanings that actors attribute to the social world are embedded in material, political, and economic relations and institutions" (Higgins & Novelli, 2020, p. 6). These are, in effect, actions undertaken by "social agents" to be *selective* in what is internalized or the target of what is to be understood (Higgins & Novelli, 2020, p. 6). The authors explore the four selectivities introduced by Sum & Jessop (2013),[1] but here, I focus on the two that hold the most capacity for ISM policy analysis relevant to the present study. Updated to connect with the topic of this study, Higgins and Novelli's (2020) highlight the value of CPE's

1. structural selectivity for encouraging analysis of the content of ISM policies and the imaginaries in reference to which those policies are created and the local and global environments in which both are embedded.

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[1] What Sum and Jessop (2013) call "structural, semiotic, technological and agential" (p. 25), Higgins and Novelli (2020) describe as, respectively, structural, discursive, technological, and agential. See chapter nine for a brief note on the prospective utility of the discursive selectivity in studies of ISM policymaking.

2. technological selectivity for inviting analysis of how ISM policies can affect control of or influence those 'targeted' by said policies.

The research questions outlined in the first and second chapters track to these respective analytical pathways. Where the first research question seeks understanding—through policy analyses—of the ways in which local prerogatives are manifest in local ISM policy (structural selectivity), the second question is positioned—through interviews with students—to gather insights into the ways in which local ISM policies affect international students in their respective host countries (technological selectivity).

Institutionalism

Institutionalism—to which the previously discussed CPE tradition is closely tied (Sum & Jessop, 2013)—draws from sociological traditions emphasizing the important influence on individuals of "cultural meanings and organizational forms" from the local environment (Meyer, 2006, p. xi). These formal and informal meanings and forms provide a basis for developing conceptual 'institutions,' which serve as formal and informal models, norms, complexity reduction mechanisms, and cultural legitimation tools within their specific context (Meyer, 2006). As such, institutions can be understood as "repositories of taken-for-granted cognitive schemata that shape people's understandings of the world they live in and provide scripts to guide their action" (Meyer & Rowan, 2006, p. 6). As opposed to discrete organizations such as a company or a university, institutions are "more cultural than structural" (Wiseman & Baker, 2006, p. 4); they are, therefore, not necessarily visible, and they may be understood as commonly held and accepted norms of what is, for example, 'real,' 'normal,' or 'acceptable.' The sociological use of the idea of the 'institution' stands in contrast to more normative use of the

term which often denotes specific organizations or structures, such as a higher education organization (HEO; e.g., a university or college).[2]

Schooling is an apt example of an institution used to impart information to those deemed to require an education (Benavot, 1997). Schooling-as-institution is a "socially embedded idea defined by well-known structures… or as standardized activity sequences that have taken-for-granted rationales [i.e., towards education and learning], that is, some kind of common social account of their existence and purpose" (Benavot, 1997, p. 1). That schooling may not be the most valuable or beneficial means of educating individuals does not matter: schooling-as-institution is "socially embedded" and has "taken-for-granted rationales" (Benavot, 1997), and is, importantly, "defined as the appropriate way" of providing education and learning (Greenwood & Hinings, 1996, p. 1025). Social institutions, such as schooling, can be understood as local or a combination of local and extra-local institutions. Baker and LeTendre (2015) explain that education through schooling "is strongly affixed to global norms and rules about what education is and how schools should operate" (p. 262). In addition to 'schooling,' other examples of institutions could, depending on cultural context, include 'marriage' (as an acceptable form of partnership and cohabitation), or 'government' (as a normal form of organizing the oversight and upkeep of a group of individuals and their holdings). These institutions can be reified through various means, such as laws, regulations, hierarchies, et cetera.

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[2] Due to the ubiquitous reference of the concept of social institutions throughout this study, I will refer to universities and colleges as 'higher education organizations' (HEOs) to avoid misunderstandings that might occur using the term 'higher education institutions' (HEIs), though the latter term is the more customarily used to refer to organizations providing post-secondary schooling.

Neo-institutionalism, utilizing the concept of the institution as "endowed with meaning by cognitive acts of individuals" (Meyer & Rowan, 2006, p. 6), is a re-imagining of sociological institutionalist theory to meet new inquiry needs in educational research (Wiseman & Baker, 2006). Stemming from influential scholarship by John Meyer and a slew of colleagues in the 1970s, neo-institutionalist literature examines and critiques the socially constructed, institutionalized nature of education in individual nations and around the globe (Meyer, 1977; Meyer & Rowan, 2006). This is often described as a "world culture" that can exert influence in a multitude of social, political, economic, and cultural arenas around the globe (Lechner & Boli, 2005). This branch of institutionalist scholarship has provided a valuable lens through which comparative education scholars have examined and questioned the ways in which the behaviors, actions, and policies of local individuals and organizations may be affected and bounded by local, institutionalized models and norms, the institutionalization of which may have itself been affected by the 'diffusion' of more global environmental influences (Benavot, 1997; Meyer et al., 1977).

This local adherence to globally institutionalized norms may lead to similar institutions or policies in disparate localities, a process referred to as 'isomorphism' in the neo-institutionalist literature (Meyer et al., 2007; Schriewer & Martinez, 2004). Kim (2006) explained that "a core [neo-institutionalist] argument is that nation-states have built modern education systems through world-cultural and associational processes beyond the considerable variation in local circumstances" (p. 142). Despite a neo-institutionalist emphasis on globalization leading to isomorphism in education worldwide, any growing similarities should be understood as continuing and complex processes, as opposed to outright, straightforward homogenization of

education-related institutions, practices, and policies as an end-state or end-goal (Wiseman et al., 2014).

Neo-institutional literatures show that despite isomorphic processes indicative of the influences of external (Western) models and norms (i.e., institutions) on education around the world, the local context can still exert influence on local policy and practice, resulting in policy or institutional divergences described as "loose coupling" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Schofer et al., 2012). Loose coupling, therefore, limits the strength of claims that there exists a global, homogenized, and monolithic world culture of education. Despite the significance of world culture theory in comparative education research, there are those who present critical voices (Carney et al., 2012; Wiseman et al., 2014;). Silova and Brehm (2015), for example, describe a worrying shift in some scholarship from utilizing the ideas of world culture theory as a theoretical hypothesis or "myth," to an uncritical, normative, prescriptive fact or "model" (p. 16).

To some extent, institutionalism and neo-institutionalism are broad to the point of significant utility within a wide range of scholarly work relating to immigration or international student mobility. Shields (2013) utilizes, among other theories, institutionalism (and cautiously uses neo-institutionalism) in their study of changing international student mobility flows and the power relations underlying those flows. Boswell and Hampshire (2017), describing institutions as placing "structural constraints on agents" (p. 134), approach their study of changes to immigration policy in the United Kingdom and Germany from an institutionalist perspective. In so doing, they show how immigration policy discourse is strategically used, within the bounds of local institutions, to drive change.

Another study, which challenges common push-pull models of study abroad, examines how the environment created by HEOs shapes international student flows. In this way, HEOs are understood to influence institutions that "mediate the relationship between individual values and the resulting social choice… by [among other things] molding the alternatives over which preferences are expressed" (Kouba, 2019, p. 4). Thus, Kouba (2019) describes the influence of HEOs on individual student mobility choices. Levatino et al. (2018), through examples of ISM policy changes in France, Spain, and the United Kingdom, provide examples of how HEOs can affect policymaking. Their study shows both that "policies result from dialogue and tensions between the state and the institutions composing it" and "shared principles and values play a fundamental role in influencing people's behaviour" (Levatino et al., 2018, p. 367).

In a study of post-Bologna intra-European mobility, Powell and Finger (2013) show that student ability to take advantage of mobility opportunities is unequally distributed. They show that the unequal access to mobility programs (e.g., Erasmus) are in part based on national "institutionalised differences" resulting from the fact that "education reflects national characteristics in ideology, values, social norms and governance structures" (Powell & Finger, 2013, p. 273). In short, this shows that institutions within each country lead to varied effects on participation in regional student mobility plans.

Regime Theory

Just as CPE (described above) has roots in institutional theories, regime theory from the field of international relations (IR) is also connected with more macro forms of institutionalism (Keohane, 1993; Rittberger, 1993a). Shedding light on the inter-relations of policy environments of sovereign nation-states, international regimes play a role in the context surrounding

internationally mobile post-secondary students. International regimes function as "principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actor expectations converge in a given issue-area" (Krasner, 1983, p. 1). These norms and procedures of international regimes provide a common point around which international cooperation may be centered. That is, they provide the basis for "the institutionalized co-operation of states for managing conflicts and interdependence problems" (Rittberger, 1993b, p. 7), for example in the absence of a global government "capable of making and enforcing international rules of conduct" (Rittberger, 1993a, p. xii). Contrary to a hypothetical overarching government that could enforce rules, Keohane (1993) describes regimes as functioning through 'horizontal' cooperation among states around convergent expectations for the given regime area.

It should be noted that though revolving around central ideas of cooperation in the absence of a centralized global government (Mayer et al., 1993), definitions of regime theory do vary considerably (see do Amaral, 2010; Levy et al., 1995; Rittberger, 1993c). In the literature, this variability appears to often center on different conceptualizations of the implicit (informal) or explicit (formal) nature of international regimes (do Amaral, 2010; Krasner, 1983).

Krasner's (1983) widely cited description of international regimes as "principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures" (p. 1) provides insight into the varied ways in which international regimes may be understood as conceptual-informal or tangible-formal. On the one hand, 'principles' and 'norms' might be considered informal, less concrete, or based on commonalities of understanding. According to Krasner (1983), "principles are beliefs of fact… Norms are standards of behavior defined in terms of rights and obligations" (p. 2). For example,

this might entail a shared principled or normative *vision* of the ways that refugees *should* be treated.

On the other hand, 'rules' and 'decision-making procedures' may be understood as more concretely agreed-upon ways of acting. Krasner (1983) describes these as such: "rules are specific prescriptions or proscriptions for actions. Decision-making procedures are prevailing practices for making and implementing collective choice" (p. 2). Continuing the example from above, principled perspectives on the treatment of refugees might eventually be codified in the form of a collection of rules and procedures agreed upon between countries with the expectation that those rules and procedures are to be followed. A real-world example of this is the 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, which was a multilateral United Nations treaty agreed upon by member nations (UNHCR, n.d.).

The examination of the variety held within Krasner's seemingly succinct definition of international regimes illustrates how disparate, and sometimes incongruous, ideations of international regimes might develop within regime theory, paving the way for definitions of international regimes along a continuum between *discernable* (emphasizing an informal or implicit character) and *founded* (emphasizing a formal or explicit character). See Figure 2.

Figure 2. Defining International Regimes along a Continuum

Discernable		Founded
(informal or implicit)	⟷	(formal or explicit)
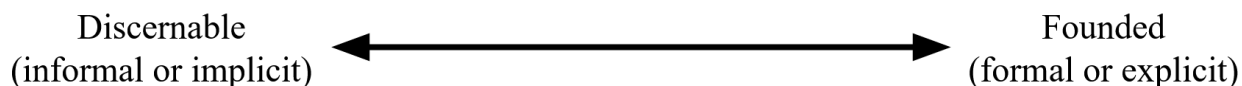
Levy et al. (1995) provide valuable insights with regard to questions about how to define international regimes. Going further than the discernable-founded continuum conceptualization I have described, they provide a typology based on two different dimensions: level of formality

and convergence of expectations (Levy et al., 1995). This is based on the examination of prospective regimes on two scales: (i) convergence of expectations, and (ii) level of formality (Levy et al., 1995). They explain that the theoretical base upon which regime analysis is built is one where "states may generate institutions in identifiable issue areas that affect their behavior and foster cooperation…" (Levy et al., 1995, p. 271). Thus, various institutions (regimes) will evidence varying degrees of formality and convergence of expectations between nation-states. Figure 3 shows their matrix for identifying different conceptualizations of international regimes.

Figure 3. Regime Types (from Levy et al., 1995)

Convergence of Expectations

Formality	Low	High
Low	no regimes	tacit regimes
High	dead letter regimes	classic regimes

As can be seen in Figure 3, (i) where there is no alignment of understandings or expectations, there can be no formality regarding those (missing) expectations so that in such a case (i.e., the top left quadrant), there is no regime; (ii) the top right quadrant identifies the 'tacit regime,' wherein there is a manifest convergence of expectations though no formal codification (e.g., an international agreement) of the ways in which that alignment will be followed through by individual nations; (iii) the bottom left quadrant identifies those agreements that hold little weight due to low convergence of expectations despite formal agreement, leading to low efficacy; finally, (iv) the bottom right quadrant is indicative of the 'classic regime' in which a

high level of convergence of expectations and high level of formality is indicative of a regime

that has been formalized through agreements between nation-states (Levy et al., 1995).

Therefore, discernable regimes are described in the Levy et al. (1995) typology as 'tacit

regimes,' while founded regimes may be seen as either 'dead letter regimes' or 'classic regimes.'

In light of this ambiguity surrounding the idea of international regimes—as they are

defined in various ways by various scholars—it is important to provide a clarifying operational

definition of an 'international regime.' For the purpose of utilizing this concept for providing

theoretical context vis-a-vis ISM policy, an international regime is defined in this study in line

with the 'discernable' side of the continuum (a 'tacit regime' within the Levy et al. matrix) as *an*

inter-national (i.e., between sovereign nations) conceptualization of and assent to norms and

conventions in a given arena of international relations. I will return to the connection between

ISM and immigration policy and its connection with tacit regimes in the final section of this

chapter, and again in chapter nine.

Through institutionalized norms or ideas of how international interrelations will ideally

occur in a given issue area (i.e., international regimes), norms and legitimized courses of action

may later be codified and reified through policies, laws, processes, and so on (high formality).

Stemming from this general, informal alignment of expectations between sovereign nations,

subsequent formal agreements—such as "international legal agreements" through the United

Nations (Raustiala & Victor, 2004)—are made possible.[3] Regime theory holds analytical

capacity for understanding the coordination of national "actors in an [otherwise] anarchic

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[3] "Agreements are ad hoc 'one-shot' arrangements, whereas the purpose of regimes is to facilitate agreements"
(Jules, 2018, p. 143).

international system" (Jules, 2018, p. 142); such as the regulatory environment for international migration which heretofore is *not* centered around a comprehensive multilateral treaty governing the movement of peoples between nations (Ghosh, 2007).

<u>Regime Theory & Immigration</u>

Various scholars have utilized regime theory to explore topics relating to immigration, migration, and global mobility and human flows (e.g., Ghosh, 2000, 2007; Plathner, 2013; Rass & Wolf, 2018; Salter, 2006; Tsianos & Karakayali, 2010). However, it is notable that there appear to be no studies connecting regime theory (or the idea of international regimes) specifically with international students or ISM policy. As such, the introduction of the intersection of regime theory and ISM through this study invites exploration of this topic as a potentially fruitful avenue for future inquiry.

In this vein, I suggest that local ISM policies may be understood as influenced by a specific international regime at the global level. Specifically, I consider national instances of immigration policy as potential instances of an international immigration regime, which locates within individual sovereign nations the expectation and prerogative to delimit territorial entry criteria and control border ingress (Czaika et al., 2018). As such, this can be described as an international regime of sovereign national (student) immigration control. The understanding and norm that each nation needs to devise their own immigration policies points to the possibility of a tacit (Levy et al., 1995) international immigration regime, which normalizes the idea of sovereign national student immigration control. I bring this central idea together with insights from the full theoretical framework in the final section of this chapter.

Implications of Conceptual Framework

CPE provides a valuable theoretical framework for understanding and describing the local situatedness of policy as it relates to cultural, economic, and political factors. Local institutions such as ISM policies are understood to be embedded within the local economic and political context of the nation-state (Sum & Jessop, 2013), though exogenous factors must, of course, be considered (Jessop, 2008). These policies, then, are born from the local economic and political factors (e.g., labor needs, international competition discourses, international student fees to prop up falling state subsidies for higher education), and, importantly, are the result of local interpretations of those factors. That is, economic policy and political decision-making affecting ISM policy are necessarily influenced by culturally- and historically-based situations and institutions in the host country (institutions which are themselves 'social imaginaries' that carry weight and have meaning; see Brooks, 2018 and Riaño et al., 2018a).

As nations seek to respond to various competitive imperatives such as the KBE, human capital development, security concerns, and more, their policy responses as relates to ISM will be molded by national perspectives and understandings (semiosis) of how their country is situated within the context of this global, competitive environment. As such, different cultural backgrounds and national exigencies will necessitate varied national policy responses to new economic challenges and opportunities (see Brooks, 2018). CPE provides an analytic path for also examining international student experiences, as they are also embedded in the local political economy of their host country (see chapter eight). Robertson's (2013) findings from Australia exemplify the influence of the local CPE policy context: "while student-migrants consistently

felt that interactions with the [immigration] regime were difficult and stressful, some justified the actions of the authority by internalizing its rationalistic logic…" (p. 98).

The context-dependent nature of national policy, as described in CPE and institutionalist literatures, points to the nation-state as maintaining considerable influence on the lives of international students. At the local (nation-state) level, ISM policies are indicative of a local (national) political institution that places bounds on the international student experience (part of a "migration infrastructure" [Xiang & Lindquist, 2014]). At the macro (global) level, from an institutionalist perspective, ISM policies may be seen as influenced by a specific international regime. That is, understood in relation to ideas of international regimes as described above, and based on the latitude within conceptualizations of international regimes in various streams of IR-related scholarship, I suggest that national instances of immigration policy (including student visas and attendant policies) may be considered instances of an international immigration regime. This international regime would be one that locates within individual sovereign nations the expectation and prerogative to delimit territorial entry criteria and control border ingress[4] (Czaika et al., 2018), so that the international immigration regime relating to students might be described as an *international regime of sovereign national student immigration control* (or, an 'ISM policy regime,' see chapter nine).

Whereas some might see the absence of a multilateral agreement to outline a "cooperative global arrangement" (Ghosh, 2007, p. 303) to control global immigration and

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[4] Not only is visa access and territorial ingress controlled, but also the rights and regulations of visitors once they have passed through the nation's borders. This is evident in student visa policies that delimit the ways in which internal controls are utilized and affect the lives of those already within national borders (Jordan & Vogel, 1997; Brooks, 2018).

attendant issues as indicative of an absence of an international immigration regime, I suggest instead that the understanding and norm that each nation needs to devise their own immigration policies is itself evidence of a *tacit* (Levy et al., 1995) international immigration regime (wherein there is, despite no formal agreements, a 'convergence of actor expectations in a given issue-area,' in this case, relating to immigration [Krasner, 1983]). It would be an international regime normalizing the idea of sovereign national student immigration control. I would like to emphasize that this hypothesis is not accompanied by a value judgment as to the ethical appropriateness of this potential regime, or, for example, its fitness for providing just and human rights-centered immigration policies. However, it does suggest a current assumption of student immigration control as within the rights of each sovereign nation, and furthermore it highlights the fact that, in light of this regime, national (and perhaps regional) exigencies would influence local (national/regional) solutions (e.g., policies) to questions of immigration control and immigration policy.

Returning to the diagram introduced previously in this chapter, CPE is understood to constitute the local environment in which local ISM policy is developed, in response to cultural, political, and economic realities and institutions within the country; similarly, it affects student perceptions of ISM policy as the CPE of the nation also influences them. Institutionalism provides an understanding of the ways in which individuals, polities, societies, and organizations are affected by social institutions, which are themselves influenced by the local CPE. Regime theory highlights the inter-national influences on local ISM and student visa policy, and points to a regime with which students must interact. Local ISM policymakers, the ISM policies they create, and students are affected by HCT's notions of augmenting human capital, serving as a

rationale for facilitating ISM and choosing to study abroad, respectively. These interactions

between various individuals, bodies, theories, and institutions are illustrated in the diagram

below.[5]

Figure 4. Conceptual Framework Diagram
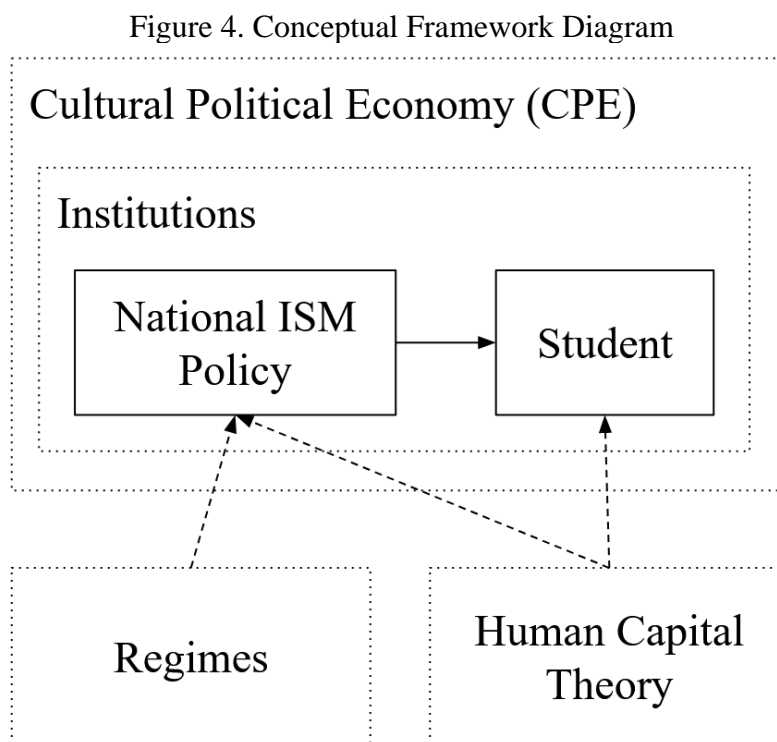
This study employs a new bricolage of theoretical frameworks to explore student

experiences of ISM policy. Through a constructivist, multiple case study methodology

employing interviews with students in the case countries (Lee, 2012; Stake, 2006), this study will

examine the effects of a specific institution (i.e., local, national ISM policy) on the experiences

of international students. This necessarily incorporates a contextualizing analysis of the specific

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[5] Solid arrows indicate concrete effects; dotted arrows indicate conceptual effects; dotted boxes indicate concepts /
theories; solid boxes indicate concrete entities.

local ISM policies in place in the case countries, including the local policy context as influenced by cultural, political, and economic factors and situated within potential ISM policy regime. The findings will shed light on how varied ISM policies in the host country affect the experiences of international students. Additionally, insights from the student interviews will provide the opportunity to explore connections between the cultural political economy of the case countries and resultant effects on their international student populations.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

"The world isn't just the way it is. It is how we understand it, no? And in understanding something, we bring something to it, no?"

—Yann Martell, *The Life of Pi*, 2007

Research Questions

In an effort to collect, present, and analyze the experiences of a sample of international students interacting with ISM policies of their host nation and to explore the "intersection[s] of the realms of the personal and the political" (Robertson, 2013, p. 88), my study will be guided by the following research questions.

1. RQ1: What emphases are present in the ISM policies?

2. RQ2: How do ISM policies affect international students?

This chapter outlines the specific methodologies and methods used in pursuit of answers to these questions.

Epistemological Approach

This project is rooted in a social constructionist epistemological perspective, or a social constructionist understanding of knowledge and truth. A constructionist epistemology is grounded in a "rejection of the notion of objective Truth" (Egbert & Sanden, 2014, p. 21), accompanied by the understanding that knowledge is therefore created or 'constructed' by individuals (Andrews, 2012). Closely related, though emphasizing factors that influence these

individual creations, social constructionism acknowledges the social genesis of our individual ways of making meaning (Crotty, 1998).

The social institutions of which we are a part, or "system[s] of intelligibility" (Crotty, 1998, p. 64), provide the schemas and formulae for making meaning of that which we experience. One of these systems is culture, which is one of the social institutions without which we would be unable to successfully function. Crotty (1998) suggests, for example, that "we depend on culture to direct our behaviour and organise our experience" (p. 65). This argument holds special significance in the case of cross-cultural and transnational research endeavors, such as the present study. Social constructionism thus emphasizes how individual semiosis (meaning-making) and understanding—in this case in the form of research on student experience and national policies—will be necessarily informed by those social and cultural experiences located within the participants' and researcher's background. This social constructionist epistemology runs counter to the positivist bent of research that seeks an ultimate or objective truth in order to "build up an explanation of social life by arranging such [collected] facts in a chain of causality" (Noor, 2008, p. 1602).

Aligning with this constructionist epistemology, this chapter outlines my qualitative approach to the study of international students' ISM policy experiences, as I work towards a contribution to the limited but essential scholarship on the individual experiences of international students as they interface with ISM policy (Gargano, 2009).

Design of the Study

Multicase Study

This study emphasizes the inherent value of understanding student experiences and the policy context in which such personal experiences occur. Qualitative case studies offer salient methods and perspectives through which these experiences and policies can be studied, analyzed, and reported on (Baxter & Jack, 2008). While the investigation of a single case provides a powerful way to understand a case and its context, the use of multiple cases allows the researcher to draw comparisons to identify similarities and "explore differences within and between cases" (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 548). This study therefore utilizes the multiple case study design (hereafter "multicase study" [Stake, 2006]) in search of answers to the research questions, relying on the selection of multiple cases to contribute to the development of a better understanding of the experiences of international students' interactions with ISM policies during their sojourn abroad.

Case study research is an especially productive methodology for studies in which "a holistic, in-depth investigation is needed" (Tellis, 1997, p. 1), as is the case in the current project. In responding to the aforementioned gap in the literature for the topic at hand, this study does not seek to provide generalizable knowledge about international students the world over, instead, it is concerned with the intrinsic value of contributing to a better understanding of how policy can affect the lived experiences of the 'targets' of said policy (Noor, 2008; Stake, 2006). Such an understanding can be valuable for future inquiry to obtain generalizable knowledge on this subject. This methodology is suited to assist with research endeavors focused on understanding, "discovery, and interpretation rather than hypothesis testing" (Noor, 2008, p. 1602).

While a single case study emphasizes the empirical value of in-depth study of an individual case and its context (Cavaye, 1996), the multicase study provides the opportunity to investigate multiple cases that comprise all or a part of a larger whole:

> In multicase study research, the single case is of interest because it belongs to a particular collection of cases. The individual cases share a common characteristic or condition. The cases in the collection are somehow categorically bound together. They may be members of a group or examples of a phenomenon. Let us call this group, category, or phenomenon a 'quintain' … Multicase research starts with the quintain. To understand it better, we study some of its single cases — its sites or manifestations. But it is the quintain we seek to understand. We study what is similar and different about the cases in order to understand the quintain better. (Stake, 2006, pp. 4-6)

For the present study, degree-seeking students studying abroad in host countries around the world by virtue of student-specific immigration policies or visas represent the quintain; a subset of those students, that is, those from my three case countries, as participants in my study selected through recruitment described below, will provide insights into student experiences of ISM policy in the selected case countries.

With international students studying in an increasingly diverse set of countries around the world (IIE, 2018), it is necessary to limit the number of case countries due to the limited time and resources available. Due to the need for a small number of cases, case selection warrants purposive sampling as described below (Stake, 2006). Again, the goal of a case study is not to generalize findings to the quintain (Cavaye, 1996), but instead because of the intrinsic value of better understanding specific, lived experiences of those who fall within the quintain. In short, "the intent is to better understand the case. It is not undertaken primarily because the case represents other cases or because it illustrates a particular trait or problem, but because in all its particularity and ordinariness, the case itself is of interest" (Baxter & Jack, 2008, pp. 548-549).

Robertson's (2011) description of the value and purpose of such a scholarly philosophy is apt: "this research thus functions as a detailed exploratory snapshot of the specific individuals studied, as a means to uncover core themes that could be the focus of further research, rather than as an analysis that can be broadly generalised" (p. 104). This study is undertaken in this vein. The selection of the case countries and the student sample, described below, is illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Quintain, Case, and Participant Diagram
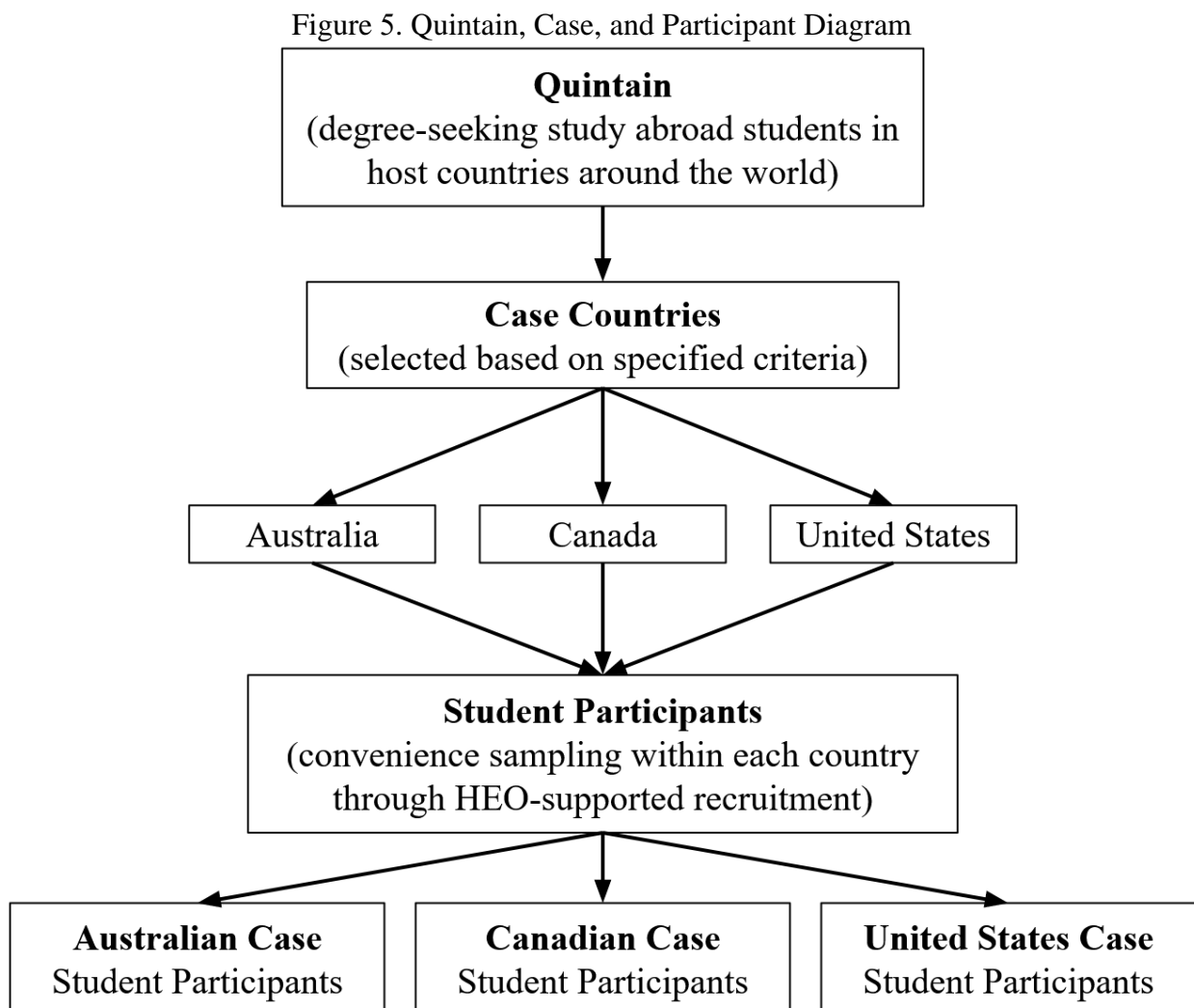
Case Countries

Stake (2006) outlines three critical factors that must be considered in the selection of cases comprising the quintain:

1. "Is the case relevant to the quintain?"

2. "Do the cases provide diversity across contexts?"

3. "Do the cases provide good opportunities to learn about complexity and contexts?" (p. 23)

The selection of my country cases relied on these and other pertinent criteria. I began the case selection process by identifying those countries that host the largest numbers of degree-seeking international students; by beginning with these countries, I am seeking to provide valuable, empirical research that touches on the "big players," or the countries in which a large number of students within the quintain are situated. As such, this study provides context-specific insights and can "uncover core themes" (Robertson, 2011, p. 104) specific to students in these case countries in a way that may maximize the potential relevance of the findings due to the large numbers of students studying in those countries.

For practical reasons relating to the limitations of my study (see below and chapter nine), a purposive sample was sought to narrow down the list of candidate countries to those nations that utilize English both as a primary language of instruction and as a primary official language. This is important for two reasons. First, fewer language-related complications are anticipated for those students who are completing their studies in programs taught in English and who must interact with an English-language national policy and bureaucracy. For example, suppose Student A is a native Spanish speaker studying in Germany in an English-language degree

program. In that case, their policy experience may be mediated by the challenges of interacting with the state and its student policies in a third language. That is, while their English-language ability is assumed to be sufficient for their studies, there is no indication of their German language ability for dealing with bureaucratic and policy processes. Alternatively, suppose Student B is a native Spanish speaker studying in the United Kingdom in an English-language degree program. In that case, this student's English language skills are likely sufficient for university-level study, providing confidence that their English language ability will be sufficient also for interacting with the state.

Second, my linguistic abilities must be considered in the selection of case countries considering, among other things, my plan to utilize national ISM policies through data collection and subsequent analysis. As a native English speaker, my ability to productively collect and analyze policy documents from countries such as China or France (two nations hosting large numbers of international students) would be severely limited. Analyzing policy documents from nations for which English is a primary official language will facilitate this vital component of my data collection and analysis plan relating to the first research question.

Noting these rationales for limiting my case countries in this way does not entail a value judgement as to the worth of studying any of the countries and hosted students that were not selected. The purposive country case selection process described here is focused on a methodical designation of cases that make this limited study feasible within a reasonable timeframe considering linguistic, financial, and time resources available to me as the sole researcher.

Executing the outlined selection process, I turned to the Institute for International Education's (IIE) global student mobility report's listing of top destinations for international

students, including shares of students as a percentage of the identified quintain. In 2017, the last

year for which this data was available at the time of project development, the distribution is: the

United States (24%), the United Kingdom (11%), China (10%), Australia (7%), France (7%),

Canada (7%), Russia (6%), Germany (6%) (IIE, 2018). According to my language criteria

described above, China, France, Russia, and Germany are removed from consideration. This

leaves four prospective case countries (the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and

Canada), which aligns with Stake's (2006) suggestion that four is an optimal number of cases in

multicase studies. With these four prospects, I removed the United Kingdom from my case list

stemming from the complexity of unresolved issues concerning the United Kingdom's recent

exit from the EU (Dennis, 2016; Marginson, 2017; Mitchell, 2021; Nicol, 2020; University

World News, 2020). Though the effects of this ongoing process on international students are still

not fully known, the implications for students studying in the United Kingdom, especially those

from the EU, led me to exclude the UK as a case country for the present study. As such, my case

countries are *Australia*, *Canada*, and the *United States*.

Student Sample

There is no broadly recognized definition of what constitutes an 'international student,'

though a most basic understanding of the term describes students who leave their home country

in order to pursue a course of study in a second country (Brooks & Waters, 2011). Aksakal et al.

(2019) define international student mobility as the "spatial movement of young people with the

purpose to pursue education abroad" (p. 610); however, in delineating an operational definition

of the individuals doing this, that is, an 'international student,' I have sought to bound and

identify the parameters of a definition for this particular, discrete study. In doing so, I

acknowledge the significant diversity of spatial, temporal, economic, citizenship, and other backgrounds and identities that constitute the heterogeneity of those who may be identified as 'international students' across the globe (Jones, 2017; Madge et al., 2015). I also understand the inequality of access to international studies for various reasons, including financial limitations and immigration restrictions (Lomer, 2018); this study focuses on those students who were able to successfully navigate these and other roadblocks to studying abroad.

To meet the inquiry goals of my study I have selected a controlled and selective definition that necessarily limits participants based on the circumstances of students' legal right to be in the host country as a student. Focusing as I am on how international students in higher education interact with and experience local ISM policies, for the purposes of this study, international students are defined as those who are or were:

1. enrolled in a higher education degree program (i.e., "diploma mobility" [Banks & Bhandari, 2012]);

2. not citizens or residents of the host nation (Lomer, 2018); and

3. permitted to engage in their study program by virtue of having procured a student-specific visa or study permit.

As noted previously, I use this focused definition of 'international student' in pursuit of student participants who, by virtue of meeting the criteria described above, are or were obliged to interact with the host government's ISM policies in a way that differs from those who may be defined as international students using a different set of definitional criteria. Within the bounds of the purposefully circumscribed definition, my recruitment efforts were aimed at maximizing the heterogeneity of study participants to ensure a diversity of student perspectives (Bryman,

2012). Students were recruited regardless of their country of citizenship, seeking to respond to what Aksakal et al. (2019) describe as a troubling "homogenizing tendency" in research on international students (p. 616), which often relies on drawing upon interviews with students from the same national or regional countries of origin.

Those who were identified as international students based on the above parameters within each case country and who were available therefore comprised my participants to provide insights on ISM policy experiences within each case country. Knowing that it is not feasible to interview all international students within each case country, a nonprobability sampling method known as convenience sampling was used to identify those interested in participating and willing to make themselves available for the interview (Etikan, 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). There are various methods by which cases can be developed, created, or identified, with the cases in the present study being demarcated based on "definition and context" (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 546); that is, cases were identified through the combination of definitional criteria (above) and host country location of study.

Data Collection

This project's data collection was composed of two parts, which, while distinct and beginning at different times, overlapped chronologically over the duration of the project's data collection phase. First, I began by collecting national policy documents from the case countries pertaining to international students and the visas or permits utilized for facilitating students' access to higher education organizations (HEOs) in them. Second, I conducted interviews with

international students who are studying[1] in the case countries, to learn first-hand about their experiences interacting with those policies. These two data collection phases are described below.

Policy Documents

In this study, I have previously described how my use of the term 'ISM policy' includes the combination of regulatory arrangements prescribing border ingress to study and in-country regulations for the duration of the degree program studies. Utilizing the Internet, national databases, national agency websites, and library resources available to me through Loyola University Chicago (LUC), I undertook a thorough search to collect documents from Australia, Canada, and the United States which pertain to their respective ISM policies. Furthermore, I utilized academic literature and news sources relating to ISM policies in these case countries to discover additional pertinent policy materials. This study used ISM policy documents produced and/or active between 2010 and 2020; such documents fell within three categories: (Type 1) national planning and strategy documents; (Type 2) national legal and regulatory documents; and (Type 3) national informational documents explaining regulations and policy (see Table 9 in chapter five). The following information uses Canada as an example to illustrate what these three types of policies document look like.

Many countries produce strategy or planning documents (Type 1) to identify core foci for new initiatives and their rationales. These provide, among other things, information in the data

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[1] Throughout this study I will refer to the study participants as international students, though participants may be either *current* or *former* international students. Information about participants' enrollments and expected (future) or actual (past) program completion dates is provided in chapter five, but to refrain from peppering the study with references to both current and former status as international students, I will simplify the presentation of the study by using the present tense when discussing these current and former international students.

analysis phase of the study for understanding the local context as it informs national approaches to international students and international student mobility and migration. In the case of Canada, this first type of document is presented in the form of their International Education Strategy publications (Global Affairs Canada, 2014, 2019). The most recent strategy document highlights, for example, the importance of incoming international students for strengthening "people-to-people ties crucial to international trade in an increasingly interconnected global economy" (Global Affairs Canada, 2019, p. 2). Additionally, it calls attention to the importance of international students for human capital development as well as to "build labour markets, spur economic development in target regions and industries, and support diversity at Canada's educational institutions" (Global Affairs Canada, 2019, p. 4).

Regulations and laws (Type 2) from the case countries are particularly salient in examining ISM policy. ISM policy in these areas emphasizes the legal circumscriptions of ISM-related activities, such as visa procurement and activities while undertaking studies within a particular country. The previously introduced strategy documents can be compared with analysis of these policy regulations to identify how national exigencies described in the former might be evident or pursued in the latter. Canada's 2011 Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (Canada MOJ, 2020a) and subsequent updates are examples of these regulations as policy documents that will be used in this study for this second policy category.

Finally, the accretive quality of national-level policy that is influenced by a range of regulatory and legal documents makes it quite challenging to understand. As a result, this study includes national informational documents which explain regulations and policy for lay audiences (Type 3). These sorts of materials are available (often through websites that can be

updated on the fly) to provide students and other stakeholders with information that "translates" the regulations and processes into understandable requirements and rules for conduct and activity. In Canada's case, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada provides easy-to-understand descriptions of the regulations that will impact students' lives (Government of Canada, 2020a). This sort of material can include information on procuring visas and study permits, employment while studying, travel visa details, and academic or university changes after starting one's degree program.

Conducting in-depth analyses of all policies, updates, and regulations that pertain to ISM in each of the three case countries would result in an analysis agenda with hundreds or potentially thousands of policy documents for each country. This would not be feasible, and as such, I have selected important primary policy documents, or what I term "national legal and regulatory" documents (Type 2), for each country, as well as a number of additional documents that provide valuable information, context, and insight into the policy situation for international students in each country (Types 1 and 3; see Table 9 in chapter five). The Type 2 ISM policy documents, which are listed in chapter five's Table 10 (along with Types 1 and 3), form the foundation of the ISM policy approach for each nation and are those that are updated, or made actionable, or clarified and elucidated, by subsequent policy documents. They are the regulations and acts that can be understood as forming the core of the policy approach to ISM in each case country.

For example, the main Type 2 document used for Canada was from the Ministry of Justice and was published in 2020, but it was originally published significantly before that and has been subsequently updated by additional legislation and changes by Canadian governments.

As such, this one document served as the repository for most if not all of the student-specific policy as it's written and supposed to be interpreted by government agencies, based on changes that have occurred over the years. Through this method of selecting a primary policy document that is updated and refreshed by other regulatory and policy changes, it was possible to select a discreet and analyzable policy document portfolio for each country.

In terms of the strategy documents, there were actually very few, so this was a relatively simple process. The United States came out with one in 2022, but it was not included because it was beyond the timeframe scope of my project, so only the 2012 and 2018 US strategy documents were used. For Australia and Canada, there were just one and two, respectively, that I encountered in the search. Finally, with the informational, Type 3, documents, this was also fairly simple, as I had determined to stick to government sources, forgoing resources from places such as schools, immigration attorneys in the different countries, or educational agents and providers in the case of Australia. Thus, I relied solely on government sources, because they serve as internal interpretations of Type 2 policy, as opposed to a university or a law firm, for example, interpreting and presenting the pertinent policy information.

The collection and subsequent analysis of these three categories of policy documents for each country was geared towards findings in relation to the first research question. In pursuit of gaining an understanding of national areas of emphasis as relates to ISM as well as the ways in which those emphases are products of the local cultural political economy, I provide a policy context that informs the locally-situated information obtained from the student interviews, to which I now turn.

<u>Student Interviews</u>

Data collection through interaction with international students studying in the case countries occurred through semi-structured interviews (SSI) and was designed to answer the second research question. The SSI is uniquely positioned to provide insights into the experiences of the interviewee: while analysis of national policies can provide information about the overarching requirements of national political and bureaucratic processes and policies, interviews through SSI methods can provide personal information for those areas in which "subjective knowledge is lacking" (McIntosh & Morse, 2015, p. 1).

The SSI facilitates the collection of comparable data from disparate interviews through a well-designed interview protocol, and it allows the interviewer to follow new emergent issues or themes that arise from the interviewees' responses (McIntosh & Morse, 2015; Qu & Dumay, 2011). This latter capability is possible through the use of probes that were predetermined or that arise in the course of the interview and which are utilized to prompt elaboration on topics and issues that come out in the primary interview questions (Qu & Dumay, 2011). The SSI, then, provides what McIntosh and Morse (2015) describe as the "dual qualities of replicability and flexibility" (p. 5) in interviews with different individuals over the course of the interview data collection phase of the research project.

Interview Question Development

The creation of the interview questions, geared towards answering the second research question, was guided by the conceptual framework outlined in the previous chapter. This framework functions as a theoretical foundation upon which the whole of the study is built,

orienting the study's approach to discerning both student experiences and the policy context in which those experiences occur.

The SSI protocol creation began with the development of prospective interview questions in four different areas. For the first two areas, the CPE-focused question development was divided between questions from the lenses of the technological and structural selectivities. The final two areas were home to prospective regime theory and institutionalism questions. The goal of this process was to create a list of all possibly useful questions, for subsequent paring down. Ultimately, a total of 47 prospective questions were developed through this process. From this, I narrowed the list of questions through refining, combining, and eliminating to arrive at a collection of questions that are fruitfully geared towards answering the second research question, guided by the conceptual framework of the study.

One important goal of this process of selecting questions through refinement and elimination was the production of an SSI protocol that balanced the data collection needs of the study with the value of an interview protocol that was not so long that it would become taxing for study participants (Jacobs & Furgerson, 2012). The resulting list contained a total of 14 final, primary questions for use in the SSI protocol. Some of the primary questions were accompanied by specific probing questions, while a bank of probing questions was also created so that I could select pertinent follow-up probes to learn more about any potentially fruitful ideas or issues that arose from participants' answers to primary questions. These questions were created with the analytical queries (AQs) in mind, as the AQs were designed to guide the analysis of the interview data, seeking to highlight specific notions and topics from the data (see below for

further discussion of the AQs). The AQs relate specifically to their home theories, that is, with AQs born from CPE, regime theory, and institutionalism.

The table in Appendix G outlines the connections between the specific questions used in the SSI protocol and the theory-based derivations of those questions. A copy of the complete SSI protocol with probing questions and with the script for the conduct of the interviews can be found in Appendix B; this selfsame document includes a step-by-step overview of the entirety of the interview process.

Internet-Mediated Research: Video Interviewing

In part due to the assumed geographic diversity of this interview data collection project (Salmons, 2015), I conducted all interviews utilizing synchronous online video conferencing software. The availability of new information and communications technologies (ICT) and novel approaches to 'Internet-mediated research' (IMR) opens new possibilities for valuable empirical inquiry that is not beset with some of the financial, environmental, time, and scheduling costs associated with standard face-to-face interviews (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014; Salmons, 2015). In addition to online video interviews, IMR may include activities such as text-based interviews (e.g., emailing questions and responses), interactions within virtual spaces (e.g., within a metaverse environment), or video observations (Salmons, 2015). Online interviewing provides a means to improve access to students around the world (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014) and to reduce the travel and time costs associated with travel to sites in the United States, Canada, and Australia (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). A further benefit of IMR is a decrease in the carbon

footprint[2] of the research project through the negation of air travel required for on-site research interviews (Cartwright, 2019; Crumley-Effinger et al., 2021).

With a relative paucity of resources focusing specifically on IMR as a method for collecting interview data, *Qualitative Online Interviews* (Salmons, 2015) was invaluable for the design of this study. This book provided a great deal of information pertaining to salient methodological and methods considerations for completing this sort of work. All interviews were offered to be conducted over Skype by Microsoft or Zoom by Zoom Video Communications based on participant preference. Both systems are free video conferencing software that work on personal computers, mobile phones, and other connected devices. Participants' presumed ease of access was anticipated to facilitate the interview process for students even if they have not previously used Skype or Zoom for video calling or other purposes. Due to the ubiquity of ICT infrastructures and systems within Australia, Canada, and the United States, as well as the pervasive use of mobile smart phones that can run software applications (e.g., Skype and Zoom), I anticipated that students within the specific population would have access to systems on which to use Skype and Zoom (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Salmons, 2015). Minimum required technology proficiency was presumed based on the importance of these systems for conducting educational pursuits within the three case countries.

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[2] Energy Consumption and Emissions Statement (ECES): My decision to utilize IMR was heavily influenced by a desire to reduce, as much as possible, the energy consumption and carbon production associated with this study (see Crumley-Effinger et al., 2021; Crumley-Effinger & Torres-Olave, 2021). The energy consumption associated with this study (which would not have occurred were it not for this study) has been identified to include: the use of my personal computer; participant use of devices for taking part in the interviews; climate control and lighting for my work space; and cloud storage. Travel to Canada, Australia, and various locations within the United States to conduct interviews was ruled out in favor of IMR due to the high emissions associated with academic air travel (Le Quéré et al., 2015; Higham & Font, 2020).

When in-person interviews are not feasible, audio-only methods, such a telephones or Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) systems, permit the collection of valuable qualitative intended data, while also permitting nuanced reflection of non-verbal speech clues such as "chronemics" (i.e., "the use of pacing and timing of speech…") and "paralinguistic" cues (i.e., "variations in volume, pitch, and quality of voice") (Salmons, 2015, p. 80). However, I have selected video interviews due to this medium's additional "kinesic" communication value (Salmons, 2015). According to Salmons (2015), IMR interviews conducted with video calling software facilitate this extra-aural "kinesic" communication, which "includes facial expressions, eye contact or gaze, body movements, and postures" (p. 80). The addition of visual data in the form of a video interface between researcher and participants facilitated the process of seeking to provide a comfortable and responsive interview environment. Though written in the context of in-person interviews, McIntosh and Morse (2015) explain that non-verbal cues from the interviewee may signal "discomfort or unease on the part of the respondent" in a way that would not be possible to discern with a voice-only interview method (p. 7). Through the video calling software, I had the ability to respond to what I saw in the interviewee's body language and adjust my lines of questioning as needed.

It should also be noted that these IMR interview methods of this study were developed and approved in late 2019 and early 2020 for the reasons listed above, that is, for ease of access to participants and for environmental reasons. The COVID-19 pandemic, however, made IMR research a near necessity. All interviews occurred while the COVID-19 pandemic was fully and fatally affecting most corners of the globe, precluding almost all international travel that could

have facilitated the conduct of research 'in the field.' See chapter nine for more on the pandemic as backdrop for the whole of the study.

Data Security and Confidentiality

According to Skype's support pages, all voice and video data transfers between Skype systems (i.e., Skype applications on mobile phones or computers) are encrypted to ensure the privacy of the content of those conversations (Skype, n.d.). Zoom's support pages similarly explain that Zoom's meetings are encrypted when conducted using audio and video capabilities through the company's desktop and mobile applications (Zoom, n.d.; Zoom, 2019). As needed within each system, settings were adjusted to ensure privacy for the duration of the interview (i.e., third parties were not be able to digitally join the video interview). Interview participants were encouraged to find a safe, private location for their interview, to prevent third parties from overhearing the interview conversation (Salmons, 2015). All interviews were conducted from my private home on my personal computer.

Interviews were recorded using the recording function on my personal computer, with recordings stored on a password protected hard drive that maintains no connection to shared networks. After the interviews were completed, all visual data was removed from the recording, resulting in audio-only files for transcription purposes. All audio files (from both sources) were stored on the same hard drive. As the sole researcher, I completed all transcriptions alone without the assistance of online or third-party software services, with transcription and audio data backed up on unconnected hard drives and USB drives. All information was kept confidential and was viewed only by the researcher; finally, pseudonyms were used throughout

the data analysis process, as well as within the final report of findings gleaned from student interviews.

Informed Consent

An ethical research study requires informed consent from all human subjects participating (Salmons, 2015). This requirement is in place to protect those who have volunteered their time and stories and to "ensure that potential study subjects clearly understand the benefits and risks associated with their participation in the study" (Salmons, 2015, p. 148). Informed consent processes also provide information to prospective participants about the purpose of the interview with relation to the study, confidentiality measures taken (see the previous subsection), and how data will be utilized, among other things (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Participants here had access to the consent form content through the study's website, which was shared with them during the process of finalizing logistics for participation in the study. At the beginning of the online video interview, the consent form was provided in the form of a digital link to all study participants and was located on the Qualtrics forms and survey platform (see Recruitment subsection below). After sharing the link, which I did concurrently with video interaction with the participant, I sought questions or points of clarification from the participant. Finally, to acknowledge the terms of the consent form, participants provided a digital signature and the date of the interview in the digital consent form. Submission of this confidential form, through the Qualtrics system, indicated consent to proceed with the interview. The language of the consent form (which was available to participants on the study website and in the Qualtrics form) is included in Appendix C.

Recruitment and Interviewing

I focused on recruiting current and former international students who are completing or completed their studies in one of the three case countries and invited them to participate in short (45-60 minutes) interviews seeking insights into their experiences in an effort to answer the second research question. My original plan was to interview anywhere from 7-10 students from each case country and to rely on the assistance of international student services (ISS) administrators (ISS Partners) at colleges and universities in the host countries. HEOs and ISS Partners were sought through introductory email communication that included a description of the project as well as an outline of the requested recruitment assistance. Upon approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of LUC, in late winter 2021 I began sending recruitment materials to the willing ISS Partners in the case countries. The recruitment assistance request was relatively minimal and consisted of sending 1-2 emails to their international student bodies and included the possible posting of my recruitment posters as they saw fit (see below for additional information on the recruitment email and poster).

The original plan for recruitment was for it to occur through three primary media, with the support of ISS Partners in ways that fit their local needs and contexts. First, I created a poster using Canva's graphic design software, a free online graphic design system (see Appendix I). With this poster, I strove to create an eye-catching call for participation that outlined the key information about the study as well as next steps for prospective participants to indicate their interest in being involved in the study. Second, I wrote a recruitment email containing the same information as the poster, but with additional narrative description of details of the study.[3]

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[3] Recruitment email messaging can be found in Appendix A.

Finally, I created a relatively simple website that included all pertinent information relating to this study from the poster and email, but also including details such as the study's IRB approval number, researcher information, and the content of the consent form. The design of this website generally reflected the poster's design to maintain a consistent look and feel when presenting this information.

Importantly, all three recruitment media described above referenced and linked to (or provided information for accessing) one another, in an effort to provide as much information as possible for students interested in participating. Interested students did not need to interact with more than one of these recruitment media, though they may have decided to, if they desired additional information.[4] All three recruitment materials were provided to ISS Partners for them to share with pertinent student populations at their HEO. The final component of this tripartite recruitment plan was the provision of a link (in the poster, the email, and on the website) to a form that provided prospective participants with the ability to indicate their interest in participating in the study by entering their contact information. This form was created in LUC's Qualtrics forms and survey system (LUC ITS, personal communication, February 20, 2020); the powerful Qualtrics system is designed for research purposes and is appropriate for studies with human subjects, based on LUC's IRB approval (LUC, n.d.b). This form allowed prospective participants to (1) indicate their interest in participating in the study, (2) confirm their fit with the sample criteria described in a previous subsection; and (3) provide basic contact information for further interaction between researcher and participant (i.e., interview logistics and data collection

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[4] Due to the limitations of the various media, the poster, email, and website contained different levels of information, with the former having the least amount of information and the latter having the most.

interview). Each successful interview concluded with a request that the participant invite their peers to participate to utilize snowball sampling to increase the pool of prospective participants (Aksakal et al., 2019; Patton, 2015). An overview of the recruitment process and steps can be found in Appendix F.

The recruitment plan outlined above yielded a significant number of prospective and actual participants from the United States (i.e., international students studying in the United States). However, this recruitment strategy was only moderately successful in Australia and Canada. Only one HEO in Australia agreed to support my recruitment, and to my knowledge, no HEOs in Canada distributed my recruitment materials. The following provides a detailed description of the actual recruitment process for the three host countries, in addition to what has already been described.

I relied primarily on the original recruitment plan as outlined above for recruitment in the United States. I reached out to a total of 17 HEOs through their international student services offices. At least[5] five of the ISS Partners sent out recruitment materials to their international student populations. As I continued to encounter issues with recruitment through ISS Partners in Australia and Canada, I tried new approaches to seeking participants. Therefore, in addition to writing to the international student services offices at universities in these two countries, I also (i) reached out to higher education network contacts at Canadian universities, (ii) reached out to Australian international student advocacy affiliation groups on Reddit and Facebook, and (iii) posted recruitment messaging on professional message boards. These three activities yielded

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[5] Some of the participation responses indicate to me that even if I did not hear back from ISS Partners, they still sent out my recruitment materials to their international students. This explains why it is not possible to provide a concrete number of ISS Partners / HEOs that assisted with recruitment.

very limited results. Ultimately, I was able to most successfully recruit participants for Australia and Canada through my personal and professional networks on Facebook and LinkedIn. I created a succinct version of the recruitment email message, including the link to my interest form, that I posted and asked contacts to share with their networks (see Appendix H). This ultimately helped me succeed in meeting my participation minima for Australia and Canada, while also yielding additional interest for the United States. Table 1 provides a breakdown of my recruitment and participation yields.

Table 1. Recruitment Outcomes

Host Country	Interest Forms	Interviews
Australia	16	8
Canada	18	11
USA	35	21
TOTAL	69	40

The significant differences in recruitment successes between the United States, on the one hand, and Australia and Canada, on the other hand, may simply come down to the differences in the sizes of my personal and professional networks in these three countries. Differences between interest form indications of participation interest on the one hand (middle column), and actual interviews completed on the other hand (right column), are due to attrition in which prospective participants either did not follow-up to schedule an interview or were not available for any of the available interview time slots.

Interviews were scheduled using Doodle (https://doodle.com/), polling software that let participants select from several dates and times pre-determined by myself. Importantly, Doodle

has the valuable feature of listing times in the local time zone based on IP address (Doodle, n.d.).

This was especially useful for time zone difference calculations for interviews with students who

were not in my own time zone. Interviews with students who studied or are studying in the

United States occurred from mid-February 2021 through mid-March 2021. Interviews with

students who studied or are studying in Canada and Australia occurred from early March to late

April. All interviews were completed by April 23, 2021.

Though all interviewees were given the option of conducting the interview on either

Zoom or Skype, all interviews were conducted through Zoom based on interviewee preference.

At the end of each interview, in addition to showing my gratitude for their participation and for

sharing their stories and experiences, each participant was asked if they would (i) please share

my recruitment materials with peers, (i) like to see a copy of the transcript of the interview, and

(iii) like to see a copy of the final dissertation once completed. Participants who answered in the

affirmative to the second question were sent a copy of the transcript in summer 2021.

Participants who answered in the affirmative to the third question will receive a copy of the final

dissertation once the dissertation committee has approved it and once it has gone through LUC's

dissertation finalization processes.

Data Analysis

The national policy documents and interview transcripts were analyzed using qualitative

content analysis (QCA) methods to pursue distinct themes and categories included in the data in

connection with the outlined research questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). QCA is defined by

Mayring (2000) as "an approach of empirical, methodological controlled analysis of texts within

their context of communication, following content analytical rules and step by step models,

without rash quantification" (p. 2). In this vein, QCA requires the researcher to function as the primary data analysis instrument as they engage with the collected data through interpretive analysis and the systematic application of codes based on data content (Schwandt, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Furthermore, a QCA in search of themes noted through coding can be utilized on multiple types of data, which in this case is valuable for analysis of both ISM policy and interview transcripts (Mayring, 2000).

Content analysis is a deliberate approach to the reading and investigation of documents that entails "comparing, contrasting, and categorizing" from the texts used in the study (Schwandt, 2015, p. 60); in this case, the texts are policy documents and interview transcripts. Through both closed and open coding, I immersed myself in the data as I examined both sources for important themes in the policies (Burnard, 1991), where themes and categories are guided and informed by the literature as well as the theoretical framework, an amalgam of CPE, institutionalism, and regime theory. For example, the modest literature focusing on the influence of ISM policy on international students has identified potential policy effects on students in academic, relationship, and professional realms; this study also seeks to examine local cultural, political, and economic perspectives, which in turn influences interpretations of local ISM policy by students. Insights from prior research served as starting points for the coding and categorization processes, however the novelty of this research agenda—both in terms of specific focus and theoretical underpinnings—emphasizes the importance of seeking new insights, requiring openness to and pursuit of new themes and categories through an emergent coding process.

Though the researcher functions as the data analysis instrument, qualitative analysis tools are available to facilitate and organize this process. The data analysis phase of this study used NVivo qualitative analysis software, which is made available at no cost by the sponsoring institution (LUC). The software's user interface expedites data analysis processes in part by bringing together all data in one place and allowing simple switching between individual files containing the data. Furthermore, the software assists with the organization of codes and themes identified in the data by the researcher (Castleberry, 2014). Through this process, interview transcripts and policy documents, with insights from the relevant literature on ISM, are analyzed in order to "allow new insights to emerge" from the data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1279).

Policy Coding and Analyses

The policy analyses were conducted to examine the three types of policy documents for each country in pursuit of answers to my first research question: What emphases are present in the ISM policies? In addition to the NVivo analysis software, the policy analyses were conducted guided by a policy coding and analysis protocol which systematizes the analysis process (Hard et al., 2018; Godward, 2008) through a series of analytical queries (AQ) to facilitate 'interrogation' of each policy. The policy coding and analysis protocol facilitated the theory-based analysis of the documents, utilizing those theories from which my conceptual framework is composed. For example, specific AQs, such as "What local environmental factors are noted as informing the policy?" and "What components of the policy requires actions to be taken by students?" functioned to examine the policy documents through the lens of, respectively, the cultural political economy 'structural' and 'technological' selectivities, as introduced in the previous chapter. The full policy coding and analysis protocol can be found in Appendix D.

Each individual policy analysis—guided by the policy coding and analysis protocol—was conducted as follows (see Table 2 for overview of the policy analysis process): The first read-through of the policy was focused on the CPE AQs, examining the document in relation to the queries and categorizing them under the appropriate CPE AQ (e.g., CPE-1, CPE-2, etc.). The second and third read-throughs of the same policy were then focused on the institutionalist and regime theory AQs, respectively. All AQs are presented in Table 3, while a more detailed look at both the AQs and the complete policy coding and analysis protocol can be found in Appendix D. Throughout this process, the goal for this initial analysis was to identify and categorize passages within the policy document according to the AQs to which they were related or which they "answered."[6] Due to the differences in the ways the policy documents were organized, some variation in the order of these analytical read-throughs were necessary. For example, Canada MOJ (2020a), Canada MOJ (2020b), Australian Government (2019a), and Australian Government (2019b) had pertinent ISM policy passages distributed throughout documents consisting of many hundreds of pages. As a result, instead of doing analysis of each and every section of these documents in the ways described above, an NVivo Text Search query was conducted to identify key terms (such as 'student' and 'study'). Then, each instance of those terms identified in the search was reviewed to see if it was pertinent to the analytical project and, if it was deemed pertinent, I proceeded with coding to sequentially go through each AQ for that specific term instance, before moving on to the next term instance as identified by the text search query.

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[6] For example, the CPE-1 AQ asks "In what ways are the key national emphases evident, highlighted, or attended to in this policy?" When a passage in a policy document was determined to highlight or contain within it an answer or information related to this AQ, it would be coded to CPE-1.

Table 2. Policy Analysis Overview

Phase	Description	Outcome
Code to National Emphases (CPE-1 only)	Closed coding: Attribution of passages and language in policy documents to the two selected ISM emphases for each case country.	A collection of passages showing how the identified emphases are manifest in the selected policies.
Code to AQs (CPE-2 through RT-3)	Guided coding: Guided by the policy coding and analysis protocol, any passages identified as important in relation to any of the AQs are coded to the appropriate AQs (where each AQ is a node in NVivo).	A compiled listing of all relevant passages from all policies grouped into the AQs.
Thematic breakdown	Emergent / open coding: Identification of themes within passages coded to each AQ. An iterative process as new themes emerge and others are further subdivided or merged.	Collections of policy passages grouped by theme; if needed, divisible by various variables, such as policy type, national origin, etc.

It should be noted that an individual passage or its component parts might be categorized to multiple AQs as needed. Each successive analytical read-through focused on a new set of AQs, however reviewing the document multiple times afforded the additional benefit of considering the texts in a new light; that is, through the lens of subsequent theoretically-based AQs. On many occasions this was useful for reconsidering how any given passage could be seen from a different angle, and thus resulted in additional categorizations for other AQs even though a different AQ was the focus of that read-through.[7] In short, this was an iterative analytical process that included the revisiting of all policy passages a minimum of three times, providing

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[7] For example, though finished with coding for the CPE AQs, as I re-read a policy the AQs associated with institutionalism might prompt a reconsideration of any given passage, which might then prompt further categorization not only to the institutionalist AQ codes, but also to CPE codes.

the opportunity to reconsider and refine prior coding decisions. The use of the AQs represented

the initial steps in the theory-based analysis of the policy documents from the three case

countries.

Table 3. Analytical Queries from the Policy Coding and Analysis Protocol

NVivo Node Code[8]	Analytical Query (AQ)
CPE-1	In what ways are the key national emphases evident, highlighted, or attended to in this policy?
CPE-2	Is there evidence or hints that other emphases are informing the policy?
CPE-3	What local environmental factors appear to influence or inform the policy? How?
CPE-4	What global environmental factors appear to influence or inform the policy? How?
CPE-5	What components of the policy requires actions to be taken by students?
CPE-6	What components of the policy requires actions to be taken by those connected to students?
CPE-7	What controls are in place that directly influence students?
CPE-8	How do any controls or influences or actionable requirements function or occur?
INST-1	What, if any, references to local institutions are evident within the policy?
INST-2	What, if any, references to global institutions are evident within the policy?
INST-3	What, if any, local or global institutions are implicitly informing the policy?
RT-1	What, if any, references are there to non-local ISM policies?
RT-2	What, if any, references are there to national sovereign control of ISM / immigration policy?
RT-3	What, if any, relationships exist between this document and others from the same country?

[8] Theoretical derivations for the node codes are as follows: CPE derives from Cultural Political Economy; INST derives from Institutionalism; and RT derives from Regime Theory.

Upon completion of the initial categorization of pertinent passages from the policy, I then focused on thematic breakdowns of these overarching codes. To organize the process, I first ran a Matrix Coding Query in NVivo to identify which AQs had passages associated with them during the coding process. This was necessary due to the large number of items that might be coded to any individual AQ, but also because some policy documents did not have any passages attributed to some AQs. Running this query identified which AQs had passages from the current policy that needed to be subdivided into new or previously identified themes. To illustrate this, Table 4 shows the number of passages from the Aliens and Nationality Act (2020) which have been attributed to each AQ. Here, 42 passages from the document were attributed to CPE-1, 35 to CPE-2, 7 to CPE-3, and so on. This facilitated the process of thematic subdivision within each AQ, as described below.

Table 4. Matrix Coding Query: Prevalence Example (Policy)

AQ	Passages Attributed
CPE-1	42
CPE-2	35
CPE-3	7
CPE-4	2
CPE-5	26
CPE-6	43
CPE-7	68
CPE-8	24
INST-1	79
INST-2	12

INST-3	1
RT-1	0
RT-2	1
RT-3	0

Aliens and Nationality Act (2020)

One AQ code at a time, I reviewed all passages coded to that AQ for that specific policy in search of themes within the variety of ideas, perspectives, and discourses contained within them. At times this process was relatively simple, while at other times it required significant revision, division, and reconsideration of the theme (NVivo node) titles and where individual passages fit within them. For example, a CPE-1 reading of the Aliens and Nationality Act (2020) section on nonimmigrant students includes both explicit and implicit passages regarding labor market protections (one of the identified emphases of US ISM policy, see chapter five). Through multiple readings, and informed by the literature, it was my task to identify these explicit and implicit statements in order to effectively code them to the appropriate theme within the CPE-1 AQ.

The result of the coding and analysis activities introduced above was a collection of themes and coded passages—guided by the conceptual framework—that highlight contours of ISM policy within these host countries. The CPE-1 analysis was undertaken to identify manifestations of a collection of selected emphases and the CPE-2 analysis was done to identify additional emphases, both of which might inform the local ISM policy in the host countries. These emphases, presented in chapter five, help provide answers to the first research question. The analysis required striking a balance between the identification of themes that were small enough in size to be thoroughly considered and presented, but large enough that they captured

ideas and information that could inform continued study of ISM policy through the presented conceptual framework.

As an exploratory study to better understand the effects of ISM policy on the student experience, the CPE-3 through RT-3 analysis was undertaken to provide valuable context for understanding the students' experiences (see chapters six, seven, and eight) as tied to the ISM policy of their host nation. As explained further in chapter five, this was done to inform my understanding of the policy environment within which these students were conducting their studies. These CPE-3 through RT-3 analyses also provide a foundation for future studies that can further explore these areas.

Interview Transcript Coding and Analyses

The second research question focuses on the student experience: How do ISM policies affect international students? Analysis of transcripts with study participants sought to provide answers to this question and was primarily exploratory as I learned from the experiences of the study participants. Guided by the interview coding and analysis protocol (Appendix E), engagement with the data from the participant interviews embraced the opportunity to uncover emergent themes and the experiences of students, but also included exploration of specified themes noted within the literature. These specified themes looked for academic, relationship, and employment topics related to the ISM policy. An overview of the interview analysis process can be found in Table 5.

Table 5. Interview Analysis Overview

Phase	Description	Outcome
Code to themes from literature	Closed coding: Attribution of passages and language in interview transcripts to the themes of (i) academic, (ii) relationships, (iii) employment.	A collection of passages connected to these three themes.
Code to AQs	Guided Coding: Guided by the interview coding and analysis protocol, any passages identified as important in relation to any of the AQs are coded to the appropriate AQs (where each AQ is a node in NVivo).	A compiled listing of all relevant passages from all interviews grouped into the AQs.
Thematic breakdown	Emergent / open coding: Identification of themes within passages coded to each AQ. An iterative process as new themes emerge and others are further subdivided or merged.	Collections of interview passages grouped by theme; if needed, divisible by various variables, such as host nation, field of study, etc.

Similar to the policy analyses, the interview data analysis was guided by a coding and analysis protocol to systematize the analysis process utilizing a series of AQs. Again, the AQs were used to facilitate theory-based analysis, setting the groundwork for general qualitative (QCA), CPE, institutionalist, and regime theory analyses. AQ examples, such as "What, if any, references to local institutions are evident in the participant's experiences?" and "What, if any, references are there to ISM policies from other host nations?" facilitate examination of the interview data through, respectively, institutionalist and regime theory lenses. In addition to the AQs and themes derived from the literature (see Table 5 above), emergent themes were pursued through direct, open exploration of the student responses to the interview questions, without deliberate emphasis on any particular topic or theoretical grounds in order to remain open to experiences of the student without confinement to theoretical silos or prior research.

As with the policy coding process, this was an iterative analytical process that included the revisiting of all interview passages a minimum of four times (for each set of AQs) providing the opportunity to reconsider and refine prior coding decisions. Each individual interview analysis—guided by the interview coding and analysis protocol—was conducted as follows: The first read-through of the interview was focused on the qualitative content analysis (QCA) AQs, examining the transcript in relation to the queries and categorizing them under the appropriate QCA AQ (e.g., QCA-1, QCA-2, etc.). The second, third, and fourth read-throughs of the same interview were then focused on the CPE, institutionalist, and regime theory AQs, respectively (See Table 6 for a list of all AQs). Throughout this process, the goal for this step in the process was to identify and categorize passages within the transcripts according to the AQs to which they

were related or which they "answered."[9] A copy of the interview protocol, and the complete

interview coding and analysis protocol can be found in Appendices B and E, respectively.

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[9] For example, the CPE-4 AQ asks "How, if at all, does the participant connect their experience to the local / national political environment?" When a passage in the interview was determined to highlight or contain within it an answer or information related to this AQ, it would be coded to CPE-4.

Table 6. Analytical Queries from the Interview Coding and Analysis Protocol

NVivo Node Code[10]	Analytical Query (AQ)
QCA-1	What (a) academic, (b) relationship, and/or (c) employment topics arise from the participants' experiences?
QCA-2	What other topics arise from the participant's experiences?
QCA-3	Are the interviewee's responses regarding ISM policy in the host country generally positive, neutral, negative?[11]
QCA-4	Used to capture interesting or insightful comments that are not connected to ISM policy.[12]
CPE-1	What actions must be taken by students?
CPE-2	What controls are in place that directly influence students?
CPE-3	How, if at all, does the participant connect their experience to the local / national cultural environment?
CPE-4	How, if at all, does the participant connect their experience to the local / national political environment?
CPE-5	How, if at all, does the participant connect their experience to the local / national economic environment?
CPE-6	What global (or home country) environmental factors are described or noted in the participant's experiences?
RT-1	What, if any, references are there to ISM policies from other host nations?
RT-2	What, if any, references are there to the host nation's prerogative to delineate their own ISM policy?

[10] Node codes are named after their theoretical derivations: CPE derives from Cultural Political Economy; INST derives from Institutionalism; and RT derives from Regime Theory; the qualitative content analysis (QCA) AQs were more generalized, qualitative queries.

[11] This was undertaken to facilitate a future combination of manual and NVivo auto-coded sentiment analysis. Such an analysis was not used in the present study; see chapter nine for more about this.

[12] It should be noted that this code was for the collection of data that may be interesting or valuable in general, but not specifically relevant to this study. These could be interesting topics that arose in the participants' statements, but that are not specific to ISM policy. For example, Ziqi's (AUS 3) thoughts and concerns the cultural and educational differences between the Chinese university system and their HEO in Australia.

INST-1	What, if any, references to local institutions are evident in the participant's experiences?
INST-2	What, if any, references to global institutions are evident in the participant's experiences?

Any individual passage or its component parts might be categorized to multiple AQs as needed. Each successive analytical read-through focused on a new set of AQs, however, like the policy analysis, reviewing the interview transcripts multiple times afforded the additional benefit of considering the text in a new light, that is, through the lens of the different AQs. On many occasions this was useful for reconsidering how any given passage could be seen from a different angle, and thus resulted in additional categorizations for other AQs even though a specific AQ was the focus of that read-through.[13] In short, this was an iterative analytical process that included the revisiting of all interview transcript passages for a given participant a minimum of four times, providing the opportunity to reconsider and refine prior coding decisions. The use of the final three AQs (CPE, INST, and RT) represented the theory-based analysis of the interview transcript for any given participant.

Unlike with the policy analyses, for which I conducted thematic breakdowns for each individual policy separately before moving on to the next policy document, the thematic breakdowns for the interviews were done after all interview transcripts had been coded to the AQs from the protocol. The thematic breakdowns of passages coded to the different AQs occurred in two distinct ways. First, all passages coded to the QCA-1[14] AQ relied on three themes from the literature, meaning that the initial thematic breakdown would be a process of closed coding. That is, for the items coded to QCA-1, I examined all passages to identify those that related to academic, personal, or employment topics in the students' experiences. Second, subsequent coding for QCA AQs was open (emergent) coding guided by the AQs. That is, the

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[13] For example, though finished with coding for the QCA AQs, as I re-read an interview the CPE-associated AQs might prompt a reconsideration of any given passage, which might then prompt further categorization not only to the CPE AQ codes, but also to QCA codes.
[14] "What (i) academic, (ii) relationship, and/or (iii) employment topics arise from the participants' experiences?"

next step was to examine all items coded to QCA-1: Academic, conducting open coding to identify further thematic breakdowns within this 'academic' code. This was done, self-evidently, to identify and thematically group the many different experiences associated with the students' academic experiences as they relate to the ISM policy. That completed, I continued the open coding for themes within QCA-1: Relationship, then QCA-1: Employment, then QCA-2, then QCA-3 and so on, through the remaining AQs.

To present the overarching findings (chapter five), passages coded to the QCA AQs were not grouped by interview participant host nation. This is done to present the overall findings from all student participants, highlighting important policy impacts on students regardless of their host nation context. As is noted in subsequent chapters, all excerpts from the interview transcripts note the student's host country, and chapter nine includes summative commentaries on the three host countries. To do this, a medley of Matrix Coding Queries in NVivo was utilized, which facilitated an organized division of coded passages by predefined attributes (such as host country) within NVivo.

An illustrative example of this likely helpful here, though it is similar to the AQ prevalence example presented in Table 4 in the previous section. The process of presenting the CPE findings was facilitated by a new Matrix Coding Query, which permitted the division of responses across three NVivo nodes (cultural, political, economic) by student case country. Query row parameters were set to identify one country at a time, based on interview transcript attributes,[15] with the attribute search defined as '[Host Country Attribute] > equals value > [Host Country]. This was then repeated for each of the remaining host countries, resulting in one row

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[15] Prior to coding, all interview transcripts were populated with attributes corresponding to details of the interviewee. Attributes included host country, reported gender, home nation, major, and more.

for each host country. Column parameters were set to include all passages coded to the CPE-3 Cultural, CPE-4 Political, or CPE-5 Economic nodes, resulting in a column for each of these three areas. The result of running this query is a simple table showing all passages for each host country that have been coded to one of these three nodes. Table 7 provides an example of how this resulting table appears for Australia.

Table 7. Matrix Coding Query: Prevalence Example (CPE)

	CPE-3 Cultural	CPE-4 Political	CPE-5 Economic
Interview: Host Country = AUS	24	32	53
Interview: Host Country = CAN	…	…	…
Interview: Host Country = USA	…	…	…

Through this Matrix Coding Query, NVivo provides a simple way of auto-categorizing responses in these three areas by the host country of the student participant. Because this is a qualitative study not focusing on the overall numbers of passages, the values themselves in this table are not used in the findings or analysis. By selecting any one of these numbers in NVivo, one can open a new listing of passages. That is, by selecting the number 24 from the above table, the software system provided me with a listing of all 24 passages, from students whose host nation was Australia, that I had previously coded to the 'CPE-3 Cultural' node. By repeating this process for each node and host nation, this process facilitated the presentation of findings on students' perspectives of the CPE rationales for the ISM policies of their host nations. The above is an example of employing the Matrix Coding Query to passages coded to the CPE AQs, but such a query could be run for any of the AQs.

The result of the coding and analysis activities introduced above was a collection of themes, guided by the conceptual framework, that explores the many and varied experiences these international students had with the ISM policy in their host country. The information gleaned through the interviews and subsequent analyses are contextualized through the findings presented in chapter five, bringing policy and interview analyses together in chapters five, six, and seven to draw connections between student experience and the ISM policy that forms the institutionalized immigration context of the host country.

Outline of Study Design

The above description of the design of the study is condensed in Table 8. This shows the various activities involved in the collection and analysis of the study's data, including the phases of the project, details on each phase, outcomes of each phase, and the research questions with which each project phase is connected.

Table 8. Qualitative Study Design Outline

Activity (Phase)	Details	Outcome	Time Frame	RQ
Case country selection (Preparatory)	Selection criteria ● Number of international students hosted ● Degree program language (English) ● National language (English) ● Additional considerations (e.g., Brexit)	Case countries ● Australia ● Canada ● United States	Fall 2019 - Spring 2020	RQ1, RQ2
Policy document collection (Data Collection)	National ISM policy categories ● Planning and strategy ● Legal and regulatory ● Informational / explanatory	A discrete collection of policy documents (of three different types) from the case countries	Summer 2020	RQ1
Policy analysis (Data Analysis)	● Qualitative Content Analysis ● NVivo software ● Theoretical Framework: CPE, institutionalism, regime theory	A collection of emphases, mechanisms, processes, etc., found within the ISM policies in the case countries	Summer 2020 - Winter 2021	RQ1
Student sample selection (Preparatory)	Selection criteria ● Enrollment type (degree program) ● Completion timeframe (2010 - January 2020) ● Citizenship (not citizen of host nation) ● Immigration category (student-specific immigration documents)	Delimitation of recruitment / participation criteria	Fall 2019 - Spring 2020	RQ2
Recruitment (Preparatory)	● 7-10 students per host country ● Facilitated by ISS Partners ● Poster, email, webpage ● Qualtrics sign-up form	Selection of 7-10 international students from each host country	Winter 2021 - Spring 2021	RQ2
Student interviews	● Informed consent	Transcripts of 40 interviews with study	Winter 2021 -	RQ2

		participants	Spring 2021	
(Data Collection)	● Semi-structured interview ● Questions with theoretical associations ● Video interviews			
Interview Analysis (Data Analysis)	● Transcription ● Qualitative Content Analysis ● NVivo software ● Theoretical Framework: CPE, institutionalism, regime theory	A collection of data on the impacts of ISM policy on the international student experience.	Spring 2021 - Fall 2021	RQ2
Findings (Synthesis of Analysis)	● Use data and data analysis results / findings ● Literature as guide	Contextualized information about how local ISM policy affects international students in their host country.	Fall 2021 - Winter 2022	RQ1, RQ2

Validity

Qualitative social scientific research approaches to issues of validity face the challenge of understanding the study's reliability within the context of the specific areas upon which the study focuses. Whereas the validity of a quantitative study might rest on ideas of objectivity or that "the findings are in fact… true and certain" (Schwandt, 2015, p. 319), qualitative research's relationship to questions of validity may be less definite. Schwandt (2015) explains that questions of study validity come down to perspectives on the possibilities of objective truths; as is explained in the previous section on this study's epistemological approach, my social constructionist perspective entails a "rejection of the notion of objective Truth" (Egbert & Sanden, 2014, p. 21) and is accompanied by the understanding that knowledge is created or 'constructed' by individuals (Andrews, 2012).

Despite this perspective on validity and its constructionist underpinnings, it is important to consider the ways in which this study evidences viable levels of internal validity and reliability. As Creswell and Miller (2000) explain, qualitative researchers must "demonstrate that their studies are credible" (p. 124). This requires explanations of the rigor, replicability, and trustworthiness of the study and furthermore requires attention to illustrating to the reader that the findings are logical products of or conclusions from the available data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Relating information as to the reliability in the present study is done in four primary ways: (i) through detailed description of the study's design ("transparency of methods" [Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 240), (ii) "thick, rich description" (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 128; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), (iii) consideration of positionality (see below), and (iv) identification of possible limitations of the study (see chapter nine).

The previous subsections of this chapter provide detailed description of the methodological approaches and specific methods used to provide the reader with an understanding of the step-by-step ways in which this study was conducted. Any necessary updates to the methods employed, for example in the coding process during data analysis, have been presented to ensure that deviations from planned practices are shared. The idea of "rich, thick description" often appears in studies of qualitative research methods and highlights the value of supporting findings through presentation of the contextual or specific details from the data sources (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In the case of this study, this includes the prodigious use of direct quotes from policy documents and interview transcripts to show the data on which findings were based.

Examination of one's 'position' or 'positionality' as it relates to the topic of the study and study participants occurs through reflexivity practices (Salmons, 2015). This is outlined in the following subsection. The final primary means of providing internal validity or reliability information in this study is the use of a statement on limitations, which is presented in chapter nine.

Researcher Positionality

This project entails the collection of personal data from students from diverse range of countries, all of whom are studying outside of their home country in either Australia, Canada, or the United States. Engaging with these students requires sensitivity as I take on the role of researcher, including acknowledgement and deliberate consideration regarding the ways in which my subjectivities and prior experiences relate to the topic and the experiences of the participants (St. Louis & Barton, 2002). In general, this acknowledges that my previous

experiences and scholarly endeavors have shaped my understanding of the study's focus and my assumptions or informal hypotheses of what the study's findings may show (Merriam et al., 2001).

By way of reflexivity exercises, as a researcher I must examine my positionality and how that may affect my interpretations of the collected data as well as the validity of the study and its findings. Undertaking a qualitative study such as this may exacerbate the need for these reflexivity practices, since the collection and analysis of data rests squarely on my shoulders, the sole researcher (Bourke, 2014).

In January 2012 I began working as an international student adviser at a small college and through this role was tasked with supporting students from more than 50 countries with navigation of the immigration rights and responsibilities attending their statuses as international students in the United States. It was through this role that I became familiar with some of the ways in which international students' experiences can be bounded by the regulatory framework of their specific student visas. My interest in better understanding the influences of ISM policy on the lives of students such as these was, in many ways, the genesis of my pursuit of an advanced degree in international education. In the intervening years I have returned to immigration advising for international students in the United States.

From these roles, I am aware that my experiences as an immigration advisor influence my perspectives as I conduct interviews with students. Furthermore, these professional roles assisting students studying in the United States may affect my reading and analysis of the collected data. As a current immigration advisor, I believe that my familiarity with the systems in the United States can enhance my understanding of some areas of the student experience. While

my experiences could serve to enhance my analysis of students studying in the United States, I must be wary of this as potentially intrusive in my analysis of students studying in Australia or Canada, for example, if I were to make assumptions about the way things may be in the latter countries based on my familiarity with the former. Related is an acknowledgement of my own location within the cultural political economy of the United States. As such, my background and upbringing have been shaped and informed by the particularities of my class-, race-, education-, and culture-based experiences as they relate to things such as capitalism, materialism, neoliberal educational logics, mobility, relationships to authority, and social norms relating to individualist-collectivist and power distance continua, among other things. Consideration of the ways that things such as these affect my perspective was important as I developed the interview protocol, interacted with students in interviews, and analyzed the policy and student interview data.

Three further considerations relating to my positionality warrant consideration here. First, I am a US citizen who, through my work as an international student adviser, has also been fully involved in practices that include interpretation and management of, and adherence to, immigration regulations for international students. As such, it is possible that students, especially those studying in the United States, will be wary of making criticisms of their time in the United States or of US immigration and international student policies. Second, as a white, cis, male, citizen of the United States I belong to three identity groups that hold many and significant intersecting privileges and forms of power. The students with whom I am interacting through these interviews will, at the very least, by definition not have the privileges associated with US citizenship, and it is also likely that some of the participants will also not be white, cis, or male. Acknowledging these forms of privilege underscores the importance of being wary of potentially

obstructive power dynamics in the interview setting. Attending to these factors as potentially problematic for my study participants, it is imperative that I explicitly highlight and center my interview interactions with these students in relation to my care for their situation and their stories.

Third, though I have had the opportunity to participate in short-term, credit mobility learning experiences abroad, I have never been a degree-seeking international student. This positions me, in relation to international students, as an outsider. I hope to prevent undue effects of these positionality concerns through my communication with students (e.g., in recruitment materials and in interviews) to show my care for their situation and my genuine interest in hearing about their experiences, whatever they may be, and in my efforts to utilize this study to shed light on their lived experiences as international students. These considerations require careful negotiation of the interview process and will furthermore rely on intercultural and interpersonal skills that I have developed over a decade of working with undergraduate and graduate international students, and as a scholar in the international education field. While conducting interviews, review of interview recordings and transcripts helped me identify areas of improvement in these areas.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

Introduction

This study is concerned with the effects of international student mobility and migration policies on international students studying in Australia, Canada, and the United States. Concomitant with this area of inquiry is an investigation of policy backgrounds and emphases for the same case countries, which provides valuable context for the policy environment to better understand the effects of policy on students. Guiding the study are two research questions, which ask:

1. RQ1: What emphases are present in the ISM policies?

2. RQ2: How do ISM policies affect international students?

Where the first research question provides valuable context for understanding the policy environment and how the local policy context affects the international student experience, the second research question lies at the heart of this study, that is, understanding the student experience, and is the primary purpose of undertaking this research.

In pursuit of answers to these questions, data collection occurred through gathering a range of policy documents pertaining to international student visa and study permits, and internet-mediated research (Zoom video calls) to conduct interviews with 40 current and former international students from the case countries. With this data in hand, qualitative content analysis was undertaken through the employ of coding and analysis protocols to identify themes and emphases within the interview and policy data. This chapter proceeds with an introduction to

findings from the policy and interview analyses, setting the scene for more in-depth discussion of RQ2 study findings, which are presented in chapters six, seven, and eight.

The first research question was answered through analysis of ISM policy documents for the three host countries, while the second research question was answered through analysis of interviews with international students who were studying or had studied in the three case countries. The policy findings, described below, show that a collection of important emphases are present in the policy documents, which provides valuable context for understanding the experience of international students beholden to the regulations and designs of ISM policies. Multiple host countries share some of these emphases, while others are evident in one country alone. The interview findings, introduced below and expanded upon in the subsequent chapters, show that ISM policies impact international students in diverse ways, including leveraging academic, employment/professional, and relationship effects; this is in addition to a collection of other, supplemental personal impacts. Additional impacts are discussed in the next section.

Policy Findings

A core goal of this study, in order to provide valuable context for engagement with the student experience, is to understand more about how ISM policies affect international students. This goal is supported by an analysis of the ISM policies of individual national governments, including how those policies attend to specific ISM-related emphases. This analysis, as introduced here and further explored in subsequent chapters, focuses on this first research question, but goes beyond it, leaning on the analytic capacity of the theoretical framework to create an in-depth contextual picture of the ISM policy environment in which international students are situated.

This section focuses on the ISM policy context undergirding the international student experience in the case countries. The core of the RQ1 analysis focused on two analytical queries (AQs) from the coding and analysis process: CPE-1 and CPE-2 (see Appendix D). The remaining AQs were used to better understand the context and environment in order to provide depth for the CPE-1 and CPE-2 analysis, as well as to broaden opportunities for building connections between the analyses and findings of the ISM policies and student interviews (see chapter four). As such, an explicit review of the CPE-3 through RT-3 AQs is not included in this study. In addition to providing valuable context for understanding the ISM policy environment for the CPE-1 and CPE-2 policy analyses as well as the students' policy context, application of the CPE-3 through RT-3 AQs provides a foundation for future research on the overall policy environments in these three countries (see chapter nine).

It is, unfortunately, not feasible to conduct in-depth analyses of all policies, updates, and regulations that pertain to ISM in each of the three case countries, as these will number in the hundreds or potentially thousands for each country. As such, I have selected important primary policy documents, or what I term "national legal and regulatory" documents (Type 2), for each country, as well as a limited number of additional documents that provide valuable information, context, and insight into the policy situation for international students in each country (Types 1 and 3; see Table 9). These Type 1 ISM policy documents, which are listed in Table 10 along with Types 2 and 3, form the foundation of the ISM policy approach for each nation and are those that are updated, or made actionable, or clarified and elucidated by subsequent policy documents. They are, for example, the regulations and acts that can be understood as forming the core of the policy approach to ISM in each case country. Noting this, additional components of

the overall ISM policy environment may, in some cases, come out through the student interviews.

Table 9. Typology of Policy Documents

Type Number	Description	Code
Type 1	National planning and strategy documents	T1
Type 2	National legal and regulatory documents	T2
Type 3	National information documents explaining regulations	T3

That is, the student participants may identify, for example, empowering or limiting policy that affects them that were not highlighted or evident within the policy documents described here (e.g., political participation, introduced below). Ultimately, the purpose of this policy analysis is to provide a contextual basis for understanding the ISM policy environment of each case country, to enhance understanding of the lived experiences of the students as exemplified by the findings from the student interviews. From the student interviews, it might be possible to (i) identify policy activities, requirements, et cetera, that are impacting students but that are not evident in the policy documents themselves, or (ii) see connections with items identified in the policy documents that, although not some of the national emphases/exigencies I focused on, are still present in those documents.

Table 10. ISM Policy Documents Analyzed

Country	Source	Title	Policy Type
AUS	Australian Government (2016)	National strategy for international education 2025	1
AUS	Australian Government (2019a)	Migration Act 1958 [part 1][1]	2
AUS	Australian Government (2019b)	Migration Act 1958 [part 2][1]	2
AUS	Australian Government (2021b)	Migration regulations 1994 [part 2][2]	2
AUS	Australian Government (2021c)	Migration regulations 1994 [part 3][2]	2
AUS	DET (2017)	International education: Ensuring quality and protecting students	3
AUS	ESOS (2018)	The Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000	2
AUS	National Code 2018 (2018a)	Standard 8: Overseas student visa requirements	3
AUS	National Code 2018 (2018b)	Strengthening Australia's protections for international students	3
AUS	SIA (2020a)	Visa compliance	3
AUS	SIA (2020b)	Work while you study	3
AUS	SIA (2020c)	Your work rights explained	3
AUS	SIA (2020d)	Legal rights and protections	3
AUS	SIA (2020e)	Entry requirements	3
AUS	SIA (2020f)	Visa information	3
CAN	Canada MOJ (2020a)	Immigration and refugee protection act	2

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[1] Australian Government. (2019a) and (2019b) are parts 1 and 2, respectively, of the same document.
[2] Australian Government. (2021b) and (2021c) are parts 2 and 3, respectively, of the same document.

CAN	Canada MOJ (2020b)	Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations	2
CAN	Global Affairs Canada (2014)	Canada's Canada's international education strategy: Harnessing our knowledge advantage to drive innovation and prosperity	1
CAN	Global Affairs Canada (2019)	Building on success: International education strategy 2019-2024	1
CAN	Government of Canada (2014)	Archived - Notice - New regulations for international students finalized	3
CAN	Government of Canada (2019a)	Work on campus	3
CAN	Government of Canada (2019b)	Work as a co-op student or intern	3
CAN	Government of Canada (2019c)	Stay in Canada after graduation	3
CAN	Government of Canada (2019d)	Your conditions as a study permit holder in Canada	3
CAN	Government of Canada (2020b)	Study permit: Who can apply	3
CAN	Government of Canada (2020c)	Study permit: About the process	3
CAN	Government of Canada (2020d)	Extend your study permit: About the process	3
CAN	Government of Canada (2020e)	Work off campus as an international student	3
USA	Aliens and Nationality, 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(f) (2020)	Aliens and Nationality, 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(f) (2020).	2
USA	SITS (n.d.a)	Maintaining status	3
USA	SITS (n.d.b)	Full course of study	3
USA	SITS (n.d.c)	Full course of study	3
USA	SITS (n.d.d)	Transferring to another school	3
USA	SITS (n.d.e)	Maintain F and M status in emergency events	3

USA	SITS (n.d.f)	Working in the United States	3
USA	SITS (n.d.g)	Working in the United States	3
USA	SITS (n.d.h)	Obtaining a social security number	3
USA	SITS (n.d.i)	Training opportunities in the United States	3
USA	SITS (n.d.j)	Understanding E-verify	3
USA	USDOE (2012)	Succeeding globally through international education and engagement	1
USA	USDOE (2018)	Succeeding globally through international education and engagement	1

It is no small task to distill wide-ranging national ISM policies that may span decades and incorporate hundreds of changes (both large and small) into a manageable number of emphases or exigencies for the purpose of guiding a study such as this. In an effort to isolate a selection of emphases across the three case countries, I have turned to the literature. This process of distillation, selection, and exclusion is, to be sure, a complexity reduction mechanism in and of itself (Jessop & Oosterlynck, 2006). However, it is one that will (i) provide a solid contextual foundation for understanding the lived experiences of international students studying in the selected host nations; (ii) present a starting point for further study of such ISM policy emphases, and (iii) contribute to the exploration of the utility of CPE analysis of policy documents. The selection of the following emphases should not be viewed as an argument that these are the most important or impactful areas of focus for each country and their respective policy, however the literature has described them as salient as it pertains to ISM policy in the case countries. I focus on them here as just two pertinent policy emphases for each country for the purpose of better understanding the policy environment.

Summarized in Table 11, the emphases chosen from the literature are as follows. For Australia, the two selected were (i) the subsidization of government funding for higher education through the enrollment of larger numbers of international students paying higher fees to attend than their domestic counterparts (Adams et al., 2012; Forbes-Mewett & Nyland, 2008; Martin, 2017; Nyland et al., 2013), and (ii) pursuit of labor market augmentation through ISM policies that facilitate post-graduation student-switching (Banks & Bhandari, 2012; Balakrishnan, 2021; Chaloff & Lemaitre 2009; Grimm, 2019; Hawthorne, 2010; Hawthorne, 2012; Robertson, 2013; Ziguras & Law, 2006).

The selected Canadian ISM policy emphases were (i) labor market augmentation to meet industry demand for a highly-skilled workforce (Arthur & Flynn, 2011; Banks & Bhandari, 2012; Chaloff & Lemaitre 2009; Crumley-Effinger, 2021; Hawthorne, 2012; Lu et al., 2009; Skuterud & Chen, 2018), and (ii) improving competitiveness against other big-draw nations for international student enrollments (Chakma et al., 2012; Crumley-Effinger, 2021; Sá & Sabzalieva, 2018; Suter & Jandl, 2008).

Finally, the US. American emphases included in this analysis were (i) labor market protection to ensure that employment opportunities for international students are filtered through regulatory limitations (Anderson, 2020; Bista & Foster, 2011; Chaloff & Lemaitre 2009; Crumley-Effinger, 2021; Goncalves, 2009; Grimm, 2019), and (ii) national security imperatives that undergird much of the US immigration system (Crumley-Effinger, forthcoming; Golub, 2005; Martin & Martin, 2003; Siskin, 2005; Tannock, 2007; Walsh, 2019). Again, these emphases are summarized in Table 11.

Table 11. Key National ISM Emphases

Case Country	Selected Emphases
Australia	1. Subsidization of government funding for higher education 2. Labor market augmentation
Canada	1. Labor market augmentation 2. Improve competitiveness for international student enrollments
United States of America	1. Labor market protection 2. National security

This and subsequent chapters refer to and utilize quotes, passages, and experiences from the selected policy documents, where citations from documents are made through a simple modification of APA citation norms in order to identify to readers the document type (i.e., T1,

T2, or T3[3]) of any given policy (see Tables 10 and 9). For example, a citation noted as

'(Australian Government, T1 2016)' indicates that this document 'Australian Government

(2016)' is a Type 1, or national planning and strategy item.

Analytical Query Findings: CPE-1

The first AQ (CPE-1) asks, 'In what ways are the key national emphases evident,

highlighted, or attended to in this policy?' The findings show that the policy documents, to

varying degrees—especially in Type 1 (National planning and strategy) documents—evidence

the specified emphases. For example, Canadian policies outlined how students might move from

the study permit to more permanent statuses with work permission, drawing a connection

between ISM policy and the goal of augmenting labor stocks within Canada. Canada's 2019

international education strategy, for example, explains

> International students make excellent candidates for permanent residency: they are
> relatively young, are proficient in at least one official language, have Canadian
> educational qualifications and can help address this country's current and pending labour
> market needs, particularly for highly skilled workers. (Global Affairs Canada, T1 2019,
> p. 5)

Such a strategy is supported by updates to immigration processes, such as:

> The development of a dynamic electronic applications process will enable Canada to
> offer timely immigration services and effectively manage the increasing demand of
> foreign nationals seeking to visit or study, work or stay permanently in Canada. This will
> further enable clients to receive decisions in a timely manner and assist in increasing the
> quality of applications. (Global Affairs Canada, T1 2019, p. 10)

The US emphasis on national security was evident in various US ISM policy documents,

such as requiring international students to meet strict reporting requirements to keep government

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[3] T1 = Type 1, or national planning and strategy documents; T2 = Type 2, or national legal and regulatory documents; T3 = Type 3, or national information documents explaining regulations. See Tables 9 and 10.

records of student activities up-to-date: "Within 10 days of the change, the student must report to the student's DSO a change of legal name, residential or mailing address, employer name, employer address, and/or loss of employment" (Aliens and Nationality Act, T2 2020, p. 311). As I have explained elsewhere (Crumley-Effinger, forthcoming), such reporting expectations are central to the US government's tracking plans to meet national security designs.

While the findings did show that these selected emphases obtained within the ISM policy documents, a notable exception was the first emphasis for Australia: subsidization of government funding for higher education. Several Australian policy documents included references to various financial expectations for international students, but fell short of speaking directly to this emphasis. For example, Australian Government (T2 2021b) notes that visa applicants must show that "sufficient funds will be available to meet… the costs and expenses of the applicant during the applicant's intended stay in Australia…" (p. 361). This is reflected in the ongoing expectation that students "must be able to support yourself financially while you're in Australia" (SIA, T3 2020a). In sum, though, despite the importance of this topic within the literature, the CPE-1 analysis of the selected Australian ISM policy documents evidenced no explicit references to an emphasis on international student enrollments to counter decreased government funding for the country's HEOs. As such, apart from the first emphasis for Australia, the selected emphases within the host countries are evident with their ISM policies. Examples of how these are manifest as policy impacts on students are explored in the subsequent chapters.

Analytical Query Findings: CPE-2

The second portion of the policy analysis sought to move beyond the above closed analysis (i.e., an analysis focused on predetermined emphases) to identify other salient emphases within each host nation's ISM policy. This analysis was guided by the next AQ, namely, CPE-2:

Is there evidence or hint that other emphases are informing the policy? This AQ is, naturally, held in reference to the CPE-1 analysis focusing on pre-determined emphases, so that the CPE-2 AQ is geared toward identifying other potentially salient emphases that may be evident within the policies. A total of 14 emphases, and a final 'Other', were identified in the analysis process, with some emphases appearing in the national policy documents of only one case country, while other emphases are present in the policies of multiple countries. A simple summary of these can be found in Table 12. It is notable that many of these emphases come across mostly through the Type 1 strategy documents, as these are explicit and aspirational statements of national emphases as it pertains to international education broadly, but especially in relation to inbound international student mobility.

Table 12. CPE-2 Policy Emphases Summary

Emphasis	Australia	Canada	United States
Benefits to Host	✓	✓	✓
Complex Challenges	✓		✓
Educational Diplomacy	✓	✓	✓
Educational Knowledge & Policy Exchange	✓	✓	✓
Facilitating Experiences	✓	✓	✓
Global Competencies	✓	✓	✓
Increased Market Share of International Students	✓		
International Benchmarking	✓		✓
International Collaboration	✓	✓	
ISM Focus on Education	✓	✓	✓

Responding to Life Realities	✓	✓	✓
Student Support, Rights, & Protections	✓		✓
Surveillance & Reporting Requirements	✓	✓	✓
Other	✓	✓	✓

Some examples of these emphases are useful. First, the importance of facilitating educational diplomacy endeavors arose as an important area in ISM policies for all three countries, almost exclusively in the strategy (Type 1) documents. The Canadian case drew connections between educational diplomacy and ISM policy, such as explaining the educational diplomacy value of international student enrollments within the context of efforts to "offer faster processing of study permit applications to prospective international students" (Global Affairs Canada, T1 2019, p. 10), in service of an expectation that "those who choose to return to their countries [after graduating] become life-long ambassadors for Canada and for Canadian values" (Global Affairs Canada, T1 2019, p. i). Australia similarly identified a connection between the need for "visa processing arrangements" that are "simpler and easier to navigate" (Australian Government, T1 2016, p. 6) in order to reach a range of international education goals, including leveraging "links with millions of international students who have studied on our shores… to support greater international connections and partnerships for Australia… and [to] help to build sustainable cultural and economic relationships between countries" (Australian Government, T1 2016, p. 26).

Second, many of the ISM policies prioritized a primary purpose of ISM policies: facilitating educational activities. Passages identified as pertaining to this emphasis often include the parameters that outline academic expectations for these international students. In Australia,

for example, the Migration Act in a general way indicates that student visas can be canceled if the visa holder "is not, or is likely not to be, a genuine student; or… has engaged… or is likely to engage… in conduct… not contemplated by the visa" (Australian Government, T2 2019a, p. 161). More specifically, Australia's National Code (T3 2018a) clarifies the need for international students to meet program performance and attendance requirements throughout their program, with arrangements in place for HEO reporting to the government when these requirements are not met. In much the same way, US policy documents outlined the centrality of the study endeavor to the student visa, allowing other opportunities only through small, defined, and explicit permissions. Policy documents described, for example, the requirement that a "course of study must lead to the attainment of a specific educational or professional objective" at an approved HEO (Aliens and Nationality, T2 2020), while SITS (T3 n.d.a) makes it clear that students "are coming to the United States to study. You should not take any action that detracts from that purpose."

This policy findings section has illustrated how a collection of emphases are presented in the policy documents, seeking to provide valuable context for understanding the experience of international students beholden to the regulations and designs of ISM policies. While some of these emphases are shared by more than one host country, others are evident in one country alone. In Australia, the policy documents evidenced an ISM policy goal of augmenting the local labor market through ISM; however, the idea that ISM policy would support subsidizing government funding for Australian higher education was not encountered. In Canada, ISM policy emphasized labor market augmentation and the importance of being competitive for international student enrollments. US ISM policy similarly showed that the selected emphases were evident, incorporating labor market protection and national security emphases. In addition to these

selected emphases, the collection of analyzed policy documents included other areas of emphasis, including thematic groups such as benefits to the host country, educational diplomacy, a focus on education, and student support, rights, and protections. A small collection of these are introduced in chapter nine.

RQ2 Findings

This section presents a brief overview of findings in response to the second research question: How do ISM policies affect international students? The findings introduced here and explored in-depth in the following chapters touch upon a wide range of topics that arose in response to the SSI questions. The responses from students illustrate the complexity of their experiences which range from just a few months to many years as international students in the host country. This complexity highlights the dynamism of their experiences and results in the presentation of findings that must, to some degree, present information in a thematic and organized way.

The result of this is that some items could easily be explored connected to many different themes, but organizational decisions have been made in an attempt to present the information in an understandable way, based on the many intersections of the students' experiences. For example, some student comments highlighted intersections of personal health, academic success, and employment limitations, all in a single statement. As such, the arrangement of the findings is not objective, and a different researcher might choose to organize this information in a different way, even if using the same source data. As noted in the chapter four section on methods, many passages were coded to multiple codes; throughout the exploration of the RQ2 findings I have sought to highlight an overview of the simple and the complex intersections of students' experiences with the different and intersecting spheres of the student ISM policy experience.

Table 13 below provides an overview of the study participants and select details about their educational and personal histories. Note that all names are pseudonyms to maintain the anonymity of research participants and all information in Table 13 is based on information reported by the students themselves, except for the pseudonym. This section and the subsequent chapters refer to and utilize quotes, passages, and experiences from the student interview transcripts, where attribution to individual students is made through a simple coded reference that includes their name, reported nationality, host country code,[4] and HEO code.[5] For example, the citation for a quote from Bernd would be noted as "Bernd (Germany U2)." This indicates that Bernd is from Germany, his host country is in the United States, and his host HEO is school 2 in the US.

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[4] A is the code for Australia; C is for Canada; U is for the United States.

[5] Though participants' host HEOs are not named, all universities are coded to indicate which HEO a student attends. Each host university is given a number, starting with 1. Australian universities are A1 through 3 since participating students hail from three different universities; Canadian HEOs are C1 through 7; and US HEOs are U1 through 6.

Table 13. Study Participants

Pseudonym	Host Country (HEO)	Nationality	Gender	Field of Study: Major (Minor)	Level[†]	Graduation
Binsa	AUS (3)	Nepal	F	Nursing	UG	2022
Eddy	AUS (3)	Britain	M	Sociology	UG	2021
Ekani	AUS (2)	Singapore	F	Psychology	UG	2013
Hachi	AUS (3)	Taiwan	F	Social Work	GR	2021
Niraj	AUS (1)	Nepal	M	Data Science	GR	2022
Olivia	AUS (3)	Italy	F	Psychological Science	UG	2022
Qiaohui	AUS (3)	China	F	Physiotherapy	UG	2023
Ziqi	AUS (3)	China	F	Secondary Education	GR	2021
Aadi	CAN (6)	Bangladesh	M	Design[†]	UG	2023
Afra	CAN (2)	Iran	F	Computer Science	GR	2022
Andrew	CAN (1)	USA	No response	Biology	GR	2021
Ella	CAN (5)	France	F	Political Science	GR	2022
Emily	CAN (1)	France	F	Biology	GR	2022
Howard	CAN (7)	USA	Genderqueer	History	GR	2016

Marion	CAN (2)	Germany	F	International Studies	UG	2023
Negar	CAN (2)	Iran	F	Urban Studies	GR	2020
Nisha	CAN (3)	India	F	Business	GR	2019
Noha	CAN (4)	USA / France	Nonbinary	Political Science (Religious Studies)	UG	2020
Pierre	CAN (1)	France	M	Biology	GR	2021
Andres	USA (4)	Colombia	M	Engineering† (Business)	UG	2024
Benesh	USA (5)	Afghanistan	F	Human Rights†	GR	2022
Bernd	USA (2)	Germany	M	History	GR	2021
Brenda	USA (3)	Mexico	F	Peace Studies†	GR	2021
Chesa	USA (4)	Tibet	F	Neuroscience	UG	2020
Dee	USA (1)	China	F	Chemistry	GR	2023
Dhonu	USA (4)	Nepal	M	Computer Science (Economics)	UG	2018
Jenni	USA (2)	China	F	Math (Statistics)	UG	2022
Juana	USA (2)	Argentina	F	Education Policy	GR	2021
Krishna	USA (4)	Nepal	M	Geology	UG	2019
Linda	USA (2)	Paraguay / Italy	F	Marketing (Information Systems)	UG	2021
Merve	USA (6)	Turkey	F	Sociology	GR	2022

Mia	USA (4)	Vietnam	F	Biochemistry	UG	2020
Octavio	USA (4)	Mexico	M	Biochemistry	UG	2020
Pia	USA (2)	Germany	F	Environmental Studies (Psychology)	UG	2022
Ray	USA (4)	India	M	Finance	UG	2020
Suz	USA (2)	Romania	F	Politics & International Relations	GR	2025
Vanya	USA (2)	Swaziland	F	Environmental Science & Sustainability	GR	2018[‡]
Vera	USA (2)	Ecuador	F	Environmental Policy	UG	2024
Vi	USA (4)	Vietnam	F	Math (Finance)	UG	2020
Zoya	USA (2)	Pakistan	F	Education Policy	GR	2019

[†] UG = Undergraduate; GR = Graduate
[‡] This is the year this student completed their undergraduate degree program in the USA, but they are currently enrolled in a graduate degree program in the USA.
NOTE: Some of the field of study names have been generalized to maintain anonymity of participants.

ISM Policy Pervasion

Chapter six explores some of the ways the study participants describe ISM policy as pervading many areas of their lives while in the host country. Illustrating what I therefore call 'ISM policy pervasion', these findings show that ISM policies impact students before, during, and after their sojourns abroad in diverse ways, as uncovered through open coding of the interview data. First, students describe how the ISM policies affect their *academic* experiences and decisions. Second, the interview data show that students' *employment and professional* decisions and trajectories are impacted by ISM policies that delimit work opportunities in their host country during and after their periods of study. Third, ISM policy imprints are evident in students' *relationships* as they navigate policy requirements, restrictions, and uncertainties. Finally, the students' reflections in the course of the interviews identified a select number of additional, *supplemental impact* topics that, while thematically diverse, are of interest for rounding out a full response to the second research question.

Many of the study participants describe both the simple and complex ways that the ISM policies affect their academics as it relates to a variety of areas. This includes academic topics such as enrollment status, time constraints on their academic programs, their chosen fields of study, and their future plans, among other areas (see Table 14 in chapter six). For example, discussing strict enrollment requirements, Noha (USA C4) recounts multiple stories about international student friends challenged by meeting the enrollment requirements while dealing with mental health issues. They explain that they have "known a multiple people who were having a really hard time, who had suicide attempts and because they just couldn't decrease their workload, without getting kicked out of the country, they had to just go on medical leave and it

completely fucks up your academics…" Noha (USA C4). As such, the lack of options to reduce the workload resulted in medical leaves that not only impeded their continued progress towards the degree, but also posed strains when they sought to return, as they needed to apply for new study permits, extensions to the time to complete the degree, and they needed to supply medical documentation (Noha, USA C4).

Some students assert there was an influence of visa or permit policies on their decisions about what field they would study while abroad. Mia (Vietnam U4) insists that she "pretty much steered away from social science" majors because students who study in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields in the US "have a higher chance of staying in the States" through benefits such as the post-graduation employment STEM OPT extension. Referring to academic progress expectations, Benesh (Afghanistan U5) suggests that the ISM policy requirements had a positive effect on her, pushing her to get good grades to maintain status. Similarly, Andres (Colombia U4) relates that the visa rules "forced [him] to concentrate more in academics" and that the visa rules added positive pressure, through fear of "jeopardizing [his] visa," to not cheat on exams.

Students' current and future employment and professional lives, as experienced through the confines of the host nation ISM policy, were an important topic that for many students often arose in the interviews before any pointed SSI questions about employment. This short section explores a range of important ideas arising from the students as they shared how the visa and study permit policies affected decisions about, perspectives on, and experiences with employment and work in general. These Employment / Professional themes are summarized in Table 15 in chapter six, with a selection of examples from the findings presented below.

Many students indicate that the visa regulations affected their ability to be employed in some way or another. This was often related to employer perceptions of their status as international students, which may have differing levels of overlap with the reality of the students' legal situations as it pertains to employment. Negar (Iran C2) feels the effects of employers only accepting those who "at least have permanent residency" in Canada and describes this as especially frustrating when "in many cases they [the employers] don't announce" this requirement.

In the interviews, the majority of students immediately sought to highlight the impact of the work limitation of 20 hours per week, or 40 hours per fortnight. That the work hours limitations came up in a variety of ways and areas, tied to many aspects of students' lives, is a testament to how often the topic was referred to in students' responses to many of the SSI questions. Nisha (India C3) expresses a concern that employers would sometimes request students to work more hours during busy times but that the study permit prevented this. Qiaohui (China A3) shares frustration with a lack of fairness compared to domestic (Australian) students who were not restricted in the number of hours they were eligible to work.

Some students draw connections between their own and their friends' work experiences and exploitation at the hands of employers. For example, Nisha (India C3) provides stories about friends who were unable to meet their financial obligations under the 20-hour work limit, which led them to "off the books" jobs that did not pay well, but that at least did not have a work hour limitation because they were cash jobs. She shares:

> It's very lucrative so a lot of people go for it, but then they get exploited in the process. Because like hazardous working conditions, they're made to do what that are unsafe for them, like working nights at very disturbing areas and gas stations. And not having

enough security, working in really bad like hygienic conditions, like things like that, like, so I feel like that opens up a whole lot of other problems. So, I guess if the work permit allowed us to work for a little longer, maybe like 30 hours or close to that, maybe that would have solved the issue. (Nisha, India C3)

Referring to exploitation by the university itself, Dee (China U1) mentions a situation where the 20-hour weekly work limitation was simply overlooked in her employment with the school:

Under F1 visa, I can only work 20 hours per week. So, this is a little bit funny because as PhD students I'm like a research assistant, right? I work for, you know, eight hours [a day], five days [a week] or more. So, that's already 40 hours, but to fit in this policy, the school just write me as working 20 hours per week.

The impact of the student visa and study permit policies on relationships in the three case countries appears to be less significant than casually hypothesized at the outset of this study. Despite this, some of the study participants shared valuable insights into the ways their family, friends, and romantic relations were impacted by ISM policy. These findings relating to relationship impacts are summarized in Table 16 (chapter six) and are introduced below.

Some of the responses to a pointed question on this topic yielded responses about the ways in which the ISM policies did not have any significant effects on personal relationships. When asked about whether the visa policies in Australia had any impact on her relationships, Ekani (Singapore A2), for example, says that the regulations had no effect on romantic relationships, but that perhaps her status as a student in the country made it easier for her family to secure visas for a visit. Qiaohui (China A3) believes that her dating life is unaffected by her status and the regulations, and Aadi (Bangladesh C6) and Ella (France C5) similarly feel no effects, with the latter saying, "No, not at all." Krishna (Nepal U4), however, provides one

example of an influence, illustrating how his romantic relationship is affected by the

impermanence and uncertainty of the student visa, explaining

> the relationships I choose, like it definitely becomes a bigger question. Like right now, I [have] been in a relationship with someone who's American for over a year. And like I… I've been, like, slowly, like, preparing her to… I will tell her 'okay my visa, like, I'm going to have to, like, leave the country next year,' and she refuses to, like, kind of go forward into the conversation because it's… such a loaded conversation to have. But that definitely introduces a lot of… instability to the relationship in a lot of ways, because… Yeah, like what options do you have? …either I find a way to be here, which is through work, that's the most likely thing, or you try to get married, which… I'm 24, like, that just also feels ridiculous. Or I just go home and see how that goes [as a long distance couple], which I mean, with the time difference… That is gonna cause a lot of difficulties like… So it directly affects that. (Krishna, Nepal U4)

Krishna also relates hesitations to invest in his relationship with other hesitations to invest

himself in the US in other ways, such as making purchases which would just represent hassles to

deal with whenever he is forced to leave in the future.

Going beyond the academic, employment, and relationship impacts, the findings also

show a variety of other ways in which the ISM policies affected students, their perspectives of

the policies, and their experiences living as international students through visas or study permits.

As with the previous topics, these findings have been thematically organized for clarity of

presentation, with critical themes summarized in Table 17 in chapter six, and introduced below.

The topic of student switching arose in multiple passages shared in the presentation of

findings on academic, employment, and relationship topics. Indeed, the topic was ubiquitous

throughout many of the students' interviews, showing how host ISM policies very much impact

students' activities and experiences while on the student visa, as they keep an eye on their post-

graduation options within the host country. For Hachi (Taiwan A3), switching to a more

permanent status in Australia was not at the forefront of her decision to study in the country: "I

didn't come to Australia [to] study with the intention that I'm gonna stay in the country. I do know… that is the reason for a lot of my friends that decided to come to Australia [to] study."

Some students hosted by the US did express concern with the extreme challenge of gaining a more permanent status in the United States. Dee (China U1) suggests that the process of moving from the student visa requires excellence and that it might be an uphill battle for employment-based visas, because if companies can "choose… someone who has citizenship or [permanent residency], then why they would choose you?" In a similar vein, Jenni (China U2) is concerned with the limited timeframe provided to students for post-graduation work on the student visa, worrying that it would not be sufficient for an employer to determine if they find it worth it to provide sponsorship.

An important, though perhaps not surprising, collection of findings show the extreme uncertainty and precarity associated with living as an international student whose life is circumscribed within local ISM policies. While it was evident in responses from all three countries, it was less prevalent in responses from the students studying in Australia. For Hachi (Taiwan A3), she explains that entering the country was often scary due to a concern that she might have done something wrong that could prevent her from entering the country. Qiaohui (China A3) states that she did not know what might happen if she failed to follow a visa-related rule, but that she might get "a warning letter, or maybe they just cancel the visa." Even if her papers are in order, Afra (Iran C2) expressed her concern that something might happen to prevent her from reentering the country after time away, which influenced her decision not to leave the country while on the student visa. While perhaps not concerned about her ability to

enter the country, Ella (France C5) shows frustration with uncertainty around processes, such as not understanding how long a study permit extension might be granted for.

Labor and Employment Prominence

While chapter six does introduce the importance of employment topics for students, chapter seven highlights just how important labor and employment topics were both in the ISM policies and in the student interviews. I make the argument that labor and employment topics are of standout importance by incorporating illustrative excerpts from the ISM policies and participant interviews. Below I include a selection of examples of employment allowances and restrictions in the ISM policies, as well as examples of ways that students' work lives were impacted by ISM policies. Further examples of these topics are explored in detail in chapter seven (see also Table 15 in chapter six).

With the understanding that the ISM policies for all three case countries are primarily focused on the facilitation of degree undertakings, a number of these policies do also indicate that additional experiences might be available for students outside of the limited institution of higher education schooling, mostly pertaining to work allowances. In the United States, the Aliens and Nationality Act (T2 2020) provides regulatory allowances for limited off-campus working experiences in the form of "practical training" programs so that students can take part in "alternative work/study, internship, cooperative education" and other initiatives coordinated by the institution (p. 305). The purpose of such programs, both before and immediately after degree completion, is to allow "eligible international students and new graduates the opportunity to gain on-the-job learning that supplements knowledge gained in their academic studies" (SITS, T3 n.d.i).

The Australian regulations also provide work opportunities that can be "a great way to meet people, gain hands-on work experience and contribute to the community" and which can also include "internship, work experience and volunteer opportunities" coordinated by the host HEO (SIA, T3 2020b). Much the same in Canada, though requiring a specific work permit to accompany the study permit, students may participate in co-op and internship programs (Government of Canada, T3 2019b).

Again, some students draw connections between their own and their friends' work experiences and exploitation at the hands of employers. For example, because of the limitations on work hours per week, as described in various places throughout this chapter, students' employment options are limited, which may be understood by those who are willing to hire international students. Hachi (Taiwan A3) explains "because of the work hours, most of the employers, they wouldn't want to employ an international student or someone that can't stay in the country for good." Faced with this, she asserts that "you can still get a job and if you're willing to accept being underpaid, you would definitely get a job." Ziqi (China A3) suggests that the work hour limitations are in place because

> if you don't pose a work hour limit, that will deteriorate, the working conditions or work environment for the general public, because people are taking advantage of the international student, as a cheap labor. (Ziqi, China A3)

A select number of students spoke passionately about the prospect of employment during their studies as a potential way of gaining experience in their fields of interest. This topic was often discussed regarding experience-rich employment being stymied by the regulations, whether directly or indirectly. Niraj (Nepal A1), having noted challenges gaining employment in his field

due to his temporary status and the hours limitation, feels frustrated with working in a position

that was unrelated to his future career.

> For me, not working in my own field kind of is hampering my studies… because I'm working part time in some other areas, rather than that if I was working in my own field, I would be on top of my own game as well, right, I would be more focused on my studies, I would be doing something that I'm actually studying on, I'm doing a work that I'm studying on, so obviously that's beneficial for me… So I'm not exactly working in my field; if I was working in my own field… maybe I'd be more focused on some of the units that I'm… studying this semester, it would actually help me side by side with the university… I'm studying here, but I'm not allowed to work in my field and that's just pissing me off, because it, it would be a lot of advantages to me, not just for me, for my academics as well, just not… just for my professional field, for my academics, because I would be doing something that I'm actually studying rather than having to invest my 20 hours of working on something else that is not affecting me academically. (Niraj, Nepal A1)

Students reported that ISM policies in their host country did or potentially could affect

the professional relationships they had with their employers. These effects could be as significant

as the exploitation explored previously, or it could be more subtle, as they navigated the

complexities of the regulatory requirements together. Binsa (Nepal A3), for example, shares

situations in which she and her friends regularly had to complete paperwork together with their

employers in order to deal with accidentally working more than the allotted number of hours. For

Binsa, this was mostly a nonissue between her and her employer, though it was a source of

stress:

> I had to do like heaps of paperwork like 'Why did I have to do it [the extra hours],' and then the manager, regional manager had to like sign it, and then, or like forward it so that I do not get any trouble with my visas, like working 40 hours… like more than 40 hours per fortnight, and then it was like a bit of stress. (Binsa, Nepal A3)

These few examples illustrate the varied ways that international students see employment

options and limitations as truly impacting not only their experiences as students, but also

potentially their future employment, in the host country or elsewhere. The prominence of labor and employment topics in the policies and interviews is explored in further detail in chapter seven.

CPE Connections

I have previously introduced the argument that local institutions such as ISM policies are understood to be embedded within the local economic and political context of the nation-state (Sum & Jessop, 2013), that is, that such policies are developed from the local cultural, political, and economic interpretations of this context. Chapter eight draws out this idea, describing how international students connect their ISM policy experiences with the local cultural, political, and economic contexts of their host country.

For example, Niraj (Nepal A1) understands the strict visa rules as being imposed to prevent unauthorized employment, noting that the working limitations are there because many international students "just enrolled into a shitty university and they're working a lot more than they're supposed to be… a majority of the students do that, so I get why the rule is there, but they're still doing it." In Canada, there appears to be an almost thoroughgoing understanding that international students are important contributors to the local economy. Often students see the ISM policies and their treatment through the lens of this understanding, which can at times result in frustrations. Afra (Iran C2), for example, insists:

> I know that like Canada relies on immigrants basically to function, and that's like… they want to get like as many immigrant students as they can, because those are the ones that contribute to Canada's economy a lot, and yeah I, like, I kind [of] understand some part of it, as I said before, like, I understand, like the… background check that they need to go through, and like all those extra things that take time, but at the same time, like it… they're missing that human side of it which I don't like.

As an Afghan, Benesh (Afghanistan U5) sees political perspectives of her home country as influencing her experience, especially in terms of the validity length of her visas and the time needed to apply for a visa.

> Like for us Afghans, we have to… every time we leave the country, like it's just a year valid visa we get so, after a year, we have to go back and renew if we leave the country, so that has been very challenging… so it is harder for Afghan students to get visa to come to the US and it takes longer for us, the process… For example, the first time, when I applied for visa to come to the US, it took very long to get a visa… I think it's different for like every country. I know like students from some countries, that they get five year visa and I have to apply like every year. (Benesh, Afghanistan U5)

These few examples provide insight into the ways these international students see connections between their own policy experiences and the CPE of their host countries. Further exploration of this topic is provided in chapter eight.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the ISM policy emphases in Australia, Canada, and the United States, providing illustrative excerpts from policies by organizing findings along the lines of the first two analytical queries that guided policy analysis. This was done with an eye towards providing policy context for chapters six, seven, and eight, which present in-depth examination of the ways in which ISM policies affect international students in the three case countries.

As the examples in the second section illustrate in response to the second research question, I have shown that ISM policies can influence international students in a variety of ways. Though the policies are generally focused on educational requirements and employment limitations, the effects extend beyond the specific educational realities of student life, and impact students in many and diverse personal ways. Chapter six examines ISM policy pervasion, which is the idea that ISM policy pervades many areas of students' lives while in the host country,

affecting students' academics, employment, relationships, and more. Chapter seven argues that labor and employment topics are especially salient both in the ISM policies and in students' lived experiences. Finally, chapter eight provides a novel exploration of the connections that students make between their policy experiences and the cultural, political, and economic environment in the host country.

Chapter nine brings together thoughts about the overall study, including a presentation and summary of broad country-specific topics related to ISM policy and student experiences, and potential areas of future research drawing on this work. That chapter also provides a brief overview of the research design and organization of the dissertation, and explains how the COVID-19 pandemic fits into the study, since the data collection, analysis, and final write-up all occurred during the ongoing pandemic. Finally, chapter nine also includes important limitations inherent in this study as well as concluding thoughts. But first, greater depth of detail into the effects of ISM policy on international students in these host countries are presented in the following three chapters, which constitute a comprehensive response to the second research question.

CHAPTER 6: ISM POLICY PERVASION

"Mostly in every single decision I take that is not entirely academic… I always have to be thinking about the impact that that's going to have to my visa, so definitely there is a fear for international students, a constant fear of losing their visa, yes."

—Andres (Colombia U4)

Introduction

This chapter outlines the idea of *policy pervasion*, which argues that mobility and migration policy for international students in Australia, Canada, and the United States pervades many areas of international students' lives. This ISM policy pervasion entails the institutionalized influence of ISM policy on the international student experience and indicates how ISM policies impact students in many ways, including their academics, employment/professional growth, relationships, and more. While ISM policy pervasion does not presuppose that ISM policy is a *primary* concern or influencing factor in the lives of all international students in these host countries, the idea is founded on the assertion—born from this study's findings—that ISM policies do play an important role in many areas of international students' lives. In short, ISM policy forms a unique policy environment bounding many of the experiences during and subsequent to the student's degree-seeking program in the host country.

The notion of policy pervasion denotes the power of policies to exert a controlling influence on these students. With this being said, it is likely not novel or surprising to assert that student visa policies, rules, and regulations act as a governance mechanism that regulate and

affect international students in these highly personal ways. For example, students may be limited in how many hours they can work while studying, which could affect their financial status; or they may be restricted to enrollment minima that create course load pressures that affect their field of study options or their mental health. Yet, while these and many other examples shared in this study may be commonly and widely understood by international students and those who work with them, there is little scholarship focusing explicitly on how ISM policies affect students, often leaving the field's understanding of the topic based on anecdotal evidence and personal experiences. This study, then, serves to provide empirical data from student interviews and policy documents to identify and outline ISM policy pervasion for international students.

This is an important task for a variety of reasons. First, it is understood that "macro-level policies shape the everyday lives of international students" (Rose-Redwood & Rose-Redwood, 2017, p. iv), however, the concrete ways this occurs is not well known. Second, this study's approach provides an opportunity to explore ISM policy pervasion in three different countries with varied ISM policy approaches, paving the way for understanding how this phenomenon (ISM policy pervasion) may obtain in other national and policy contexts. Third, the study may provide a first pass at understanding this wide range of policy impacts on international students in order to inform larger-scale quantitative or mixed-methods studies to continue exploring ISM policy pervasion in greater depth by incorporating the voices of more international students from these and other countries (see chapter nine). Finally, the scant literature on student visa policies (Grimm, 2019) seldom centers on student voices and experiences. According to Gargano (2009),

> efforts are needed to create and implement policies and programs not only based on data
> that reflects… national trends and figures, but also by taking into consideration the voices

of students who engage in educational sojourns and who are impacted by these very policies. (pp. 332-333)

Thirteen years after Gargano's (2009) call to action, there remain relatively few studies in this vein, especially ones that explicitly focus on this issue area. Identifying and outlining the concept of ISM policy pervasion may provide a point of departure from which policymakers can draw on student voices to reconsider, adjust, and critique ISM policies. Just as importantly, one may consider the value of broadening and deepening educators' knowledge to better understand the contours of ISM policy effects, which may provide new insights into actionable areas to develop international student support services and contribute to policy advocacy activities. Finally, coming in contact with the ideas outlined explicitly as ISM policy pervasion may benefit both prospective and current international students as they consider how the policy context in their (potential) host country might affect their lives beyond simply facilitating access to degree programs in the host country.

The following section recounts illustrative examples of ISM policy pervasion. The first examples show how ISM policies can affect international students' academic lives in each country. Examples of effects on students' professional experiences and relationships are provided, as well as policy influences in other areas of students' personal lives. The data are drawn primarily from interviews with the study participants, but also incorporate policy excerpts from the host countries policies to contextualize the experiences reported by the student participants.

ISM Policy Pervasion

Academics

As is evident in the SSI interview protocol (Appendix B), one of the interview questions explicitly asked students about the possible effects of their host nation's ISM policy on their academic experience.[1] Naturally, this was a source of valuable information on this topic, but students' reflections on ISM policy influences on their academics also came out in response to many of the more broad or open-ended questions posed throughout the interview. An overview of the themes that arose pertaining to academics can be found in Table 14; a selection of these is discussed below.

Table 14. Key Academics Themes

Themes
Enrollment status
Time constraints
Academics and employment
Field of study
Future plans
Academic performance
Stress

Common to the three case countries are enrollment requirements for students on a study permit or visa. In Australia, one policy document noted that international students under the

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[1] Can you think of a time when the rules or regulations for international students affected your academics or decisions that you make about your learning?

Subclass 500 (student) visa must "be enrolled in a full-time registered course" (Australian Government, 2021c, p. 177); this is explained more simply in SIA (T3 2020a) which states that international students "… must remain enrolled and maintain satisfactory course progress and attendance." Referring to these regulations, Hachi (Taiwan A3) explains that the full-time enrollment requirement was very limiting and that it "affected a lot of people studying" because they "can't cut it down to part-time" unless they obtain certification from a psychologist. Hachi (Taiwan A3) herself did this due to mental health issues, and notes that she found this requirement fair. Niraj (Nepal A1) is an example of another student who worked with staff at the school to get a reduction in enrollment due to stress and mental health issues. Qiaohui (China A3) communicates that there were times when she wanted to lessen her workload due to stress, but she did not because of the enrollment requirement. She feels that this was unfair in comparison with "the local students [who] don't have the… limitations on enrollment" (Qiaohui, China A3). Olivia (Italy A3) observes the dire consequences of an unauthorized drop below full-time enrollment, recounting a story of receiving worrying communications from the Australian government that her temporary lack of enrollment would be grounds for deportation.

Students studying in Canada identify some of the challenges they faced with the time limitations of their study permit expiration dates. Students there are expected to "leave Canada when your [study] permit expires," and furthermore, to procure the study permit in the first place, they must "prove to an officer that you will leave Canada when your study permit expires" (Government of Canada, T3 2020b). To prevent problems, students are permitted to "apply to extend your stay as a student" if the courses are not completed before the study permit expires,

but if this is not done in time, students "need to stop studying and leave Canada" (Government of Canada, T3 2020c).[2]

In the face of study permit expirations, Nisha (India C3) describes the renewal process as "strenuous" and full of uncertainties, as the extension is not guaranteed, putting degree completion at risk even though the renewal might simply be needed because the end date on the study permit was listed as prior to an unchanged, original expected date of degree completion. She recounts a story of a friend who "just missed the paperwork, like one paper, and they just downright rejected his application and that added another three months [delay] to his study because… he couldn't go back to the university without the extension" (Nisha, India C3). Nisha also reveals that some students try to get ahead of the pending expiration of their study permit by taking more classes, for example, during the winter and summer break; an added benefit of this practice is that those classes are often less expensive than during the regular (i.e., fall and spring) terms and those courses are often shorter as well, but worth the same amount of credit (Nisha, India C3). This decision to enroll in these extra classes can help with students' finances and to "get ahead of their graduating schedule" (Nisha, India C3), but sometimes resulted in students not seeing their family for more extended periods of time, which Nisha herself experienced.

Noha (USA C4) and their boyfriend were quite uncertain that the extension of the study permit would be approved when their boyfriend applied to extend the standard four-year permit to reach the end of his five-year academic program. This was accompanied by stressors related to the time of year when the renewal was needed, as well as the cost of the renewal:

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[2] "217 (1) A foreign national may apply for the renewal of their study permit if (a) the application is made before the expiry of their study permit; and (b) they have complied with all conditions imposed on their entry into Canada." (Canada MOJ, T2 2020b, p. 232).

> Put yourself in his shoes, where… he's going into his last year and he's very overwhelmed and he forgot to renew 30 days ahead of the expiration date, and… so he renewed it for one semester, and then he renewed it again around Christmas. And so the… last few days of December were really, really stressful because we were scrambling to… get everything in and renewed on time because it was going to expire on on January 1 and you have to renew it before it expires, and he was fine, you know, but it means that you have these extra fees… Like if you're going to be studying longer than your permit lasts, you need to be prepared to cough up an extra like $200, $300 [CAD] to renew… (Noha, USA C4)

Adding to the stress of the renewal was that their boyfriend had failed classes as a first-year student, which meant that there was additional uncertainty if the permit would be renewed, because it was unclear how those failed courses would look to the authorities reviewing the request.

Andrew (USA C1) asserts there is a "temporal stress of like, 'I have to finish by the time my study permit runs out.'" This stress was also caused by the fact that Andrew was required to make a guess, before starting the degree, of how long his degree would take. This potential end date was then codified in the study permit end date, but, as Andrew explains (and can be verified by this author), for doctoral students, "expected end dates and actual end dates are not… they're not the same thing…" (Andrew, USA C1). Overall, Andrew felt that the study permit had a limiting effect on the research he could do. He mentions:

> If I were a Canadian student… I would feel much more able to just, like, negotiate between me and my supervisor… [being able to say to the supervisor] 'I think this is going to take another semester, I just need a little longer to write this up,' or 'I need to collect a little more data,' or 'I need to do more background reading before I finish my thesis,' or something like that. (Andrew, USA C1)

Ultimately, the time limit of the study permit had a significant effect on Andrew's final dissertation: with a pending study permit end date, Andrew left a chapter out of the thesis. He points out:

I was going to have a fifth [chapter], I collected all the data for it, and then, like, looking at the timing over the summer of, like, I've still got this much work to do, I talked to my supervisor and I was like, I'm just not going to do this one… the motivating reason for that initially was that I was concerned about being able to finish on time. (Andrew, USA C1)

In the United States, one's access to post-graduation employment, through the Optional Practical Training (OPT) option, is limited to jobs that are related to one's major (Aliens and Nationality Act, T2 2020). According to the Aliens and Nationality Act (T2 2020), "a student may apply to USCIS for authorization for temporary employment for optional practical training *directly related to the student's major area of study*" [emphasis added] (p. 306). Reiterating this, SITS (T3 n.d.i) notes "Optional Practical Training (OPT) is a form of training, often paid, that directly relates to your program of study."

The fact that post-graduation employment options were limited by students' chosen field of study led some students to either change their chosen subject or wish that they had. Krishna (Nepal U4) used some of the most passionate language about his choice of major, saying that one of his "biggest regrets" is not fully understanding that because he "just kind of studied what [he] wanted to study," his post-graduation employment options were going to be restricted to those jobs related to the major. He states:

If I had known I would have probably… just gone out of my way and majored in computer science or business, just to kind of keep my options after I graduated… if I were to be more proactive and knew what I was doing more back in college and was more prepared, I would have never done geology. Like it's honestly… this was one of my biggest regrets in life. Because of the field I studied in, like, if there was no restrictions in what I can work, I think I would have regretted it less but… So I think back in the days… because I wasn't paying attention I kind of did what I wanted to do, so, like the visa policy didn't really affect my decisions back then, but like now looking back I'm like, 'wow, like, that was actually the dumber thing to do…' (Krishna, Nepal U4)

Krishna further adds:

> It made me more resentful of the field [of geology], and I also, like, lost interest because of the resentment, I feel like. And I think after this, [I am] becoming more aware of the restrictions… I don't know, I just like started paying more attention to like more appealing fields… I feel like there needs to be more flexibility, it's human nature to like, be curious about different things, and like, find new passions… So, in a way, I feel like that's a very inhumane treatment of international students that can like restrict them in that way. (Krishna, Nepal U4)

Trying to learn from that experience, Krishna was considering what his graduate school options might be, hoping to choose a major to "best optimize [his] visa limitations into… what [he] can do to make a living" (Krishna, Nepal U4).

Examples abound of literature focusing on international student learning and academic performance in higher education. These might discuss the efficacy of the flipped classroom for teaching international students (Öznacar et al., 2019), academic services for supporting international students (Martirosyan et al, 2019), new frameworks for "teaching, learning, and engagement for international students" (Tran, 2020), and much more (for example, see Khanal & Gaulee, 2019). But how do ISM policies affect student academics and learning?

The student visa or study permit is self-evidently married to the purpose of facilitating access to academic and learning opportunities in the host country (Arenas, 2021; Brunner, 2022b; Ammigan, 2019). A published comprehensive review of literature from 2000 to 2019 focusing on challenges faced by international students primarily discusses visas in the context of pre-sojourn and post-graduation contexts (Khanal & Gaulee, 2019), reflecting a general deficit of literature focusing on the importance of visa or study permit impacts during the student's time studying in the host country, including on students' academic and learning experiences while abroad.

Elfeel & Bailey (2020) describe how being on a dependent visa associated with an international student in the United States (e.g., on an F-2 visa) sets individuals up with strict limitations on their learning, since study is prohibited with this particular status. Of course, this is only partially relevant to the present study since the F-2 visa is explicitly not a student visa (Elfeel & Bailey, 2020). Grimm (2019), citing Miano (2017), notes that visa policies outlining OPT for international students in the United States are "intended to serve as a practical complement to their academic studies" (p. 240), identifying one of the ways that policy has been oriented to contribute to student learning. Engaging with complications arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, some research has noted how ISM in Canada (Brunner, 2022a) and in the United States (Crumley-Effinger, 2021) places restrictions on learning modality options, limiting the number of courses that students can take through online learning. Importantly, though, such studies do not touch on the personal effects of these limitations for students.

Responding to this identified lacuna as it relates to the ISM policy impacts on international student learning and academics, this section has provided a selection of illustrative examples. The findings and student voices show that ISM policies can influence students due to limitations those policies pose, including through enrollment requirements that restrict students' options, limits on students' periods of study due to expiring study permits or visas, and the influences of ISM policy on students' chosen fields of study.

Employment

After introductory questions to get to know study participants, the first 'content' question in the SSI asked students what kinds of responsibilities or limitations they have as international students. The majority of students immediately identified the work limitation of 20 hours per

week, or 40 hours per fortnight. That the work hours limitations come up in a variety of ways and areas, tied to many aspects of students' lives, is a testament to how often the topic was referred to in students' responses to many of the SSI questions. The ubiquity of these comments, and the many ways that the work hour limitations affected students, means that many references were interwoven throughout their interviews. These work hour limitations connected to a variety of student employment concerns, as outlined below. An overview of the themes that arose pertaining to employment can be found in Table 15; a selection of these is discussed below.

Table 15. Key Employment / Professional Themes

Themes
Getting hired
Hours Limitations
Gaining Experience
Future Work and Immigration Status
Exploitation
Employer Relationships
Earnings and Income

In Australia, the regulations outline the parameters for employment while on the study visa, requiring that "the [visa] holder must not engage in work for more than 40 hours a fortnight while the holder is in Australia" (Australian Government, T2 2021c, p. 172). As useful explanatory documents, both DET (T3 2017) and SIA (T3 2020b) clarify that this work is limited to 20 hours per week (40 hours per fortnight) "when your course is in session" (DET, T3 2017) and "unlimited hours during holiday breaks" (SIA, T3 2020b). Working while studying is

described as "an option to earn extra money and get a taste of the local culture" as well as "a

great way to… gain hands-on work experience" (SIA, T3 2020b).

In contrast to how this is described in the policy documents, Niraj (Nepal A1) comments

on the challenges of gaining work in his field due to his temporary status and the hours

limitation, expressing frustration with working in a position that was unrelated to his future

career:

> For me, not working in my own field kind of is hampering my studies… because I'm
> working part time in some other areas, rather than that if I was working in my own field, I
> would be on top of my own game as well, right, I would be more focused on my studies, I
> would be doing something that I'm actually studying on, I'm doing a work that I'm
> studying on, so obviously that's beneficial for me… So, I'm not exactly working in my
> field; if I was working in my own field… maybe I'd be more focused on some of the
> units that I'm… studying this semester, it would actually help me side by side with the
> university… I'm studying here, but I'm not allowed to work in my field and that's just
> pissing me off, because it, it would be a lot of advantages to me, not just for me, for my
> academics as well, just not… just for my professional field, for my academics, because I
> would be doing something that I'm actually studying rather than having to invest my 20
> hours of working on something else that is not affecting me academically.

Canada's study permit policies similarly limit employment for international students.

This hours limitation in Canada is seemingly based on the understanding that students must be

able to undertake their studies with "sufficient and available financial resources, without having

to work in Canada" (Canada MOJ, T2 2020b), which makes explicit that any work within the

country should be extraneous to the funds needed to cover one's education and cost of living

expenses. On top of this, those on study permits are limited to 20 hours per week when school is

in session, as outlined in the regulations: Individuals with a study permit "are permitted to

engage in full-time work during a regularly scheduled break between academic sessions, they

[may] work no more than 20 hours per week during a regular academic session" (Canada MOJ,

T2 2020b, p. 187). This is further explained as follows:

> Working more than 20 hours per week is a violation of your study permit conditions. You can lose your student status for doing this, and may not be approved for a study or work permit in the future. You may also have to leave the country. (Government of Canada, T3 2020e)

Some students drew connections between their own and their friends' work experiences

and exploitation at the hands of employers. For example, because of the limitations on work

hours per week, students' employment options are limited, which may have been used by

employers to exploit the students. Nisha (India C3) recounts stories about friends who were

unable to meet their financial obligations under the 20-hour work limit, which led them to "off

the books" jobs that did not pay well but that at least did not have a work hour limitation because

they were cash jobs. She shares:

> It's very lucrative so a lot of people go for it, but then they get exploited in the process. Because like hazardous working conditions, they're made to do what that are unsafe for them, like working nights at very disturbing areas and gas stations. And not having enough security, working in really bad like hygienic conditions, like things like that, like, so I feel like that opens up a whole lot of other problems. So I guess if the work permit allowed us to work for a little longer, maybe like 30 hours or close to that, maybe that would have solved the issue. (Nisha, India C3)

Student concerns about exploitation were not limited to issues related to work hour limitations.

The temporary nature of the study permit—where students are expected to "leave Canada when

your [study] permits expires" (Government of Canada, T3 2020b)—was also identified as a

potential source of exploitation of students by employers. Negar (Iran C2) especially articulates

concerns about labor exploitation of international students, noting that she had witnessed

employers threatening students "by their visa status." She insists:

> Because you are on a study permit, your status is temporary, so you have to… try to keep your status until you're in a safe side, a safe position. So if you are in an exploitative environment, your work environment is exploited, you can't…risk your… [status], people who are… a more permanent status here, they easily can… I won't say easily, but it's way easier for them to change their work environment, to speak up, to defend their rights, but it's very hard for [international students] because you know that your presence here can be tied to that conversation.

Furthermore, Negar describes power differentials that are at play in the international student-employer relationship:

> If someone have a racist comment or something against your rights, but the process of pursuing it is so complicated, and it's so vague, and there are lots of loopholes that nobody can, you know, it's hard for people to risk everything [to pursue rectifying the issue]. Generally, there is a power imbalance when you are an employee or you are a student in your relation with your supervisor or your boss, but when you are international students on a temporary visa status here, [it] is a high more vulnerable [position]. (Negar, Iran C2)

The ISM policies in all three case countries permit limited employment options both prior and subsequent to academic program completion. Valuable resources are available that discuss the intersections of international student policies and employment topics, often focusing on post-graduation employment (Ammigan, 2019; Blackmore et al., 2017; Glass et al., 2021; Grimm, 2019; IDP Education, 2019; Tran et al., 2020), while a more limited number of studies focus on student employment prior to program completion (Arkoudis et al., 2019; Blackmore et al., 2017; Clibborn, 2021; Forbes-Mewitt et al., 2009). The findings from this study, with illustrative examples above, show that international students evidence a concern with the work hours limitations they face in their host countries and that labor exploitation is also present as students seek employment to gain experience or to secure financial benefits.

Clibborn's (2021) study of underpayment of international students in Australia shows that concern for the sorts of exploitation described above is warranted. This work showed that

international students are subject to "multiple vulnerabilities common to many temporary migrants" and that this can make them vulnerable to labor options that may deprive them of institutionalized labor protections (Clibborn, 2021, p. 350). Additionally, working hours limitations may limit students' employment options, as can a "lack of understanding of employment processes" in the host country (Arkoudis et al., 2019, p. 803). Brunner (2022a) explains that many international students in Canada are "concentrated in the service sector" (p. 90), which aligns with comments from student participants in this study and indicative of the possible limitations of a relationship between student jobs and postgraduate career plans. These examples show that while international students are bound by immigration regulations facilitating their academic endeavors, the opportunity to accept employment in the host country—as well as the limitations on that option—have impacts on their experience abroad. The following chapter continues this section's theme of the salience of employment topics for international students as it relates to ISM policy impacts.

Relationships

The impact of the student visa and study permit policies on relationships in the three case countries appears to be less significant than casually hypothesized at the outset of this study. Despite this, some of the study participants shared valuable insights into the ways their relationships were impacted by ISM policy in the host country. An overview of these themes that arose pertaining to academics can be found in Table 16; a selection of these is discussed below.

Table 16. Key Relationships Themes

Themes
Non-Issues

Family
Romantic
Friends

One Australian policy document outlined strategies to improve student-switching options

post-graduation, explaining that improved

> post-study work visas enable international students to remain in Australia on completion
> of a higher education degree for 2–4 years—more than many other countries. In addition,
> we have announced changes to our student visa processing arrangements, making them
> simpler and easier to navigate. (Australian Government, T1 2016, p. 6)

Despite this, initial visa issuance is predicated on affirmation from the student that the

"applicant intends to genuinely stay in Australia *temporarily*…" [emphasis added] (Australian

Government, T2 2021b, p. 360). Faced with a conflict between the possibility that they might be

able to remain in Australia post-graduation, and the implied temporary nature of their time in the

country, some students indicated visa policy effects on their romantic relationships. That is,

without certainty that they will be able to remain in the country, some students identified

perceived policy influence on their relationships with romantic partners.

Eddy (Britain A3), for example, shared a deeply personal story about the ways in which

his uncertain pursuit of a permanent status, by way of the student visa, influenced one of his

romantic relationships. Considering the many challenges he was facing to move from the student

visa to a more permanent status, Eddy shared the following:

> I just couldn't believe it when it was nine and a half years that I knew that it would take
> to get this [more permanent] visa, I just could not believe it and then, all of a sudden, I
> started seeing an Australian guy, and the first thing that came to my mind was, 'Oh! If
> my visa doesn't work out, then I'll just be with him,' because I just thought, 'Oh, you

> know, I'm just going to be with him forever.' And it didn't actually work out that way, and then I noticed, we would be having arguments, and I would think, 'Oh, well I better not really, you know, be too harsh with him, because then he'll break up with me and I won't have the visa option.' And then I sort of thought, 'Oh, my God, this is awful,' I'm really sort of… I mean it's just in my subconscious, trying to get this extra visa option, that's not why I want to be with another person, I want to be with them because I love them.

This experience informed Eddy's perspective on future relationships, eventually prompting him to devise a commitment ceremony with his current Australian partner that deliberately did not involve any official paperwork, therefore preventing the possibility that visa considerations would slip into decisions he made about his relationships.

Though she did not experience it herself, Hachi (Taiwan A3) feels that "the visa can put some stress on the [romantic] relationship." She further explains, whether it was two people or only one on a temporary visa, there can also be stressors, and that the lack of clarity regarding permanence in the country can "definitely affect the power in the relationship" (Hachi, Taiwan A3). Qiaohui (China A3) also believes that it is possible that some potential romantic partners would think "I don't want to date someone with student visa," closing off the option for some relationships to develop. Ziqi (China A3) is planning to develop a long-term relationship with her boyfriend, but his family is concerned about her situation, that is, that her student visa does not provide a sense of permanence for her to remain in the country. Out of this concern, her boyfriend's family has offered to assist with a potential switch to a more permanent status.

Though not explicitly evident within the policies analyzed for this study, the impermanent or changeable nature of some US policies were challenging for some of the students[3]. This included, for example, sweeping policy changes as a result of suspicion of

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[3] Discussion of this sort of precarity for those studying in the United States were common, see chapter nine.

students from Muslim countries in 2017 and as a result of the pandemic (Crumley-Effinger,

forthcoming). There exist strict expectations that students "should not take any action that

detracts from" the stated purpose for obtaining the visa, that is, studying (SITS, T3 n.d.a). Such

actions that could detract from this purpose and prevent a student from maintaining their legal

status (and thus result in termination of their eligibility to remain in the country) could include

temporary suspension or incarceration. Referring to these two phenomena (swiftly changing

policies and actions that could put the visa in danger), students indicated that they felt visa

policies could impact their friendships.

When visa policy changes occur, students themselves or their friends can be affected.

Merve (Turkey U6) argues that it is important for international students to commit to "sharing

resources… because when they attack one it comes to all of us." In this case, the attacks she was

referring to included things as the so-called Muslim ban in 2017 and ICE restrictions on online

learning in summer 2020. Brenda (Mexico U3) suggests that she and her friends are a source of

support for one another, especially as they try to keep track of regulatory changes. For example,

she explains:

> [I was] not necessarily personally [affected], but a lot of my friends, when all the Muslim
> ban happened, a lot of them were affected by it, and so I was kind of like indirectly
> affected by it, because you know we were a source of support for each other…

Andres (Colombia U4) illustrates multiple situations in which his interactions with friends were

perceived through the lens of his visa and the resulting precarity of his situation. For example, he

describes hesitancy to drink with friends because of the risk that an incident could pose to his

ability to remain in the US to study. In this vein, he expresses the following:

>Mostly in every single decision I take that is not entirely academic… I always have to be thinking about the impact that that's going to have to my visa, so definitely there is a fear for international students, a constant fear of losing their visa, yes. (Andres, Colombia U4)

Again, confronted with invitations to drink when it is not allowed for him, he explains that he is more "self-aware" and "cautious" because he does not want to "jeopardize [his] visa." Ultimately, he feels that the visa regulations were unfair because of the "lack of freedom when you have maybe the chance of doing social interactions that are not" entirely legal or well-received (Andres, Colombia U4). Finally, according to Ray (India U4), the uncertainty certainly affected his friendships, saying: "I think you were reluctant, because you have a visa and you don't know what's the clear future, you might be reluctant in ways to form those friendships because you know you might not be able to come back."

As described in chapter two, the literature acknowledges some of the ways that international students consider their family relationships when considering undertaking a degree program abroad, for example when deciding to undertake the sojourn and in financial considerations (Martin, 2017). Family involvement in student's mobility decisions can be accompanied by "immense internal and external pressure to succeed" (Hanassab & Tidwell, 2002, p. 315), both in pursuit of academic credentials and, possibly, looking towards potential family mobility. Brooks & Waters (2011) explain that in some cases, the "immigration of the whole family begins with the mobility of an individual student (p. 50), wherein student academic and professional successes abroad may facilitate future migration for family members to the host country.

While this study's findings indicated limited impacts of ISM policy on family relationships, the findings clearly do show that students' romantic relationships were influenced

by ISM policies in their host nation. Lipura & Collins (2020) noted the influences of romantic relationships on international students' activities but did not focus on any potential ways that the relationships were impacted by ISM policies themselves. Discussing student-switchers in Australia, Robertson (2013) identified an immigration environment in which students' "bodies, capabilities, relationships and bank accounts [were] laid bare to the scrutiny of the immigration regime" (p. 8). Elfeel and Bailey (2020) describe how the contours of the student visa policies in the United States can push dependents into challenging sacrifices due to the limitations on those whose status in the country are dependent on a primary visa holder studying in the country, though dependents were not the focus of this study.[4]

Another area of interest for this study is the way that friendships are impacted by ISM policies, though this is not often discussed in the literature. Byrne (2016) describes the soft power aims of Australian mobility policy of the New Colombo Plan (NCP) for facilitating inbound student mobility. By bringing in international students from the region, the "underpinning expectation is that the cumulative insights, experiences, and friendships generated by the NCP at an individual and institutional level will provide new and enduring pathways to mutual understanding, respect, trust, and collaboration between states" (Byrne, 2016, p. 108). Troubling this sort of effort, some studies discuss a "social fragmentation" in relation to domestic and international students, with only a small percentage of international students making friends with local (domestic) students (Arkoudis et al., 2019; Martirosyan et al., 2019).

Another study showed that work opportunities offered through the Australian ISM

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[4] In fact, few of the participants interviewed for this study discussed family members who were on dependent visas during the sojourn abroad. Of the few that did, all were studying in the United States.

policies facilitated the development of new friendships with coworkers, especially other international students in the same place of employment (Tran et al., 2020). Working to expand the body of literature related to relationships and international students, the findings outlined in this section describe a selection of ways that ISM policies can impact students' romantic and platonic relationships because of limitations put on the student, as well as because of the precarity or limited duration of the student's status in the host country.

Supplemental Areas

Going beyond the academic, employment/professional, and relationship impacts, the findings also show a variety of other, miscellaneous ways in which the ISM policies affected students, their perspectives of the policies, and their experiences as international students through visas or study permits. An overview of these themes that arose can be found in Table 17; a selection of these is discussed below.

Table 17. Key Supplemental Impact Themes

Themes
Student switching
Knowledge of policies
Visa and immigration support
Uncertainty and precarity
Study abroad decisions
Political Involvement

The topic of student switching arose in many areas of the participant interviews, including being intermingled in students' consideration of academic, employment, and

relationship topics. Indeed, the student switching topic was quite ubiquitous throughout many of

the students' interviews, serving to show how activities and experiences while on the student

visa are very much impacted by host ISM policies for those students keeping an eye on their

post-graduation options within the host country. In Canada, ISM policy is in some ways

explicitly geared towards student-switching aims, perhaps best illustrated by the following

statement in the Global Affairs Canada (T1 2019) strategy document:

> Due in part to the aging of Canada's population, immigration will increasingly drive net workforce growth… International students make excellent candidates for permanent residency: they are relatively young, are proficient in at least one official language, have Canadian educational qualifications and can help address this country's current and pending labour market needs, particularly for highly skilled workers. (p. 5)

One policy document explicitly describes the "path to permanent residence" for those students

who have "studied in Canada" and who would now "like to live here permanently" (Government

of Canada, T1 2019c). Noting this, students discussed how the switching options for moving

from a student to more permanent status posed challenges. Afra (Iran C2) mentions frustration

with the ways in which her time on the student visa informs her efforts to move to permanent

residency, noting:

> The limitation that when you're working in Canada on a study permit your work experience doesn't count as Canadian work experience [towards permanent residency], that's… Like, that also doesn't make sense to me, like just because I'm an international student, I'm still working in Canada, why doesn't it count?

Ella (France C5) feels uncertain why the Canadian and local provincial government would make

it challenging to move to more permanent status after completing the degree. In addition to

noting the challenges of the switching process, this shows how provincial policies can also affect

international students. She says:

> The policies, when it comes to retaining students… especially that there's been a lot of back and forth [with] the provincial government on keeping international students, which

for me is a complete nonsense, in the sense that the government just, you know, subsidizes our education through you know, subsidizing universities, our tuitions, and even some scholarships, and then they make it difficult for us to renew our permits afterwards, there's been a lot of back and forth, and changes over the past few years… But something that I think doesn't make any sense, it's like if you fund students, you want to keep them, considering that, you know, we've been shaped for the Canadian market, so it would make sense for us to stay here. But that's not always the case. (Ella, France C5)

Not only are the policies themselves sometimes challenging when seeking a switch from student to more permanent status, personal factors can also come into play. Negar (Iran C2) explains that

you need to be always during your studies full time to be able to get a postgraduate work permit, and this is a big limitation. If you have a disease, you are not sure if you [can] take a leave of absence, [or if] you can justify it afterward and when you get granted that work permit.

This can also be tied to Negar's prior mention of the fact that some of her work experiences while studying as a student did not count towards the work experience accrual needs of the permanent residency pathway.

Though not explicitly reflected in the analyzed policies, students in all countries, but especially in Canada, note that concern for their study permit or student visa was an important factor as they considered how they might become politically engaged while in the country as students. As Afra (Iran C2) explains:

I do a lot of activist stuff and things like that, and I did, like, take a step back when things would get like a little bit more serious, like, you know, where there are like rallies and things like that I wouldn't participate in those just because… I'm an immigrant, like, if they get me, like, you know, I'm going to get deported, I'm not doing that, even though, like, I cared about the cause a lot.

Andrew (USA C1) illustrates how these concerns might not only be the result of students' perceptions of policy limitations, but that he had been explicitly cautioned against such involvement:

As [a new] international student is like go through a little orientation, and one of the things that… There were there were a number of different people who presented this, so

it was a big room of students… and one of the things that they talked about, there was a professor, and I don't really remember what his affiliation was with the international office… but he gave a little presentation of how to succeed as an international student and one of the things that he said was 'Don't be too politically active while you're an international student, because that can come back to haunt you,' and I haven't especially heeded that advice, but that is something that I've thought of, like, it's a bummer that he gave that advice. It's like, I don't know whether it's a bummer that he had to give that advice or that he…Like I don't know whether I can judge whether it's good advice or not, but I was kind of bummed when he said that. I was like, 'Oh that that sucks.'… As like a white man that… I think I'm the person least likely to suffer from those things anyway, but um… and so, yeah each time I've done those things [been involved in protests], I like think back to this thing this guy said and I'm like, 'You know, I don't think this is gonna be a problem for me, but like maybe it would have been a problem for someone else, or maybe somebody else would have been dissuaded.'

Marion (Germany C2) notes that she must carefully consider her actions as an activist,

explaining that

Canada is really hard to kind of navigate, like the identity you hold as a migrant, because… I can't really do any blockages or like go into specific riots, not that I necessarily want to do this, but I also want to protect my friends who do this and I can't because I know if the police does anything I might be detained or like sent back to Germany, so it's just kind of… I wouldn't say that, like my freedom of expression is really impacted, but I would say that I really have to be careful what I do… Like some people in my activism group that have planned, like, really cool actions and I kind of had to say, like 'I can't go because I'm not willing to risk my study permit for this,' and then it's kind of like, 'Ah!' you know, 'I wish I could go…'

Further reflecting on some activist issues she is passionate about, Marion insists:

I do believe that you want to hold the state accountable when it engages in things that are not okay and morally not acceptable. And I think that's kind of like the goal of democracy to be able to do this, and I'm not saying that I can't do this, of course, but I do notice the difference in how Canadians can do it and how I can do it. (Marion, Germany C2)

Finally, Noha's (USA C4) emphasis in this area was on her inability to vote despite living there and paying taxes, expressing a frustration that she does not get a say in what is happening in her community, and noting that:

it has a huge effect on me, and, especially, going from somewhere [her home] where I was a lot more privileged and then suddenly crossing the border and being seen legally, as someone who is just… in just leagues and miles, different.

The items included here represent just a small number of the additional ways that international students are impacted by ISM policies beyond their academics, employment, and relationships. This section highlights how ISM policies affect students' perceptions and experiences of student-switching, as well as the ways that ISM policy impacts their political participation.

Multi-step migration, which often begins with international students making the move from a temporary student status to a more permanent employment visa (Brunner, 2022b) is often discussed in the literature. The importance of this topic in the student interviews, with examples provided above, is mirrored by the topic's importance for scholars of mobility and migration vis-a-vis international students. Grimm (2019), for example, presents an Australian scheme to introduce a new visa category that "effectively allowed international graduates to 'switch' their immigration status from that of a student to that of skilled migrant" (p. 246). This is noted as a "two-step" migration process (Grimm, 2019), or as "edugration"[5] (Brunner, 2022b), with such approaches described as "nexus policies" in countries attracting large numbers of international students (Robertson, 2013). Ultimately, policies facilitating this sort of movement are building "education pathways as a means to residency" (Robertson, 2011, p. 110) and otherwise facilitate the pursuit of personal and familial "migration intentions" with students' academic pursuits as the starting point (Glass et al., 2021, p. 14).

International students, as ostensibly temporary guests in their host nations, may have varied relationships with the political life in their new homes. Gao (2021) describes

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[5] Combining the words 'education' and 'immigration.'

"heterogeneous and malleable" political identities of Chinese international students in Western countries (p. 1), while Glass (2018) notes that international students' "sense of belonging is shaped by the restrictions they are subject to, including legal, political, and social restrictions" (p. 29). Finally, the following excerpt from a poem by an international student in the United States emphatically elucidates the concerns that might arise for some students when it comes to political participation or demonstrations in the host country:

> I know how badly we both wanted to go to the #BLM protest at City Hall,
> But what if we get caught and need an attorney?
> Let's check first. Would we be okay with the visa and all? Remember, we could lose
> our status, in an instant, since F-1s, at risk of being sunk,
> are forever behind the eight-ball. (Anand, 2021)

These selections from the literature bear witness to what some of the student participants in this study described, as they felt restricted in their political involvement due to their status as international students, including a concern that they may run afoul of (unspecified) ISM policies or local authorities that could put their status as students at risk.

Conclusion

The preceding examples illustrate the varied and wide-ranging ways that ISM policies affect international students, serving as an explicatory foundation for the concept of policy pervasion vis-a-vis international student mobility and migration. When possible, the excerpts from ISM policies and student interviews are complemented by drawing upon those bodies of literature which attend to some of the ways in which ISM policies affect international students in these diverse realms of their academic, professional, and personal lives. While ISM policies are ostensibly limited to a select number of issue areas delimiting the international student visa or

study permit (i.e., facilitating entry into the country and representing permission to undertake studies), these policies clearly evidence significant and far-reaching effects for students.

These students are, in effect, slotting into an education-centered "migration infrastructure" that bounds their experience abroad (Xiang & Lindquist, 2014). Even when student voices and an analysis of the policies themselves cannot point to specific policies that might affect or speak to a given student action, students' lack of familiarity or knowledge of policies can have an impact or even chilling effect on student activity. This is exemplified by student accounts of feeling that there are necessary limits on their political involvement, without identifying specific policies that might prohibit or proscribe such activity. Further examples of this include the general precarity felt by many students, as they expressed concerns that they may not be permitted to reenter the host country or continue their studies despite meeting regulatory requirements for entry.

As outlined here, ISM policy pervasion is the idea that mobility and migration policy for international students in the case countries influences many areas of international students' lives. This chapter has provided evidence for ISM policy pervasion in the form of recounting international students' descriptions of the ways that ISM policy affects their lives in meaningful, diverse, and wide-ranging ways; that is, ISM policies affect students academically, professionally, and in their relationships. Examples include ISM policy influences on students' chosen field of study, on their ability to accept employment in-country, and can also extend to their romantic relationships. Furthermore, ISM policy affects students in other ways, such as dealing with challenges associated with the precarity of their situations, differing levels of knowledge of the policy parameters, and as they try to navigate the intersections of their time as

students with student switching regulations if they seek to remain in their host country more permanently upon program completion.

Future studies of ISM policy pervasion may include greater numbers of students, additional host countries, and may pursue replication of the findings here or identification of other areas in which the institution of ISM policies affect international students. This chapter has used data from the policy analyses and student interviews to provide concrete examples of the ways that "macro-level policies shape the everyday lives of international students" (Rose-Redwood & Rose-Redwood, 2017, p. iv). In doing so, I have identified what I have termed 'ISM policy pervasion,' by centering student voices and experiences to show the variety of ways that ISM policy can have important impacts on international student experiences in Australia, Canada, and the United States.

CHAPTER 7: LABOR & EMPLOYMENT PROMINENCE

"All the decisions that I make in terms of my career have to do with accomplishing those [visa] rules."

—Brenda (Mexico U3)

Introduction

As introduced in chapter three, with international students often seen as a key source of talent to remain competitive in the global economy, nations are increasingly pursuing those students as prospective immigrants who can contribute to the nation's pool of educated labor (Han et al., 2022; Trilokekar & El Masri, 2017). Policymakers may therefore see ISM policies as a mechanism through which the host nation can both enjoy immediate economic benefits and attract and retain educated foreign labor in an increasingly open and competitive market (King & Sondhi, 2018; Lo, 2019; Tannock, 2009). This "education-migration nexus" (Robertson, 2013) highlights national perspectives of the labor market value of hosting and retaining international students, and it may also entail adjustments to immigration systems to further entice students to stay, in order to accumulate greater human capital for the host nation (Lo, 2019). In the Canadian context, this nexus is described by Brunner (2022a) as one in which after the student's graduation, "Canada gains human capital, tax revenue, population growth, and soft power" (p. 79).

Such a view of international students relies on notions of human capital development through higher education, combined with efforts to retain (selectively, in some cases, see Grimm, 2019) educated international students who have been trained in the host country (Fischer, 2021a;

Tremblay, 2005; Woodfield, 2009). The findings from the first research question (outlined in chapter five) illustrate how the host countries in this study pursued specific policy emphases as it relates to international students as prospective contributors to local labor markets (Crumley-Effinger, 2021; Gopal, 2016). Those findings, which are explored in more detail in this chapter, show that labor considerations are prominent in ISM policies in Australia, Canada, and the United States.

Not only is labor prominent in the ISM policies analyzed in this study, but ISM policy related to employment was also identified as particularly salient in the experiences of the student participants. Employment-related topics in the international student literature have already been introduced briefly in chapter three. For example, some students see benefits from earning local credentials in the host country because those credentials may carry more weight within the local (host country) labor market as employers are more familiar with local degree programs and institutions (Collins, 2008; Tremblay, 2005), which is naturally valuable for those students who hope for employment in the host country. According to a 2019 study, prospective international students' concerns about graduate employability in many countries—including this study's case countries—exceed concerns with things such as tuition fees, living costs, and safety in the host country (IDP Education, 2019). And while it is true that international students have many concerns and areas that factor into their experiences while abroad (Martin, 2017; Glass et al., 2021), the findings from this study indicate that employment concerns—both during and after program completion—are quite prominent in students' experiences in these host countries.

Taken together, this chapter draws on the ISM policy analyses and student participant interviews to outline some of the ways in which labor and employment issues might be of central

importance when considering the broad topic of international student mobility in these three countries. The identification of labor and employment issues as prominent in the ISM policy and international student experience was introduced in chapter five but is presented in more detail below. This is done in the first section through illustrative excerpts from each host nation's ISM policies, highlighting important ideas from the analyzed documents that relate to the selected labor themes. The second section introduces three different themes that arose in the interviews, showing how employment-related policies have impacted student experiences in the host country. Both sections, as well as the conclusion, incorporate findings from the literature to contextualize these findings with other research on international students.

Labor Emphases in ISM Policy

The sole Australian strategy document examined in this study, Australian Government (T1 2016) clarifies the understanding that there exists an important connection between students' studies and their future careers, noting that "employability [is] a key driver for why students choose to undertake a particular course of study" (p. 4). With this, the strategy document aims to precipitate "effective industry links and student services" (p. 6) to improve the "employability of graduates" (p. 10). Finally, the student visa should "facilitate work opportunities," allowing international students the chance to work for the duration of their studies and to "apply for a work visa following completion of their study" (p. 14).

The success of this project (i.e., enhancing connections between industry and education, resulting in improved employability of students, as well as visas to support post-graduation employment in the country) is seen as "critical to the success and competitiveness of Australian international education" and furthermore "supports enhanced graduate employability outcomes,

research investment and output, and technology and innovation transfer" (Australian

Government, T1 2016, p. 19). Ultimately, the strategy document touts Australia's "quality

education products supported by competitive visa settings and post-study work options"

(Australian Government, T1 2016, p. 28).

Providing guidance on the move from the Subclass 500 (student) visa to the Subclass 485

(temporary graduate) work visa, Australian Government (T2 2021b) delineates the connection

between the student visa and fulfilling Australian labor needs. That is, sections of this document

identify the need for a recently conferred degree (within the last six months) as well as a match

between students' studies and predetermined skilled occupations eligible for Subclass 485

employment. For example, one of the conditions needed for receiving the 485 visa is that the

"degree, diploma or trade qualification used to satisfy the Australian study requirement is closely

related to the applicant's nominated skilled occupation" (Australian Government, T2 2021b, p.

335). As a visa designed for students recently graduated from an Australian HEO, the Subclass

485 visa directly ties student-switching with current labor needs in the country.

Relating the aforementioned strategy document with the ideas explicated in the preceding

paragraph, we see a connection between the importance of providing international students with

an opportunity to gain "skills desired by industry" in the country (Australian Government, T1

2016, p. 4), and the opportunity to move from the student visa (Subclass 500) to the post-

graduation work visa (Subclass 485). This helps one understand, then, the value of work

eligibility while students are still enrolled. Australian Government (T2 2021c) outlines the

parameters for such work: "The holder must not engage in work for more than 40 hours a

fortnight while the holder is in Australia" (p. 172). As useful explanatory documents, both DET

(T3 2017) and SIA (T3 2020b) clarify that this work is limited to 20 hours per week (40 hours

per fortnight) "when your course is in session" (DET, T3 2017) and "unlimited hours during

holiday breaks" (SIA, T3 2020b). Working while studying is described as "an option to earn

extra money and get a taste of the local culture" as well as "a great way to… gain hands-on work

experience" (SIA, T3 2020b). This same document succinctly describes the process of moving

from the student visa to a work visa post-graduation:

> If you're interested in staying in Australia to work after you graduate, you'll need to get a
> new working visa before your student visa expires. As a graduated international student
> you may be eligible for: The Post-Study Work stream of the Temporary Graduate Visa
> (subclass 485) if you have completed a Bachelor, Masters or Doctoral degree. (SIA, T3
> 2020b)

Such moves are described by Robertson (2013) as indicative of the "education-migration

nexus" in Australia, wherein ISM may be viewed by host nations as a path for highly skilled

students towards future migration and entrance into the local labor market (Kratz & Netz, 2018).

This phenomenon, also known as "two-step migration," is vital to Australian interests, where the

"great majority of onshore migrants are former international students" (Hawthorne, 2010, p. 6).

This is due, in no small part, to the assumption that these students, upon degree completion,

"possess the attributes associated with superior labor market outcomes – youth, advanced host-

country language ability… and domestically relevant training (Hawthorne, 2010, p. 12). Within

the context of the pandemic's wide-ranging disruptions, the Australian government has further

shown the connections between ISM policy and labor market augmentation goals, with the

announcement that there would be a "temporary relaxation of the existing 40-hour per fortnight

cap for student visa holders working in the hospitality and tourism sector," though "Using

international students as a quick fix to 'fill the gap' in Australia's workforce shortage runs the risk of undervaluing international students and may lead to student visas being seen as low-skill work visas in disguise" (Balakrishnan, 2021).

Though international students are often "officially and legally categorized as temporary migrants" (Grimm, 2019, p. 236), the Australian ISM policy documents evidence a commitment to facilitating more permanent status for educated workers who complete degree programs in the country. This perspective is influenced by the Australian pursuit of international students towards competitive economic ends, occurring within the context of global discourse positioning these students as a desirable, limited resource, where student "Mobility is shaped as much by the individuals, institutions, and states that seek academic migrants in a global higher education market and competition arena as by the individuals who physically move" (Cantwell, 2011, p. 443). The discussed policy documents, as well as SIA (T3 2020c) and SIA (T3 2020f) illustrate the ISM policy emphasis on facilitating the development of skilled workforce from the international student population, drawing a connection for current students between their employment activities while enrolled with the post-graduation visa options for legal employment in the country.

Some Canadian pathways to permanent residency (PR) entail the accrual of points to gain such benefits (Crumley-Effinger, 2021; Government of Canada, 2019c), with a variety of policy documents exemplifying the close connection between international student studies and post-completion student switching, including the value of a Canadian education for gaining points. According to one strategy policy document, "As most international students are young, have Canadian educational qualifications and in-demand labour skills, and are proficient in one of our

official languages, they are often ideal candidates for permanent residency" (Global Affairs

Canada, T1 2019, p. iv).

For the Canadian experience class pathway to PR, for example, former students who have

studied in the country for a minimum of two years are eligible for five points towards the

required point total, furthermore, if their "accompanying spouse or common-law partner" has

also completed at least two years of study in Canada, they receive an additional five points

(Canada MOJ, T2 2020b, p. 90). This same policy provides broad, *de facto* work authorizations

to students with study permits for the duration of their studies and after they have graduated as

they await their post-graduation work permits (Canada MOJ, T2 2020b; Government of Canada,

T3 2014; Government of Canada, T3 2020e). It should be noted that these students do have work

hour limitations while classes are in session during regular academic terms. These allowances

both encourage students to contribute to the local economy and set them up for the possibility of

receiving future student-switching benefits upon completion of their studies to facilitate

obtaining more permanent status in the country, should they desire to do so (Canada MOJ, T2

2020b; Crumley-Effinger, 2021; Government of Canada, T3 2019c).

Again, labor force augmentation goals are central to Canada's aims for the future

competitiveness of the country on the global stage:

> According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada, within the next decade, immigration
> is expected to account for 100 percent of net growth in the workforce, up from 75 percent
> today. Attracting the best and the brightest students through a robust international
> education strategy will help secure Canada's long-term prosperity and economic success.
> (Global Affairs Canada, T1 2014, p. 9)

Workforce augmentation is also supported by ISM policies geared towards skills development at

the intersection of academics and future employment through internships and co-ops

(Government of Canada, T1 2014; Government of Canada, T3 2019b) and pointed attendance to "medium- and long-term labour shortages, particularly in the highly qualified professional and skilled trades that sustain a modern economy" (Global Affairs Canada, T1 2019, p. 5). In short, Canadian ISM policy provides one avenue through which the country is seeking to respond to future identified challenges as it relates to the labor market within the country and in relation to modern global economic competitiveness discourses.

US ISM policy displays a commitment throughout many policy documents to the idea that the study visa is obtained for the primary purpose of undertaking studies, and that employment is and should remain limited. According to one policy document, "The U.S. government takes working illegally very seriously" (SITS, T3 n.d.f), a point which is driven home with the ominous explanation that

> If your DSO [Designated School Official] knows you are working without permission, they must report it through SEVIS, meaning your SEVIS record will be terminated. That means that you will have to leave the United States immediately, and you may not be allowed to return. (SITS, T3 n.d.f)

While students can engage in on-campus employment on a part-time (during the regular terms) or full-time (during the regular breaks) basis, they must refrain from off-campus employment unless they have received explicit permission in the form of various authorizations (Aliens and Nationality, T2 2020; SITS, T3 n.d.a).

At all times, any work authorization, whether for on- or off-campus, is tied directly to the student's status as a *student*: "The employment authorization is automatically terminated whenever the student fails to maintain [student] status" (Aliens and Nationality, T2 2020, p. 304). The close connection between off-campus work and students' academic undertakings are underscored by the two practical training programs available to degree-seeking F-1 students in

the country. For example, OPT provides work "authorization for temporary employment for optional practical training directly related to the student's major area of study" (Aliens and Nationality, T2 2020, p. 306; SITS, T3 n.d.i).

While there are options for emergency work authorizations due to "economic hardship" cases (SITS, T3 n.d.g), a component of the initial visa application is the requirement to show sufficient funds to cover one's academic and living costs as indicated by the HEO where the student will be enrolling (Aliens and Nationality, T2 2020). In addition to the employment authorization gatekeeping capacity of students' advisors and US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), additional government agencies are brought in to assist. Both SITS (T3 n.d.h) and SITS (T3 n.d.i) explain that the E-Verify program and the Social Security Administration can provide additional checks on unauthorized employment by international students.

Employment in the Student Interviews

Students' current and future employment and professional lives, as experienced through the confines of the host nation ISM policy, were an important topic that for many students arose in the interviews before any pointed SSI questions about employment. This section explores a range of important ideas arising from the students as they shared how the visa and study permit policies affected decisions about, perspectives on, and experiences with, employment and work in general. Note that some of these themes in Table 15 have already been discussed in chapter six, so this chapter focuses on the themes of (i) earnings and income, (ii) employer relationships, and (iii) getting hired.

A number of students felt frustrated by various ISM regulations that inhibited their earnings, such as through the hours limitation and rules about what types of employment are and

are not permitted. Many of the concerns with employment limitations affecting income were

related by the students to a frustration that almost all of their funding needed to come from home

or savings, whereas domestic students could earn from unimpeded employment. Ziqi (China A3)

explained:

> I would have financial burdens, even [though] I work part time, and even with the support from my family, even with the support from myself. I would avoid, like, going to… Avoid, like, leisure activities, if that costs a lot, unless I really like it, I will save money for it, um I would tend not to eat outside a lot.

In the same vein, Noha (USA C4) conveyed the limited value of part-time work, saying:

> So, 20 hours a week on the Quebec minimum wages 14.50 an hour. And so you know, that's, you know, it's pretty good if you're also getting help from family. But it's not nearly enough. I don't know how I would have dealt with it, if I hadn't had that like financial support from my family, because working just 20 hours a week on minimum wage, it's not enough to support yourself. It's really, really, really not.

Noting domestic (US American) friends who were able to earn more working at a local

restaurant than in on-campus jobs, Krishna (Nepal U4) explains: "I wish we had access to that

because I feel like a lot of times, people who need money… tend to be international students and

they just don't have access to the same kind of opportunities and resources." Benesh

(Afghanistan U5) and Brenda (Mexico U3) made similar statements, with Brenda saying, "you

know, sometimes I want just a simple job, sometimes I want to just work in a bar or something

you know to maintain myself." Hachi (Taiwan A3) expresses similar concerns, explaining that

> at the moment I only work 20 hours a week because of this regulation, even though I know the money will only cover my living expenses and I can't have any saving and… yeah.

Students reported that ISM policies in their host country did or potentially could affect

the professional relationships they had with their employers. These effects could be as significant

as the exploitation explored previously or could be more subtle as they navigated the

complexities of the regulatory requirements together. Binsa (Nepal A3), for example, described situations in which she and her friends regularly had to complete paperwork together with their employers in order to deal with accidentally working more than the allotted number of hours. For Binsa, this was mostly a nonissue between her and her employer, though it was a source of stress:

> I had to do, like, heaps of paperwork like, [explaining] why did I have to do it [the extra hours], and then the manager, regional manager had to like sign it, and then, or like forward it so that I do not get any trouble with my visas, like working 40 hours… like more than 40 hours per fortnight, and then it was like a bit of stress.

Krishna (Nepal U4) was also concerned about the strain that the regulations might put on his relationship with his supervisor, saying

> having to do paperwork and then also like I feel like I constantly feel like I'm asking the favor from my employer at times like, 'Hey can you fill this extra documents for me?'

As Andrew (USA C1) navigated the academic requirements of his program and the study permit extension process, a concern of his was related to the need to maintain the ability to work, in part because he did not want to leave his "supervisor in the lurch halfway through the semester." When the timing of the study permit extensions did not line up with his academic terms dates, it could cause trouble with his teaching assistant contracts, which in turn was

> A big burden on… it's actually a big burden on my supervisor, because the department guarantees my stipend and if you don't have a TA-ship and you don't have a scholarship ,then you're guaranteed… then it comes out of your supervisor's research grant. And so you know, I like my supervisor I want to keep… like have a good working relationship with them, and so I that's not a position that I want either of us to be in, where he like is now bitter because he's having to spend an extra like $7,000 or something like that on me that semester.

For Nisha (India C3), the work hour limitation was the source of some challenges with her employer in the retail sector.

> I would love to, you know, work 40 hours and make that money but there's nothing I can

do, right… and they don't understand that either because, like they're not in that same situation, so it's difficult like maintaining that conversation with them.

Many students indicated that the visa regulations, in one way or another, affected their ability to be employed. Often this was related to employer perceptions of their status as international students, perceptions which may have differing levels of overlap with the reality of the students' situations.

Binsa (Nepal A3) sought healthcare-related work from her first year as a student in Australia but was often frustrated to find employers who only desired employees who were Australian citizens or those who had permanent residence in the country. She explained

> Whenever you're applying for the job, they actually specify, like you either need to… have Australian citizenship or you need to have the permanent residency, so it has affected me personally, a lot… And yeah, it was really tough time for me, at that time, when I think about it… it has affected me a lot, to get a job.

Olivia (Italy A3) described a similar experience, where both on- and off-campus employers often preferred to hire Australian citizens, noting that international students are "kind of not a priority" when it comes to hiring, noting that when employers "[see] in your resume that you have a visa, like immediately it's kind of like, 'Yeah, okay, you're pretty much at the back [of the line of applicants]...'"

For Marion (Germany C2) in Canada, she once had a work permit but was still unable to find work, and considered whether there might be a connection between that difficulty and her desire to find employment in her field of study:

> For me another stressor is… I mean this is also specific, but I always tried to apply for jobs or for internships and it's always for Canadian permanent residents or citizens, so I cannot apply. And it's, yeah, it's… even though like I got a working permit, but that does

> not allow me to work for most of the jobs. Especially because I study international studies and so, most of the jobs that are advertised are by the government, and you can only work for the government as a permanent resident or citizen, which is understandable, but I would just, you know, love to experience that too.

Negar (Iran C2) also felt the effects of employers only accepting those who "at least have permanent residency" in Canada and explains that this was especially frustrating when "in many cases they [the employers] don't announce" this requirement.

Chesa (Tibet U4) expressed concerns with what she understood to be an inappropriate practice in an interview, when the interviewer asked her if she was authorized to work in the US. Prior to asking that question and receiving Chesa's answer that she had authorization as an international student, Chesa noted that the interviewer "was excited because we were talking and stuff like… the moment she knew that I was international student, like I was on OPT…I saw her like, I could see her change her energy" related to her interest in Chesa as a candidate. This was a further disappointment with the issue of employers not being able to hire students on visas, even if they might wish to, as Chesa shared another story about a summer internship while completing her studies. She shared:

> I really enjoyed the internship and then the team liked me, and then they were like 'Oh you're graduating this May, come back.' And then I was also excited and [they] didn't ask me my status and everything and I told my manager that I was on F-1 visa, because I didn't want to like… I knew them well and then I wanted to be clear with them, so I told the manager, that I was on was on F-1 visa and that I will have like OPT, and she didn't know what OPT was, and she did some research if they will be able to hire people who are on F-1 visa and then later on, she discovered that they won't be able to hire like… students who have F1 visa. (Chesa, Tibet U4)

Many other students shared similar stories of having interest in their applications end when prospective employers learned about their status, including Aadi (Bangladesh C6), Afra (C2),

Howard (USA C7), Benesh (Afghanistan U5), Dee (China U1), Mia (Vietnam U4), Ray (India U4), and Vanya (Swaziland U2).

Binsa (Nepal A3) shared that even if an employer was willing to hire someone who was not an Australian citizen and who did not have PR, they often would still shy away from hiring international students due to the work hour limitations:

> You had the working limitation and many people, they wouldn't like to hire you because you just have the work limitation and then um, the employer wants you to like, have a full-time availability to them, so it's not flexible for them. So, yeah, so it affects the hiring process

Niraj (Nepal A1) experienced much the same thing, as he sought employment in his field:

> I have plenty of work experience in international companies. I wanted to do a part time research… or work in similar field, but because of the fact that my visa actually says it's only allowed… to work 20 hours per week, I could not get… even though I got interviewed… like called out [invited] for interviews, because of the visa situation, no I never, never got any even part time jobs in my own field.

Towards the end of the interview, Niraj noted that while he knew a great deal about the visa regulations before deciding to study in Australia, he did not know that the work hour limits would affect his ability to gain employment in his field in this way. Expanding on this, Niraj recounted a specific situation in which he was interviewed for a position at an important news company:

> I got called in for interview, which I was surprised [about in] the first place, because I had clearly mentioned that I was on a student visa, meaning that I'm only allowed to work 20 hours. The interview went well, but at the end, the point from HR was: I'm still on a student visa. So that kind of pissed me off, because I told that beforehand… Everyone's always going to look for someone [to work] more hours… that can contribute more hours, you don't want to have someone for [a] three day period and then someone else for the next three day period, that's just gonna mess up more things within the company. So, because of that main 20 hours issue, I had a lot of struggles finding work in my own related field, so yeah, that's one of the major things that actually bummed me out about the work restriction. (Niraj, Nepal A1)

Ziqi (China A3) suggests that "most employers doesn't want to, like, deal with these visa conditions" like the hours restrictions. She explains that some employers will ask students to stay for additional shifts to work more hours, even if that puts the student's visa status at risk. Similar concerns about employers being unwilling to hire a student due to the fact that they can only work a limited number of hours were recalled by others as well, including Ziqi (China A3), Negar (Iran C2), and Nisha (India C3).

Hachi (Taiwan A3) mentioned that work hour limitations curtailed employer interest in her as a potential employee, but that students' temporary status could also cause problems. She explained that prospective employers were hesitant to "employ an international student or someone that can't stay in the country for good" (Hachi, Taiwan A3). Olivia (Italy A3) echoed this concern, sharing that she has heard prospective employers state that they do not want to hire international students because the students are only temporarily in the country and will eventually leave. Nisha (India C3) highlighted the concern that employment while enrolled is challenging because of the work hours limit, but also that companies will be hesitant to hire international students because "you probably are not going to stay there after graduation, so they're not going to… they'll give you all the skills and techniques you're going to take and just fly away after that."

Linda (Paraguay U2) felt frustrated not only by the concerns of employers about the lack of permanency that an international student worker has, but also by the discourse around post-graduation employment for international students:

> Finding a job or an internship is really hard, that's something that no one really tells you whenever you're applying to go abroad. And they're always like… because you always think 'Oh like I'm going to study abroad, I'm going to work there and like come back.'

But it's a little bit harder than that because they don't tell you that, because you need OPT, people will probably… like companies will probably not offer you the job or just like take it away from you. Either, if people are like 'Oh, but you can do the full year without having to like pay or the sponsorship,' or whatever, they [employers] still don't want to train you, because you [are] only going to last a year.

Eddy (Britain A3) faced challenges getting hired because his visa issuance was delayed, resulting in a lost employment opportunity because he did not receive the visa in time to accept a position. Brenda's (Mexico U3) efforts to continue working after graduation were stymied by regulatory requirements that necessitated that her employer hold a certain status verification with the US government (E-Verify), and when she was unable to find an employer with this status, she had to make other plans. She explains:

I couldn't get a job that was part of an E-verified company, and so I just couldn't get a job that would allow me to extend my OPT. When I apply for a job it has to be a company that's E-verified and they have to kind of like, not necessarily financially but like somewhat officially sponsored me, and we have to file all these things, and I think that makes the process way more complicated than if I were just applying to a job and they said yes, i'm taking care of her. Yeah, because I know a lot of a lot of companies don't even want to hire us, just because they know that they have to go through all of that. (Brenda, Mexico U3)

Furthermore, Brenda asserts that visa considerations are involved in the job search process "really all the time." That is,

every single decision in my career that I make, I have to take into account whether, if it's a visa [-appropriate job] or not, so most of the times I get jobs [offers] that fail the visa [requirements]... I put more weight on whether I'll be able to do it, than whether I like it or not. (Brenda, Mexico U3)

Mia (Vietnam U4) shared Brenda's concerns that the bureaucracy might put employers off of hiring international students "because of how many regulations and all of the paperwork and red tape, involving in there." In light of these sorts of roadblocks, and looking at her own post-graduation employment options, Dee (China U1) shares that she was considering looking

elsewhere for work because of the challenges posed by visa requirements if she were to remain

in the United States. She suggests:

> I feel Europe and also Australia has much open policy for immigration in general and it's easier to get status. It's easier to get working visa in those places, so in case that it becomes so difficult here [in the United States] to find a job, I would definitely consider, you know, just go to another country. (Dee, China U1)

Like Dee, Brenda (Mexico U3) was also considering whether the bother of paperwork for

staying in the United States was worth it, explaining

> I guess as I'm thinking about [post-graduation] jobs that I can get for August, I'm again in the same process of like 'should I go home?' 'Should I stay here?' And if I stay here, I'm probably going to get a job that's like, not my hundred percent, but it's one that will allow me to stay here for longer. And something that I've been thinking a lot about [is] like, whether it's worth like this exhaustion every single year, having to think about where I'm going to be, what I'm going to do, and I'll apply for all these things, I'm starting to question whether it's worth it, if I'm not really doing what I want anyway.

Krishna's (Nepal U4) frustrations with post-graduation employment, as described previously,

included concerns about the paperwork the employer would need to be willing to complete in

order to make the employment possible. In addition to needing to "have to have employer like

ready to sign these documents," Krishna describes the challenge of outlining his status to the

employer:

> When you're, like, talking to potential employers and then the whole, like, visa thing shows up like sometimes you're like… you're not sure if you want to say that you are authorized to work or you're not because technically you are because you are on OPT, that also becomes confusing. (Krishna, Nepal U4)

This confusion may come, in part, because authorization may be contingent upon successfully

securing a position, and because the employer may not understand what the authorization means.

While some prospective employers were unfamiliar with work authorizations and status,

others were concerned about their own potential role in supporting the student's status. Linda

(Paraguay U2), for example, outlines challenges getting temporary internships because

employers thought that they would need to sponsor her visa:

> as I mentioned a lot of times like they're like, yeah, like we keep going, I go through interviews and like towards the final steps they're like 'Oh, if you don't have…' like, 'if you need a visa, like, we can't really sponsor you.'

Mia (Vietnam U4) also faced stress and frustration at a pending deadline for getting

employed after graduating. Mia had interest from an employer, but with the ubiquitous hiring

freezes during the pandemic, Mia's status was at risk because she was reaching the maximum

days of unemployment allowable for OPT. Luckily, Mia had an associate who was able to "press

people" to get the employment started as soon as possible to prevent a situation in which Mia

lost her status due to exceeding the unemployment maximum. Also facing challenges finding a

job, Chesa (Tibet U4) was grateful to learn about an option in the regulations that allowed her to

volunteer to prevent accruing more than the allowed number of days of unemployment. She

shares:

> My OPT starts in June I think, June 2020, and then it took a long time for me to land a job and then normally, as you know, like we have like three months of unemployment period. And then, after that, if you don't get job then it's done, you know that kind of thing, so I was really concerned like oh like if I won't be able to get a job in that, in, within that three months, then what would happen? And then I was concerned, and fortunately, I did not know that I could volunteer and still like keep my. OPT active, I did not know until the very end and that yeah, that saved me from like not being like [un]employed for like more than six, I think, six months yeah. (Chesa, Tibet U4)

Such time pressures were also keenly felt by Vanya (Swaziland U2):

> You know, there's a lot of pressure on international students to find a job ASAP. And you I feel like that could lead you to taking the wrong job just because you want to stay, and that's happened to a lot of people, actually, they'll just take whatever job comes and they'll continue looking for whatever.

Conclusion

Chapter six introduced the concept of ISM policy pervasion, which points to the ways that ISM policy plays a significant role in the experiences of international students' lives in their host countries. Among the impacts of ISM policy is an influence on students' employment, stemming from ISM policy focusing on labor considerations in the host country. A significant body of literature shows that policy influences on labor and employment topics is not solely a phenomenon in this study, identifying a range of issue areas such as those related to earnings while working in the host country (Forbes-Mewitt et al., 2009) and the challenges of getting hired due to employment requirements (Arkoudis et al., 2019).

Mirroring discussions about the labor market and human capital benefits of international student enrollments, the literature often emphasizes post-graduation employment and labor topics. Findings from a study surveying prospective international students showed, for example, that post-graduate employment opportunities may be a primary concern for both prospective students and their parents (IDP Education, 2019). In the Australian context, Tran et al. (2020) explained that "international students… place increased emphasis on post-study work experiences in the host labour markets and employability" (p. 2); the same study emphasized that this is a change from prior emphases on "affordability, quality of education, safety and employment outcomes" (Tran et al., 2020, p. 2). This is understood to be the case in Canada as well (Netierman et al., 2022).

Importantly, this is a topic that is not only on the minds of students, as ISM policies in these host countries may be adjusted to facilitate movement from a student status to a more permanent one that permits employment. Brunner (2021b) describes this as a type of "three-step

immigration" (p. 25) wherein students (i) undertake their studies in the host country, then (ii) gain access to post-graduation work options, before (iii) moving to a more permanent status. This is also described as "edugration" as students move from student to employee to permanent resident (Brunner, 2021b), facilitated by ISM and immigration policies designed for such a move. Noting the increasing student intentions to stay after completing their studies, one study explained that "several host countries have devised visa schemes to enable international graduates to remain in the country and work after graduation" (Grimm, 2019, p. 235), providing apt examples of two of the three steps of 'three-step migration" (Brunner, 2021c) in the US American and Australian policy contexts. She and Wotherspoon (2013) describe how "recruiting international students has drawn growing attention from advanced economies and has been integrated into their strategies to attract and retain highly skilled migrant workers" (p. 1; see also Riaño et al., 2018a).

Clibborn (2021) has illustrated that in Australia, the presence of limited work opportunities for international students paired with the large number of these learners has created a "de facto low-skill work policy" in the country (p. 340), which supports findings from a previous study showing that international students in Australia often endure illegally low wages and that they are often concentrated in service-sector positions (Campbell et al., 2016). This reflects findings from student interviews (including those introduced in chapter six) for both the Australian and Canadian contexts. Less evident in the literature are discussions of the challenges of gaining employment in the first place, or discussion of students' perspectives on ISM policy influences on their relationships with employers, as was brought to light in the student interviews in this chapter.

In light of the literature's emphasis on student interest in post-graduation employment as well as national policy facilitating this, it is notable that some of the students in this study have highlighted concerns with the ways that ISM policy might inhibit their work options while enrolled, or movement towards post-graduation work opportunities, despite the fact that they are in the country based on student visas or study permits. This is notable, for example, in terms of their stories of trying to gain experience through employment opportunities (see chapter six), building strong relationships with employers, meeting their financial need through in-country employment (Arkoudis et al., 2019; Clibborn, 2021; Forbes-Mewitt et al., 2009), and getting hired in the first place (Schulte & Choudaha, 2014). This is an important contribution of this chapter, in that it focuses attention on the employment related impacts of policy when students are enrolled, instead of only their post-graduation experiences.

As is illustrated in the above sections, there are many examples of labor and employment considerations in the analyzed ISM policies and international student interviews. This tracks with conceptions of education as tied to the development of human capital as translatable to higher labor productivity or better employment (Lauder, 2015). Human capital theory perspectives position education as a primary means of developing human capital (Nafukho et al., 2004), which can benefit both the individual in terms of earnings from employment and the nation in which the individual is contributing their labor (Brown & Tannock, 2009; Riaño & Piguet, 2016). Human capital is seen not only as developed through "the investment people make in themselves [to] enhance their economic productivity" (Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2008, p. 479), but it can also be understood as something that nations may have in varying amounts. Human capital can therefore be understood in the micro (individual) scale as well as in the macro

(national) scale, as educational investments in the labor productivity of an individual's skills or the labor force at large, respectively.

In this vein, the findings presented in this chapter contribute to understanding how nations position their labor markets in relation to international students, and how the student participants see their educational sojourn as connected to employment options and opportunities, especially in the host country. Even though international students have many concerns and areas that factor into their experiences while abroad (Glass et al., 2021; Martin, 2017), this chapter draws on policy and interview data—and it must be remembered that the presentation of the findings in this chapter represent a significant paring down of the overall analysis findings on this topic—to illustrate that labor and employment issues may be of central importance when considering the broad topic of international student mobility in these three countries.

That ISM policy should include such an emphasis on labor parameters and restrictions might come as a surprise, however, its salience in the policy mirrors the prominence of employment topics in the students' experiences. Again, these ideas call to mind the ever-present ideas of human capital theory, especially as it relates to the connections people and nations often make between education and employment and labor. The prominence of labor and employment topics in the policies and student experiences highlight the need for a consideration of how academic and employment topics are handled in student visa and study permit policies, especially in terms of how these policies meet student needs, and those of host nations. From the findings presented in this study, it is clear that student needs are often not being met in this area. The success of these ISM policies on national labor-specific goals were not explored, but this is another area ripe for additional empirical study. This research has shown a light on the centrality

of labor and employment in ISM policy, and invites consideration of how policies (or

interactions with them) might be reconsidered to better meet student needs, and to determine if

the current ISM policy status quo is meeting the needs of host nations as well.

CHAPTER 8: CPE CONNECTIONS

Introduction

As guests in a host country, international students may have a relationship with ISM policy that is characterized by what I have identified as ISM policy pervasion (see chapter six). This relationship is born from their experiences of ISM policy as playing an influential role in various areas of their academic, work, and personal lives, and these policy influences take place within the context of the particular cultural, political, and economic environments of their host country. Noting this, I have already explained how local institutions such as ISM policies are understood to be embedded within the local economic and political context of the nation-state (Sum & Jessop, 2013), meaning that such policies are developed from the local cultural, political, and economic interpretations of this context. That is, economic policy and political decision-making affecting ISM policy are necessarily influenced by culturally- and historically-based situations and institutions in the host country.

To date, I have found no explicit examination of how students contextualize their experiences within the CPE of the host nation. Some examples of local contextualization of students' experiences in the literature can be found in the previous two chapters, however those studies were not embedded in the CPE framework and thus did not look specifically at these CPE influences. In addition to the findings and discussion introduced in the previous chapters, this study embraces the opportunity to explore the connections that students themselves make between their own ISM policy experiences and the cultural, political, and economic environment

in which they find themselves. This short chapter proceeds by drawing on the student responses to any of the interview questions (see Appendix B), though students were specifically asked two questions that had the potential to yield particular insights in this area. Those interview questions are:

- Do you think the rules and regulations of your visa / study permissions make sense or are fair? Why or why not?
- Since you have spent a great deal of time in [COUNTRY], do you have a sense of why the policies are the way that they are?

Findings from interviews were analyzed to identify what, if any, connections students identified between their own experiences and the cultural, political, and economic context of their host countries.

Student responses to these and other questions were analyzed using the interview coding and analysis protocol (see chapter four and Appendix E), which was composed of a number of analytical queries (AQs) that sought to draw out specific areas of interest. Naturally, the CPE AQs were used specifically to explore findings for this chapter's area of inquiry. These pertinent AQs are listed below:

- CPE-3: How, if at all, does the participant connect their experience to the local / national *cultural* environment?
- CPE-4: How, if at all, does the participant connect their experience to the local / national *political* environment?
- CPE-5: How, if at all, does the participant connect their experience to the local / national *economic* environment?

During analysis, then, interview passages were manually coded to relevant codes (i.e., CPE-3, CPE-4, and/or CPE-5) based on the thoughts shared by the student participants. Put

simply, passages that could broadly be considered to draw a connection between the student's

ISM policy experience and the cultural milieu in the host country were coded to CPE-3, and so

forth. A different researcher might choose to code these items in different ways when confronted

with the same interview data, but these findings are presented here as the first known

undertaking of analysis in this area of ISM policy experience. As such, I note here that the

coding of these items to the different AQs could be contested, as distinctions between cultural,

political, and economic factors will often contain blurry or contested boundaries. The following

section is organized by country so that the CPE findings are grouped by host country based on

students' statements during the interviews.

CPE Connections

Australia

Niraj's (Nepal A1) experience of Australia is informed by his understanding that

"Australia is one of the countries that has one of the largest amount of rules," meaning that there

"are restrictions on everything." This includes the restrictions Niraj found so frustrating with the

employment hours limitations as introduced above. He shares:

> There are a lot of rules and restrictions in place, which affects you in many ways, right? But at the same time, I kind of get it, but yeah, it's just dumb rules that I've never heard such rules in other countries, but knowing the people here, it kinda makes sense, but yeah, so a dumb rule… I don't know… Some of the rules, I get it, the 20 hours rules, I get it, but again might be a different scenario if people are not… the rules are there because someone did something… I feel like they fail to understand the background of the event, so they'll put in a rule which affects other people in many ways, that is what I personally feel. (Niraj, Nepal A1)
> Olivia (Italy A3) describes frustration with an overall sense that when you're an

international student in Australia, you do not "have the same rights of a student" in comparison

to Australian students. This sentiment about the treatment of international students as 'other' was

echoed by Ziqi (China A3), who explained that while the Australian government restricts

students' rights to work,

> the government is treating you as a minor group…because you are not… you're doing further education, instead of working. So, the government gives [domestic students] some benefits, if you go to museums, you can buy concession ticket, like student concession ticket, if you see opera or… if you go to theater you can buy a student concession tickets. Including public transportation. But for international students you're not included in that scheme.

This is, in Ziqi's eyes, a clear link between the general perception of international students as set

apart and other, where the work limitations imposed by the government affect the treatment and

benefits of being a student in the country.

Some of Ekani's (Singapore A2) statements illustrated how ISM policy in the country

approached international students from different countries with different levels of caution or

varying levels of burden of proof for visa related benefits. Ekani (Singapore A2) understood that

an "underlying current" of cultural attitudes towards Indians[1] might have affected decisions

relating to the Australian government's scheme of ranking other countries in order to determine

how extensive the visa process will be for individuals from those countries. She rhetorically asks,

"why the hell is India so low on their list? We like… God knows how many people go there

from India and they made Indians jump through hoops" (Ekani, Singapore A2). In bringing this

up, Ekani clarifies that, while not seeming to be "racist" or "anti-Indian," these attitudes did

result in policies that affected her experience.

Hachi's (Taiwan A3) experiences and decisions were in part influenced by local political

decisions pertaining to student switching. She shares that her decision to attend university in one

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[1] In addition to being Singaporan, Ekani is Indian.

particular Australian territory was prompted by their particularly "friendly" regulations for gaining permanent residency, especially for individuals with sought after educational backgrounds.

In a different vein, Niraj (Nepal A1) presents an acknowledgement that international students are a formidable source of income for Australia, which led to frustration at the lack of concern for international students from the government. When confronted with the challenges of the pandemic, Niraj worries that

> there is no actual support by the government for the international student, if that makes any sense, like, for instance, every time they go on a public speaking, it's more related to their people. The things that they're providing grants blah blah blah to their people for. (Niraj, Nepal A1)

The political decisions pertaining to international students also affected Niraj's ability to travel during the pandemic:

> The government has clearly closed their borders to any international people, and you… once you leave the country, I'm not allowed to come back in. Okay, so that was one of the struggles and, at the moment, even though, if they open the borders I'm pretty sure it would still be a struggle, because the government has said, at least till the end of 2021, which is yeah, unless until 2022 they're not going to open their borders for international students, that's what they've clearly said. (Niraj, Nepal A1)

On multiple occasions, Olivia (Italy A3) identified the political distinctions between Australian and international students as problematic, even potentially influencing her interest in continuing her studies in the country. She states that

> [The visa] feels a bit like a constriction and like I feel like, I have a visa and this visa is kind of like this card that shows everyone that I'm not Australian, so, you know, so I'm like, I rather go somewhere where I'm treated like everyone else. (Olivia, Italy A3)

For Olivia, the visa was important because of what it signified in terms of her permissions, requirements, and access to services as outlined by the Australian government.

Qiaohui (China A3) expresses that politicians' decisions to prioritize the needs of Australian citizens over international students were "understandable," though not fair. Ziqi (China (A3) echoes some of these same sentiments, and also describes the ways in which the legal system applies to all people in the country, but that the ramifications of a legal infraction were different for international students considering their status.

Students' identification of the connection between ISM policies and the economy in Australia were common. Binsa (Nepal A3), for example, explains how her positive outlook on her future in the country was tied to her studies in a field (healthcare) that was in high demand in Australia. Despite this, she feels the pressures of work hour limitations in light of the high costs of living in the country.

Eddy (Britain A3) sees a connection between the services he receives as an international and the fact that as an international student he is paying high fees. He maintains:

> when I have any kind of problem, because I'm paying such high fees, they're so helpful. Well, it sort of makes me a little bit angry sometimes, because I just think, I'm really buying the help and support that I'm getting, which I don't like the idea of at all, but I suppose we're living in this capitalistic mainframe. (Eddy, Britain A3)

In a subsequent reply, Eddy more pointedly identifies how the high cost of his studies and the challenges with the student-switching process are connected to the economic side of the Australian immigration system:

> I mean when you see how incredibly rich this country is… And I don't understand how it works, because everywhere is empty, like you go into a cafe and there's five people working behind the bar, and there's two customers and it's always like… You think, 'What on Earth is funding this country?' And then you realize, nearly everybody in the world is trying to move here… people are just going, 'Please let us in!' And [the Australian government is] saying 'Well, you know, you need a degree and that's going to cost you, and you also need to pay this, and this, oh and by the way, you need this, and this…' (Eddy, Britain A3)

Hachi (Taiwan A3) notes that her decision of what field to pursue for her graduate degree was based on the labor market needs in Australia, opting to pursue a "skill that they're looking for" in the local labor market. When asked for her understanding of why the visa policies are the way that they are, she explains:

> I think it's because of the economic reason that they need… they do need people with skills to stay in the country. And also, Australia is a country that relies on international students quite heavily, especially the education sector, the higher education sector. Yeah and most of the universities are very… They do charge international students an extremely high school fee. (Hachi, Taiwan A3)

Niraj (Nepal A1) understood the strict visa rules as being imposed to prevent unauthorized employment, noting that the working limitations are there because many people "just enrolled into a shitty university and they're working a lot more than they're supposed to be… a majority of the students do that, so I get why the rule is there, but they're still doing it." Explaining further, Niraj says:

> One of the reasons why the [20-hour work limit] rule was there, because I'm pretty sure a lot of the people in the past probably said that they're here to study but they're working more and studying less so the rule is there for that. (Niraj, Nepal A1)

Again, focusing on working hour limitations, Olivia (Italy A3) expresses frustrations about what that means in terms of covering the costs of attendance:

> I feel like the working hours are a bit unnecessary because, like, if you like, the kind of idea is that if you come here to study, you're not here to work so someone else have to pay for your university. But, I don't know, I feel like it's a bit too much controlling. Like and also like, because the prices are so high, I don't know if you know how it works in Australia, for international students but like, at the university where I'm going, I paid double what a normal student would pay, but at the other universities, [international students pay] like four times, or even like a big big university like Sydney Uni, UNSW, it's like… Like crazy, like it's like four times, five times the price that a normal student will pay…

Summing up these frustrations, Olivia shares: "I feel like I'm more here to give them… to make them make more money rather than here, like, to be some kind of enrichment and like diversity, and… you know?"

Qiaohui (China A3) and Ziqi (China A3) also point to the high tuition for international students, with Ziqi explaining that in Australia enrolling international students is "education export. Yeah so, they're basically exporting the further education as a service to foreign countries, yeah. And it's a price for that, there is a price for that." Ziqi (China A3) indicates that the high tuition costs are "how the country generates income," and further explained that the work limitations are there to prevent the deterioration of working conditions for all, "because people are taking advantage of the international student, as a cheap labor." In the same vein, Ziqi (China A3) explains that

> Australia… has the well organized and it's highly highly efficient welfare system and medicare system. It is protecting itself, not to be taken advantage by the people who are not working, but rely on the subsidies. Yes, so that's why they're posing the work hour limit.

Canada

Ella (France C5) understands her study permit, and more specifically the ease of obtaining it, to be at least in part the result of an emphasis on "chosen immigration" in Canada and her province; that is, a Quebecois emphasis on attracting French speakers to the province. Marion (Germany C2) feels that international students are seen as less capable and a "second option" when applying for jobs, due to a perceived deficit with their language abilities.

Noting Negar's (Iran C2) previous statements about employers and exploitative situations, she associates this employer activity with a lack of support and protections for

international students, as well as the forced precarity of the student permit. She also identifies

racism in the country as a problem and believes that it is hard to pursue justice in instances of

racist remarks or actions because of the "power imbalance" between international student

employees and employers (Negar, Iran C2). Such discrimination was the impetus for Negar and

friends to form a cooperative to assist not only international students but also Canadian citizens

who face workplace discrimination.

In the same area of concern for employment discrimination, Noha (USA C4) highlights

the fact that the required Canadian social insurance number, which students need to apply for,

indicates that students are on a study permit. She describes this, saying:

> like if I need to give my social insurance number to an employer, or if I need to give it to
> my new landlord or something, they will see that I'm an immigrant, like just right off the
> bat, you can see, oh that nine [at the front of the number] means that you immigrated
> here. (Noha, USA C4)

Furthermore, Noha discusses the possibility that strained relationships between their host

province (Quebec) and international students can create further issues:

> So, if you go to like a government of Canada office, or you go to a like government of
> Quebec office. And you're there because you are, you know, you're a student and you
> need a social insurance number, you're not going to have a great experience, especially if
> you speak accented French, like I speak French fluently, but I have an accent. And so you
> know, (1) you have a study permit, so they don't like that right off the BAT, and then (2)
> you know, you're a dirty student, you're lazy, you don't contribute to anything around
> here, And there's like there's this perception of you, and so it's very much tinges your
> interactions going into these offices. On top of that, you know, I have to disclose my race
> and stuff too the employees. So that also just makes it even worse for me, because you
> know, walking on the street… actually no, a lot of French people are very good at being
> racist, I don't get clocked as Arab in the United States, but I get clocked as Arab here. But
> you know, I don't get clocked as much as more visible Arabs, but when I go to an office,
> you know, they ask for your racial information, and they also asked for the information of
> my parents and my dad was born in Lebanon and is very obviously Lebanese. Um, and so
> I think it also is different for students coming from different backgrounds, coming in, into
> Quebec. (Noha, USA C4)

Discussing the policies in the area, Noha (USA C4) notes:

> [The policies] make no sense. And a lot of it is political and especially in Quebec where there's a lot of anti-immigrant sentiment, I mean this is just, this is just my federal work permit, you know this doesn't even get into the Quebec work permit, or the Quebec study permit um. And that's just a whole other thing, and a lot of that is just done to win political points among Racist white francophone 'Quebs' in rural areas that have never met a person of color, who hate anglophones, and don't want immigrants, and there's a lot… there's a lot to also be said about how many students, how many students of color and non-francophone students of color are coming into Quebec. And that's also a huge, huge driver behind these policies and behind these limitations.

Similarly, Pierre (France C1) draws a comparison between his knowledge of ISM policy in the

US and that of Canada:

> I would say because compared to the USA, we say Canada its mostly immigration country, so they tried to get the most possible people come here, one of the advantage we have it's because we do grads schools because it means we are like the elite. Which is not true, but like they kind of like try to make them more easy, but it's still like a lot of paper.

Afra (Iran C2) decries the general disconnections between Canadian agencies that she

observed during her pursuit of study permit issue fixes, explaining:

> Since it [the study permit issue] was very complicated, like I did like a very detailed document, like I made lists, I made like sections, everything just was like as clear as possible and I tried to do that for like any interactions that I had with them. And, most of the times the responses that I got so far, especially with my brother's situation is basically like, they're disconnected, they don't… Like different sections don't truly connect to each other, they don't even read through the documents, most of the time, especially based on the response that i'm getting. And, and they don't really care about the people that are doing that… they care about the rules more than actual effects on [of] it on people so like. They might like screw over someone or like waste someone's time for like you know, a year, or something, as long as they can like make the rules clear or something.

Afra explains that her initial decision to study in Canada was informed by the fact that Canada

had devised welcoming policies (especially in comparison to the United States) for international

students. Discussing her decision to study in Canada, Afra (Iran C2) notes that the political and

policy environment was an important influence:

> I think I would still have come to Canada, especially like you know, still like if I look at the different policies of the places that I was looking at, so my choices were between

Canada, States, and Netherlands. And generally, in Europe, things were very complicated, it was, like some of it was like even paper-based, you didn't even know, and it was like in their own language, you wouldn't really understand that, and that was very complicated and challenging, and then the States had Trump and all of those rules, so Canada, I think, was still my best choice… Again, like, even though I'm critical to a lot of like policies here, I do think that, like it's more inclusive than the other countries that I've seen.

Ella (France C5) understands the challenges she faces as a potential student-switcher to be in part

related to the political machinations of the Canadian and provincial governments, explaining:

I wish to change the policies, when it comes to retaining students, until… especially that there's been a lot of back and forth, the provincial government on, on keeping international students, which for me is a complete nonsense, in the sense that the government just, you know, subsidizes our education Through you know, subsidizing universities, our tuitions, and even some scholarships, and then they make it difficult for us to renew our permits afterwards, there's been a lot of back and forth, and changes over the past few years, but, But something that, I think doesn't make any sense, it's like if you fund students, you want to keep them, considering that, you know, we've been shaped for the Canadian market, so it would make sense for us to stay here. But that's not always the case.

Marion (Germany C2) describes the "complicated" nature of the study permit policies, noting

that

From the state perspective… when you let someone into your country, obviously, there are some rules that they have to follow and because they're not a citize,n these rules will not be as… Yeah, you won't be… you won't have as many privileges as a citizen, so from the state perspective that makes sense, but from a personal perspective, it just does not make sense, I think.

As some others have done, Noha (USA C4) discusses the peculiar circumstances of an

international student in the Canadian province of Quebec. She explains:

Canada has been working really hard on getting more immigrants, but because Quebec is a nation technically, They have first say on their immigrants so In order to apply for a study permit with Canada, first I had to apply with Quebec, and they're a lot more limited, and so I think the other thing is, I think my experience would be different if I was in say Ontario or British Columbia.

There appears to be an almost thoroughgoing understanding that international students are important contributors to the Canadian economy. Often students see the ISM policies and their treatment through the lens of this understanding, which can at times result in frustrations. Afra (Iran C2), for example, shows this, saying:

> I know that like Canada relies on immigrants basically to function, and that's like… they want to get like as many immigrant students as they can, because those are the ones that contribute to Canada's economy a lot, like and yeah I like, I kind understand some part of it, as I said before, like, I understand, like the… background check that they need to go through, and like all those extra things that take time, but at the same time, like it… they're missing that human side of it which I don't like.

Ella (France C5) echoes her own previously described sentiments about international students as an important part of Canada's labor force designs, saying

> The philosophy of chosen immigration, I guess so, yeah. I think it's pretty… Yeah, it's pretty coherent. Again, it makes sense in terms of attracting students, it doesn't make sense in terms of retaining students. Especially that you hear everywhere in the media that Canada is missing manpower, and there's demands in pretty much every sector. So, yeah… but in terms of attracting students, yeah it is coherent.

Marion (Germany C2) expresses concerns about the Government assumption that "international students are just swimming in money and that we can afford everything." This came up in her discussion of ever-increasing fees, including for health insurance and tuition, the latter increasing 3-5% each year, while for domestic students it is closer to .5-1% each year. She contextualized this in terms of her perception of how the Canadian government sees international students, which also affects the policies for them:

> I think the state, from experience and from assumptions, tThe state] Knows that on an average international students do come to Canada because they can afford it. And so I think they see international students, to some extent, as a source of money and income, which I wouldn't disagree with 100%, but I think it needs to be more nuanced. And so I think just the… yeah the policies that you can just increase international students, health care, or tuition, it kind of… yeah I think it makes sense to them, because they think that

the money that is incoming is… [limitless]. So, yeah, so I can understand why they would do it from a state perspective… (Marion, Germany C2)

Negar (Iran C2) also discusses the economic rationales that influence some policies relating to international students:

Something more related to the provincial regulations, but I don't know if you know about this or not, but two years ago, one year and a half actually, they made the health insurance fee in [her province] free for all residents, except for the ones who are on a study permit. And their rationale was that the International students don't pay taxes, don't contribute to the economy, which is very, easily you can prove them wrong. and They actually at that time they doubled the fee that the international students are supposed to pay. By removing it for others. And why we… most of us, at least graduate students, most of us, we have to pay taxes, we work and we pay taxes.

Understanding Canadian immigration policy as related to the development of their labor force, Negar (Iran C2) also describes the Canadian approach, saying

They [Canada] are not taking many refugees or many, you know people, they select people, they select a skilled workers, they select international students [who have a] higher resume, and they simply get the tech people who are ready to contribute what other countries have paid for those people to come to that stage, and then they are actually taking advantage. And it's not something like a favor that they do to people like us, but still the situation is very problematic in… Some of the regulations are really even not compatible with their own goals like that this postgraduate work permit Is not renewable, it's just one time you can use it and it's not renewable, and even if it expires in the middle of your working and haven't gotten that one year experience, And you haven't got your PR, You just simply can go undocumented, your lose your status, and I really don't understand this part, you want people to stay here, you want people to after graduation enter your job market because you need labor, A workforce and then you pose these limitations, which doesn't make sense, who can… these people have studied here, have worked here, have experience, so why you don't just don't simply Change the… make the… well the postgraduate work permit renewable.

When asked pointedly if she had any thoughts on why Canadian ISM policies are the way that they are, Negar (Iran C2) clarifies:

I feel that they want to Keep the… The graduates to stay and work here, so they don't grant PR for most, Most degrees, degree holders. Not most, I can say that there are actually some other cases, mostly that can use some programs called Provincial Nominee Programs. For mostly technical degrees to get a PR earlier, they don't need one year of work experience, but They use this policy in general to keep people after graduation, like, I know because job opportunities in the US are way higher than Canada, and many

people tend to Be for the these, I don't know how long they have been in place, but previously apparently people immigrate to the US after graduating, and so one of the reasons is that they want to Keep people After the graduation in Canada. And they want them to be All the time, full time, I guess it's also something that you can argue, is that In like the technical, especially the technical majors, you see very cheap labor force working in a schools in In research labs, and this is… many of them, most of them, are internationals. Because the other… if they are Canadian or they don't have to… don't have to complete their degree to Get that permanent residency path To get it through that, they just… they want work in that condition. Which is not very fair

Nisha (India C3) also saw the connection between international student enrollments and the

economy, explaining

These are people [international students] that no one cares about, because they bring income to the country, but that's it, like actually they're the more contributing factor… like universities are there because international students, Because we pay full fees, we pay the higher amounts, like almost 50% more than what the regular Canadians pay. Which is immense amount, right, and so they're making money off of international students, but then we don't get the exact same rights or the privileges that we should get, paying that amount. But then the reason most of us are here is for a better life, so I guess that is what… that's the trade off right, so we just don't complain about these things… no one cares about us… but we are the highest contributing factor to the economy, here, so I don't get why it's like this, like people should care about what we do here, like what our rights are, but no one does, so yeah, it's very frustrating, to be honest.

United States of America

Benesh (Afghanistan U5) understands her experiences and the policies shaping them to

be informed by the US approach to clearly establishing the differentiation between those who are

citizens and those who are not. She explains that these regulations for international students

kind of drawing this line between who belongs, and who does not in a way, and labeling them and these rules we get kind of put in into a different category, like you are, no matter what you do, you're not going to belong or you're not going to have the exact same experience as students [from] the US, because you have to, like, whatever decision you're making… it's kind of a reminder that you are: Remember you're an international student… For example, if I applied for a job or like for an internship, like when they say Oh, you have to be a citizen it's like oh that's a reminder, you're not A citizen, like you, no matter how hard you work, no matter how Like how good you are in this society you're still an international… like an outsider in a way… Yeah, it's like highlighting your difference in a way. (Benesh, Afghanistan U5)

Brenda (Mexico U3) emphasizes the US approach to supporting students with the

immigration policies as truly impactful, saying:

> I would emphasize how important… international students advisor are for us. Like we
> don't really get support from almost anyone and, I don't know, the fact that there are
> people who are there and who, like, know their stuff, it's always such a really… Like it
> takes so much weight out of our shoulders…

Chesa (Tibet U4) relates that international students are seen as a source of diversity within the

United States, but that this benefit to the country must be accompanied by efforts to "make them

feel safe and stuff" while undertaking their studies. She sees the large number of international

students as attracted to the country due to the curricular options, among other things, but notes

that with regard to the cultural environment "it is better to just make [international students] feel

safe, than welcoming a bunch and then making all them not [feel] safe."

Dee (China U1) describes dealing with the policy ramifications specifically for Chinese

students resulting from "biases in reporting [about] China" by Western media, as well as general

anti-Chinese and anti-Asian sentiments (especially, though not exclusively, connected to

COVID-19). Krishna (Nepal U4) connects ISM policy issues with the demand for an education

in the United States, which he sees as connected to the "glamorous and appealing" perceptions of

the United States and the opportunity to live the American dream. This meant that

> by default it just had a higher demand, which means that they had to put more restrictions
> in place… And I guess there's also like a lot of problems of like undocumented
> immigration and like, sometimes I feel like maybe that's also part of why, like, it's, like,
> stricter is because they're trying to like deal with such kind of immigration problems.

He went on to explain that he sees a disconnect with US American values and these policies:

> I can see how it started, but it hasn't been like adjusted as needed um and, obviously, like
> if you're in the place of privilege like it's easy to like kind of overlook people who are
> not. So in like a very like 'human faults' sense, yes, I see it. But in like the sense of like

American values I don't think it makes sense. Like free country, the American dream, yeah. (Krishna, Nepal U4)

Merve (Turkey U6) sees popular conceptions of immigrants as influencing politics and policy, saying:

It's not only government, it's also people who doesn't want us here. So, I have a… I have a sense that, like the old, very old nationalists discourse of 'These international people will steal your jobs,' is there, so the… I think that informs the policy, unfortunately.

Merve feels that the policies are the result of racism in the country, but that to combat challenging policies that affected international students there was also

support from a lot of American friends too, like, it's not like… when visa things happen and when we raise our voices and there are a lot of Americans that's fighting with us in [these] matters, so… and now we have an international students working group. (Merve, Turkey U6)

Noting some similar sentiments, Vanya (Swaziland U2) expresses herself succinctly when asked why she thought the visa policies are the way that they are, saying

This is gonna sound controversial, but I think it's just for, you know, they don't really like immigrants. Like, no there's no reason why it has to be this strict, you know, I can't think of a reason why I'm not allowed to work off campus, you know. I can't think of any… I can't.

As an Afghan, Benesh (Afghanistan U5) sees political perspectives of her home country as influencing her experience, especially in terms of the validity length of her visas and the time needed to apply for a visa. She shares:

Like for us Afghans, we have to… every time we leave the country, like it's just a year valid visa we get so, after a year, we have to go back and renew if we leave the country, so that has been very challenging… so it is harder for Afghan students to get visa to come to the US and it takes longer for us, the process… For example, the first time, when I applied for visa to come to the US, it took very long to get a visa… I think it's different for like every country. I know like students from some countries, that they get five year visa and I have to apply like every year. (Benesh, Afghanistan U5)

Furthermore, Benesh identifies the precarious political position of international students in the

United States, which prompted her appreciation for the work that is done by universities to

support those students.

> It's been a year like in April Trump said about like the International students, they are not like allowed, they have to leave and But then like these, universities, like stepping up and like kind of. trying to get rid of those new rules in different ways. So yeah, I just wanted to say that that, like the universities, they have been very helpful and like they try their best to help their international students. (Benesh, Afghanistan U5)

This sentiment of the political precarity of international students due to changing policies was

also expressed by Brenda (Mexico U3), as has been noted previously (see chapter six). Brenda

(Mexico U3) also identifies a concern that the political motivations for some of the restrictive

policy is because

> [The government is] looking for people who can pay and they're kind of like filtering people, I think. I don't… again, this is not a fact. I think they're filtering people and so those who can't pay or those who can't do all this regulation will just leave… I don't think [the regulations are] fair, I think they're kind of classist.

Summing up her thoughts on why the ISM policies are the way that they are, Brenda (Mexico,

U3) simply says:

> A lot of it is politics, I think… I think a lot of immigration laws have to do with who is in charge, and what their political views are, and so the immigration policies are sometimes a statement on a broader narrative about immigration.

When asked why she thought the ISM policies in the US are the way that they are, Dee (China

U1) wonders

> if it's because international students didn't voice themselves enough to have the government have better policy for them or it's just hard to get any… I guess it's hard to get anyone to voice, you know domestically for internationals, is my feeling.

> Andres (Colombia U4) identifies economic considerations for the work hour limitations,

explaining that the government "don't want us to work instead of studying" because the

government does not want international students to "take advantage of… [work] opportunities

that, yeah, a [domestic] person from here could have." Jenni (China U2) feels that international

student expenditures were supporting the US government's various activities, or subsidizing

activities of other students. She explains that

> it's just the kind of unfair we put, we paid our tuition and it's kind of… It just that illegal
> for us to take the student loan and everybody knows college tuition is always super
> expensive but, but the government's like collect our tuition to feed [other government
> activities], yeah to doing those type of things, it does make people feel uncomfortable.

Speaking about the limitations graduated international students face in seeking to enter

the labor force, Krishna (Nepal U4) suggests that the different policies are

> just brutal. And there's no way to like justify that as being fair, like, especially knowing
> that international students being a lot of workforce like to the US economy right, and a
> lot of like talent and, like, I just feel like international students, need to be treated way
> better for what they bring, and a lot of times like they're coming, seeking for better
> education, for a better life, like we're not coming for the wrong reasons.

Echoing the thoughts of others about labor market protection, Krishna (Nepal U4) further

explains:

> looking around, I feel like from fees, to, like, different policies, to deadlines, it's like… I
> feel like it's not that hard to make things more equitable for us. But we're not going to,
> because there's just, like, this assumption that the international student is going to like,
> take more of the US jobs. And yeah, more Americans will be unemployed because of
> that. Which from research seems like it's not the case, because there was an article I read,
> they were like, it's actually the growth in employment opportunities is directly correlating
> with how many international students are coming to the US, it's actually expanding the
> job market, but yeah I definitely don't think it's fair or equitable… So, like a bird's eye
> view, like I get a sense, like okay yeah like you're in demand and then you have some
> undocumented immigration problems and part of the population is worried that like
> immigration is like reducing American job opportunities.

Seeing the financial contributions of international students, Merve (Turkey U6) notes that the

> United States is making… and the institutions that we are in, are making a lot of money
> from international students coming in and studying in the US and becoming productive
> universities…a lot of knowledge comes to United States because of us too. Not only we
> got the resources but there's all the resources coming to you, it's brain drain, it's almost
> like successful hardworking people come to you, to give their knowledge to you as a

country, and then there are some moments that you feel very… it's frayed with this kind
of issue.

Referring to 2020 policies that would have forced many students to leave the United

States if they could not take in-person classes, Mia (Vietnam U4) identifies a disconnect between

this and the importance of international students to the US economy.

> its just like weird because international students are also like humans, they also like
> contribute to the State[s'] welfare, they kind of like, they pay their tuition, they contribute
> to the local economy by means of you know, paying rent, buying groceries, and like
> taking part in like the economy and stuff. Why would they… Why would you not want
> them to stay in the states? It's just, like, weird.

Finally, one student decries ISM policies that limit students' income potential while in the

country, connecting these policies with a selection system that benefits students with greater

financial means. Vanya (Swaziland U2) suggests:

> A student that have already has some kind of financial support, which that's not the case
> for everyone, you know, and if this is the country of like, to realize your dreams, your
> economic status shouldn't…That shouldn't be a factor. If you are intelligent and you want
> to go to this university, you should be able to. But I feel like a lot of the immigration laws
> are geared towards people who are on the wealthier side.

Conclusion

The extensive use of excerpts from student interviews in the chapter provide illustrative

examples of the ways that international students understand their experiences as connected to the

cultural, political, and economic contexts in their host countries. These findings and how

students see these connections open new avenues for explicit inquiry into the ways that the host

nation's CPE context affects students. By providing student interpretations of their policy

experiences, this chapter serves three primary functions. First, it identifies how students perceive

their experience as related to the policy environment. Second, and naturally closely related to this

first function, the findings in this chapter provide an exploratory foundation for future empirical research that seeks to better understand the ISM policy experience as embedded within a particular context. Finally, the chapter can help guide future research that drives towards uncovering the genesis of ISM policies as outcomes of cultural, political, and economic discourses and policymaking activity in the host nation (see chapter nine).

With reference to this third function, the overall study has sought in part to identify some of the emphases that are salient in the ISM policies, however, this chapter has not sought to examine the cultural, political, and economic rationales used by policymakers in the creation of ISM policies (see chapter nine for more on this topic). Student perspectives of those policy rationales are presented above. As outlined in chapter five, selected policy emphases in this study were identified in the Type 1 (strategy) policy documents, but these also do not impart information about the specific derivations of policy designs. The Type 2 (legal and regulatory) and Type 3 (informational and explanatory) policy documents were generally descriptive, outlining and describing the policies. As such, these also do not provide information about the rationales, decision-making processes, and discourses that informed policy creation in these host countries.

There appears to be little to no literature explicitly examining how students contextualize their ISM policy experiences within the CPE of the host nation. This chapter responds to this important area, with interesting potential for informing continued research in this vein as it outlines some of the ways students understand their experience as fundamentally connected to the host country environment. Examples of this include seeing visa issuance challenges connecting to Australian perspectives of India as a suspect source of international students;

holding frustrating experiences with student-switching efforts in comparison with discourses about the need for student-switching; and identifying the precarity of one's situation as resulting from negative perspectives of foreign nationals in the host country. It should also be noted that the findings here do not seek to clarify whether students' understandings of the policy context are factually correct (for example, descriptions why a certain policy is in place), but that these are their understandings and perceptions of the policy environment within which they find themselves.

In short, whether it is often considered or not, there is a connection between the broad, national policy environment of a host nation and the individual lives of international students studying there. The participants in this study have shown that they can see how the cultural, political, and economic environment of their host country can affect them personally. Among much else, this shows that the student experience is not only influenced by factors such as a student's chosen university, academic area, or personal activities, but also by the national policy environment in which they conduct their studies. Furthermore, it shows more than just this influence, but also students' perceptive appreciation for and understanding of the profound ways that their experience is informed by the host countries cultural, political, and economic realities. Such findings contribute new knowledge to supplement studies that focus more on the cultural environment of the HEO or host country, incorporating the important mediating factor of local ISM policy and its pervasive influence on the international student experience.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION

"What is any ocean but a multitude of drops?"

—David Mitchell, *Cloud Atlas*

Introduction

This dissertation has taken on the challenge of explicitly identifying the ways in which international students experience the ISM policies in their host countries, while also exploring some of the emphases that are salient in the ISM policies themselves. The impetus for undertaking this came from a desire to better understand and explore these policy impacts on students in order to contribute to the growing literature on international students around the world especially as it relates to migration policy. This is because the literature often does not focus on the ISM policy environment and international students, instead more commonly focusing on topics such as international student inclusion and belonging; academic challenges, acclimatization, and achievement; health, involvement, and activities; and interactions with domestic and other international students. As a qualitative study, it is also firmly rooted in an understanding that it is crucial to complement "national trends and figures" with the "voices of students… who are impacted" by the ISM policies during their time abroad (Gargano, 2009, pp. 332-333).

Ideally, this dissertation will advance varied and valuable knowledge for a range of stakeholders. In addition to providing empirical data and knowledge for ISM policy studies, I

believe that this study may hold three especially important implications for international education on ISM, at the individual, institutional, and national levels. First and most broadly, I hope that this research will serve an affective, individual purpose, highlighting for any and all readers the many ways that international students are affected by policies, in ways that may be ignored entirely or at least commonly understood as benign or inevitable regulatory requirements for those populations that do not often encounter the policies. A general, increased understanding of some international students' experiences as it relates to ISM policies is, by my estimation, a worthy goal. Additionally, prospective students considering undertaking a degree abroad who read this study will hopefully be able to better understand the policy environment in these three host nations and how said environment can affect students. Perhaps more importantly, they will gain insights into the ways that any host nation's ISM policy context may affect the lives of students in profound academic, professional, and other personal ways. This will equip them to ask and consider deep questions as they make decisions about what and where to study, among other things.

Second, institutions could use the findings from this study to inform the decisions made at the nexus of organizational practice and national ISM policy. This might help them better mitigate the challenging components of such policy or guide their practice to leverage beneficent ISM policy to better serve students and HEOs. Third, national ISM policymakers may gain insights into the specific ISM policy in their own or other nations, including, importantly, how those policies affect students. The study may also provide policymakers with empirical evidence of the intended and unintended policy impacts on students and how these impacts might benefit or detract from the country's attractiveness as a host for degree-seeking international students.

In pursuit of the above impacts, the dissertation has proceeded as follows. The first chapter introduced the overarching topic, outlining the rationale for the study as focused on sharing the personal, experiential insights from students to show the effects of policy on the individuals behind international student enrollment numbers, policies, and national objectives. This chapter presents the research questions guiding the overall study: The first, contextualizing research question asks what emphases are present in the host nations' ISM policies, while the second asks how those ISM policies affect international students. These are purposefully broad questions, designed to provide ample space for exploring the different avenues that arise during analysis of the interviews from participating international students and of the ISM policies themselves.

The second chapter provides background context for the study, introducing international student mobility as a broad topic, and specifically exploring the various rationales that inform host nation and international student perspectives about hosting international students and undertaking a degree program abroad, respectively. As can be seen in subsequent chapters, the ideas that arise in the literature in chapter two are germane to many of the topics that arose from the students who participated in this study, especially as it relates to human capital development and the impacts of the host nation's policy environment on the international student experience.

Chapter three provides a thorough examination of the theoretical context and frameworks for the study. Contextualized with human capital theory's functionalist and economic perspective on human capital development through education, the study's theoretical framework employs an amalgam of cultural political economy (CPE), institutionalism, and regime theory. CPE is used to explore the local environment in which local ISM policy is developed, in response to cultural,

political, and economic realities and institutions within the country; similarly, it affects student perceptions of ISM policy as the CPE of the nation also influences them. Institutionalism provides a foundational understanding of the ways in which individuals, polities, societies, and organizations are affected by social institutions, which are themselves influenced by the local CPE. Regime theory highlights the inter-national influences on local ISM and student visa policy, and points to a regime with which students must interact. As described in chapter four, the theoretical framework formed the foundation of the study, explicitly impacting the conduct of interviews and analyses of the interviews and ISM policies.

The fourth chapter outlines in extensive detail the methodology and methods employed in all stages of the study. With international student perspectives and experiences at its center, this dissertation employs a qualitative multicase study that is concerned with the intrinsic value of contributing to a better understanding of how policy can affect the lived experiences of the 'targets' of ISM policy (Noor, 2008; Stake, 2006), as opposed to a focus on providing generalizable knowledge about international students the world over. The chapter describes how the case countries (Australia, Canada, and the United States) were selected, how participating international students in the case countries were recruited and interviewed, how the tools of inquiry were constructed, and how the data were analyzed. The chapter also discusses study validity and researcher positionality.

Chapter five provides a general overview of the findings of the study. This begins with pointed answers to the guiding research questions, as well as details on the IMS policies analyzed and the international students who graciously participated in the study. This chapter also sets the scene for the subsequent three chapters, which form the core of the dissertation's

findings and discussion, exploring three important issue areas through excerpts from ISM policies and student interviews, with additional contextualization from relevant literature.

Chapter six examines the idea of policy pervasion as a descriptive term to understand how ISM policy plays an important role in the lives and experiences of international students. In doing so, it draws out a collection of themes to explore these policy impacts, incorporating related ISM policies in the host countries. Chapter seven highlights the prominence of labor and employment topics in the policies and student experiences, respectively. Again, this is undertaken through elucidation of student experiences from the interviews, with ISM policy excerpts for context. Finally, the eighth chapter draws on the student interviews to introduce some of the ways that international students identify connections between their own experiences and the cultural, political, and economic contexts of their host countries.

This final chapter explores some of the identified limitations of the study, as well as final commentaries on the three case countries in relation to the overarching topic. I then provide thoughts on a hypothesized ISM policy regime, which segues into a collection of potential future research projects that may be especially fruitful as outgrowths of this project. The final section provides concluding thoughts on the importance of this research.

Limitations

As noted in the discussion of the selection of case countries, one limitation of this study is the necessity of focusing only on host countries that use English as the language for instruction and for bureaucratic processes. This is a result of my own limited language abilities, and it necessarily means a selection of countries that excludes some host nations which are highly desirable in the eyes of many internationally mobile students. A further limitation in this vein is

my reliance on English language literature to inform my understanding of the vast scope of the field of ISM studies. This means there are likely bodies of literature to which I did not have access; that is, either a lack of physical or digital access to the materials or lacking linguistic access to the knowledge and findings contained within them. This language-related limitation does not nullify the potential value of my findings; however, it does limit the diversity of resources that could have beneficially informed my study design.

Further limitations include my relative lack of experience designing and conducting studies such as this; sample size considerations; the decision to conduct online, video interviews; and ongoing uncertainties relating to the COVID-19 global virus pandemic (see below and Mitchell, 2020). The guidance of my dissertation committee has been valuable in relation to the former limitation; also, I am lucky to have conducted another study interviewing international students in 2019, lessons from which have positively affected decisions I made in the design of the study, such as crafting the interview protocol, developing the recruitment and consent materials, and analyzing the data. Conducting a study that relies so heavily on volunteer participants has posed some challenges, which, as described in chapter four, may have been exacerbated by any number of factors, including the lack of connection between myself and ISS partners or prospective participants, current social or political challenges in the host countries at the time of recruitment, or a lack of interest in my study on behalf of the participants.

The decision to conduct video interviews was made based on environmental, financial, and time resource considerations and it worked well, however, this may have been a limitation in some ways. It has created some challenges in terms of interview coordination considering time differences and it may have affected participation interest from students. The former problem is

one that I as the interviewer have worked to mitigate through acknowledgement that I needed to be flexible in my own schedule in order to facilitate interviews across various time zones (especially with students from Australia). The latter issue did not appear to be a problem, perhaps due to the relative ubiquity of video calling systems in the lives of many (though not all) prospective participants. Ultimately, the interview method proved to be a flexible, accessible, and financial and time cost-effective means for collecting data from students in three different countries around the world.

As described in chapter four, this study relied on convenience sampling to secure study participants. This means that any number of factors from students' backgrounds and ISM policy experiences perhaps led them to participate in the study, leading to a non-representative sample of international students. Student experiences with ISM policy, from the more benign to traumatic and all that may lay in between, indicate that despite this sampling method, students came with broadly varying ISM policy experiences. While some had a great deal to say, others were fairly succinct in describing the ways that the ISM policy did and did not affect them.

Individuals familiar with the ISM policy environments in all or some of the case countries may have noted incorrect or simplified statements from students about the ISM policies in their host countries. This highlights another limitation of this study: the students were reporting on their experiences, and salient here, on their own perceptions of the policies. So, it is crucial to understand that the reported policy experiences are the students' perceptions, even if the rules and regulations are not correctly perceived or interpreted by the students. But these perceptions are also important, as they indicate, regardless of their regulatory veracity, the challenges of understanding complex and far-reaching rules and regulations for young adults

whose presumed primary purpose in the country is to meet personal or other goals, not to follow immigration rules.

In the course of conducting my research, I determined that there were issues with my research questions. The primary issue is that they did not accurately reflect my true, core interests in this overall study topic; this was the case because of how they were initially worded and presented. Through the processes of finalizing the semi-structured interview protocol, producing the policy and interview coding protocols, and preparing to code the data, I identified this problem and sought to refine these research questions. As a researcher, the change from the old to new research questions did not affect the study in terms of data collection, data analysis, or overall aims. As such, the refinement of the research questions was undertaken to facilitate understanding and to simplify the questions, so that readers of this study will have a more accurate understanding of the core goals of the study. The original research questions were as follows:

- Old RQ1: What emphases are present in the ISM policies? How do national ISM policies reflect local (national) exigencies and/or emphases?
- Old RQ2: How do ISM policies affect international students? How do international student interactions with host country ISM policies affect their experiences in the host country?
  - Old RQ2-a: How do international students interact with host country ISM policies?

To better align the research questions with the goals of this study after the approval of the dissertation proposal, both the first and the second research question were reworded and refined. Additionally, the RQ-2a sub question was removed altogether. The new questions, as noted throughout this document, are as follows:

- New RQ1: What emphases are present in the ISM policies?
- New RQ2: How do ISM policies affect international students?

These are broad questions, but more granular specifics pertaining to the execution of inquiries (i.e., applying the analytical queries) to answer these questions have been introduced in chapters four and five.

When the design of this study was finalized in April 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic was still quite new and there were many unknowns as the world grappled with the virus. Among much else, the pandemic resulted in massive disruptions for higher education systems and students around the world and has severely reduced opportunities and capacity for international mobility (Fischer, 2020; Fischer, 2021b; Mitchell, 2020; Raimo & Ilieva, 2022; Unkule, 2020). The ultimate and full ramifications for ISM remain unknown, but they will likely be affected by any number of forthcoming changes relating to attitudes and actions affecting student perceptions and national ISM policy (Wiseman et al., forthcoming). Impacts as it relates to ISM could include continued restrictions on physical mobility, changing conceptualizations of the necessity of mobility, reconsideration of the potential for online learning, and fears of future border closures or restrictions (Wiseman et al., forthcoming).

During the interviews, some students brought up the pandemic and its effects on them, sometimes in relation to how their host government was responding to the complications of the virus vis-à-vis international students. While the pandemic did arise in the interviews, and while the interview protocol included a question explicitly asking about COVID-19's effects,[1] the participants did not bring it up as often as one might expect with interviews occurring almost

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[1] How would you describe the pandemic's effects on your overall experience as an intlstu over the past year or so?

exactly one year (in spring 2021) after many countries entered their first lockdowns. A small number of the excerpts from student interviews included mention of COVID-19 and policy experiences that were influenced by the pandemic, but the participants described an environment that more often than not did not elicit many ISM policy-specific experiential changes for the students resulting from the pandemic. Due to this and the original plan to utilize video chat software for interviews, this study was able to proceed almost unchanged to focus on the effects of ISM policy, as opposed to the pandemic itself.

One potential silver lining of the pandemic is the possibility that prospective study participants might have been more willing or comfortable sharing their experiences through Zoom, since so many students in these three countries were conducting so much of their academic lives on Zoom and similar software systems for many months by the time we connected. With all of that being said, during the analysis of the interviews I was able to code responses that touched on the pandemic (even if unrelated to ISM policy) to gather these together for future use in potential pandemic-focused research about international students in these three case countries.

Country Commentaries

Chapter five introduced a collection of emphases that may be found within the ISM policies in the host countries. This was done, first, through a pointed search for policy emphases that had been identified as salient within the literature, and then through an open analysis process to identify additional emphases within the policies. The former showed that the highlighted policy emphases for each country were indeed evident, with the exception of one. In Australia, very little was found in the policies that reflected the notion that enrolling international students

was used to subsidize government funding of higher education, though the labor market augmentation emphasis was discernible in the policies. In Canada, both labor market augmentation and an emphasis on improving the nation's competitiveness for international student enrollments were evident in the policies, while for the United States, labor market protection and national security emphases were identified throughout the policies.

The second policy analysis project within the study identified ISM policy in each country as also being geared towards reaping benefits for the host country (such as spending in host communities and enhancing cultural diversity), confronting complex challenges facing the world (such as climate change and natural disasters), and enhancing global connections to further national educational diplomacy efforts. Policies were also oriented towards meeting goals for student support and protections, surveillance and reporting for national security, facilitating experiences for international and domestic students, and more (see Table 12 in chapter five).

With these emphases in mind to provide valuable policy context for the experiences of students as outlined in chapters six, seven, and eight, this section of the conclusion seeks to provide a broad overview of the ISM policies and student experiences within each country, which should serve to augment the perspectives and information shared in the previous chapters. In this section I provide additional insights, based on the analyses of the policies and interviews, to provide a fuller picture of each host nation as it relates to international student mobility and migration policy. This is done through a mix of policy or interview references as a catch-all for important additional information that has not been previously shared.

Australia

Analysis of the 2016 Australian strategy document included economic foci for continued enrollments of international students, for example noting that "International education is currently one of Australia's top service exports, valued at over $19 billion in 2015" (Australian Government, T1 2016, p. 1). Additional important benefits to the host were discussed, such as importance of international education to research and industry and the idea that "engagement between international students and Australian local communities is pivotal to a positive student experience" (Australian Government, T1 2016, p. 21). Other benefits included the ways that international students support "the growth and development of our education sector" (Australian Government, T1 2016, p. 28), student employment contributions to important employment sectors such as farming and aged care (SIA, T3 2020b), and making tax contributions (SIA, T3 2020c).

A small number of ideas from Australian strategy documents identified the value of hosting international students to develop educational knowledge and policy exchange, both for the host and for sending nations. The Australian government (T1 2016), for example, explains that

> Although traditional forms of education will remain in high demand there are new and emerging forms of education where there are significant opportunities for both students and providers. These include blended delivery models, online professional development, and offshore and edu-tourism opportunities. (p. v).

An important part of hosting international students connects to assurances or expectations that students' qualifications will hold value outside of the country as well. This highlights the importance of a globally distributed Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) which

"support[s] successful mobility and a globally mobile workforce" (Australian Government, T1 2016, p. 25).

Australian policies provided many descriptions of the rights of international students to protect them from a range of potential dangers or risks during their time in the country, as they sought to outline the specific rights and protections for international students (DET, 2017; ESOS, 2018; National Code 2018, 2018a; 2018b). DET (T3 2017), for example, explains that laws are in place so that

> As a student on a student visa, you benefit from Australian laws that ensure high standards of education, facilities and support services while you are in Australia. You also have rights to information about your course and the institution you wish to study with before and during your enrolment. The Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) framework offers you financial protection in case your education institution does not deliver what it has promised you.

This includes tuition protections, requirements about the availability of enrollment options, expectations for refunds depending on the situation (ESOS, T2 2018; SIA, T3 2020d). In general, the ESOS Act is described as a set of "nationally consistent standards that govern the protection of international students and delivery of courses to those students by [registered education] providers…" (National Code 2018, T3 2018b, p. 1).

Such documents clarify the expectations for international student "entitlements to minimum wages and conditions" as workers and to anti-discrimination laws in the workplace including "when you are applying for a job… or at any time during your employment" (DET, T3 2017, p. 5). Such "workplace protections" are supported by assistance from "government and private organisations as well as your education provider" (SIA, T3 2020b). Outside of the workplace and at their HEO, laws "ensure registered providers are not giving international students false or misleading information about courses, or outcomes associated with those

courses" as well as preventing "a registered provider from suggesting it can secure a migration or education assessment outcome for the international student" (National Code 2018, T3 2018b, p. 2). These are generally described as "laws and services to make sure you receive a high-quality education and are treated fairly when you buy goods and services" [such as educational services] (SIA, T3 2020d). The National Code 2018 (T3 2018b) also identifies international student services requirements for HEOs, including the provision of "reasonable support at no additional cost to international students to assist them to achieve expected learning outcomes" (p. 4), policies and practices to support students through "critical indices… that may cause physical or psychological harm" (p. 4), and providing resources for dealing with workplace rights or conditions issues.

To summarize the ISM policy emphases in Australia, one can see the importance of international students as a source of potential future skilled labor, the salience of international students as providers of economic and cultural benefits, and the necessity of providing ISM policy that protects and supports students, especially as it relates to potential for exploitation. The ISM policy experiences of international students interviewed in this study (see chapters six, seven, and eight) highlight crucial topics such as enrollment requirements, work hours limitations, and the opportunities and limitations put on student switching options, among others.

Canada

As it relates to the benefits reaped by the host country, Canada's ISM strategies emphasized the fact that "Increasing the number of international students to more than 450,000 will create new sources of jobs, economic growth and prosperity in every region of the country" (Global Affairs Canada, T1 2014, p. 11), while noting also that, more generally, "International

students in Canada provide immediate and significant economic benefits to Canadians in every region of the country" (p. 7). This instrumentalist perspective on the benefits of increasing international student numbers continued through into the follow-up strategy document, Global Affairs Canada (T1 2019), noting for example, that international students in Canada contribute by "sparking new ideas, strengthening innovation and building people-to-people ties that are crucial to international trade and the global economy" (p. iii). The strategy identifies the nations sending the largest numbers of international students to Canada (India and China) and highlights the importance of "diversifying source regions for students" within these countries in order to "amplify economic benefits and create jobs in more of our communities" (Global Affairs Canada, T1 2019, p. 9).

The Canadian documents clarify the education and study emphasis of the study permit and visa combination, noting that students must be able to undertake their studies with "sufficient and available financial resources, without having to work in Canada" (Canada MOJ, T2 2020b), which makes explicit that any work within the country should be extraneous to the funds needed to cover one's education and cost of living expenses. The Government of Canada (T3 2014) document explains that students failing to enroll and undertake their studies may be removed from the country, and that the study permit is invalidated within 90 days of the completion of studies. Government of Canada (T3 2019a) reiterates the way in which the study purpose limits work opportunities, while other policy documents outline study permit conditions regarding enrollment requirements, co-op work experience guidelines, and program completion deadlines (Government of Canada, T3 2019b; T3 2019d; T3 2020b; T3 2020d; T3 2020e). These

examples show how closely tied the study permit is, naturally, to the primary function of studying.

As was discussed in chapter six in the case of the United States, the Canadian international student experience is one that is also associated with a sense of uncertainty and precarity, where international student experiences are circumscribed within local ISM policies. For example, even if her papers are in order, Afra (Iran C2) reveals that she is concerned that something might happen to prevent her from reentering the country after time away, which influenced her decision not to leave the country while on the student visa. While perhaps not concerned about her ability to enter the country, Ella (France C5) expresses frustration with uncertainty around processes, such as not understanding how long an extension might be granted for. She describes this as follows:

> When we ask for renewal we don't really know how much or how long we're going to be granted, could be a year, could be a year and a half, could be, you know… So it seems a bit arbitrary, it hasn't been a problem so far, but it's a bit unsettling. (Ella, France C5)

Emily (France C1) illustrates this sort of uncertainty as "not really a stable situation" when it comes to knowing whether her status will be extended. Negar (Iran C2) notes that students on the study permit are in a "vulnerable position" since they are temporary. This temporariness can be exploited, since their status can be removed, meaning that employers can "threaten [international students] by their visa status." Furthermore, this precarity of the situation puts added stress on the bureaucratic processes students must go through. Negar (Iran C2) explains,

> The people always say don't mess with the Canadian immigration. And they are very restrictive about their rules, if you get… if you make a mistake, if you are even for like

lack of information or for filling out one thing wrongly, then it's likely that it put your all your future applications, you know, in dangers.

Noting how quickly things can change, Negar (Iran C2) describes her concerns:

I was thinking about that, it was a few months ago, that they said that they are going to change some of the immigration rules, and I was thinking, what if I should maybe apply earlier, what if they change the situation, because of the… they change their policies and rules because of the economic status.

Noha (USA C4) also shares about rules changing during their time in-country, which complicated their situation and changed their options. Not only did the rules change, but shortly after submitting an application in person, the application process and system changed, which resulted in delays to their request.

In summary, Canadian ISM policy is particularly focused on labor market augmentation, improving competitiveness for international student enrollments, facilitating the more immediate benefits of these enrollments, and pushing the importance of study as the primary activity that must be associated with students on the study permit. In addition to the many topics that were noted in the preceding chapters by international students studying in Canada—such as enrollment requirements and work limitations—students' policy experiences may be especially understood as backgrounded by the uncertainty and precarity of their status in the country.

United States

The construction of the "international student" within US ISM policy centers on the presumed sole reason for entering the country: to study. This is evident, for example, in the limited work opportunities and the study terms while in the country. As has already been described, employment opportunities are strictly circumscribed, likely as a way to ensure that the student's primary activity is engaging with their studies. Off-campus employment is not permitted for its own sake or for solely income-related reasons, instead, off-campus employment

for the F-1 visa holder is oriented towards the augmentation of skills and knowledge related to the student's studies and is thus referred to as 'training' (SITS, T3 n.d.a; SITS, T3 n.d.i). Even after completing the degree program, a graduate's employment options are still intimately tied to the educational focus of the degree program, and as an employee, the student is still just that: a student, and the government's oversight of the training can include site visits to "ensure that each employer possesses and maintains the ability and resources to provide structured and guided work-based learning experiences" (Aliens and Nationality, T2 2020, p. 309).

Individuals on the student visa are required to follow a collection of rules related to the maintenance of their F-1 student status (SITS, T3 n.d.a). For example, maintenance of status requires timely check-ins with immigration advisors at the university within 30 days of entering the United States, and a student's entry into the United States must be no earlier than 30 days before the start of the academic program (SITS, T3 n.d.a). Students are also required to meet a minimum enrollment requirement, ensuring that education remains a primary focus of the sojourn to the country (SITS, n.d.b). They are also expected to continuously make "normal progress toward completion of his or her educational objective" (Aliens and Nationality, T2 2020, p. 300). There are limited options for dropping below this enrollment minimum, however the rationale and approval for this drop must be adjudicated by school officials and cannot be used regularly (SITS, T3 n.d.c).

Somewhat connected, and with the understanding that the ISM policies in the United States are primarily focused on the facilitation of degree undertakings, a small number of these policies do also indicate that additional experiences might be available for students outside of the HEO's immediate curriculum, mostly pertaining to work allowances. In the United States, the

Aliens and Nationality Act (T2 2020) provides regulatory allowances for studying abroad outside

of the country and facilitates limited off-campus working experiences in the form of this

"practical training" programs so that students can take part in "alternative work/study, internship,

cooperative education" and other initiatives coordinated by the institution (p. 305). The purpose

of such programs, both before and immediately after degree completion, is to allow "eligible

international students and new graduates the opportunity to gain on-the-job-learning that

supplements knowledge gained in their academic studies" (SITS, T3 n.d.i).

Finally, as introduced in chapter six, students studying in the United States noted that

their situation in the United States was often uncertain and precarious. Linda (Paraguay U2)

describes this by saying that "Like a small thing could actually deport you." Brenda (Mexico U3)

argues that the "immigration stuff… changes all the time" and provides the example of this in

2020, a year that included

> a lot of changes and everything that Trump was saying indicated that he wanted to
> terminate OPT and all these other opportunities that I had been considering for visas. And
> so just keeping track of all the minor changes have been really challenging.

Again noting the quick changes that can occur, she explains:

> I think a lot of immigration laws have to do with who is in charge [of the country], and
> what their political views are, and so the immigration policies are sometimes a statement
> on a broader narrative about immigration. (Brenda, Mexico U3)

Merve (Turkey U6) also identifies political changes as a source of challenge in terms of feeling
secure in the application of ISM policy to which she is subject. She explains:

> This is my 10th year with F-1 visa, if Trump passed one of the laws they might just kick
> me out like because they want to put some years limitation to F-1 and I was very scared
> to be honest, because I was like, I did all these choices which I wanted to do my
> dissertation in the way that I want, and some of these are out of my control, but now I'll
> be punished probably… between Obama and Trump and then Biden, there are changes all
> the time about what our status is, how the policies are affected, so it's a very context-
> dependent thing. (Merve, Turkey U6)

Returning to Brenda (Mexico U3), she also notes the lack of certainty that she will be allowed to

reenter the United States, describing that customs experience as "Oh so stressful." She says:

> I'm always scared and usually they [the customs officer] tend to being, like, kind and nice, but it's always that fear that they won't be, or that it's that fear that they're always in control, even if they're nice. (Brenda, Mexico U3)

This fear was a recurring theme, with Krishna (Nepal U4) explaining

> Going back home is easy, but coming back here is not, so it's been over two years now that haven't been home and a big part of that is just me just feeling a bit like oh like i'm gonna have to get past this… like jump this huge hurdle of going through customs again if I leave the country. So that has really like stuck with me too, like just knowing that the threat of not getting a visa is always out there and they'll just like completely jeopardize… Like, what if I went home and I couldn't come back to finish off my work, like even though I'm having a valid OPT status, like that's a big reason I haven't been able to go home.

These two examples illustrate a fear that even when one has followed the rules and has their

immigration documents in order, there may still be unexpected issues that might put their status

at risk.

In summary, the US ISM policy is particularly focused on labor market protection,

national security, and pushing the importance of study as the primary activity that must be

associated with students on the study permit. This is in addition to the other areas of emphasis

explored in chapter five. International students in the United States shared many ISM policy

experiences as introduced in chapters six, seven, and eight, but the above takes the chance to also

highlight the concerns these students have about the uncertainty and precarity of their status as

international students in the country.

An ISM Policy Regime

In discussing the theoretical framework for this dissertation study, chapter three

introduced the notion of an international regime of sovereign national student immigration

control (or an 'ISM policy regime'), which is based on the idea of international regimes as an inter-national conceptualization of, and assent to, norms and conventions in a given arena of international relations. This hypothesized ISM policy regime locates within individual sovereign nations the expectation and prerogative to delimit territorial entry criteria and control border ingress for international students (Czaika et al., 2018). The theorized, tacit 'ISM policy regime' suggests that ISM policies may become similar (perhaps through normative isomorphism) as host countries face similar pressures and phenomena as part of the same competitive global knowledge economy (see chapter three). The preceding chapters have outlined some of the ways that ISM policies are similar between the three case countries, despite an apparent lack of formal alignment of policy arrangements. This includes restrictions on employment activities, enrollment requirements, student switching regulations, and limited duration student visa or study permits during which degrees are expected to be completed. The interviews with international students in all three countries also show similarities in ISM policy experiences, such as in the policy effects on their academic, professional, and personal lives.

Despite these similarities, as nations seek to respond to various competitive imperatives such as developing human capital for the knowledge economy and security concerns, sovereign control of local (national) ISM policies indicates that policy responses will likely be molded by national perspectives and understandings (semiosis) of how their country is situated within the context of this global, competitive environment (Levatino et al., 2018; Riaño et al., 2018b). As such, different cultural backgrounds and national exigencies will necessitate varied national policy responses to new economic challenges and opportunities (see Brooks, 2018 and Riaño et al., 2018a), perhaps resulting in loose coupling of ISM policy approaches. These are introduced

in chapter five. Examples include the US emphasizing security concerns due to terrorism histories and protectionist stances, and Canada's emphasis on skilled labor migration pathways to meet competitive, skilled labor growth needs.

One of the limitations of the ISM policy analysis involved in this study is related to the ISM policies that were selected. ISM policy selection was used to contextualize the experiences of students, which resulted in selection of policies that are currently in place—that is, active and affecting students—and documents pertaining to those. This did not include, then, policy items that might document the policy development process, including legislative and policymaking discussions that might incorporate rationales behind the selection of one policy response over another. Additionally, the selected policies do not elucidate how the ISM policies in other countries might or might not have been studied during the policymaking process in other countries.

In short, the policy documents used in this study were not geared towards discerning the processes and rationales that went into policy creation, meaning that the present study was not capable of ascertaining why, for example, a certain Type 2 (i.e., legal, regulatory) ISM policy is the way that it is, using just the information contained within it or within the Type 1 (strategy) or 3 (informational) documents, unless additional, contextual information would have been used.[2] Doing so would have likely required the incorporation of a significantly larger body of literature to include the policymaking debates, white papers, legislative drafts, news reports, and much

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[2] Policy analysis efforts in this vein were included in this study, as can be seen by the regime theory AQs in the policy analysis and coding protocol. However, due to the limitations of the policy documents described in this section, it was challenging to create a comprehensive picture, from national policy documents, of a wider, inter-national ISM policy environment or regime of the sort hypothesized here.

more, that led to the finalized ISM policies. This was beyond the primary focus of this study, but it would likely be necessary in future studies seeking to advance the development of an empirical basis for this theorized ISM policy regime. Such an undertaking would likely be well-served by the "discursive selectivity" from Higgins and Novelli's framing of CPE, because the discursive selectivity is described by the authors as referring "to the selective process of intersubjective meaning making through the use of language… [This] set limits on how the social world is framed, imagined and understood…" (Higgins & Novelli, 2020, p. 6).

This study has identified both similarities and differences between ISM policies in these host countries, as well as similarities and differences in the ISM policy experiences of international students in the host countries. In doing so, the study therefore sets a foundation for future empirical study of ISM policy development processes and rationales to elucidate potential strengths or weaknesses of the hypothesized ISM policy regime, which is more specifically characterized as a tacit, international regime of sovereign national student immigration control (see chapter three). Future research could, through regime theory as described here and in chapter three, be used to fruitfully explore the CPE bases and rationales that directly lead to ISM policies, asking, for example: How do policymakers reflect on current local and world situations and phenomena when devising ISM policies?

Future Research

Because of my care for this topic, I naturally hope that this study will contribute to further research on the ways that ISM policy affects international students. Using the data collected for this study, I hope to pursue various avenues of additional analysis and research. For example, while I undertook initial steps to conduct manually- and auto-coded sentiment analyses,

ultimately to do this the data needed additional preparation that did not fit with the timetable for the study. With hundreds of pages of transcripts from the 40 student interviews, a sentiment analysis would provide a new angle on the interview data used in this study, paving the way for an analysis to classify students' "sentiments or emotions to determine the [student's] attitude toward an object or entity" (Zhou & Ye, 2020, p. 1). This would therefore use a popular approach to analyze the data, more explicitly focusing on students' affective and emotional perspectives of policy and employing the analytic capacity of software systems like NVivo to conduct manually- and auto-coded sentiment analyses.

The data from this study and other sources could also be used to continue seeking an understanding of how ISM policy affects prospective students' decisions about potential host countries (IDP Education, 2019). Interviews in this dissertation indicated varying levels of ISM policy influence on student decisions to study in their chosen host country. Ekani (Singapore A2), for example, did not know much about the visa policies prior to coming, and they therefore had no real bearing on her decision to study in Australia. Qiaohui (China A3) and Ziqi (China A3) also felt that the visa policies did not affect their decision to study in Australia, nor, in retrospect, would more knowledge about the policies and their impacts have changed their decisions. Unlike some of his fellow international students who studied in Australia, Niraj (Nepal A1) was emphatic about how he views his decision to come to Australia after experiencing ISM policy challenges, revealing: "I would not be here. I would not be here. No, I would not come to Australia. No, that's given. That's a statement. I say that multiple times even to people here…" Others, such as Afra (Iran C2), Krishna (Nepal U4), and Linda (Paraguay U2) described, with mixed levels of vigor, how more prior knowledge of the ISM policy in their host

countries might have led them to different decisions. Such an area of focus in future research would ideally have a positive informational impact as described in the opening paragraphs of this chapter.

The complexity of the ISM policies and students' efforts to navigate the rules and regulations highlighted the importance of knowledgeable and accessible sources of support from various public, private, and HEO entities. Visa and ISM policy support experiences and needs therefore appear to be another area ripe for additional, focused research. For example, while Binsa (Nepal A3) felt very much supported by education consultants who assist with questions about visas, this can be contrasted with Eddy's (Britain A3) frustration with support provided by the Australian government. In Canada, Aadi (Bangladesh C6) felt very supported by his institution, which employed advisors to support students with the many processes that accompany being a new international student in Canada. Afra (Iran C2), on the other hand, was frustrated by the support provided by her HEO in the face of visa challenges, describing it as "a mess." These few examples are representative of the responses from all participants in the study: Their visa and study permit support experiences vary widely, and students reported getting advice from their own and other HEO advisors and websites, the government, friends, family members, advocacy groups, Google, and more. Future research could examine ISM policy experiences at the intersection of student knowledge and available advising, support, and informational resources.

As discussed in this study ISM policy remains intimately tied to the host nation and its particular constellation of local environmental factors. This positions cultural political economy as a worthwhile approach to the study of ISM policy and yet, to my knowledge, this is only the

second study utilizing CPE to undertake empirical research on the topic (see Crumley-Effinger, 2021). CPE and perhaps also the hypothesized ISM policy regime (see above) can be explored as a basis for a valuable theoretical approach to the conduct of a range of additional ISM policy studies, such as the ones described in this chapter. In short, this study has set a theoretical and methodological foundation for continued exploration of the use of CPE in research on ISM policy and the international student experience. More specifically, I have provided a detailed outline of my approach to utilizing the technological and structural selectivities in this work and above I have hypothesized how the discursive selectivity could be especially helpful in examining policymaking as an act that includes semiotic activities that will ultimately affect ISM policy.

Additionally, findings presented here show that some students' policy experiences are shaped by the host nation's perspective of their country of citizenship. For example, Benesh (Afghanistan U5) and Ekani (Singapore A2) shared stories of how their nationality affected their experiences of ISM policy in the United States and Australia, respectively. A CPE framework for research into these effects would also be potentially beneficial for further studies of how host nations' discourses and perspectives of particular countries affect the policy experiences of inbound students from those countries.

Finally, it is my hope that this qualitative study may serve as a foundation for future quantitative and large-scale research into the effects of ISM policy on international students. The findings outlined in the previous chapters may serve as a starting point or provide a theoretical and empirical foundation for future research projects and hypotheses. Future studies may, for example, incorporate more student voices, more national contexts, and cover more granular

inquiry into ISM policy impacts on students' academics, and professional and personal experiences.

Implications for Practice

Because it is one of my stated aims that this research will inform practices of those supporting international students in their home countries, it is also valuable to consider how this study might hold implications for international student support (ISS) professionals. I have already noted that students seek and obtain study permit and visa information from a wide variety of sources, which could both benefit and pose problems for students' understanding of how national policies intersect with the context of their host HEO. This points to the need for additional efforts by ISS professionals to continue striving to provide up-to-date and comprehensive information on the ISM policies that affect their international student populations.

It is also salient to point out the importance of straightforward and honest conversations with new or prospective students. That is, finding ways to impart transparent information to students to 'tell it like it is' in a caring way so that students can reasonably expect to know some of the benefits and drawbacks of how ISM policy will affect this. This is an especially crucial idea, though perhaps challenging in practice, considering the competitive environment for international student enrollments. There are many success stories and examples of things that work well, and there are permissions and allowances that are helpful and useful, like CPT and OPT in the United States. However, there are also limitations, so I would argue that communicating with students about what they are really heading into is quite important. This empirical study could support efforts in this vein.

Finally, I also believe that communicating with other audiences should be a priority because, as mentioned throughout this study, many people simply do not understand how much the ISM policies pervade these students' lives. The students themselves mentioned that their domestic friends and others just do not understand. So, I would hope that ISS professionals, using data and findings from this dissertation as well as their own personal and professional experiences, can help spread the word to other audiences that are not as closely related or connected to international students. If the idea of policy pervasion became more accepted and a more understood, then it would help others understand the situations and experiences that these students are living through.

Concluding Thoughts

This study has provided a methodical approach to producing new knowledge about the ISM policy experiences of international students in Australia, Canada, and the United States. This has been done through the employ of a robust conceptual framework of cultural political economy, institutionalism, and regime theory, and is informed by ideas central to human capital theory. I have also outlined the thoroughgoing theoretical structure of the study, wherein these theories were explicitly incorporated into the data collection, analysis, and reporting of findings as outlined in chapters five through nine. Not only were the interview questions developed in connection with the conceptual framework, the analytical queries guiding the interview and policy analyses were also wholly built with this framework at the center. Building on the strengths and lessons of this study, future research can continue to delve into the value and analytic capacity of these theories, as described in the previous two sections.

For the better part of three years, I have centered the ISM policy experiences of international students in my own professional and overall doctoral work. Having done so, it is my contention that students' experiences of ISM policy are seldom a pointed focus of studies centering on international students (Riaño et al., 2018a). Taking this lacuna as a starting point for my own inquiry, I have sought to show why this research is imperative. This research imperative is illustrated most explicitly in chapter six, where I show that for the students in this study, ISM policy has the power to pervade many areas of international students' lives: from their romantic relationships to their career paths, from their mental health to their chosen areas of study, and beyond. The empirical research describing this ISM policy pervasion tracks with anecdotal evidence from my professional work as an immigration advisor in the US, where I have seen time and again how students' lives are impacted directly by the ISM policies. As noted above, it is my hope that this study will drive future research to continue exploring experiences and refining knowledge of this ISM policy pervasion with more students, in more countries, and through different methods.

That international *student* migration policy should include such an emphasis on labor parameters and restrictions might come as a surprise, however, its salience in the policy mirrors the prominence of employment topics in the students' experiences. These ideas, explored in chapter seven, call to mind the ever-present ideas of human capital theory, especially as it relates to the connections people and nations often make between education and employment and labor. The prominence of labor and employment topics in the policies and student experiences highlight the need for a reconsideration of how academic and employment topics are handled in student visa and study permit policies, especially in terms of how these policies meet student

needs, and those of host nations. From the findings presented in this study, it is clear that student needs are often not being met in this area. The success of ISM policies on national labor-specific goals was not explored in this project, but this is another area ripe for additional empirical study. This research has shown a light on the centrality of labor and employment in ISM policy and invites consideration of how policies (or interactions with them) might be reconsidered to better meet student needs, and to determine if the current ISM policy status quo is meeting the needs of host nations as well.

The previous chapter showed that whether it is often considered or not, there is a connection between the broad, national ISM policy environment of a host nation and the individual lives of international students studying there. The participants in this study have shown that they can see how the cultural, political, and economic environment of their host country can affect them personally. Among much else, this shows that the student experience is not only influenced by factors such as a student's chosen university, academic area, or personal activities, but also by the national policy environment in which they conduct their studies. Furthermore, it shows more than just this influence, highlighting also students' perceptive appreciation for and understanding of the profound ways that their experience is informed by the host countries cultural, political, and economic realities. Such findings contribute new knowledge to those studies that focus more on the cultural environment of the HEO or host country, incorporating the important mediating factor of ISM policy and its pervasive influence on the international student experience.

As has already been stated, it is likely not novel or surprising to assert that student visa policies, rules, and regulations affect international students in highly personal ways. Yet, while

this may be understood by international students and those who work with them, there is little scholarship focusing explicitly on how ISM policies affect students, often leaving the field's understanding of the topic based on anecdotal evidence and personal experiences. This study, then, serves to provide empirical data from student interviews and policy documents to identify and outline ISM policy pervasion for international students.

In short, it was in response to these aforementioned lacunae that this study was undertaken. I therefore hope that this dissertation and its unique findings constitute a useful contribution to—though perhaps just a drop in—the ocean of literature that seeks to better understand international students' diverse experiences. I also hope that it might drive valuable ISM policy and international student support changes to better serve international students. This research highlights and provides empirical nuance to what some already know: ISM policy matters deeply to—and has significant effects on—international students. Because ISM policy matters, continued research on the subject and advocacy for just, stable, responsive, and nuanced ISM policy matters. And because these policies have such significant effects on students, it is imperative that we continue to seek understanding of *how* these policies affect international students so that students, policymakers, and those supporting the sojourners can deftly respond to ISM policy challenges and opportunities, both local and global, old and new.

APPENDIX A

RECRUITMENT MESSAGING

ISS Partners Email

SUBJECT: *Research Assistance Request: International Student Experiences of Visa Policy*

Hello,

I hope you are well. I am currently undertaking a research project for my doctoral dissertation and hoping that you might be able to assist me. My dissertation research is focusing on international student experiences of the policies and regulations connected with their visa or permit to study in the host country. To do this, I will be interviewing international students in Australia, Canada, and the United States, and will additionally be conducting analysis of policies that affect international students in the selected host countries.

I hope that this research will be valuable not only for students, but also for those who assist international students through the various regulatory challenges and opportunities connected to their studies in a foreign country.

If you are interested in supporting this research, I would ask that you send a pre-written email to your international students 1-2 times in order to invite them to participate in this study. The email (attached as a word document) includes a description of my study as well as a link to my study's [website]. I also have a poster (see attached) that could be posted or included in other communications.

If this is something you would be willing to do or if you have any questions about this study, please feel free to send an email to me (Max Crumley-Effinger, M.Ed. at [mcrumleyeffinger@luc.edu]). A request for more information does not obligate you to participate in outreach to your students. More information can also be found in the attached poster or at the study's [website].

I would really appreciate your assistance and look forward to hearing back from you!
Sincerely,

Max Crumley-Effinger
PhD Candidate, School of Education
Loyola University Chicago

Recruitment Email

SUBJECT: *Study Participation Opportunity – International Student Experiences of Visa Policy*

The following message is being sent on behalf of Loyola University Chicago doctoral candidate Max Crumley-Effinger. All inquiries should be directed to Max Crumley-Effinger at mcrumleyeffinger@luc.edu with the subject line "RE: Study Participation Opportunity – International Student Experiences of Visa Policy."

Dear students,

        I am looking for international students who would be interested in participating in a research project on international student experiences of the policies and regulations connected with their visa or permit to study in the host country. In addition to interviewing students, I will be conducting analysis of policies that affect international students in the selected host countries.

        To be eligible to participate in this study, you must be a college / university student over 18 years old, degree-seeking international student studying in [Australia / Canada / the United States] on a [student] visa and / or study permit. If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to share your experiences through a 45-60 minute online (Skype or Zoom) interview. Interviews will take place on Zoom or Skype at a time determined by you and me, and each interview will be recorded with your consent and an electronically signed consent form will be requested to affirm your participation before the interview. Participation is completely voluntary, and the identity of any participating students will be kept completely confidential through the use of pseudonyms.

If you would like to participate or if you have any questions about this study, please feel free to
1. Visit my study website, or
2. Complete this interest form, or
3. Send an email to me (Max Crumley-Effinger) at mcrumleyeffinger@luc.edu.

A request for more information does not obligate you to participate in any research study. More information can also be found at the study's website.

I would really appreciate your interest and participation!
Kind regards,

Max Crumley-Effinger
PhD Candidate, School of Education
Loyola University Chicago

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PREPARATION AND CONDUCT PROTOCOL

Stage	Activities	Outcomes
Interview Finalization	Use inputs from the SignUpGenius and the Qualtrics form (*Dissertation Participation Interest*) to finalize interview time and medium. Share *Informed Consent* Qualtrics form.	Firm, finalized interview appointment
Interview Initiation	Zoom: Start meeting and let the participant into the meeting room. Skype: Call participant using the name provided in the Qualtrics form (*Dissertation Participation Interest*)	Interview meeting initiation
Initiate Recording	● Tell the participant that recording is starting ● Begin recording ○ Zoom: Click 'Record to Cloud' ○ Skype: Click Record? ○ Screen Record: With the video call window selected, press Windows + G and press the record button in the "Capture" window; turn on microphone; must keep chat system selected to record audio.	Record the interview for subsequent transcription
Interview Start	Greet participant and finalize Informed Consent If Informed Consent has not been received ● Have you had a chance to read through the Informed Consent form? ● Do you have any questions before you sign the form? ● https://luc.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1Ap01m5lIOc5u2F	Receive confirmation of informed consent
Interview Participant	Follow the SSI protocol	Data collection through SSI protocol
Member Check Opportunity	Ask the participant if they would like the opportunity to review a transcription of the interview. (Included in the SSI, see below.)	Transparency

| Snowball Check | Ask the participant to invite their peers to participate in the study. (Included in the SSI, see below.) | Greater pool of prospective participants. |

SSI Protocol

Introduction

Thank you for joining me for this short interview. I really appreciate your time assisting with this dissertation study, which is focusing on the experiences of international students as they navigate and interact with national policies that affect them as international students.

Housekeeping

Before I begin with my questions for you, there are a few quick but important tasks we need to take care of. If you did not already have a chance, please look over the consent form that I have supplied to you.

- [Pause for time to review, if necessary.]
- Do you have any questions about the content of the consent form?
- I want to note a few important items on the consent form:
  - First, as you can see in point #3, this interview will be recorded. Point #5 outlines the details of the ways in which I will be keeping the content of the recordings completely confidential.
  - Second, point #6 is about the voluntary nature of this study. If at any point you are not comfortable answering a question or if you would like to stop the interview altogether, that is fine, please just let me know.
  - If you do not have any additional questions, please complete the online form and we will get started.

If there are any interruptions with our call I will try to reconnect with you through this Skype / Zoom call, or, if needed, I will contact you through your email address.

Preliminary Interview Questions

1. To start the interview I would like to begin with some introductions; so I will begin.
   a. My name is Max Crumley-Effinger and I am currently a PhD candidate at Loyola University Chicago, though I currently live in Virginia, USA.
   b. Could you introduce yourself?
      i. Name
      ii. In what country are you studying?
      iii. What is the name of the university you are attending?
      iv. What city do you live in?

       v.   Year in school

       vi.   Degree program / major / subjects studied

       vii.   Where were you living before you started studying in [COUNTRY]?

2. What have been some of the best things about living in [COUNTRY] and studying at [UNIVERSITY]?

3. What have been some of the more challenging things about living in [COUNTRY] and studying at [UNIVERSITY]?

4. Why did you decide to study outside of your home country?

Content Interview Questions

Thank you. I would now like to turn to some questions about policies for international students in [COUNTRY]. When I say "international student policies" I am referring to regulations relating to your permission to study in [COUNTRY] as well as government rules and regulations relating to your time as a student enrolled in a university in [COUNTRY]. If you are unclear about what is meant by any of these questions, please let me know.

1. Can you think of some responsibilities or limitations you have because you are an international student, that a local (domestic) student would not have?

2. Can you think of a time when a policy or regulation relating to your visa / study permission posed particular challenges to you?
    a. Please take any time you need.
    b. Any more examples?

3. What, if any, penalties are there if you fail to follow a rule relating to your visa/study permission?
    a. Does a fear of these penalties enter into any of your decision-making?

4. In what ways, if any, do you interact with the national government? (E.g., going in person to an office; sending items; at embassy; at the national border, etc.)
    a. How would you describe those interactions?
    b. How do they make you feel?

5. Where do you turn if you have questions or are encountering challenges with something related to your visa or immigration status? Who do you speak to?
    a. Are there any other places?

6. What, if anything, do you wish was different about the policies relating to your student visa / immigration status?
    a. Why do you wish that?

7. What, if any, stressors do you have/feel because you are an international student in [COUNTRY]?

8. Can you think of a time when the rules or regulations for international students affected…

      a. Your ability to get a job or be employed?

      b. Your relationships? (e.g., relationships with people inside or outside the host country; family, friends, with a significant other, etc.)

      c. Your academics or decisions you make about your learning? [E.g., courses you take, or field of study, or where you are studying.]

9. Do you have any examples of the rules and regulations for international students affecting…

      a. Your professional goals or plans? [i.e., longer term]

      b. Your travel or your plans to travel? (either within the host country or internationally)

10. Do you think the rules and regulations of your visa / study permissions make sense or are fair?

      a. Why or why not?

      b. In what ways do you feel that these rules / regulations are beneficial to you?

11. Did / do the rules / regs of the student visa/permissions of [COUNTRY] enter into your decision to study there?

      a. Did you know much about the rules / regs for intlstu before you came to [COUNTRY]?

      b. If you knew then what you know now, would you have made a different decision?

12. Since you have spent a great deal of time in [COUNTRY], do you have a sense of why the policies are the way that they are?

Extra Questions

- How would you describe the pandemic's effects on your overall experience as an intlstu over the past year or so?
- Do you feel like the government is "supervising" or "inspecting" you during your time on the student visa / study permit?
  - "Keeping tabs" on you?
  - Government oversight?

That's all of the questions I had for you today. Is there anything else that I did not ask about that you would like to bring up?

- Do you have any questions for me?

- As I mentioned previously, I can make a transcript of this discussion available to you to look over. Is this something you would like me to do?

Finally, I want to thank you, again, for giving me some of your time to complete this interview today. It was an absolute pleasure to speak with you today. I would also like to invite you to tell any of your friends about this study, if you can think of anyone who might like to speak with me about these topics. You can share with them my email address or the study's website. And as always, please do not hesitate to be in touch with me if you have any follow-up questions.

Probing Question Bank
- Please take any time you need to think.
- Can you think of any more examples?
- Can you provide more information about that?
- Why
    - Is that?
    - Was this a concern?
    - Did you feel this way?
    - Was this important for you?
- What concerned you about this?
- How did that make you feel?
- How, if at all, has this/that changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Project Title	*Experiencing International Student Mobility and Migration Policy: A Qualitative Multicase Study*
Researchers	Max Crumley-Effinger, PhD Candidate at Loyola University Chicago
Faculty Advisor	Dr. Tavis Jules
IRB Approval #	3001

1. Introduction:

You are being asked to take part in a research study being conducted by Max Crumley-Effinger as part of his dissertation research, under the supervision of Dr. Tavis Jules in the School of Education at Loyola University of Chicago. You have been invited to participate because you are (or were) a college or university level, degree-seeking international student studying in Australia, Canada, or the United States. This study includes plans to interview approximately 10 students in each of the case countries (that is, in Australia, Canada, and the United States) to learn more about their experiences as international students.

Please read this form carefully and ask the interviewer any questions you may have before deciding whether to participate in the study.

2. Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to understand international student experiences of the policies and regulations connected with their visa or permit to study in the host country. In addition to interviewing students, Mr. Crumley-Effinger will be conducting analysis of policies that affect international students in the selected host countries; this policy analysis will examine the ways in which host country policies reflect local context.

3. Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in a 45-60-minute, individual, online video interview with Mr. Crumley-Effinger. Interviews will take place using Skype or Zoom video chat, and each interview will be recorded to facilitate transcription and review of the interview. Skype and Zoom are both free video chat software systems that work on personal computers (Mac and Windows operating systems), on tablets, and on mobile smart phones. Mr. Crumley-Effinger will ask questions about your experiences studying and living in the host country, especially as it relates to terms of your student visa or permit. Study participants can elect to discontinue the interview at any time should they wish to do so.

4. Risks/Benefits:

There are some risks associated with participation in this project in that interviewees will be asked about their immigration situation and their experiences with it, and it is possible that the interview will bring up unpleasant memories of experiences for you. Please see the section below regarding the careful steps taken to ensure the confidentiality of all interview participants. There are no direct benefits to you from participation, but the results may provide information and

insight for educators and researchers interested in international students and student visa policies.

5. Confidentiality:

All recordings will be stored locally and password protected and the video portion of the recording will be removed so that there remains only audio from the interview. All interviewees will be assigned a pseudonym at the time of transcription so that no written/typed data will contain the name of the interviewee. At the conclusion of the interview you will be able to indicate your interest in reviewing a transcript of the interview. If, after reviewing your interview transcript you would like to withdraw from the study (and have all data associated with your participation permanently deleted) please contact me. All information gathered will be kept confidential. The final written report will also use the pseudonyms and it is possible that the results of this study may be published.

The researcher is legally required to report child/elder abuse or neglect, as well as if the student reports an imminent threat of life to self or others. Recordings and data will be accessible only to Mr. Crumley-Effinger, with potential input from the faculty advisor.

6. Voluntary Participation:

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not want to be in this study, you do not have to participate. Even if you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.

7. Contacts and Questions:

If you have questions about this research study or interview, please feel free to contact Mr. Crumley-Effinger at mcrumleyeffinger@luc.edu or the faculty advisor Dr. Tavis Jules at tjules@luc.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Loyola University Office of Research Services at (773) 508-2689.

8. Statement of Consent:

Your electronic signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above, have had an opportunity to ask questions of the researcher, and agree to participate in this research study. You will be given a digital copy of this form to keep for your records.

☐   I confirm that I am at least 18 years old.

_____   _____

Participant's Digital Signature   **Date**

APPENDIX D

POLICY CODING AND ANALYSIS PROTOCOL

QCA: Cultural Political Economy

Structural Selectivity
     ● Analysis of the content of ISM policies and the imaginaries in reference to which those policies are created, and the local and global environments in which both are embedded.
     ● Analysis of the ways in which local prerogatives are manifest in local ISM policy.

Analytical Queries
     ➔ CPE-1: In what ways are the key national emphases evident, highlighted, or attended to in this policy?
     ➔ CPE-2: Is there evidence or hints that other <u>emphases</u> are informing the policy?
     ➔ CPE-3: What *local* environmental <u>factors</u> appear to influence or inform the policy? How?
     ➔ CPE-4: What *global* environmental <u>factors</u> appear to influence or inform the policy? How?

Technological Selectivity
     ● Analysis of the ways in which ISM policies can affect control or influence on those 'targeted' by said policies.
     ● Gather insights into the ways in which local ISM policies affect international students in their respective host countries

Analytical Queries
     ➔ CPE-5: What components of the policy requires actions to be taken by students?
     ➔ CPE-6: What components of the policy requires actions to be taken by those connected to students?
     ➔ CPE-7: What controls are in place that directly influence students?
     ➔ CPE-8: How do any controls or influences or actionable requirements function or occur?

QCA: Institutionalism

Analytical Queries
     ➔ INST-1: What, if any, references to *local* institutions are evident within the policy?
     ➔ INST-2: What, if any, references to *global* institutions are evident within the policy?

➔ INST-3: What, if any, local or global institutions are *implicitly* informing the policy?

QCA: Regime Theory

Analytical Queries
  ➔ RT-1: What, if any, references are there to non-local ISM policies?
  ➔ RT-2: What, if any, references are there to national sovereign control of ISM / immigration policy?
  ➔ RT-3: What, if any, relationships exist between this document and others from the same country?

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW CODING AND ANALYSIS PROTOCOL

Data Preparation

Stage	Activities	Outcomes
Data Backup	Save the video file (MP4) to an external USB	Data backed up for safety
Accessing Audio	• Zoom automatically does an audio-only version, so I just need to delete the other files associated and save the audio-only version.	Audio files saved
Data Save	• Save all files in a dissertation folder on my desktop. • Once any manipulation is completed, save copies of all data on the external USB drive.	Data backed up in a secure location
Transcription	Zoom: Auto-transcribed by Zoom. • Review all Zoom-generated transcripts and correct for accuracy.	Transcriptions of all interviews
Name Files	File Naming Conventions • Country_Pseudonym_Year-Month-Day • Consent forms: (saved in Qualtrics, backed up in computer) • Interest forms: (saved in Qualtrics, backed up in computer)	Organization of all interview files
Data Notation	Add all information to the *Participant_Data_Master* document on my PC; save copy onto the USB drive.	Interviewee data collected in one location
Interview Data Analysis	Conduct analysis (see below)	Analyzed data to determine findings

Analytical Queries

General Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA)
QCA Analytical Queries

➔ QCA-1: What (a) academic, (b) relationship, and/or (c) employment topics arise from the participants' experiences?

➔ QCA-2: What other topics arise from the participant's experiences?

➔ QCA-3: Are the interviewee's responses regarding ISM policy in the host country generally positive, neutral, negative?

➔ QCA-4: Used to capture interesting or insightful comments that *are not* connected to ISM policy.

Cultural Political Economy (CPE)

Technological Selectivity
- Analysis of the ways in which ISM policies can affect control or influence on those 'targeted' by said policies.
- Gather insights into the ways in which local ISM policies affect international students in their respective host countries.

CPE Analytical Queries
➔ CPE-1: What actions must be taken by students?
➔ CPE-2: What controls are in place that directly influence students?

Structural Selectivity
- Analysis of the content of ISM policies and the imaginaries in reference to which those policies are created, and the local and global environments in which both are embedded.
- Analysis of the ways in which local prerogatives are manifest in local ISM policy.

CPE Analytical Queries
➔ **CPE-3**: How, if at all, does the participant connect their experience to the local / national cultural environment?
➔ **CPE-4**: How, if at all, does the participant connect their experience to the local / national political environment?
➔ **CPE-5**: How, if at all, does the participant connect their experience to the local / national economic environment?
➔ **CPE-6**: What *global* (or home country) environmental factors are described or noted in the participant's experiences?

Regime Theory (RT)

RT Analytical Queries
  ➜ RT-1: What, if any, references are there to ISM policies from *other* host nations?
  ➜ RT-2: What, if any, references are there to the host nation's prerogative to delineate their own ISM policy?

Institutionalism (INST)

INST Analytical Queries
  ➜ INST-1: What, if any, references to *local* institutions are evident in the participant's experiences?
  ➜ INST-2: What, if any, references to *global* institutions are evident in the participant's experiences?

APPENDIX F

RECRUITMENT PROTOCOL

Stage	Activities	Outcomes
Request to ISS Partners	Invitation email (*Recruitment Email*, see Appendix A-A) to ISS partners at Australian, Canadian, and U.S. HEOs (includes link to website, student email text, my email address, and the PDF poster).	ISS partners send out the recruitment email to their intlstu populations
Student Responses	[Receive responses]	Students send emails to me or indicate their interest in participating using the Qualtrics form (*Dissertation Participation Interest*)
Sign-Ups	Send *Online Interview Details* email (see below).	Students sign up for an interview time.
Interview Reminder	24 hours before the interview, email participant with gratitude, recap of interview time, and description of interview location (Zoom or Skype, as indicated on their interest form). *Interview Notification and Reminder* email (see below)	Students are reminded of interview details

Online Interview Details email

SUBJECT: Online Interview Details

Hello,

Thank you for your interest in participating in my dissertation research study. I really appreciate your time!

1. If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please feel free to respond to this email.
2. If you are ready to schedule a Zoom interview, please **select the date and time** that works best for you.
3. If you have time before the interview, please review and complete the **Consent Form**.

4. I will send a reminder, but on the date and time you have selected for the interview, please use the following link to join the Zoom meeting: https://luc.zoom.us/my/maxce

Please let me know if any questions come up or if you need to reschedule; I really look forward to speaking with you.
Thanks!
-Max

Interview Notification and Reminder
SUBJECT: Interview Reminder
Hello,
Thank you, again, for your interest in participating in my dissertation research study. This is a reminder of our upcoming interview.

1. The time you have selected is **(DATE)** at **TIME**. I will send a reminder email before the interview.
2. If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please feel free to respond to this email.
3. If you have time before the interview, please review and complete the **Consent Form**.
4. Please use the following link to join the Zoom meeting: https://luc.zoom.us/my/maxce

Please let me know if any questions come up or if you need to reschedule; I really look forward to speaking with you.
Thanks!
-Max

Waitlist
SUBJECT: Interview Follow Up
Hello,
Thank you for your interest in participating in my dissertation research study. At this time, I do not have any free interview time slots, so I have added you to my interview waitlist. If you would like to be removed from the waitlist, please just send me a quick email. Otherwise, I will try to be in touch in the coming weeks if I am able to schedule an interview.

Please let me know if you have any questions; I really do hope that we will be able to connect in the future for an interview.
Thanks!
-Max

APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW QUESTION DERIVATION

Primary Question	Theory-Based Derivations			
	CPE: Technological	*CPE: Structural*	*Regime Theory*	*Institutionalism*
What are some responsibilities or limitations you have because you are an international student, that a local (domestic) student would not have?	✓			✓
Can you think of a time when a policy or regulation relating to your visa or study permission posed particular challenges to you?	✓			✓
What, if any, penalities are there if you fail to follow a rule relating to your visa/study permission?	✓			
Can you think of a time when the rules or regulations for international students affected… • Your ability to get a job or be employed? • Your relationships? (e.g., relationships with people inside or outside the host country; family, friends, etc.) • Your academics or decisions you make about your learning?	✓			
Do you have any examples of the rules and regulations for international students affecting… • Your professional goals or plans?	✓			✓

● Your travel or your plans to travel? (either within the host country or internationally)				
Where do you turn if you are encountering challenges with something related to your visa or immigration status?	✓			
What do you wish was different about the policies relating to your student visa / immigration status?	✓			
Do you think the rules and regulations of your visa / study permissions make sense or are fair?		✓		
Did the rules / regs of the student visa/permissions of [COUNTRY] enter into your decision to study there?			✓	
Why did you decide to study outside of your home country?				✓
What, if any, stressors do you have/feel because you are an international student in [COUNTRY]?	✓			
Since you have spent a great deal of time in [COUNTRY], do you have a sense of why the policies are the way that they are?		✓	✓	
Do visa policies or regulations or immigration considerations ever enter into your decision-making processes?	✓			✓

APPENDIX H

SOCIAL MEDIA RECRUITMENT MESSAGE

Hi all, I'm wondering if anyone in my network might be able to help me out: I am currently working on my PhD dissertation and I am recruiting to conduct 45-minute Zoom interviews with international students who are attending or graduated from Canadian or Australian universities. If you have any suggestions for folks I might reach out to please send me a message. Alternatively, please feel free to share my interest form with anyone you know who might be interested in participating: https://lnkd.in/dy2Scba

APPENDIX I

RECRUITMENT POSTER

REFERENCE LIST

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