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**MY COUNTRY, 'TIS OF THEE: EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
IMMIGRANT STUDENTS' POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION AND THEIR FEELINGS OF
BELONGING IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA**

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by

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ABSTRACT

While political scientists have long described the choice to engage politically as a rational decision, we consistently see evidence of individuals participating because they value the community they live in, and the identity they gain by belonging to a community. The political socialization literature, which studies the knowledge, attitudes, habits and dispositions that motivate young people to become politically active, continues these individualistic assumptions by focusing on individual students' thinking rather than the school and community context where students live, learn and interact. By excluding students' feelings of belonging to the school and symbolically the broader community, political socialization scholars miss a crucial element of students' political socialization. This failure is particularly problematic for immigrant students whose first experiences of in/exclusion in their new countries' governments come from the schools that they attend.

I use an exploratory, comparative, embedded case study of two school districts: one in Pennsylvania and the other in Manitoba, Canada to examine the unexplored relationship between immigrant youths' political socialization process and their feelings of belonging to their school community. Using document analysis, observations, interviews, surveys and reflective writing, the study contextualizes a previously largely undifferentiated model of political socialization. Students described feelings of belonging which largely aligned with the literature on belonging. These feelings included feeling comfortable, accepted, known, trusted and cared for. Many students relied on a thin sense of belonging to maintain a feeling of connection even when the students' experiences with school and community did not warrant feelings of belonging. This thin sense of belonging allowed them to justify and claim their right to be somewhere even when the people and policies of that place did not warrant a feeling of belonging. In school, the study shows that teachers' responses to the students shaped the students' experiences of schooling. Such that when students forged caring, responsive relationships with teachers, students' feelings of belonging to the school existed even as those same students recognized the myriad of problems in their school such as bullying or the academic failures of many of their peers. School-level policies also influenced students' feelings about their relationship with adults and others in the schools. These policies communicated school officials' assumptions to the students and this helped or hindered students' feelings of belonging to the school. Lastly, the findings highlight the varying understanding of citizenship that students' hold. One group of students tended to define citizenship in legal terms of the rights and responsibilities entailed in citizenship. The other group of students focused on the relational aspects of citizenship. However, while the students differed in their various emphases on the priority of citizenship, they shared a similar understanding of what the characteristics of good citizenship entailed. The relationship between belonging and citizenship became the most clear when students discussed the characteristics of a good citizen and those that they considered citizen role models. These good citizens shared the characteristics with people who helped create places of belonging for the students. We see that the students' role models exemplify individuals who both help students feel a sense of belonging to their schools and communities as well as model good citizenship for the students. The findings show that immigrant students' feelings of belonging relate to how they conceptualize the concept of citizenship and whom they find to be good citizens. This dissertation will add an important but absent element to the political socialization model, the role of belonging to the school community. Lastly, it challenges the rationalistic assumptions undergirding much of political socialization research. Given the burgeoning population of immigrant children, the study explores fundamentally important relationships between schools, immigrant children's feelings of belonging and their political socialization.

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To Marlene Ertingshausen,
My role model who taught me to live life with integrity and joy

Chapter 1

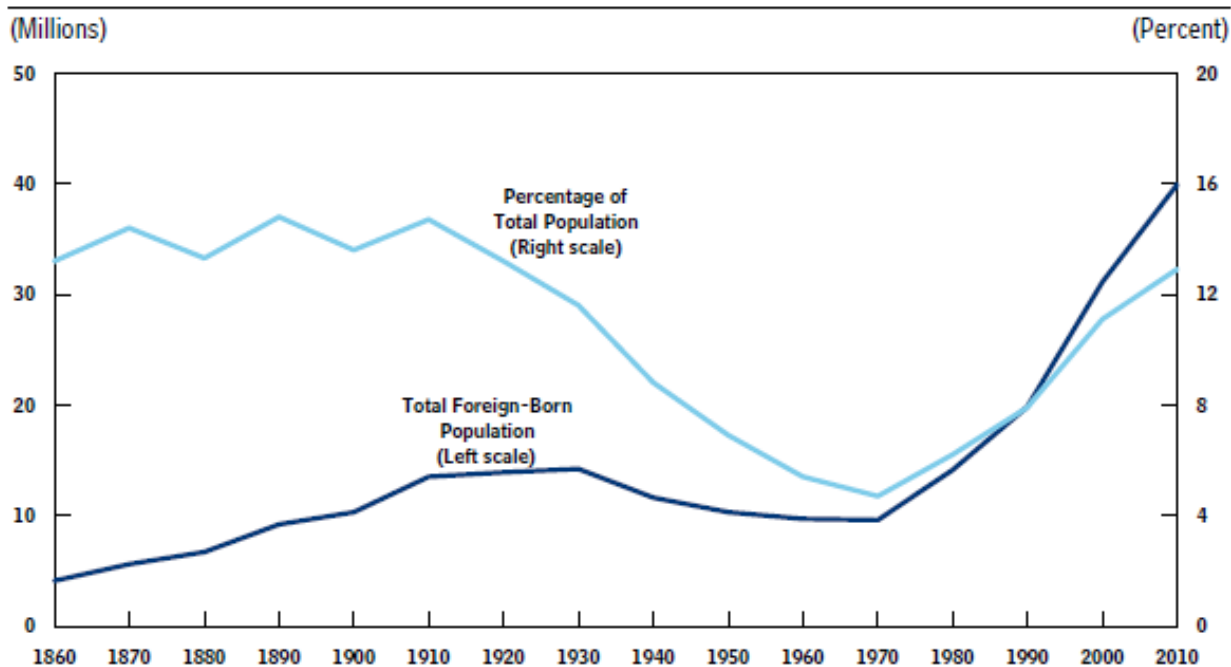
Introduction

The desire to belong lies at the heart of the human experience. John Steinbeck captures this fundamental need in *East of Eden* writing “the greatest terror a child can have is that he is not loved, and rejection is the hell of fears. I think everyone in the world to a large or small extent has felt rejection” (p. 270 as cited in Beck & Malley, 1998). The drive to belong to a community manifests itself early in childhood and continues to remain a central force throughout our lives (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Pugh, 2009). The question of belonging has become all the more salient in the United States of America and Canada where foreign-born residents now account for approximately 13% and 21% of the respective populations (Britz & Batalova, 2013; Chui, Flanders, & Anderson, 2011). Many immigrants either bring or start families in their new countries, sending their children to the local public schools. While schools prepare these students academically, schools also play a crucial role in the political, social and economic socialization of our youngest and newest citizens (Labaree, 1997; Ramirez & Boli, 1987). These socialization processes introduce students to societal expectations and help them become part of the community (Lave, 1991). Though scholars have long recognized the importance of education in the political socialization process (Niemi & Junn, 1998; Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993), scholars have only recently begun examining the political socialization process of immigrant students (Wong & Tseng, 2008). To my knowledge, none have examined the relationship between students’ feelings of belonging and their political socialization process. My dissertation will address this research lacuna.

Problem Statement

This dissertation arises from a recognition that the mass migration of individuals as part of the third demographic shift has created a large number of first and second generation immigrants around the world but particularly in the United States and Canada where these immigrant groups now make up almost 25% and 39 % respectively of the United States and Canadian population (Britz & Batalova, 2013; Chui et al., 2011; Coleman, 2006). Indeed the rates of immigration, to both Canada and the United States have only been topped by the immigration boom a century ago. Figure 1 shows the sharp increase in the foreign-born population in the United States that has occurred since the mid-1990s. The same trend is present in Figure 2 which

Figure 1 Percent of Foreign Born Population in the United States, 1860 to 2010



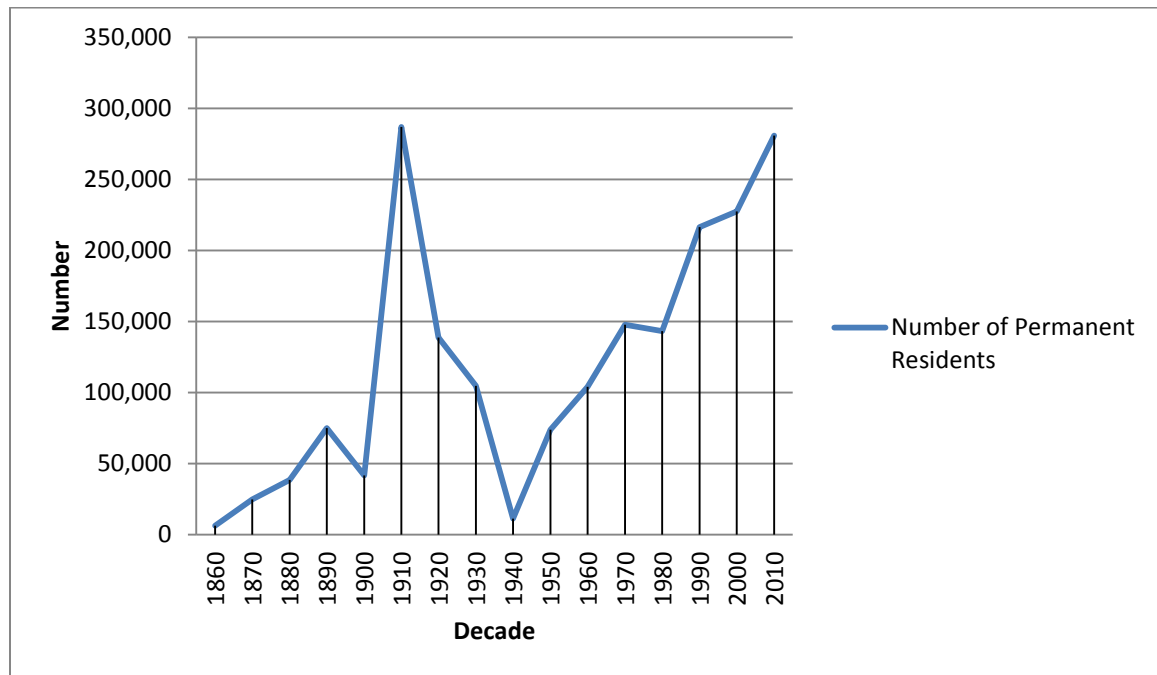
Sources: Congressional Budget Office based on data from Campbell J. Gibson and Emily Lennon, *Historical Census Statistics on the Foreign-Born Population of the United States: 1950-1990*, Working Paper 29 (Census Bureau, Population Division, February 1999), <http://go.usa.gov/TKFG>; Nolan Malone and others, *The Foreign-Born Population: 2000*, Census 2000 Brief (Census Bureau, December 2003), www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/c2kbr-34.pdf (473 KB); and Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009, 2010, and 2011, www.census.gov/acs/www.

Note: In 2011, the total foreign-born population exceeded 40 million people and accounted for 13 percent of the total U.S. population.

Source: Congressional Budget Office, 2013

shows the population in Canada is also experiencing a migration of historic proportion. The figures demonstrate that both Canada and the United States are experiencing near record levels of immigration. Canada and the United States share many similarities that facilitate the comparison between these two countries; these similarities will be explored more completely in chapter three. One important similarity to note is that both countries have laws that grant any child born in either country citizenship (United States Const. amend. XIV, § 1; Citizenship Act, 1985). Thus one estimate suggests that almost 80 percent of United States children born of immigrant parents are citizens (Hernandez, Denton, & Macartney, 2008). While an equivalent statistic has not been found for Canada, one can expect it to be equally high, making the importance of these students' political socialization all the more salient.

Figure 2 Foreign Born, Permanent Residents living in Canada, 1860 to 2010



Source: Author, Data: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2010

These immigrants and children of immigrants enter the school systems with a vast array of cultural, linguistic, and political diversity and they require systematic support to flourish (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2010). By virtue of their birth, these students are

citizens of their new nations yet they do not necessarily have the cultural, social or political capital to successfully navigate the education system and eventually their political community (Jiménez, 2011). As one important access point to information and integration, the question becomes how do schools help students navigate the schooling system and facilitate the development of the knowledge, attitudes, habits, and dispositions that they need to become engaged citizens in their new countries. While this is an important question to ask given the record number of immigrants moving to Canada and the United States, a small but growing number of researchers have studied immigrant students' political socialization process (some examples include Abu El-Haj & Bonet, 2011; Hall, 2004; Wong & Tseng, 2008). Further the political socialization research does little to acknowledge the work that has been done around the creation and understanding of students' identity. This is surprising given the growing understanding of the importance of identity politics and the politics of recognition and belonging (Taylor, 1994; Yuval-Davis, 2011). Both movements for recognition and belonging stem from social groups that demand that their unique experiences not only be recognized but accepted as belonging to the larger society.

Research Questions

To examine the potential relationship between students' feelings of belonging and their political socialization, my dissertation used an exploratory comparative embedded case study approach to examine two school districts: one in Pennsylvania and the other in Manitoba, Canada. Both Pennsylvania and Manitoba have recently become immigrant destinations particularly in areas outside of major cities. These locations were chosen as they provide a particular set of challenges for immigrant integration. These previously homogenous communities wrestle with questions of community identity. Who belongs to the community becomes especially salient as

the communities redefine their understanding of themselves (Massey, 2008). As local public institutions, schools often act as one of the first points of contact for immigrant families and students (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Thus these schools provide immigrants an important introduction to the community (Dabach, 2011). While these early experiences are formative for immigrant students, we do not yet understand the relationship between immigrant students' feelings of belonging to their school and by extension their new community and their political socialization.

I worked with immigrant students living in two new immigrant destinations in Pennsylvania and Manitoba to come to understand how they thought about the concept of belonging. The study also investigated places where these immigrant students found a sense of belonging. Through the interviews, surveys and reflective writing, the students shared their understanding of citizenship, characteristics of good citizens, and whom they considered to be good citizens.

The study was guided by three research questions. The first overarching research question asks: "what is the relationship between immigrant students' feelings of belonging to their school and their political socialization process"? Subsidiary research questions include the following:

- 1) How do immigrant students understand belonging and how does this shape their feelings of belonging to the school?
- 2) How do immigrant students understand their political socialization process and are they influenced by their experiences of inclusion or exclusion in their schools?

Organization of the Study

The remainder of this study will be presented in the following seven chapters. The second chapter presents a review of literature, which continues the discussion started in this chapter about the potential role of students' feelings of belonging in their developing political socialization. The literature review explores the roots of the political socialization literature in the political science field as well as other more nuanced discussions of students' political identities, which begin to give insight into how the role of belonging may influence immigrant students' political socialization. The literature review also discusses the tensions between the Western liberal democratic tradition and the competing demands that stem from the demands of citizens to be recognized for who they are and the politics of belonging that result. The literature review then examines belonging as conceived by psychologists and youth development researchers providing another lens through which to examine the concept of belonging and the influence it has on students' development. The literature review concludes by introducing Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of development, which informs my understanding of individuals' development and how belonging may shape students' political socialization.

Chapter three lays out the context of the two case studies. Since the contexts matter in the development of how schools receive immigrant students, this chapter provides an overview of the federal policies of the United States and Canada towards immigrants. The chapter then focuses on the two communities, which in the past fifteen years have experienced a rapid growth in their immigrant populations and examines how the two communities have responded to this influx. It next provides an overview of the school districts and schools attended by the participants of this study.

Chapter four outlines the research design used in this study. The chapter provides the rationale for using a comparative, exploratory embedded case study to investigate the research

questions. It then introduces the 11 Larton participants and 12 Perth participants. I then provide an overview of the data collection process, which occurred from January to July 2014 in Larton and August to December 2014 in Perth, and included a series of iterative interviews, classroom observations, surveys, reflective writing, and document analyses. Next, the methods used to analyze the resulting data are presented. This analysis involved both deductive and inductive coding. Lastly, the chapter overviews the ethical considerations made to protect my participants and the limitations of this study.

The findings are presented in chapters five, six and seven. Chapter five responds to the first subsidiary research question which asked how immigrant students define feelings of belonging. It also notes an important qualification in students' understandings of belonging, a concept I am calling thin belonging. Students invoked this concept when they wanted to claim a place for themselves where they spent a lot of time but where they did not experience the same rich sense of belonging that they had found elsewhere.

Chapter six presents results on how the two schools fostered or hindered students' feelings of belonging. These findings highlight the important role that teachers and school-level policies have in shaping students' feelings of belonging to their schools. The chapter explores the students' experiences in these two schools and how the schools' differing stances towards the immigrant students affected the students' feelings of belonging.

Chapter seven explores the connections between students' understanding of citizenship and their feelings of belonging to their schools. Briefly, the findings show that the students' understandings of belonging overlap with their perceptions of citizenship. In this overlap, the findings suggest how belonging to a community may in fact be a nascent stage for a more robust political citizenship.

In the concluding chapter, I explore the implications of my findings for theoretical understandings of political socialization and suggest that the conceptualization of political

socialization needs to be broadened to include students' community contexts. Further, I will argue that we need to consider the development of young citizens from a developmental perspective, which honors and recognizes individuals as active dynamic actors who use their experiences in their various ecosystems to develop a political identity greater than just the sum of their knowledge, attitudes, habits and dispositions.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter will overview the political socialization literature and focus in particular on how it relates to immigrant students. It will then turn its attention to the concept of belonging and how political scientists, sociologists, youth development scholars and psychologists have articulated it and the tensions belonging raise in communities. The review will conclude with a presentation of the study's conceptual framework, which brings together different understandings of belonging with work from the political socialization field, and may provide a more complete understanding of how young people form their political identities.

Citizenship, Political Socialization, and Civic Identity

Schools have traditionally played an important role in developing the next generation of citizens (Niemi & Junn, 1998). Indeed, a long line of thinkers have acknowledged the important role of education in shaping the next generation of citizens. In Western thinking, philosophers have regarded education as an important tool in cultivating moral democratic citizens needed for democracies to thrive as evidenced by the following quote regarding the “great benefit the state derives from the training by which it educates its citizens.... The good education they have received will make them good men” (Plato, *Laws*, 641b7–10) and consequently good citizens. In the centuries since the *Laws*, others have continued emphasizing the connection between education and democracy. Indeed, many of the United States founders worried that without education, the young nation's citizenry would return to the authoritarian governance that had so recently been overthrown. Thomas Jefferson extolled the benefits that the young United States

would receive if it invested in educating its' young men. Education would not only create self-reliant individuals, but it would

“improve, by reading, his morals and faculties; [4] To understand his duties to his neighbors and country, and to discharge with competence the functions confided to him by either; [5] To know his rights; to exercise with order and justice those he retains; to choose with discretion the fiduciary of those he delegates; and to notice their conduct with diligence, with candor, and judgment; [6] And, in general, to observe with intelligence and faithfulness all the social relations under which he shall be placed” (as cited in Smith Pangle & Pangle, 2000, p. 27).

These thinkers believed that education would benefit and improve citizens' capabilities to self-govern. The common school movement in the United States worked towards creating a mass system of schooling that would help assimilate the multitudes of arriving immigrant children into the American way of democracy and self-rule (Tyack, 1974). However, these thinkers largely focused on developing the rational capacities of the individual rather than the individual in context of their communities both within and outside of school (Biesta & Lawy, 2006).

Importantly, many scholars and educators did propose and worked towards creating schools that supported democratic education within the context of the community and the education of the whole child. These scholars included among others Edward Sheldon, Francis Parker and John Dewey. These educators believed that schools could transform the lives of students and ultimately society by focusing on bringing together the school and society thereby creating citizens imbued with purpose and understanding of their role in society (Cuban, 1993). Dewey's philosophy of education presented school as a community that introduced students to the “associated living” involved in a democracy. In his thinking, Dewey argued that children naturally sought to engage in cooperation and association with others and that schools should become a form of “embryonic community life, active with types of occupations that reflection the

life of the larger society and... [that] trains each child of society into membership within such a little community, saturating him with the spirit of service and providing him with the instruments of effective self direction". Dewey notes that if this occurs then we "shall have the deepest and best guaranty of a larger society which is worthy, lovely and harmonious" (Dewey, 1899, pp. 27–28). In this quote, Dewey highlights that individuals naturally seek to engage in collaborative activities that if mirrored in schools could help students develop the ability to cooperate with others an essential skill in citizens (Gibson, 2006). While the progressive school movement, which included Dewey, focused on the communal nature of schooling, they did not overtly consider the role of belonging though I would argue for these schools to succeed students would need to feel a sense of belonging to their schools.

In political science, researchers viewed education as important for the political development of students by providing them with the skills, knowledge, attitudes and dispositions necessary to become politically involved. The field was deeply influenced by the rational actor model, which grew out of neo-classical economics and as such tended to see citizenship and education's role in citizenship preparation through the lens of a rational actor. While there are many theoretical offshoots of the rational actor theory, typically a rational actor chooses to engage in an action after weighing the costs and benefits of that action and how it will help him/her achieve his/her goal (Goldthorpe, 1998). The political scientists Wolfinger & Rosenstone (1980) exemplified this view of a rational actor citizen by arguing that education supported citizens' development in three ways. First, they argued that education improves students' cognitive skills allowing for students to learn about politics, secondly more educated people "are likely to get more gratification from political participation" and thirdly "schooling imparts experience with a variety of bureaucratic relationships" thereby developing students' familiarity with clearing the procedural hurdles necessary to get involved politically (1980, pp. 35–36). In these three ways, Wolfinger and Rosenstone show how education decreases the cost of action by

providing students with the skills to understand politics as well as navigate the bureaucratic channels necessary to participate while increasing the gratification of participation. These understandings of why education improved individual's civic behaviors focus on the individual and the rational actions of the individual. Thus political action is understood to involve costs and benefits and, therefore, rational actors become involved only if they perceive that they will derive some benefits from their involvement (March & Olsen, 1984).

While a number of scholars have pushed back on rational choice theorists (England, 1989; Green & Shapiro, 1994; Lane, 1995; Smelser, 1998), rational choice theorists' focus on the individual have influenced the way political scientists and other scholars have studied students' political socialization. Indeed many political socialization scholars have not fully engaged with theories emerging from psychology and youth development that suggest alternative motivations for human action (Torney-Purta, Amadeo, & Andolina, 2010). Further, the next section will show that these theorists tend to ignore the context in which citizens act. I include civic engagement to capture the theoretical work that has been done across the disciplines and thus broadened the understanding how students come to understand and engage in their public and political community.

While political scientists and others scholars agree "the civic norms within one's adolescent social environment have an effect on civic participation well beyond adolescence" (Campbell, 2006, p. 5), we still know "relatively little about the civic development of adolescents. Specifically, we have a limited understanding on how schools do, or do not, foster political engagement among their adolescent students" (Campbell, 2008, p. 438). Political socialization describes children and adolescents' development of political attitudes and inclinations to participate in the political process. Political socialization researchers typically present five factors involved in political socialization: 1) knowledge of the political process, 2) a sense of efficacy in effecting change in the political system, 3) a trust in the political process, 4) an interest in the

political process, and 5) an actual or expected involvement in the political process (Hahn, 1998; Lay, 2012). The different factors of political socialization theoretically operate in conjunction with each other; however, it is helpful to parse out and define the individual parts in the following paragraphs. The sections will also survey what is known about education's role in developing these characteristics of political socialization.

Political knowledge

Political knowledge consists of both knowing how the political system works as well as current events in that system (Lay, 2012). Many theorists acknowledge that these twin processes greatly influence how involved students become in the political system (Amadeo, Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Husfeldt, & Nikolova, 2002; Galston, 2001; Langton & Jennings, 1968). While some debate how much knowledge is needed to be an effective citizen, William Galston's definition of a politically competent citizen captures a consensus on the question. He states that "competent democratic citizens need not be policy experts, but there is a level of basic knowledge below which the ability to make a full range of reasoned civic judgments is impaired" (Galston, 2001, p. 218). Research has shown the positive relationship between greater political knowledge and engagement in the political process (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996). Additionally, researchers have found that politically knowledgeable individuals tend to have a greater faith in the political system and the democratic process (Niemi & Junn, 1998). Further, greater political knowledge has been shown to influence citizens' policy preferences and voting behavior (Andersen, Heath, & Sinnott, 2001).

Researchers have also specifically linked what students learn in school with their political knowledge. Richard Niemi and Jane Junn argue in their 1998 book *Civic Education* that civic education makes a significant difference in students' civic knowledge and that high school

students who take a civic education course know more about their government and hold more democratic attitudes. Additionally, studies have found that the opportunities afforded to students to speak openly in their class about political matters is a “powerful predictor of [students’] knowledge of and support for democratic values, and their participation in political discussions inside and outside of school” (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001, p. 137; Hess, 2009; Mcavoy & Hess, 2013). Though civics education scholars have frequently called for more opportunities for students to engage in relevant and experiential learning, the vast majority of students acquire political knowledge through a passive absorption of the curriculum (Niemi & Junn, 1998; Parker, 2010). Further complicating the picture is that political and historical knowledge is contested and scholars have challenged educators to consider the way that students’ civic identities enter the classroom and mediate their thinking about the curriculum and the knowledge that they are expected to acquire (Epstein, 2000; Levinson, 2012). Thus research has consistently shown that political knowledge supports students’ participation in the political sphere and that the development of such knowledge requires skillful educators that can create open and safe classroom spaces that help students connect their lived experiences with the curriculum they encounter in schools.

Given what we know about the importance of political knowledge, it is also helpful to know how American and Canadian students fared on measures of political knowledge. In a 2007 report using data from The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement survey, Milner found that only 31.7 percent of Canadians and 42.4 percent of Americans aged 15-25 could correctly answer at least one survey question (2008, p. 6). Further, scholars have commented with concern that “Canadians’ knowledge about public issues, and perhaps more importantly their ability to connect particular perspectives on these issues to political parties and candidates, is disturbingly low” (Cook & Westheimer, 2006, p. 349). The results from the United States 2010 National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP)

showed that only 24 percent of the 9,900 seniors who took the civics test scored at the proficient level. This indicates that they understood how the constitution limited governmental power, different forms of democratic government and how laws protect individual rights and promote the common good among other items (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011). This level of proficiency was down for high school seniors from the 2006 assessment period. While the gap in performance narrowed slightly between White and Latino/a high school seniors, White students continued to outperform Latino/a students as well as Black, American Indian, and Asian American students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011). Further analysis shows that immigrant students scored the lowest on the IEA CivEd questions regarding how democracy works, what weakens a democracy and the interpretation of a written piece on political communication (Torney-Purta, Barber, & Wilkenfeld, 2006). Thus, in both the United States and Canada, we see a concern for the level of political knowledge held by the youth and in particular immigrant youth which is connected to their ability to participate more fully in the life of the polis.

Political efficacy

Numerous studies have linked the concept of political efficacy to later adult participation in a variety of political activities (Almond & Verba, 1963; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). Political efficacy consists of two components: internal and external efficacy. Internal efficacy refers to the belief that a citizen can make a difference in the political system. This perception requires that a citizen has both the resources and knowledge necessary to impact the political process (Gimpel, Lay, & Schuknecht, 2003, p. 16). Some political scientists use the words political confidence rather than internal political efficacy. They suggest that students may possibly think in the abstract that individuals can influence the political process but do not think

that they themselves can influence the process (Hahn, 1998). External efficacy relates to a belief in the system's responsiveness and reflects more than "what one thinks of incumbent officeholders at a given moment; it reflects a more enduring attitude toward the system" (Gimpel et al., 2003, p. 17). As Michael Morrell (2005) notes, there is a significant relationship between these two forms of efficacy writing that "believing that I can influence the political system in a representative democracy requires that I feel capable of participation in the system (internal efficacy) and that the system is responsive to my input (external efficacy)" (Morrell, 2005, p. 56). However, others note that while internal and external political efficacy coexist, it not always the case that they are positively related as seen in studies of Black youth in the 1960s who were involved in the Civil Rights movement. In these situations, the students expressed both a high sense of internal political efficacy and a mistrust of the government's responsiveness to their demands (external political efficacy) (Rodgers, 1974).

The question then becomes who feels politically efficacious and what role do schools have in supporting the development of competent and confident citizens. Studies have suggested that the most politically efficacious individuals tend to be White, higher socio-economic status individuals (Verba et al., 1995). However, recently researchers have begun to connect theories on self-efficacy from the psychology field to examine whether and what factors can help shape students' political efficacy outside of the relative stability of socio-economic resources (Beaumont, 2010). Psychologists view political efficacy as an expression of self-efficacy and define it as a "belief that one can produce effects through political actions" (Bandura 1997, as cited in Beaumont, 2010, p. 526). Given interconnections between the two constructs, researchers have learned that students' political efficacy can increase in the presence of several important factors. These studies have shown that when students engage in authentic political and civic situations and have structured support to work through political situations, students' feelings of political efficacy increase (Beaumont, 2010; Kahne & Westheimer, 2006; Serriere, 2014). Further

Beaumont's et al study of college age students in various courses that focus on cultivating political engagement found that feeling connected to other students helped support students' feelings of political efficacy as they found encouragement and acceptance for the political work they were engaged in. It also noted the importance of role models students could relate to as they worked on engaging in political action. These role models need to be people who looked "like us [and] possess a confident outlook in the face of difference kinds of political experiences" (Beaumont, 2010, p. 543). These role models could be professors or other community members who have continuously engaged in the political process with varying degrees of success. Serriere's (2014) findings also illustrate the important role of teachers in facilitating the development of students' efficacy. She showed that teachers provide important guidance, structure, and encouragement necessary for elementary school students to effectively pursue their civic goals and thus the development of their civic efficacy. Taken together, these studies highlight the important role schools have in facilitating the development of political efficacy.

Political trust

Trust in the government to work well and ethically has been perceived as important in maintaining citizens' positive perceptions of the government. In the political context, trust refers to a general belief in the ethical nature of public officials and the general ability of the government to efficiently carry out its responsibilities (Hetherington, 1998). Numerous political theorists believed that trust mattered a great deal in facilitating the workings of civic and political institutions but early political science literature struggled to find a connection between political trust and citizens' attitudes towards the government (Uslaner, 2002). Political trust is thought necessary to enhance the legitimacy and engagement with the government. Thus the theory goes that if people trust politicians and the government they will more likely support governmental

policies and decisions (Hetherington & Globetti, 2002). Recently trust has been shown to influence individuals' willingness to comply with governmental policies (Scholz & Lubell, 1998), beliefs about governmental spending patterns (Rudolph & Evans, 2005) and voting behavior of citizens (Hetherington, 1999). Research has shown that when countries have greater economic inequality (Pickett & Wilkinson, 2010) and levels of ethnic diversity (Putnam, 2007), trust among citizens is lower. Importantly, research has shown in the United States that African Americans have the lowest sense of trust of all race groups (Howell & Fagan, 1988) while other research suggests that as Mexican immigrants acculturate they become less trusting of the American government (Michelson, 2003). These two findings indicate the important role of social and cultural contexts of communities in influencing individuals' political trust.

When examining young people's feelings of trust towards the government, researchers have found a disheartening distrust of government and the working of the political system (Twenge, Campbell, & Carter, 2014). In 2014, citizens in both the United States and Canada became less trusting in their government as compared to 2013. Citizens' levels of trust in United States dropped from 50 to 37 percent while Canada experienced a smaller decline from 58 to 51 percent (Edelman, 2014). While little research on the development of trust in youth has occurred, researchers have begun to argue that the roots of trust begin in childhood (Uslaner, 2002). Damico, Conway, & Damico (2000) found that significant predictors of political trust in 12th graders were the positive relationship between students and their parents as well as a perception that their teachers and principals were fair. Comparative research using the 1999 IEA CivEd data revealed that particularly in countries with less established democracies with higher levels of poverty and corruption, the quality of interactions with local schools provided a better predictor of students' level of trust than other more distant elements of government (Torney-Purta, Henry Barber, & Richardson, 2004). Furthermore, research has shown that adolescents, regardless of their racial/ethnic background, found the United States to be a just society and were more

supportive of civic goals if they felt that their teachers were fair and respectful of students and local community residents worked together to improve their communities (Flanagan, Cumsille, Gill, & Gallay, 2007, p. 428). These findings indicate the importance of local school and community contexts in the development of students' feelings of political trust. I will further examine this relationship in this dissertation.

Political interest

Political interest has been defined as a general attentiveness to political matters (Lay, 2012). It has been shown to be a powerful predictor of political knowledge, likelihood of voting and engagement in politics (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Verba et al., 1995). Thus the more interested an individual is in politics, the greater their levels of political knowledge as well as frequency of voting and engaging in other political acts. Furthermore, politically interested citizens are more likely to respond to mobilization efforts by political groups and remain more politically engaged (Schlozman, Verba, & Brady, 1999). It also appears that political interest remains a relatively stable and salient predictors of citizens' involvement over an individual's life course (Prior, 2010). Given the important influence of political interest on individual's political life, it should trouble concerned democrats that in 2001 only 26% of U.S. college freshman felt it important to keep abreast of current political events as compared to 50% in 1970 and 42% in 1991 (Soule, 2001, p. 4).

Given the important relationship between political interest and other political attitudes and behaviors, it is surprising that relatively few researchers have focused on what stimulates individual's interest in politics. Hess and Torney found a relationship between a child's IQ in seventh and eighth grade and political interest. They suggested a child's IQ increased interest because of "a more general interest in the events of the external world, possibly reinforced by a

belief that the citizen should be interested in government and a greater understanding of current affairs...[and] the increased comprehension may, in turn, motivate the child to follow current events regularly"(1968, p. 174). Other research has linked political interest to adults' recollection of their families' political interest in childhood (Verba et al., 1995). In schools, research has shown that students who take civic education classes often have higher levels of political interest (Zukin, Keeter, Andolina, Jenkins, & Carpini, 2006). Further students who report having an open classroom environment display the highest levels of political interest (Hahn, 1998). Shani's (2009) recent dissertation on political interest found that children's home experiences and exposure through their parents to politics might increase children's interest in the political world. Shani draws on the notion of cultural capital to explain the differential levels of political interest noting that children of families from higher socioeconomic status are exposed to various cultural and political experiences that make them feel more comfortable in the public sphere. Importantly Shani who used longitudinal data to examine her hypothesis found that students who are involved in extracurricular and voluntary activities were also more likely to be politically interested at the end of high school and remain more interested in politics at ages 26, 35, and 50 (2009, pp. 319–321). Thus, we see that students' involvement in the life of the school and/or community will increase their awareness of and interest in political events. I would argue that students' involvement in their schools' extracurricular activities or voluntary activities may increase their feelings of belonging to their schools and thus encourage their further interest in their school and community.

Political participation

Lastly, participation in political activities has been defined to include both future intentions as well as either current or past engagement with political activities (Glanville, 1999).

Some scholars define political participation as the intention of electing representatives and/or influencing governmental actions (Verba & Nie, 1972). These activities involve traditional forms of political participation such as voting and contacting elected officials (Brady, Verba, & Schlozman, 1995). While earlier political socialization research tended to restrict political participation to formal participation, researchers have recently begun to argue for a more nuanced and expansive understanding of political participation. These researchers find it important to consider more local community organizing as well as life-style values such as commitments to environmental and human rights concerns (Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009; O'Toole, Lister, Marsh, Jones, & McDonagh, 2003; Quintelier, 2007; Zukin et al., 2006). Thus researchers have suggested considering not only electoral, political party and protest activities but also consumer participation which includes donating money to charities, politically motivated spending patterns such as choosing to purchase or boycott products and contacting officials as forms of political participation (Teorell, Torcal, & Montero, 2007 as cited in Amnå, 2012). While this typology expands the understanding of political participation to include consumer actions, scholars like Ekman & Amnå (2012) argue that it fails to include latent political participation. They suggest a measure of latent participation could capture an engaged stance towards the political and civic sphere of many individuals who follow and care about the public domain but do not actively take part in the traditional sense of political participation. Thus, Ekman and Amnå suggest including in measures of political participation the levels of awareness of political and civic activities. Including this measure recognizes that action might not always be the appropriate response for individuals who might identify with and find the civic and political sphere important but do not necessarily choose to participate in these traditional ways. By expanding the notion of political participation to include the precursors of traditional political actions, Ekman and Amnå broaden the notion of political participation.

Schools have long been thought to play an important role in facilitating the political participation of students through a variety of means. However, scholars have found mixed results with some studies finding that measures such as open classrooms and participation in extracurricular activities related to higher levels of political participation (Ehman, 1969). More recent research has found that the years of education is predictive of levels of political participation (Brady, Verba, & Schlozman, 1995). In examining the ways in which school might influence political participation practices of students, researchers have noted the positive relationship between students' attentiveness to political matters and their likelihood of voting (Pasek, Feldman, Romer, & Jamieson, 2008). The role of school in these models focus on the individual to the exclusion of the community and the students' relationships to the school. Thus this dissertation examines to what extent the relationship between students' feelings of belonging to their school may influence their understanding of their role in schools and moreover in the political community.

Developing students' civic identities

As seen by the above discussion, most researchers have focused on how the various aspects of political socialization influence students' knowledge, attitudes, habits and dispositions towards involvement with the political sphere. Many researchers view civic identities as developing from these factors of political socialization and assume a view of students as rational actors that acquire these habits and dispositions largely in a passive top-down approach to development. This assumption of a top-down process of socialization suggests that the student is acted upon rather than interacting with the environment (Sherrod, Torney-Purta, & Flanagan, 2010). Thus schools, parents, peers and media all exert an influence on students' understanding of themselves but rarely does political socialization research recognize how students' communities,

contexts and students' own understandings shape their identities. In the act of constructing their own identities, students change the nature of the influence of others as well as actively shape their own environment. Thus students act as a force that does more than just reflect these manifold influences. Further, most research does not consider how individuals whose lives are embedded in multiple contexts come to understand the political sphere through their interactions in these environments. By failing to consider how individuals' interactions influence their thinking about political situations, we ignore large bodies of research around social capital as well as psychological and youth development research which shows the important role of others in shaping our understandings of the political sphere. This failure, as Biesta points out, too often assumes that "good citizenship will follow from individuals' acquisition of a proper set of knowledge, skills, values and dispositions" which they gain in schools (2011, p. 12). Thus the emphasis in much of the political socialization literature has been on individuals' passively learning about democracy rather than the recognition that individuals live, learn and do democracy in their unique community contexts (Biesta & Lawy, 2006).

It is interesting to note that some researchers have argued that immigrant children become active in and learn about the political process in different ways than non-immigrant children (Bloemraad & Trost, 2008). Unlike the unidirectional model formulated for non-immigrant children in which parents and teachers guide children's political socialization, immigrant children's socialization has been conceptualized to be more bidirectional. Immigrant children frequently have more responsibilities in their families as they learn their new homelands together with their families. Thus, as children navigate their new countries, they help socialize their parents to the new norms and expectations while still learning from their parents' attitudes and beliefs (Wong & Tseng, 2008).

Further, I argue that these five factors, political knowledge, efficacy, interest, trust and participation, constitute an understanding of a small part of an individual's political identity. Thus

drawing upon sociocultural theory, I argue that individuals' identities are the product of both their social, historical and cultural context as well as their own agencies in the choices that they make in developing new understandings of themselves (Holland, Skinner, Lachicotte, & Cain, 1998; Olsen, 2012). Thus sociocultural theory provides a way to acknowledge the many constraints on the development of an individual's identity such as the social, historical and contextual realities while also leaving space for individual agency (Olsen, 2012). Given this assumption regarding the process of constructing an identity, the review turn its attention to civic identities and forms of citizenship that move away from the individualistic understanding of political socialization research and contribute to a more fluid understanding of immigrant students' identities.

Civic identity has often been conceived of in the political socialization literature as something that develops during adolescences and essentially remains fixed. This can be seen in this definition of civic identity offered by Youniss, McLellan, and Yates who write that it "entails the establishment of individual and collective sense of social agency, responsibility for society, and political-moral awareness" (1997, p. 620). By using words such as establishment of agency, responsibility, and awareness, Youniss, McLellan and Yates suggest that these aspects are a fixed construct. Thus while recognizing that research has clearly established a link between adolescents' activities and their continued involvement in the public sphere as adults as Youniss, McLellan & Yates show in their review of previous civic identity work, I would caution that these identities do not have to remain stable. As Youniss, McLellan & Yates (1997) note individuals who join youth organizations as well as engage in civic organization tend to remain more involved in the political sphere than others. I would argue that while the experiences that students have as adolescents do inform students' understandings of themselves, development is not fixed but rather continue to change over the course of a life-time.

Other researchers suggest that the development of a civic identity requires both “a sense of connection a community” to and “entitlements and responsibilities” for that community (Atkins & Hart, 2003, p. 156). For Atkins and Hart developing a civic identity is in their words contingent on a commitment to democratic principles, knowledge of the community, and participation in one’s community...[therefore for a variety of structural reasons] youth in high-poverty neighborhoods appear to lag behind youth in low-poverty neighborhoods in their development of civic knowledge and political tolerance. Furthermore, youth in high-poverty, urban neighborhoods are at a greater disadvantage in becoming civically engaged because they have fewer opportunities to perform voluntary community service that is an important component of community participation (Atkins & Hart, 2003, p. 163).

Their conclusion that civic identity is contingent on a range of factors seems to predetermine the outcome of youth in high-poverty, urban neighborhoods to an anemic civic identity which focuses again on the deficits of youth living in such conditions. This deterministic view of identity fails to consider the resiliency of youth as well as the possibility of agency and development of a robust civic identity despite these challenges. Further, there seems to be an assumption of singularity in the communities that one can belong to which is often challenged by the immigrant students who have crossed many community boundaries and identify with multiple communities. This is shown in research by Hall (2004), Abu El-Haj, (2007), Peck & Thompson(2010) on immigrant student civic identity as well as the increasing mobility of American students themselves (Mackel, 2009).

Turning to examine the civic identity of immigrant students, we see the evidence of sociocultural theory in the continued construction and reconstruction of self that immigrant students engage in as they interact with communities both in their home countries and in their new communities. Through the students’ experiences of integration, exclusion and marginalization in their schools and communities, students come to learn about and make sense

of the communities that they live in and interact with. Immigrant students' civic identities also respond to how the host country understands who belongs to the imagined community as shown by both national laws and policies as well as the local communities' responses to immigrant students (Hall, 2004). Hall's work with British Sikh students highlights the "numerous possible identities, potential communal ties, and alternative life paths. [As student's] sense of self is molded by contradictory cultural influences in contrasting social settings" (2004, p. 118). In this way, these Sikh students claimed their rights to be part of the British imagined community thereby shifting the boundaries of who belonged to that community.

Abu El-Haj's (2007) work with Palestinian American students explores how these students negotiated their identities as both Palestinians and Americans. Through an ethnographic study in a large urban high school, Abu El-Haj showed how these students created an understanding of their identity that involved a negotiation of themselves. Thus sometimes the students sought to distance themselves from their American citizenship; other times they asserted their rights as American citizens with all the attending legal rights and responsibilities. Throughout these shifts, the students often did not feel a sense of belonging to the imagined community of America. In this way, we see how civic identities for these Palestinian students involved a rejection of American culture even as the students in some ways displayed distinctly American attitudes. This became clear in the everyday lifestyle choices of the young Palestinian female participants who discussed their choices to enact their understanding of themselves including the choice as to whether or not to wear a hijab, dance in public (which according to traditional Islamic views would be forbidden) or serve their male relatives. These choices highlight how the identity of Palestinian students challenge the conventional notions of assimilation and acculturation. Further in the wake of September 11th, the Muslim students felt that the climate in their school challenged their identities as Muslims and Americans. These students shared many experiences of discrimination from teachers, administrators and others

students that reinforced their feeling of exclusion that also forced them to claim their American citizenship. In these tensions that Abu El-Haj shared, one can see how these teenagers' civic identities are shaped and reshaped by their different interactions in their school, local communities as well as their transnational communities.

Rubin's 2007 article explored the role of identity with four different groups of middle and high school students. The students who came from different societal positions expressed vastly different understandings of the United States. These students came from a lower income urban area, an upper-middle class suburb, a racially and economically integrated suburb, and a lower and middle income suburb with a large immigrant population. These groups all participated in a similar activity designed around the Pledge of Allegiance and Bill of Rights that gave the researchers a chance to understand how these students' positionality shaped their understandings of the questions raised in these activities. Rubin showed how the students' identities shaped their understanding of their civic experiences and their role in the country as the students' responses reflected their positionality. Therefore, students who had witnessed or experienced racial discrimination and economic injustices felt the disjuncture between the ideals expressed in the two documents with greater intensity than the more privileged students interviewed. Importantly, the students developed differing stances towards citizenship. While some students displayed a resigned stance, other students expressed an active and critically engaged stance. Rubin noted that some of the differences in the students' stances came from their experiences in the classroom with students who expressed an engaged stance having positive relationships with their teachers and had taken classes with teachers who encouraged their critical thinking. In examining the understanding of the different students' experiences with their society and schools, Rubin established that "youth craft civic identities from the materials at hand, and these materials are distinct for youth from different communities" (2007, p. 477). Thus we see that students' actively construct their civic identities based on a number of characteristics including their sense of self,

where and with whom they identify as well as their understanding of their place in society.

Further, students' experiences in schools intimately shaped the students' stances towards their political lives. We see then how a civic identity comes from more than the five characteristics of knowledge, trust, efficacy, interest and participation. Rather these characteristics result from and inform the identity of citizen students. Thus, the tensions in students' identities raise the questions of belonging and the politics of belonging, which we will turn to next.

Where Do I Belong?

The question above is central in the understanding of students' identities and the question of belonging has animated discussions in multiple disciplines including political science, psychology, youth development and sociology. These various lenses contribute unique perspectives to the understanding of belonging and its relationship to students' development. These different facets of belonging will be explored in the following section.

Political and sociological conceptualization of belonging

Belonging to a political community has typically come through the conveyance of citizenship which grants individuals "a status ...[as]full members of a community ...[and] are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed" (Marshall, 2009, pp. 149–150). Marshall suggested that modern citizenship provides political, civil and social rights through the tripartite vision of citizenship. Benedict Anderson described nation-states as being comprised of citizens who though they can never know every other citizen still feels a sense of loyalty and comradeship with this unknown fellow citizen through an imagined community (2006, pp. 6–7). Other political theorist like Michael Walzer also presents citizenship as a membership

in a community as he writes “ a citizen is most simply a member of a political community, entitled to whatever prerogatives and encumbered with whatever responsibilities are attached to membership” (1989, p. 211). Citizenship provides both membership in a community and a range of rights and responsibilities. Thus, we see the overlap between citizenship and belonging to a political community. One of the defining “struggle[s] for citizenship in America has, therefore, been overwhelmingly a demand for inclusion in the polity, an effort to break down excluding barriers to recognition” including the exclusion of slaves, women and certain immigrant groups (Shklar, 1991, p. 3). Membership in a political community for political scientists gives members a political identity and recognition of one’s standing in the political community.

Political theorists with different understandings of citizenship have contested who has access to the political community and balancing the competing demands of liberalism to treat everyone equally with the need to recognize individuals’ unique political identity. The politics of recognition grow out of the tension between the competing desires of citizens in a liberal democracy that affirms everyone is equal and everyone is unique (Gutmann, 2003). Our individuality, Charles Taylor argues, grows out the dialogic character of human nature in which “we become full human agents, capable of understanding ourselves, and hence of defining our identity through our acquisition of rich human languages of expression... [and] we learn these modes of expression through exchanges with others...[thus] we define our identity always in dialogue with, sometimes in struggle against, the things our significant others want to see in us” (Taylor, 1994). Thus while the politics of liberalism promises all citizens the same rights and entitlements as other citizens, we also demand recognition of our differences. This tension between being a unique individual competes with the universalism enshrined in the liberal philosophical traditions of Western citizenship. Thus citizenship theoretically promises to be impartial towards all citizens but in practice cannot ignore the differences in its citizens and the need to recognize those differences. Moreover, citizens demand recognition because “our

identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or a group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves” (Taylor, 1994, p. 25). Indeed, in the increasingly multicultural world with ever-increasing flow of immigrant across porous borders, these immigrants bring to our societies different understanding of culturally appropriate practices that challenge the dominant cultural values and practices of a country.

This question becomes more complicated by children of immigrants who are born in a new community but remain tied to their families’ countries of origin by their families’ language, culture and religious practices. Further, many of these students might in fact spend significant time in their families’ home countries as exemplified by the immigrant students in Abu El-Haj’s study. In examining the nature of the transnational citizen, we must consider Ong’s pointed question “what key cultural values, codes, and rules are internalized and contested in the process of learning to belong” to a new country (2003, p. xvii)? Indeed, it is the challenge of increasing immigration and multiculturalism that has raised the questions of how a liberal democracy like Canada and the United States can protect the rights of minorities. Taylor answers it his essay on the politics of recognition that it require the humility to understand that other cultures provide another way of expressing in his words “the good, the holy, the admirable” that we must respect even though we ourselves may not agree with or some cases even abhor it (Taylor, 1994). Critics like Appiah (1994) reply that this answer does not do enough to protect and legitimate the rights of the minority.

The difficulty of negotiating the space for different groups and individuals who claim the right to be part of the polity and yet have been disenfranchised has led theorist to develop the concept of cultural citizenship. Cultural citizenship proclaims individuals’ right to be different

from the dominant narratives of the society¹ while claiming the right to belong to and participate in the country's democracy. Cultural citizenship has been defined as "the right to be different (in terms of race, ethnicity, or native language) with respect to the norms of the dominant national community, without compromising one's right to belong, in the sense of participating in the nation-state's democratic process" (Rosaldo & Flores, 1997, p. 57). In this quote, Rosaldo and Flores claim for groups the right to define themselves differently from the dominant narrative and yet still participate in the renegotiation process of a democracy. Through these democratic processes, individuals can remake the nation to become more inclusive as argued by Shklar (1991) among others. Further the belonging that Rosaldo and Flores claim for themselves and others as citizens of a nation that has at times questioned their rights to belong despite their citizenship has fueled the study of what does it mean to belong as will be discussed next in the sociological views of belonging.

In the sociological sense of the term, belonging connotes individuals' sense of comfort and feeling of being "at home" in their communities (Yuval-Davis, 2006). In the social sciences, many scholars tend to conflate the notion of belonging with citizenship or national identity. Critics of this conflation argue that citizenship is only one of the many locations for individuals' feelings of belonging which can include any number of group characteristics (Antonsich, 2010). Yuval-Davis (2011) identifies three analytic facets that are helpful to consider when discussing belonging. The first relates to what Yuval-Davis (2011) describes as social locations which are groups that individuals identify with such as gender, race, class or nation (p. 12). The second aspect examines the emotional attachments and identification of individuals to certain narratives that individuals "tell themselves and others about who they are" (Yuval-Davis, 2011, p. 14). Interestingly, it is this emotional identification with groups that becomes more salient when

¹ Differences that have led to the disenfranchisement of citizens include property ownership, race, gender, and ethnicity to name a few.

challenged by others of different groups (Yuval-Davis, 2011). Lastly, Yuval-Davis (2011) identifies the ethical and political values that are ascribed to these various collectivities.

Yuval-Davis' categories are helpful to consider when working in new immigrant destinations where the arrival of new immigrants may stir community tensions as many previously homogenous communities confront narratives of who they are and what does it mean to be part of that community. This is particularly true as "the first time in living memory, millions of natives lacking any experience with foreigners are now having and will continue to have direct and sustained contact with unassimilated immigrants" (Massey, 2008, p. 352). Thus, though both Larton and Perth share an immigrant history, these communities have had to in the past ten years confront their own perceptions, prejudices and concerns around the rapid increase in immigrant populations. The immigrants challenge the long-standing residents' notions of being at home in their own communities as well as the narratives that they create around what it means to live there. Many of these narratives are often based on a nostalgia which tends to blame the newly arriving immigrants for the demise of their pristine small towns (Fennelly, 2008). In the United States in particular, many long-standing residents in these new immigrant destinations often blame immigrants not only for taking their jobs but also for willfully maintaining a language² that in these residents' minds indicate a choice to not assimilate into the American culture (Fennelly, 2008). Thus new immigrant communities wrestle with questions of identity and more practically resource allocations as the growing immigrant population may stretch local community resources both for social services and school districts' capacities (Wortham & Contreras, 2002). These context of receptions, which involve the economic, social and educational opportunities that immigrants receive as well as how the community members perceive immigrants, shape how immigrants are integrated into the community (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006; Stepick & Stepick, 2009). Further schools often act as one of the first and important sites of reception for immigrant

² Irrespective of the reality that many immigrants in Larton and Perth are working to learn English

students and their family. However, evidence shows that schools in new immigrant destinations are often ill-equipped to manage the influx of immigrant students (Dabach, 2011; Wortham, Murillo, & Hamann, 2002). As communities and their schools work with immigrant students, they provide important opportunities for exchange and a growing understanding and sense of belonging for the immigrants, their children and community members. This desire to belong to a community intensely shapes immigrant students understanding of themselves and their role in their new countries. It also has deep psychological roots that will be explored in the following section.

Psychological need to belong

While the above research represents a sociological perspective on belonging, researchers from the field of psychology and youth development also examine notions of belonging. However, they tend to examine belongingness from the view of the individual and the various communities in which the person holds membership. Maslow placed love and belonging third in his hierarchy of needs coming only after physiological needs, such as food and water, and security needs, such as stability and freedom from fear, were met. As Maslow writes a person “will hunger for affectionate relations with people in general, namely, for a place in his group, and he will strive with great intensity to achieve this goal” (Maslow, 1943, p. 381). Another early psychologist defined belonging as “personal involvement (in a social system) to the extent that the person feels himself to be an indispensable and integral part of the system” (Anant, 1966, p.22-23 as cited by Anant, 1967, p. 391). This discipline approaches feelings of belonging within the larger context of having a sense of community. This means that feelings of belonging are only one aspect of individuals’ sense of community which includes: membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs (Sánchez, Colón, & Esparza, 2005). Membership specifically

conveys the notion of belonging or that notion of “shared relatedness” (Sánchez et al., 2005, p. 619). School relatedness, membership and belonging share similar constructs and refer to “extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included, and supported by others” (Goodenow & Grady, 1993, p. 61). Goodenow points out that feeling a sense of belonging involves more than just being liked by others; it is as she writes, “feeling oneself to be an important part of the life and activity of the class. More than simple perceived liking or warmth, it also involves support and respect for personal autonomy and for the student as an individual” (1993, p. 25). Belonging is a subjective sense of one’s well-being and it matters for adolescent students who have begun to develop the ability to think more abstractly and increasingly look to their peers and other adults beyond their family as a source of support (Goodenow, 1993). Many researchers agree that this sense of belonging positively influences a range of academic, motivational and social-emotional outcomes (Becker & Luthar, 2002; Osterman, 2000).

Feelings of relatedness have been linked to a range of positive outcomes for those who feel a part of their school communities. Studies have shown that for students who felt a sense of belonging to their classes, they also have a higher belief in the value of and their likelihood of success in specific classes. In addition, students’ perceptions of teachers’ support and respect in class were strongly related to their feelings of belonging and their perceptions of their likelihood of academic success and the value that they placed on those classes (Goodenow, 1993). Feelings of school belonging and a positive-student teacher relationships also supported the development of academic self-efficacy in a study of almost 300 eighth graders (Roeser, Midgley, & Urdan, 1996). Battistich, Solomon, Watson, & Schaps (1997) designed a Child Development Project that worked first with individual teachers and then whole schools to develop a caring school environment that supported students’ socio-emotional outcomes as well as their academic performance. They report that students’ sense of belonging and school community supported a range of positive outcomes including students’ motivation to achieve academically, their feelings

of self-efficacy and esteem as well as their perceived social and emotional competencies. They also noted a decrease in student delinquency and drug use. Further it seems that for minority and low-SES students feeling a sense of belonging to the school may help mitigate the negative effects of poverty (Becker & Luthar, 2002). Other benefits of feeling a sense of belonging include improved academic, economic, and social outcomes (Gibson, Bejinez, Hidalgo, & Rolón, 2004; Ma, 2003; Gonzalez & Padilla, 1997).

Immigrant students feelings of belonging to schools

As children enter the school system, they often encounter a culture very different from their family units (Oxman-Martinez et al., 2012). Schools often act as the first contact that many students have with their government. By extension, teachers and other school staff, the “street-level bureaucrats”, enact governmental and school policies, and through their words and deeds, represent and interpret their governments’ policies and attitudes towards the children they serve (Lipsky, 1980). As manifested by the numerous sub-fields within the education literature that address various components of belonging, there is a clear recognition that students’ feelings of belonging to their school community have positive implications for a range of educational outcomes (Osterman, 2000).

Schools develop immigrant students’ feelings of belonging or exclusion both by the overt actions of school officials and by more symbolic acts of (mis)recognition . These subtle messages convey powerful lessons to young immigrants about their place in schools and, by extension, society. These measures of inclusion and exclusion can be as literal as the placement of the classroom in the far corner of the school building signaling the isolation of immigrant students (Gitlin, Buendía, Crosland, & Doumbia, 2003). Inclusive acts can involve connecting immigrant

students to necessary resources and programs as well their native peers (Lewis-Charp, Yu, & Friedlaender, 2004).

At a macro-level, education policy of the government might unintentionally separate and marginalize immigrant students thereby reifying their differences (LeTendre, 2000). One recent study examined how the Arizona immigration policy known as SB 1070³ related to first and second-generation immigrant students' sense of well-being, self-esteem, feelings of being American, perceived ethnic discrimination by authorities among other measures. The researchers found positive and significant relationships between students' awareness of the law and their perception of ethnic discrimination by authorities, a negative and significant relationship between awareness of the law and the identification as Americans. These findings suggest that the policy context immigrant students live in does intimately affect their attitudes and perceptions towards authorities in their new countries as well as their identification with that country (Santos & Menjivar, 2013). Thus, for the students living in Larton and Perth, the types of policies enacted at the local, state and federal level may intimately influence their sense of belonging and well-being in their daily lives as well as their identification with their new home countries.

Towards a Conceptual Framework on Belonging's Role in Political Socialization

While researchers have long studied these different parts of the political socialization process, the field has lacked an agreed upon unified theoretical framework from which to make sense of these various aspects of political development and predict youth's political behavior. Further given the wide number of disciplines that have examined political socialization and civic engagement more broadly, a range of fields has developed theories around the political

³ SB 1070 was policy Arizona enacted that allowed to local law enforcement to ascertain immigration status during lawful police stops, imposed a requirement that all "aliens" carry proof of registration; prohibited undocumented immigrants from working; "and permission for warrantless arrests if there is probable cause the offense would make the person is removable from the United States" (Morse, 2011).

socialization of students. However, in part because of the inability of numerous theories to correctly predict how different cohorts will advance, the field of political socialization continues to search for a coherent understanding of the political socialization process (McIntosh & Youniss, 2010; Wilkenfeld, Lauckhardt, & Torney-Purta, 2010). The theories that do exist come from different perspectives such as life span or life-course perspective and the positive youth development perspective. The life span or life-course perspective has been used by both psychologists and sociologists to examine how humans grow and change over the course of a lifetime. This perspective tends to hold that there are many aspects that influence the development of an individual over the course of a life-time (Sherrod et al., 2010). From this perspective, I take the notion that students' political socialization occurs differently for different students and that students' political development continue over the course of their lives. I draw from the work being done in positive youth development by developmental psychologists to understand how young people interact with their environments. Thus the context of the students' lives deeply influences how student will come to understand their role in the political sphere (Wilkenfeld, 2009). Drawing on Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1979), I understand how individuals develop through interactions with their environment, which consists not only of their immediate surroundings but the interplay of their environments with broader contextual factors such as cultures at the national and particularly appropriate for a study of immigrant students, the transnational level. Using Bronfenbrenner's ecological model provides a lens by which to understand how these varying influences shape students' feelings of belonging and their political socialization. Bronfenbrenner's theory complements the use of socio-cultural theory to interpret how students come to understand their political and civic identities. Before exploring possible connections, I will lay out Bronfenbrenner's theory of development and then I will connect the research on political socialization and belonging to Bronfenbrenner's model.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory posits that the environment shapes the individual and the individual actively shapes his/her environment. It assumes that there is a "progressive and mutual accommodation between an active, growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate setting in which the developing person lives" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 21). An important note here is the expectation of reciprocity in which both the individual and environment changes and adapts as the individual grows in the environment. The environment in this theory, however, is not related to only the immediate setting but also recognizes the interconnections between the different environments. The environment is conceived as a "nested arrangement of concentric structures each contained within the next" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 22) as seen in Figure 1. These various systems are porous and influence each other as indicated by the arrows

Figure 1. Overview Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory

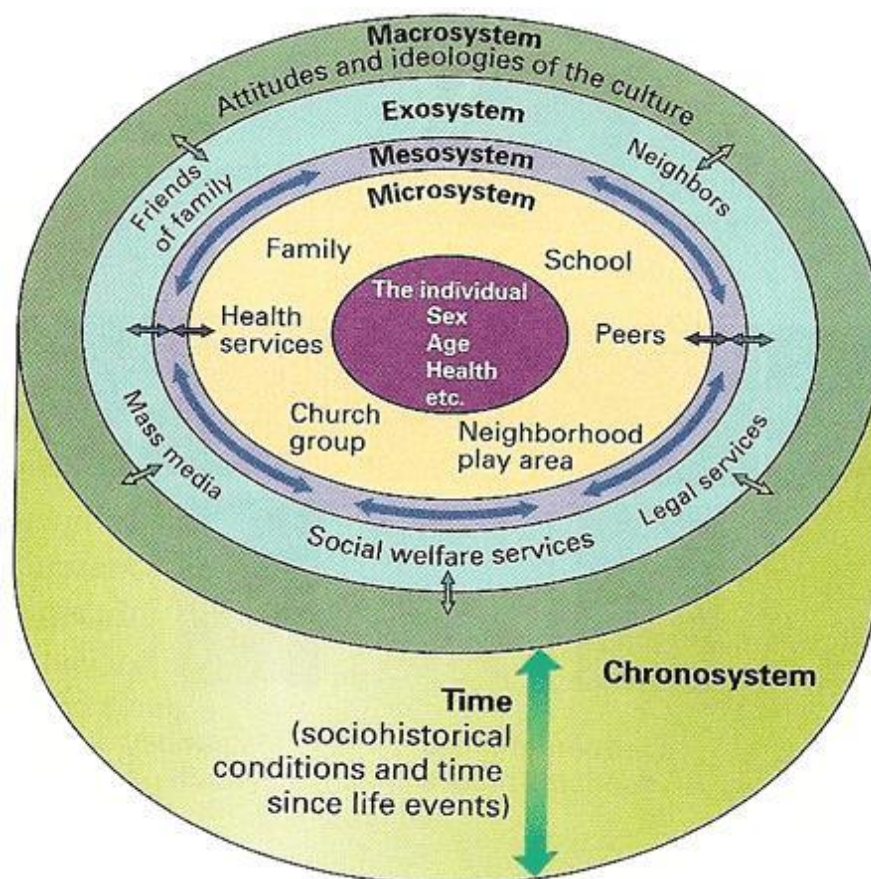


Image Source: Kohli (2013)

between the different structures. Further, the influences within each circle inform each other and shape the experiences of the individual.

The microsystem consists of settings that a person can readily experience and which displays “a pattern of activities, roles and interpersonal relations” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 22). Bronfenbrenner emphasized the importance of the meaning the person attaches to his/her experience in those environments as well as the interpersonal relationships in which each person contributes to a common undertaking. Drawing from the theories of George Herbert Mead among others, he uses roles to apply to the expectations for one’s behavior that people hold based on their position in society. The mesosystem consists of the interrelationships between the different microsystems that a person interacts in. These interrelationships form between the various systems and are created by the person themselves moving in and out of the different systems, such as a child leaving his/her school and playing in a neighborhood community center. The mesosystem may also occur as different groups communicate across the systems such as a parent and teacher discussing the child or a community center volunteer also volunteering in the school. It also involves as Bronfenbrenner writes the “extent and nature of knowledge and attitudes existing in one setting about the other” (1979, p. 25) which can relate to how aware a teacher is of students’ home lives and cultures. The exosystem consists of settings that do not directly include the actions of the developing individual but influence what happens in the person’s micro and mesosystems. These systems could include both the school board as well as the parents’ work environment but also the mass media and particularly influential for immigrant children, immigration services. Lastly, the macrosystem refer to the culture, belief systems and ideologies that undergird the patterns and consistencies found within the lower-order systems. These systems refer to the belief systems and lifestyles that are found in different countries and that could exist as society shifts according to the vision of policymakers and world events. Thus

Bronfenbrenner offers as an example the differences between schooling in different societies such as between the pre-kindergartens in the United States and the crèches of France (1979, p. 26).

Bronfenbrenner extended his ecological model by including an element of time, which he calls a chronosystem. This system reflects the influences of the life events on an individual. These experiences can occur either within the individual such as the aging process but also various events that Bronfenbrenner calls either normative events such as beginning school, puberty, getting married and retiring or non-normative events such as moving, illness or death in the family (2005, p. 83). Thus for Bronfenbrenner, individuals exist in a web of social networks and an environment that they not only are shaped by but also shape. This theoretical understanding of how individuals grow and develop over the course of their life influences how I see the role of belonging and the development of individuals' civic identities which I will present below.

As Bronfenbrenner acknowledges, students do not enter schools as *tabula rasa* but come with a set of personal experiences as well as set of social and cultural expectations that shape their schooling experiences. In school, they enter in a series of relationships with adults and peers. Students form relationships with adults other than their parents that help them shape their understanding of who they are (their role) in public spaces. These "dyads" facilitate the development of the individual through a series of observations and interactions. Through observations of their teachers and others in their school, students engage in activities that help them learn and grow. Similar to the observational role posited by situated learning theorist (Lave & Wenger, 1991), students engage with increasing complexity in the activities of school. These activities develop students' understandings of themselves through their roles in school and the quality of relationships. Given teachers presences as important mentors and "street-level bureaucrats" who also represent the public's stance towards students, the students' positionality in their school community will influence how they understand their position in other microsystems they are involved in. For a student who enters school's microsystem and feel a

sense of belonging, I would suggest this translates into how students understand their roles in other public, political communities. Further, Bronfenbrenner notes that students learn more from individuals with whom they have developed a “mutuality of positive feeling” (1979, p. 60). Thus by viewing the classroom environment as one of the many environments within which students exist, we see that in this community, students learn to interact with individuals of authority. Thus, if students feel a sense of belonging and develop positive relationships to authority figures within their class community, they will more likely translate that understanding to the other environments that they inhabit.

The classroom is one of the first public communities that students spend significant time in. Therefore, if students feel a sense of comfort and belonging in this environment, I argue that this will significantly shape their political socialization and understanding of their own identity. Thus for a student who enters a school’s microsystem and feels a sense of belonging, we see that there are range of benefits both academically, socially and emotionally (Ma, 2003; Osterman, 2000). From the earlier review of the political socialization literature, one would notice that very little research contextualizes children’s political socialization within communities (Lay, 2012). As communities become increasingly diverse, scholars need to wrestle with the role communities have in shaping its youths’ political socialization. My research model seeks to incorporate the school community and feelings of belonging or exclusion of immigrant students in their political socialization. I argue that students who feel excluded from their school community by teachers or peers will have lower sense of trust in the political system. Further, these excluded students might have lower feelings of both internal and external political efficacy as they have been largely marginalized in one of the first public institution they participate in. I also see a connection between decreased immigrant students’ interest in the political process and their perceived exclusion. It is possible though that some students might perceive this type of exclusion and

decide to persist in claiming their rights to participate thus fueling their political socialization process (Abu El-Haj & Bonet, 2011).

Conclusion

In this review, we have seen the development of the political socialization literature, which while acknowledging the importance of schools, has mostly ignored the quality of students' relationships within the school and the role of community contexts in shaping students' political identity. Yet other research on students' political identities has shown how students' communities, both those immediately surrounding them and their imagined communities, intimately shape their sense of identity. Further, while citizenship has long been conceived of as belonging to an imagined community, scholars have not sought to examine how students' feelings of belonging to that community may relate to their developing identities. Thus by developing a theoretical lens that understands individuals as nested within environments that shape and are shaped by the students, a more complete understanding of how students' political socialization occurs and how they develop their political identities can be explored.

Chapter 3

Contexts Matter

Introduction

Sociologists frequently discuss the importance of contexts of reception which both provide immigrants with opportunities to integrate into the community as well as reflect how residents in the host communities react to these new immigrants (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). Contexts of receptions include “the policies of the receiving government, the conditions of the host labor market and the characteristics of their own ethnic communities” (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006, Chapter 4, Section 2, Paragraph 5). It also includes the normative responses that center on how the community members and immigrants interact and evaluate the other group (Stepick & Stepick, 2009). As these evaluations occur, the opportunity for greater integration and cross-cultural understanding can occur. However, as immigration patterns have begun to shift outside areas that traditionally host new immigrants, communities not used to large immigrant settlements may react with uncertainty and fear to their new populations (Massey, 2008).

My research will examine these potential relationships between immigrant students’ feelings of belonging and their political socialization in two distinct policy contexts: the United State and Canada. Given the importance of the context of reception for the immigrant communities’ successful incorporation as well as feelings of belonging, this chapter will examine the policies of the governments towards immigrants. It will overview federal immigration policies in Canada and the United States which are fairly similar but have some important differences. Next it will examine the local context of receptions as well as the economic conditions and community profiles of those who lived in Larton, Pennsylvania and Perth, Manitoba respectively.

Comparing National Policies on Citizenship and Immigration in the United States and Canada

The United States and Canada share similar policies toward immigration and immigrant citizenship. Both countries are two of the few in the world that follow the birth-right citizenship rule which states that any child born in the United States or Canada automatically gains citizenship regardless of their parents' citizenship status (United States Const. amend. XIV, § 1; Citizenship Act, 1985; Borrajero, 2013). While both Canada and the United States share the express desire to recruit skilled workers from foreign countries to supplement their labor force and offer sanctuary to refugees and family reunification programs (Alboim & Cohl, 2012; Congressional Budget Office, 2010), there are interesting and important differences that will be further explored below.

The United States has an incredibly complex system of immigration rules and regulations. These regulations provide a range of ways an immigrant can come to the United States. However, many consider the United States to be one of the most restrictive countries to immigrate to (Massey & Sanchez, 2009). While one objective of the United States' Immigration and Nationality Act seeks to "increase diversity by admitting people from countries with historically low rates of immigration to the United States", Americans hold notoriously ambivalent views towards immigrants frequently worrying about competition from immigrants who may take their jobs and clash culturally thereby ultimately failing to become truly "American" (Congressional Budget Office, 2010; Zolberg, 2006). Evidence of this ambivalence can be found in a poll from Gallop which surveyed Americans on their opinions about immigration levels. The poll asked Americans to consider "Thinking now about immigrants – that is, people who come from other countries to live here in the United States, in your view, should immigration be kept at its present level, increased or decreased?". As seen in Table 1, consistently

more American responded that immigration levels should be decreased rather than increased. In the nearly fifty years of polling, the majority of Americans have consistently answered that

Table 1. Americans' Views On Immigration Levels from 1965 to 2014

	Present level	Increased	Decreased	No opinion
	%	%	%	%
2014 Jun 5-8	33	22	41	4
2014 Feb 6-9	35	27	36	2
2013 Jun 13-Jul 5	40	23	35	2
2012 Jun 7-10	42	21	35	3
2011 Jun 9-12	35	18	43	4
2010 Jul 8-11	34	17	45	4
2009 Jul 10-12	32	14	50	5
2008 Jun 5-Jul 6	39	18	39	3
2007 Jun 4-24	35	16	45	4
2006 Jun 8-25	42	17	39	2
2006 Apr 7-9	35	15	47	4
2005 Dec 9-11 ^	31	15	51	3
2005 Jun 6-25	34	16	46	4
2004 Jun 9-30	33	14	49	4
2003 Jun 12-18	37	13	47	3
2002 Sep 2-4	26	17	54	3
2002 Jun 3-9	36	12	49	3
2001 Oct 19-21	30	8	58	4
2001 Jun 11-17	42	14	41	3
2001 Mar 26-28	41	10	43	6
2000 Sep 11-13	41	13	38	8
1999 Feb 26-28 ^	41	10	44	5
1995 Jul 7-9	27	7	62	4
1995 Jun 5-6	24	7	65	4
1993 Jul 9-11	27	6	65	2
1986 Jun 19-23 †	35	7	49	9
1977 Mar 25-28	37	7	42	14
1965 Jun 24-29	39	7	33	20

(Source: Gallup, 2015)

immigration should either be kept at the same level or decreased (Gallup, 2015). Other scholars have suggested that America's ambivalence towards immigrants can be traced back to federal immigration policies with explicit preferences being made for certain racial and ethnic groups (typically Northern Europeans) versus others from Southeastern Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin

America (De Genova, 2002; Dick, 2011). This ambivalence, and at times outright hostility towards immigrants, will play an important role in the reception that immigrants received in Larton, Pennsylvania as they began arriving in the early 2000s.

Though Canada's immigration policies are similar to the United States in that they share common priorities and have a similar legacy of explicit preferences for certain groups of immigrants (e.g. white Europeans), Canadians demographically need immigrants to maintain their economic competitiveness as the current Canadian birth rate cannot replace its aging population⁴ (Challinor, 2011). Jeffrey Reitz, a University of Toronto sociologist, notes that many Canadians feel more positively toward immigrants than Americans seeing them as an economic benefit rather than an economic threat (Orrenius & Zavodny, 2011). Further Canadians treasure a rich legacy of biculturalism that differs from America's more assimilationist stances towards immigrants (Kymlicka, 2010). Beyond a perceived attitude of accommodation of diversity, Canada's policies show the government's attempts to accommodate diversity including the formal adoption of a federal multicultural policy and a multiculturalism clause in the Canadian Constitution (Kymlicka, 2007). Despite having similar naturalization policies, the policies welcoming diversity and immigrants in Canada seem to bear fruit in the 70 percent of immigrants who choose to become naturalized Canadian citizens and who participate in the political process at nearly the same levels as other Canadian citizens as compared to the 35 percent of naturalized citizens in the United States⁵ (Bloemraad, 2006; Howe, 2007). Yet despite the political commitment of the Canada's federal government and many of the provincial governments, some troubling trends can be found in data from an Ethnic Data Survey conducted by Statistics Canada.

⁴ The United States has a slightly higher birth rate than Canada though both are decreasing as of 2013 (World Bank, 2015).

⁵ Theorists have suggested that the difference in naturalization rate is due to individuals differing feelings of welcome in these respective countries and therefore making different choices about whether to become naturalized citizens.

This survey revealed that visible minorities⁶ earn almost \$10,000 less than the local White counterparts (Reitz & Banerjee, 2007). Further though many Canadians welcome immigrants, recent polls of Canadian residents reveal some concerns about the role of immigrants in Canadian society with 30 percent of respondents agreeing that “immigrants take jobs from Canadians”(CBC News, 2014). This poll also found important variation by regions in Canada with a significantly higher percentage of respondents who agreed to that previous statement living in the Prairie regions of Canada, such as Manitoba, the province focused on in this dissertation. Lastly, research has shown that many immigrants in Canada continue to be employed in low-skill jobs, despite their educational credentials that qualify them for more advanced employment (Challinor, 2011; Galarneau & Morissette, 2008).

Another important difference between the United States and Canada come in the limited decentralization of Canadian immigration policy in the form the Provincial Nominating Programs. Developed in the 1990s, this program sought to encourage the distribution of immigrants to areas outside of the three major cities⁷ in Canada (Pandey & Townsend, 2010) and meet the diverse needs of the different provinces (Wiginton, 2013). This program allows provinces to nominate immigrants that “have the skills, education and work experience to contribute to the economy of that province or territory, and must want to live there” (Government of Canada, 2015). This policy has allowed provinces like Manitoba to recruit workers that may not meet the federal government’s immigration requirement but can address a need in the local province (Carter, Pandey, & Townsend, 2010). Manitoba has successfully used this program as over half of the immigrants arriving in Manitoba do so through this program (Carter et al., 2010). Therefore within the Manitoban context, immigrants are seen as key to supporting the economic

⁶ Visible minorities are defined by the Canadian Employment Equity Act as "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour". This includes groups such as: Chinese, South Asian, Black, Arab, West Asian, Filipino, Southeast Asian, Latin American, Japanese and Korean (Statistics Canada, 2015).

⁷ Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal

vitality of the province. These differences in perceptions of immigrants provide an important context for the two small cities that this dissertation will investigate. Below, I will provide a brief overview of the two different local contexts.

Larton, Pennsylvania

Early in the Industrial Revolution, Larton, Pennsylvania and surrounding areas experienced a large influx of immigrants from England, Scotland, Wales and the German states who came to work in the anthracite and coal mines. As America's appetite for coal grew, more immigrants arrived to meet the demands for coal. However, these new immigrants now came from Ireland and later Southern Europe and faced the scorn of the first generation of immigrants who saw the new arrivals as economic threats willing to work for less and in more dangerous conditions than the "old miners who were self-respecting English-speaking citizens" (Aurand, 1986, p. 28 as cited in Kaye, 2010). As the coal industry faded from prominence, the city's population declined from a peak of almost 40,000 in the 1940 census to approximately 25,000 residents now⁸. In the 1950s, in an effort to combat the economic decline associated with the shrinking coal industry, a community redevelopment organization formed to attract new economic opportunities. Under the auspices of this economic organization, large international corporations came to the area bringing with it many blue-collar jobs that attracted Latina/o immigrants to the community. The Latina/o population which had been slowly growing since the late 1980's swelled after September 11th in response to the economic slump in New York City's economy and the growing job opportunities and affordable housing available in Larton (Kaye, 2010). As shown in Table 2 below between

⁸I did not include specific references to certain quotes or demographic data in order to preserve the school district's confidentiality.

1980 and 2000 the population of Latina/os only grew by 3.5 percent but jumped to 37 percent of the population just ten years later.

As the immigrant population in Larton rapidly grew, tensions began simmering with long-standing residents blaming immigrants for bringing crime, straining the economically struggling city budget and social services. In May of 2006, police accused two undocumented immigrants of killing a white man as he changed a tire in the street. While charges were

Table 2 Population Change in Larton from 1980 to 2010

Year	1980		1990		2000		2010	
	N total	% Total	N total	% Total	N total	% Total	N total	% Total
Total population	27,318	100.0	24,730	100.0	23,329	100.0	25,340	100.0
White, Non-Hispanic¹	27,037	99.00	24,166	97.7	21,741	93.1	14,955	59.0
Black, Non-Hispanic¹	13	0.05	46	0.19	135	0.58	497	1.96
Other Races, Non-Hispanic^{1 & 2}	129	0.47	184	0.74	321	1.38	434	1.71
Latina/o/a Population	139	0.51	334	1.35	1,132	4.9	9,454	37.3

¹This was the classification provided for by State of the Cities Data Base from the 1980, 1990, 2000 Census.

² For the number in the 2010 column, I created this category by combining American Indian and Alaska Native alone, Asian Alone, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, Some Other Race alone, and Two or More Races from the 2010 Census Demographic data

Source: (United States Census Bureau, 2015; United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2015)

eventually dropped due to lack of evidence, in the same month a 14-year-old Dominican boy was arrested for firing a gun at a playground. Larton's mayor and supporters cited these two incidents as the "last straw" and sought to pass a series of restrictive ordinances designed to penalize anyone who knowingly rented housing or hired an illegal immigrant and thereby drive out "illegal immigrants" out of the city. In addition, the city passed an ordinance that made English the official language of the city and mandated that all city business be conducted in English. This law became a touchstone in the community drawing ire from many immigrants who decried the law

as discriminatory and racist. Others who supported the law saw it as necessary to help stem the flood of immigrants. Both sides protested and by many accounts, the town split over the legality and appropriateness of the law. The mayor declared in a speech that “illegal is illegal! We do not care where they come from, we do not care what language they speak, but an illegal alien is not welcome in Larton! Those who are here illegally continue to drain city resource... Larton is small town USA. We are an All-American City.... A city where residents and legal immigrants can live side by side, communicating with and looking out for each other”. However, despite the mayor’s suggestion that all legal residents could live together peacefully, a Dominican resident argued that the act in effect made the climate such that “everybody that was looking as a stranger, as Hispanic, has an accent...[was seen as] illegal”. This climate of suspicion strained relationships between local White community members and the Latino population both those who were immigrants and those who were long-time American citizens.

In the eight years since the act was introduced, it was repeatedly struck down by several courts and never enacted. While the English-only ordinance remains in effect today, several groups coalesced in the wake of the law to work to support the integration of the immigrants into the community. These groups supported immigrants by providing citizenship and English language classes, afterschool tutoring, and translation services.

One group, the Larton Unity Project, will play an important role in the lives of the immigrant students that I interviewed in Larton and therefore I will give an introduction to the Project, the community center the project started, its’ goals and the services it provides. The community center was the brainchild of several long-time White residents of Larton as they sought ways to bridge the increasingly large divide they saw in their community as a result of the politics around the immigrant influx. As the mission statement of the center states, the group came out of a “community-based effort that seeks to unite the people of many different cultures who now call [Larton] home”. Formed with the explicit purpose of bringing together long-

standing White Larton residents with immigrants, the project opened a community center called the Larton Unity Community Center in 2013. Located in a former school building, the Center quickly became a community hub. It provided a Saturday reading club for struggling readers. On Mondays through Thursdays, the center operated a free afterschool homework help for students from second through eighth grade. It collaborated with other non-profits to offer peer-mentoring, computer and engineering clubs among other extracurricular activities. It hosted several local sports teams as well as offering open basketball courts for recreational play. Through various partnerships, the community center also took many of their students on various excursions such as to local universities or to major-league baseball games. The community volunteers often became resources and advocates for the immigrant students' families who had questions regarding the schooling process. Thus often times one would find families meeting with one of the executive directors regarding their children's progress in school or asking for translation services for a meeting with the school district. The center also sought to become a public gathering space for all of Larton residents. To this end, they hosted various political events including a town hall with the city council and police. It also hosted events for various local and state-level politicians. In the short time in existence, the community center has become a source of information and support for the immigrant community in Larton. In this center, I recruited many of the participants for the Larton study. Many of the high school students at the center volunteered in the homework help program for elementary school students, in addition to using the computer lab, play sports and participate in extracurricular activities like dance or Karate.

Introducing Larton Area School District

The Larton Area School District (LASD), a small suburban district, has jurisdiction over 11 schools within the district including the Larton Area High School (LAHS), the focus of this

study. According to the Common Core of Data, the school district serves almost 11,000 students in the 2010-2011 school year, employing 600 full-time classroom teachers and 500 support staff and administration. Approximately 1,200 students are English Language Learners and 1,200 students have individualized education plans. In the fiscal year, 2010-2011, the district spent on average 12,000 dollars per pupil (National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 2015).

Since 2000, LASD has experienced a 919 percent increase in the Latina/o students attending their schools. However, change has not come evenly to the school district; the municipalities outside of the city limits of Larton have not experienced the same increase in population. Therefore, the schools located within the city limits and LAHS have experienced the majority of the growth in student bodies. In 2013-2014, the school district opened another high school outside of the city limits, which focused on sciences.

In the 2011-2012 school years, LAHS served more than 3,000 students with almost 2,000 of those students qualifying for free or reduced lunch (NCES, 2013). The school employed approximately 140 teachers, 46% of whom were absent for 10 or more days in the 2011 school year, and only 6 counselors (Office of Civil Rights, 2013b). Within LAHS, Latina/o students account for almost 33% of the student body (NCES, 2013). While accounting for a third of the population, approximately 75 % of Latina/o students scored basic or below basic in math and 67 % of the students scored basic or below basic in reading (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2013). Additionally, only six percent of the Gifted and Talented students were comprised of Latina/o students. In Calculus, almost nine percent of students were Latina/o while more than a third of the Chemistry students were Latina/o. In Physics, 13% of the students were Latina/o. In 2011, Latina/o students represented almost 20% of the students taking the SATs or ACTs (Office of Civil Rights, 2013b). While Latina/o students were underrepresented in all but Chemistry enrollment, 100% of the in-school suspensions and 45% of out-of-school suspensions were of Latina/o students. Latina/o students represented more than 50% of the expulsions in 2011 (Office

of Civil Rights, 2013b). The data above reveal the lack of representation of Latina/o students in many of the advanced placement and college preparatory courses while it showed the reverse for discipline policies with Latina/o students being overrepresented in all disciplinary categories.

In 2011, almost 15% of LAHS' student body was classified as Limited English Proficiency (LEP) with almost all of these students being from Latin America. No LEP students were enrolled in the gifted and talented program. While no LEP students were enrolled in Calculus or Physics, 11.2% students in Chemistry were classified as LEP. Only 2 of the more than 125 students in Advanced Placement courses are LEP students and only 7 of the more than 600 students who took the SATs or ACTs were LEP designated (Office of Civil Rights, 2013a). These statistics show the low number of LEP students in LAHS who were being prepared to enroll in colleges and universities and gives an overview of the context found in Larton.

As in Larton, the percentage of immigrants living and attending school in Pennsylvania has doubled in the past twenty years. Despite this rapid growth of immigrant students, the Pennsylvania Department of Education has provided school districts very little guidance as to how to support and integrate these newcomers. The Department's website offers neither a philosophy nor statement of educational mission to guide local districts about state level educational priorities. In the Basic Education Circular⁹ regarding the education of Students With Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and English Language Learners (ELL), the State details school districts requirements to follow the federal and state mandates. However, nowhere in these guides, does the State discuss the importance of culturally relevant and/or inclusive education. The relative silence around the education and integration of immigrant students into the Pennsylvania school systems we will see will carry over into Larton's district level policies.

While the Larton school district's student population has undergone a rapid and large

⁹ The Department of Education provides a Basic Education Circular (BEC) to guide the school districts' implementation of law, regulation and policy.

shift in the past ten years, many of the school district's policies have not shifted at a similar pace. In an ongoing study of school board policies in the wake of this demographic shift, the LASD has rarely, if ever, used the word immigrant in the twelve years of publicly available school board meeting minutes. The boards silence mirrors their slow policy responses, which in the early years focused more on handling overcrowding and security concerns than addressing the growing population of immigrant students' educational needs. In the mid-2000s, the school board began taking steps towards hiring translators for the schools to facilitate communication between parents and the schools. The school district also began providing language training for some teachers using computer-based software such a Rosetta Stone. However, the district has resisted hiring additional English as Second Language (ESL) Teachers. When the board did hire additional ESL teachers, they were amongst the first to be cut during budget cuts. In 2010, the school board finally aligned the ESL curricula so that students could move from middle to high school still following the ESL curricula. Since 2013, the school board has actively sought to hire a more diverse teaching staff by participating in recruitment fairs at large universities though the majority of the teachers remain white and monolingual. Also in 2013, the school board hired a community liaison whose job included spending 50 percent of his time at the Unity Project's community center thus seeking to build ties to the local community. While these more recent measures represent progress in the school board's thinking around services for immigrant students, the school board has still not provided quality teacher professional development for the LASD teachers. This frustrated teachers because as one high school teacher stated in a 2014 interview:

I don't have an ESL degree, to I kind of feel like I'm set up to fail at it [teaching ELs]. All these professional development days that we sit through, I'm going...Give me something I can use. Why can't you [the district] provide us with

a college course that gives us college credits where we come out at the end of the year with an ESL degree?" I think every teacher should have [an ESL certificate].

The lack of professional development opportunities hindered many teachers from improving their practice and developing the strategies that they need to support and help integrate their newly arrived immigrant students. Thus, the systematic lack of supports provided by the school board and the teachers' lack of preparation for their work with their new student population helped to create a school environment that the students will later describe as unwelcoming.

Perth, Canada

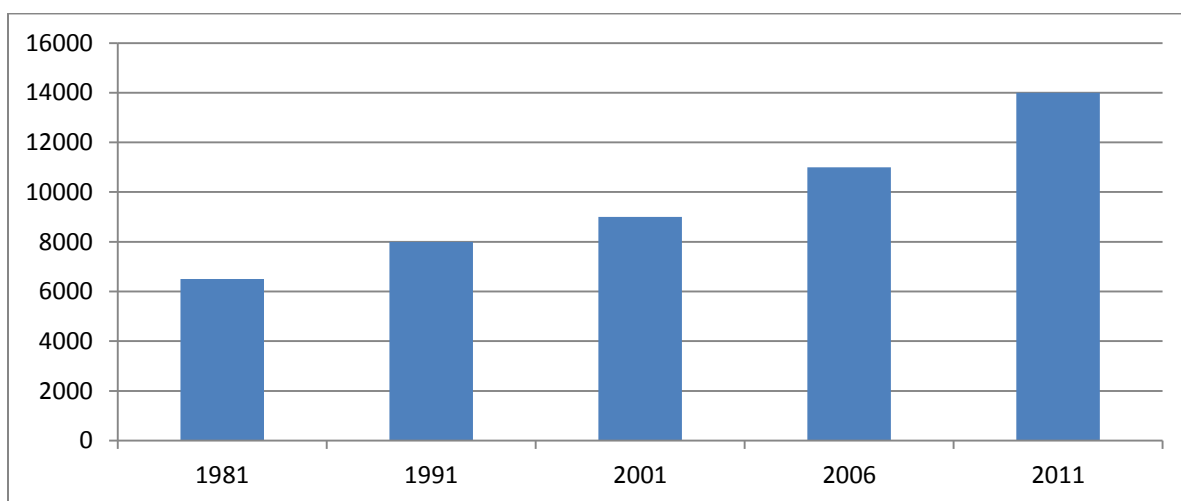
Perth, Canada is located in the prairies of Canada having been originally settled by Russian Mennonites who were seeking religious freedom and having received a waiver for the requirements to serve in the Canadian armed forces¹⁰. Located in Manitoba, the town's population grew as other Mennonites joined the original settlers. Interestingly one of the first buildings built in the center of the new village was the school, which began offering instruction in the first fall that the settlers arrived. As the town grew, it became a center for regional business boasting large general supply stores, car dealerships and other commercial ventures in the still wild Western Canadian Prairies. By the 1950s, the town was home to other faith groups like the German Lutherans and English Anglicans. It also became a regional agricultural center and hosted several service sector industries such as trucking and retail.

Like Larton, this small community sought to stimulate its economy. To do so, it established a Chamber of Commerce which supported the development of a regional hospital,

¹⁰ I did not include specific references to certain quotes or demographic data in order to preserve the school district's confidentiality.

civic center and libraries (Perth Chamber of Commerce, 2015). In addition to its efforts to attract business, Perth has also sought to encourage immigrants to settle in the community. Thus, Perth is one of the top destinations for immigrants arriving in Manitoba and consequently one of the fastest growing cities in the province. This change has been received positively with the executive director of the Chamber of Commerce noting "Last year [2010], we attracted people from more than 40 countries and we have more than 100 countries represented in the region". Echoing this sentiment the Mayor of Perth stated that "We've had a lot of growth in the last number of years. We have a very diverse economy, a lot of immigration and people say this is a great place to live and do business". As shown by both these quotes, these statements highlight that they saw the increasing immigration and subsequent diversification of the population as beneficial for the town. As shown in Figure 1, between 2001 and 2011, the population in Perth grew from 9,000 to 14,000 an almost 47 percent growth in the past ten years. The population of Perth nearly doubled between 1981 and 2011. Much of this population growth has been attributed to immigrants who

Figure 1 Population Growth in Perth from 1981 to 2011

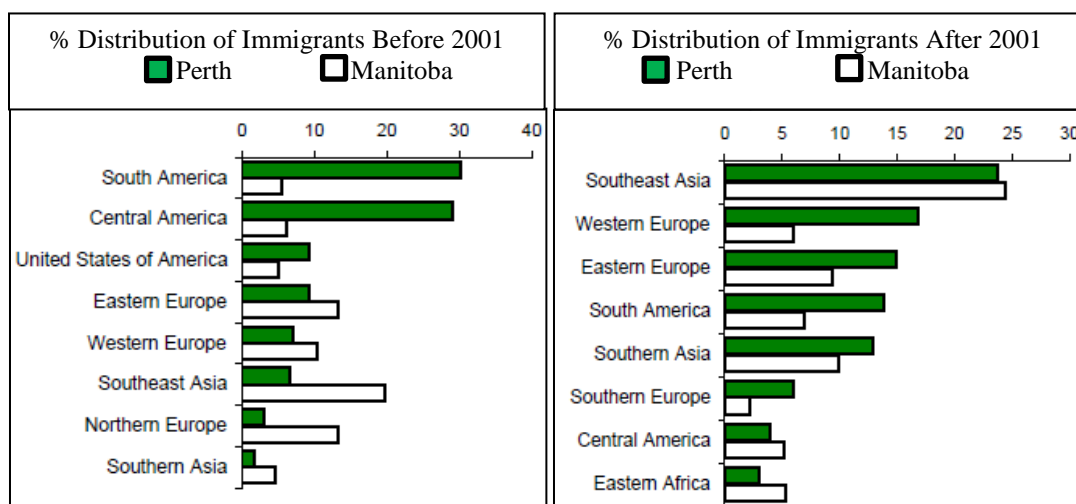


Source: (City of Perth Mayor and Council, 2015)

have arrived as part of Manitoba's Provincial Nominating Program (PNP). Thus given the concerted effort to attract immigrants, many in Perth saw this growth as a welcome addition to the community.

As the executive director of the immigrant center suggested in our conversation, the nationality of the immigrants arriving in Perth have changed over time. In the late 1990's and early 2000's many Mennonites whose families had roots in Canada returned to Perth from South America, particularly Paraguay. These Mennonites descended from families who left Canada in the 1920's after the passage of the Public School Attendance Act, which closed all private Mennonite schools and compelled all Canadian students to attend public schools in an effort to teach all children standard English and to become patriotic Canadian citizens. This was a violations of agreements previously made between the Mennonites and Canadian government (Crocker, 2013). In addition to the Mennonites from Latin America, many Mennonites from Germany and Russia arrived in the late 1990's and early 2000's. With the opening of a large

Figure 2. The Percent Distribution of Immigrants before and after 2001 in Perth and Manitoba



(Source: Statistics Canada, 2006)

pharmaceutical company among other industries, the second large wave of immigrants came as the company actively recruited Filipino workers thus bring Filipino and other south-eastern Asian workers to the area. The 2006 Census data shown in Figure 2 supports the director's observations showing that the percentage of immigrants arriving in Perth after 2001 came predominantly from Southeast Asia.

Though Canada does not gather demographic data, they do gather information on mother

Table 3. The Most Common Non-Official-Language¹¹ Mother Tongues

Mother tongue	Number	Percentage of non-official language mother-tongue population	Percentage of total population
German	3,735	75.3	28.0
Tagalog (Pilipino, Filipino)	430	8.7	3.2
Russian	245	4.9	1.8
Ukrainian	115	2.3	0.9
Spanish	65	1.3	0.5

(Source: Statistics Canada, 2006)

tongue and languages spoken at home thus giving insight to the demographic makeup of the immigrant boom in Perth. As shown in Table 3, the most common language spoken at home other than French was German. Tagalog was spoken by 3.2 percent of Perth's community reflecting the second wave of immigration.

Introducing Perth School District

The Manitoban Ministry of Education considered Perth School District (PSD) a rural school district despite it being one of the largest school district in the province. It educates almost

¹¹ Canada's official languages are French and English. In Perth, 47 percent of the population reported speaking French at home regularly in addition to English or some other non-official language.

eight thousand students in 20 schools, which includes the Perth High School (PHS), the focus of this study, as well as two other high schools. The PSD boasts of its diversity saying that it educates students from 37 different countries. It employs over a thousand staff members and has a ratio of 15 students to every educator (PSD, 2015; Schools Finance Branch, 2013). The division has a budget of about 75 million dollars and spends about 10,000 Canadian dollars per pupil. This spending places it close to the bottom in per-pupil spending amongst the other divisions in the Province (Schools Finance Branch, 2013). The division is overseen by a board of trustee that functions in a similar manner to the school boards in the United States.

Perth High School serves almost 2000 students from around the Perth district. It employs almost 115 teachers, 5 counselors and almost 50 educational assistants. It offers more than 60 different academic courses and almost 20 vocational programs including electrical, plumbing, culinary arts and hairstyling. In addition to the wide number of options for academic programming, the students can also get involved in a range of extracurricular activities that included musical programming such as band, choir and guitar club as well as several “social responsibility” groups, which volunteer in the school and local community through programs like the Loop Group¹². The Loop Group, which will be discussed in further detail, is one part of a strategy to support the successful transition of the incoming students to the PHS. In the 2013-2014 school priorities, the group was described as “a teacher led, student facilitated program aimed to improve successful student transition and orientation from middle to high school. 100 student Loop Group Leaders have been trained, and transition/orientation activities planned to integrate 750 new grade 9 and 10 students into the PHS” (Perth High School Community Report, 2013). Unlike the United States, Canada does not require it schools to publicly release demographic or student assessment data, therefore, this data will be absent from this report.

¹²Like all names in this dissertation, this too is a pseudonym.

In considering the policy context in Perth, we see that the school division and Province approached this immigrant student influx differently than in Larton. At the provincial level, the policies developed by the Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth consistently indicate a respect for the need to develop inclusive schools. This respect is evidenced in the policies specifically geared towards developing feelings of belonging. A 2004 provincial document defined the Manitoba's philosophy of inclusion in this way:

Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth is committed to fostering inclusion for all people....Inclusion is a way of thinking and acting that allows every individual to feel accepted, valued, and safe. An inclusive community consciously evolves to meet the changing needs of its members. Through recognition and support, an inclusive community provides meaningful involvement and equal access to the benefits of citizenship...In Manitoba, we embrace inclusion as a means of enhancing the well-being of every member of the community.

(Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2004 p. vii)

The commitment to inclusive and welcoming schools that serve a hub of support services not just for students but for families and communities as well is seen in the recent passage of the 2013 *Community Schools Act* which provides funding for schools seeking to develop a community school approach. This approach entails recognizing the school's unique position within a community with "unparalleled contact with students and families" and "includes working collaboratively on finding ways to braid educational, social, and public health policy and programming" in such a way to support the health of the student, family and community (Altieri, 2015, p. 14). Accompanying these initiatives are numerous opportunities sponsored by the provincial government for professional learning for both teachers and administrators. In addition to the inclusive stance taken towards students in Manitoba, the Manitoban government also consciously worked to support the immigrant families context of reception with a series of

support services including help enrolling one's children in the appropriate schools (Clement, Carter, & Vineberg, 2013). This continuum of services and strong emphasis on inclusivity has translated into the majority of immigrants feeling satisfied with their integration experiences in Manitoba.

The proactive attitude towards the integration of immigrants taken by the Manitoban government is mirrored at the divisional level in Perth. The division has responded to the increasing diversity in its schools by issuing a statement that clearly explains the division's stance towards diversity writing that the division is "committed to creating and maintaining a positive and inclusive environment in which students, staff and parents are aware of and respect the human rights, diversity and dignity of others". This commitment is shown in the numerous commitments to supporting students from all background through support services, which involves a commitment to fostering in all students "a sense of acceptance and belonging". Thus, the division's policies towards students reflect a value for the diversity that immigrant students bring to their schools. To further support the inclusion of all students, the division offers professional development for all teachers in inclusive schooling as well as working with English as Additional Language students. The teachers interviewed felt that they received adequate support through various professional development opportunities to work with immigrant students. Thus through a myriad of avenues, both the province and division seeks to support the integration of its newly arrived immigrant students.

Conclusion

This chapter highlights the similarities and differences between Perth and Larton. The similarities in federal policies towards the types of immigrants sought and recruited as well as the

history of explicit preferences for certain types of immigrants over others. Further, the governments share a similar structure with federal, state/provincial and local levels. The schools are the purview of the state and province, however, both schools are guided by a local board of community members who help allocate resources and implement state/provincial level policies. The cities themselves have both recently experienced a boom in population due in part to the immigrant influx. The immigrant influx in both cities was caused by the presence of a healthy job market that sought blue-collar labor that many of the immigrants provided despite their previous background.

Despite the many similarities, there are important differences. First and most importantly is the different context of reception the immigrants received when arriving in their new communities. While in Larton, the Mayor led a fearful reaction, which produced an unsuccessful ordinance that attempted to make Larton the most difficult place in the United States for illegal immigrants to live, in effect it created an unwelcoming environment for all Latina/os who lived in Larton. This reaction was juxtaposed by the generally positive perception of the Mayor and other community leaders in Perth who saw the immigrant arrival as a positive for their community's economic and social vitality. Further, many of the immigrants who arrived in Perth were specifically selected by the Manitoban government through the PNP. Additionally, it must be noted that the LAHS is much larger than PHS and this can have an important impact on the research that I will deal with further in the limitation section.

As seen above the similarities in structures and functions of the governmental agencies make Larton and Perth comparable. However, the differences between the context of receptions will play an important role in developing students' feelings of belonging and their understanding of their role as citizens in their new countries.

Chapter 4

Methods

Introduction

This chapter will outline the methods that I used in this exploratory, comparative embedded case study. Since the goal of this study was to develop an understanding of the possible relationships between immigrant students' feelings of belonging and their political socialization, the primary research question of the study was: "what is the relationship between immigrant students' feelings of belonging to their school and their political socialization process"? Subsidiary questions in this study included how do immigrant students understand their feelings of belonging and how do their school experiences help or hinder the development of their feelings of belonging? How do immigrant students understand citizenship and their political socialization and are they influenced by their experiences of inclusion or exclusion in their schools? To answer these questions, I designed a comparative case study of two high schools in new immigrant destinations. Since my questions focused on contemporary issues in which the boundaries between the phenomena of interest, in this case the relationship between immigrant students' feelings of belonging and their political socialization and their school communities context of reception, were not clearly evident, using a case study research design allowed me a comprehensive research strategy. As part of the case study, I gathered a range of data on the immigrant students' experiences in their respective high schools and how this shaped their experiences of belonging (Yin, 2003, pp. 13–14). The flexibility that a case study allows also fits with my own pragmatic stance as a researcher which lends itself to a belief that understanding the complexity of human experience requires a range of methods to explore and to comprehend the different facets of that experience (Biesta & Burbules, 2004).

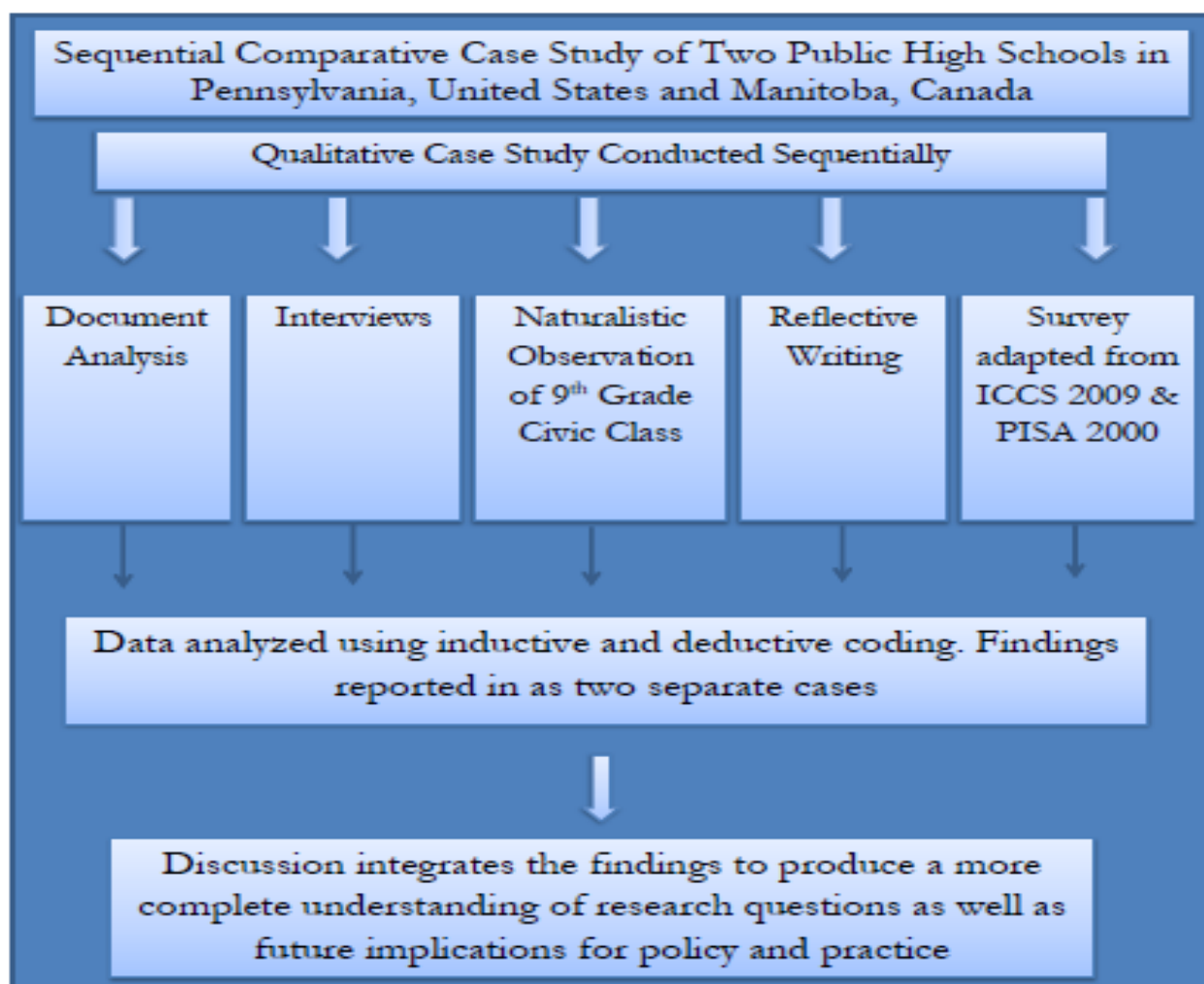
This chapter will explicate the research design and introduce the participants involved in the study. I will discuss the data collection process and data analysis. I will explain the ethical considerations I had when working with a vulnerable population like immigrant students. I will then review features of this study that strengthen its validity and reliability as well as the inevitable limitations of the study.

Research Design

I conducted a comparative, embedded case study to explore the research questions. My design emphasizes the embedded and comparative nature of the case study as I consider the dynamic creation of a school community that either embraced or excluded its immigrant students. A case study explicitly recognizes the contextual nature of this research such that what occurs at the local school level reflects and engages multiple actors and systems across the various levels of government (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The case studies are embedded, as the unit of analysis is specifically immigrant students' feelings of belonging or exclusion and the potential relationship to their political socialization. The case study is bounded by several areas. First, it focuses on the relationship between feelings of belonging and political socialization. Secondly, it focuses on this relationship for immigrant students only, though there is a possibility that the theory developed could apply for non-immigrant students as well. The two cases focus on students within the schools but recognize that the policies created at other governmental levels cannot be ignored as they create the context for the schools' responses to their immigrant students. Thus, the feelings of exclusion or inclusion result from policies enacted by the school and school boards. Additionally, the schools' policies reflect the realities of the policies enacted at the state and provincial levels as well as federal immigration and education policies. The case studies focused on understanding the immigrant students' experiences using a variety of data sources as shown in

Figure 1. Figure 1 provides an overview of the research design. The following sections will detail the completion of the study.

Figure 1. Overview of the Research Design



Each case will focus on immigrant high school students living in a previously homogenous area that over the past twenty years have experienced a growing immigrant population. The schools will reflect this changing population. I have matched the communities along measures of location, size, and immigrant growth rate. Matching the communities along

these measures will help the comparison between the two communities' responses to the immigrant influx.

Importantly, Pennsylvanian and Manitoban schools have very similar school structures as was outlined in the context chapter, which also facilitates the comparison between the two schools. The two school systems both consist of school boards at the local level and an intermediary unit or school division at the intermediary level. Both the Manitoban Province and Pennsylvania State function in similar manners with the federal governments providing limited oversight. Importantly, both school districts provide explicit civic instructions in the ninth grade which introduces the students to an overview of the two countries' governments and the students' roles as citizens therein (Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth, 2007; Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2009). This matters as the goal of the study is to understand the

Table 1. Overview of the Two Community Contexts

	Larton, PA	Perth, MB
Population	~25,000	~13,500
Percent Change in Population between 2000(1) and 2010(1) ¹	~10% (735% increase in Latina/o students) ²	~50%
Industry	Manufacturing, Distribution, Meatpacking	Pharmaceutical, Meatpacking, Construction
Immigrant Group(s)	Predominantly Latino, Middle Eastern North African	German, Russian, Paraguayan, Filipino, Vietnamese
School District Size	~10,000	~8,000
High School Size	~3,000	~2,000

¹Canada's Census runs between 2001 and 2011.

²While the overall population change in Larton was only 8% the 735% increase came in Latina/o population

(Sources: U.S. Census 2011; Statistics Canada, 2011; Manitoba Bureau of Statistics, 2008; NCES, 2013)

political socialization process of the students. As research has shown, explicit instruction in civic education can contribute to students' understandings of their political and civic identities (Levinson, 2012; Rubin, 2007). As a complete overview of the contexts of the two cases was provided in chapter three, Table 1 gives only a brief overview of the similarities between the two communities. One important and unexpected difference between the two cities was the large number of devout Mennonites who live in Perth. As Perth was founded by Mennonites, maybe this should not have come as a surprise but the continued inflow of immigrants with Mennonite backgrounds did surprise me. Their religious background matters in part because the Mennonites believe in focusing their attention on the religious communities and seek to minimize their involvement with civic and political affairs of the countries where they reside.

Sample

The study focused on two high schools in Manitoba and Pennsylvania. These two cases were specifically chosen because of the rapid increase in the immigrant student population in both Larton and Perth. As many scholars have discussed, the long-term and majority White residents in the communities facing these rapid transitions react in myriad of ways. These reaction can range from seeing immigrants as an economic benefit and the diversity they bring with them as a positive change, to worrying that immigrants compete for economic resources and lack the ability to assimilate into the life of the community, to blaming immigrants for perceived increases in crime and social strife (Fennelly, 2008). As outlined in the context chapter, the two communities reacted very differently to their immigrant influxes suggesting that the context of reception also differed. These differing contexts could theoretically lead to the students having different experiences in schools and those experiences might alter their feelings of belonging to the new community.

Initially, I had planned on purposefully sampling only ninth and tenth grade immigrant students because most of them have not yet reached an age where they can legally drop out of school. Given that I wanted to speak with students, who may not have felt a sense of belonging in school, I worried that the students' disengagement might have led them to drop out when they legally could. Additionally, I had specifically not wanted to recruit from the two high schools with the help of teachers in those schools, as I wanted to be able to interview students who either had or had not connected with teachers and high schools. If I relied solely on recruitment from the high schools, I worried I would speak only with students who had made a connection to at the very least one teacher. Thus, I planned to make organic connections with potential participants through interactions at community centers and other community venues. In the following two sections, I will explain how my recruitment of participants unfolded in the two communities as well as share details about my participants.

Larton participants

In Larton, I focused my recruitment efforts at the Unity Project's community center, which was a hub of activity for the immigrant youth of Larton. I worked with the community center's program director to support the community center's work as needed. Therefore, I volunteered with the afterschool homework help groups as well as provided technical support to a virtual tutoring program. As I spent time at the center, I cultivated relationships with high school students who came to the center to volunteer, play basketball or participate in one of the many afterschool activities offered at the center. While these relationships developed organically, the students were not just ninth and tenth graders but rather spanned the high school experience and one student had graduated from the high school in the Spring of 2014. However, in the course of speaking with these students, I realized that they had interesting and important experiences to

share despite the original selection criteria. After receiving the necessary institutional review board approvals (available in Appendix A), I began recruiting students at the community center. When I spoke to the students, I shared with them the specific information about the study, including the expected duration of the interviews, as well as the time it would take to complete the survey, and written reflections. They also received the institutional review board forms¹³ to review with their parents (available in Appendix B). After some consideration, some students declined to participate feeling uncomfortable with their language abilities even though over the course of several months we had become friendly and I felt confident in our abilities to have meaningful conversations. This hesitation to share their own experiences even though they clearly had a lot to offer surprised me. Some students agreed to speak with me after their friends had begun being interviewed by me and they realized it could be fun. Thus, I ended up speaking with 11 students in Larton. The majority of the immigrants I spoke with were Latina/o students, which matched the demographics of the immigrant community. A short biography of each student is available in Appendix C in which I share more detailed information about each student such as his or her post-secondary aspirations, family background and immigration history. Table 2 provides an overview of the students who participated in Larton. The students spanned the spectrum from first generation immigrants who had only arrived in the United States four years prior to those born in the country making them second or third generation immigrants. The students' ages ranged from 14 to 21 years old and a range of grades with the predominant group of students being high school seniors. Ayesha, the 21 year old, had graduated from the LAHS and I decided to include her for her different perspective as one of the few Muslim immigrant students in the community. I expected that her different experiences would provide another important voice in this exploratory study. Further given the limited number of Muslim students in Larton

¹³ These forms had been translated into the predominant languages of each community. Thus in Larton, the forms were in both English and Spanish. In Perth, the forms were also available in German, Russian, Tagalog and Spanish.

Table 2. Overview of Larton Participants

Name	Grade	Age	Identified Nationality	Years in U.S.
Isabella	11 th grade	16	Dominican/Puerto Rican	Born (2 nd Gen)
Bianca	10 th grade	16	Dominican	4 years
Veronica	12 th grade	17	Dominican	Born (2 nd Gen)
Gigi	12 th Grade	18	Dominican	5 years
Marie	12 th Grade	17	Dominican	Born (2nd Gen)
Christopher	12 th Grade	16	Dominican	6 years
Jacob	11 th grade	17	German	Born (2 nd Gen) in US lived in Guatemala for 7 years
Charlie	9 th grade	14	Dominican	12 years
Isaiah	11 th grade	16	Dominican	12 years
Maria	9 th grade	14	Dominican/Puerto Rican	Born (2nd Gen)
Ayesha	12 th grade	21	Middle Eastern North African (MENA)	9 years

from the (MENA) region, to protect her identity I chose not to reveal the exact country from which she emigrated.

Perth participants

In Perth, my recruitment of participants changed significantly. Originally, I had planned to recruit students from community venues. However, I traveled to Perth in late July of 2014 to meet with the Assistant Superintendent of the district as well as develop a better understanding of Perth than I had gleaned from my research into the community. As I met with the assistant

superintendent and then the director of an immigrant center, I sought insight into the best way to recruit students. I thought that perhaps I would approach local religious leaders in the various Mennonite churches. However, I was advised against doing so as some worried that the religious leaders might advise their congregations not to work with me. Furthermore, many of the students – both Mennonite and non-Mennonite – had responsibilities after school and as such, it would be difficult to recruit students to speak with me after school given these responsibilities. Since I had a limited amount of time to spend in Perth given the expectations of my research assistantship at Penn State and financial considerations, I would not have the time required to develop the relationships with immigrant students as organically as I did in Larton. I realized that to be able to meet and recruit immigrant students, I would have to work within the school setting and use gatekeepers to find immigrant students. Once my study was approved, I met with Ms. Lehrer, a teacher at the high school who taught the English as an Additional Language course. Her close relationships with many of the immigrant students she worked with facilitated many students agreeing to speak with me. After explaining to her the population I would like to speak with (immigrant students who had a sufficient command of English that we could communicate), she found ten of the twelve students presented in Table 3. The other two students came through the immigrant center's network as the director had also agreed to reach out to immigrant students that he and his staff personally knew to see if anyone would be interested in speaking with me. It should be noted that some of the Filipino students were older than the typical high school student age. These students had chosen to go through a year of high school in Canada to give them time to acclimate to the Canadian education system and work on their English before continuing their post-secondary education. All the Filipino students I spoke with planned to do this. The difference in sampling is a concern I recognize as the students I spoke with in Perth trusted Ms. Lehrer enough to speak with me, a stranger to them. This concern and possible implications for my findings will be discussed in the limitations sections at the end of this chapter. Sufficed to say,

I realize there is a significant difference in the sample of students from Perth and Larton. After Ms. Lehrer recruited all the students presented in Table 3, I met with the students and shared with

Table 3. Overview of Perth Participants

Name	Grade	Age	Identified Nationality	Years in Canada
Jason	12 th	19	Philippines	2 months
Noah	12 th	18	Paraguay	12 years
Katherine	12 th	16	Germany	2 years 2 month
Daniel	12 th	17	Middle Eastern/North African (MENA) ¹⁴	3 years
Peter	12 th	17	MENA ²	3 years
Mary	12 th	18	Germany	1.5 years
Elaine	12 th	20	Philippines	4 months
Andrew	9 th	14	Philippines	2 months
Michael	12 th	17	Paraguay	2 years ago most recently; been lived in Canada twice before
Miriam	12 th	18	Philippines	7 months
Isaac	12 th	17	MENA ²	3 years
Rebecca	12 th	17	Germany	13 years

them the same information I did with the Larton students regarding the expected time requirements of this study and the appropriate institutional review board forms. The students then had a month to mull over their interest in participation and if they wanted to participate in the process, they returned their forms to Ms. Lehrer who kept the forms until I returned in October at which point we began the interviews. Another difference between the two groups is that the students in Perth also tended to be chronologically older than the students in Larton. This is

¹⁴ As in Larton, I chose to identify these three students as from the MENA region rather than their home countries which were unique and therefore could possibly identify these three students.

important because of the influence of chronological age on students' political knowledge and development (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996).

Data Collection Procedure

In the process of conducting the two case studies, I gathered multiple forms of data from the students, at the school, and school district and state level. These data include observations, interviews, surveys, reflective writing and document analyses. To unpack the procedures I used to gather this data, I will discuss each data collection process separately.

Document analysis

In addition to the observations, I gathered publicly available documents from the two high schools' websites regarding their mission, vision and policies about English Language Learners and immigrant students. To examine the interaction between the various layers of government and the enactment of school policies, I analyzed documents that specifically dealt with immigrant students within the Pennsylvania and Manitoban school system. I also reviewed policies at the school division and school board level to understand how these policies view immigrant students and how they may include or exclude these students. These documents provided insight into the values of the schools, districts and state level government and important contextual information for the schools' approaches to the integration of the students and the reception that the students' received. These documents were collected in NVivo and identifying information for the school and district was removed. The documents were analyzed and important understandings of the school district and schools' priorities were documented in memos.

Interviews

As students' perceptions of their feelings of belonging and political socialization were the main focus of this study, the majority of the data in the study came from the interviews, reflective writing and surveys the students completed for and with me.

The students participated in three iterative semi-structured interviews with me. These interviews lasted between 20 minutes and one hour with the first and second interview tending to be longer while the third interview, which was designed as a wrap-up, and reflection interview tended to be shorter. The first interview was designed to build rapport with the students (see Appendix E for each interview protocol). Establishing rapport was particularly important with the Perth students who did not know me as well as the Larton students did who already knew me from my volunteering at the community center. The interview explored their school experiences and their families' history. It also established a baseline understanding of what it meant to belong to a group and their thoughts about citizenship and politics as well as their feelings towards their local communities. The second interview explored the students' answers to the International Civics and Citizenship Survey¹⁵ I had adapted as well as their understanding about citizenship, models of good citizens they knew, concepts gleaned from working with different groups of people and conflict. The last interview was a reflection on what they wrote in their reflective writing¹⁶ journals as well as their thoughts about the project and if their thinking has changed over the course of our conversations. After the interviews, I wrote memos reflecting on the students' responses, their demeanor and any observations or reactions that I had during the interviews. This allowed for me to capture my own thinking about the students and examine my own biases and pre-conceived notions. The memos also allowed me to document my surprise around students' responses. In Larton, the interviews occurred on a weekly schedule as I was in

¹⁵ This survey will be discussed below.

¹⁶ The reflective writing piece will also be discussed below.

Larton on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. In Perth, the interviews were spaced approximately three to four weeks apart. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed by a transcription service. Once the interviews were returned, I reviewed the transcriptions by listening to the full audio recording to ensure accuracy of transcription and to capture any speech patterns or breaks that could provide insight to the student's feelings at the time. To protect the anonymity of the participants, I inserted pseudonyms in the interviews and uploaded the files to NVivo for coding.

I also conducted semi-structured interviews with the three civics teachers I observed to explore how they have experienced these changing demographics in their classes, school community and as a community member. I also interviewed two Spanish teachers in Larton and the English as an Additional Language teacher and her educational assistant Emma in Perth (the protocol is available in Appendix F). The individual interviews provided detailed information on teachers' perceptions of immigrant students and the school's supports of the students. The interviews ranged from 30 to 50 minutes and were audio recorded. The interviews were transcribed and once returned I checked them for accuracy.

Modified International Civic and Citizenship Education Study Survey

After the first interview, I gave the students a survey I adapted from the 2009 International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) which targeted eighth grade students (available in Appendix G). The study's aim was to examine students' views on "civic society and systems, civic principles, civic participation, and civic identities" (Ainley & Schulz, 2011, p. 16). The ICCS survey includes questions that reflect all five components of political socialization: 1) an interest in the political process, 2) knowledge of the political process, 3) a sense of efficacy in

effecting change in the political system, 4) a trust in the political process and 5) an actual or expected involvement in the political process (Lay, 2012).

I modified the survey in two ways. First, I added questions from PISA 2003 that examined students' feelings of belonging to their school community. Secondly, I tailored the questions to the United States and Canadian context (i.e. one question asked if they "participat[ed] in a youth group (such as Scouts of Canada, Girl Guides of Canada, a church group)"). I asked the students to complete the survey and return the survey to me. I also noted that if they did not understand a question in the survey that they could leave the question blank and we would review the question together. This was meant to ease any worries that they might have about understanding the questions. When the students returned the survey, I asked them if any questions that surprised them. I also used their responses as a spring board for questions about their civic beliefs. Since we reviewed the survey together, there was no missing data with the exception of a question regarding fathers' education level as some students did not know or interact with their fathers. I entered their responses on an Excel spreadsheet. I used t-tests to examine differences in the two groups of students' responses.

Observations

At the school level, I sought to conduct observations that would provide insights into the teaching of civics as well as the interactions of immigrant students with other non-immigrant students and teachers. Through the observations, I wanted to understand "how [immigrant students] act and think in their [school] settings" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). I included observations of the civics classes in the two schools to understand the way civics was taught. I also wanted to understand how immigrant students interact in these classrooms with their teachers and peers. These observations provided important context into the interactions that students had with each other as

well as with their teachers. It provided insight into three teachers' practices in teaching civics and introduced me to the curriculum that students learned in their civics classes. While not all students I interviewed had taken the civics classes their high school offered, having transferred in afterwards, the observations provided helpful background information on what students learned in ninth grade. All observation notes and the attending memos were entered in NVivo after the event. I then would review the notes and take out any identifying information such as student names and replace them with initials. The observations and memos were stored on my password protected hard drive and backed up on Penn State's Box collection. Since I followed slightly different procedures to gain entree to the school sites, I will detail the process for each observation site separately in the following sections.

Larton Area High School observations

To gain access to this school, I wrote a letter to the assistant superintendent of the district explaining my project and requesting permission to conduct naturalistic observations of the ninth grade civics classes. As I had decided not recruit from the school given my concerns about potentially only recruiting students who had established a feeling of belonging, I specifically said I would not recruit students from the school. The assistant superintendent presented my research project to the school board for their approval. After receiving school board approval, I met with the high school principal, Mr. Gallo. We discussed the scope of my project, the classes I could observe as well as the school population. He then arranged for me to attend a social studies department meeting where I met with the teachers, explained my project and asked their permission to observe their classes¹⁷. I arranged to present my project to six classes. During

¹⁷ I asked their permission despite Mr. Gallo's insistence that I did not need their permission as I had his permission and the school boards permission to observe their classes.

the presentation, I explained the project, what I would be doing while observing their classes, the ways I would protect their privacy and gave students a chance to ask questions. After I distributed the Institutional Review Board forms¹⁸ (a generic form is available in Appendix D which I tailored to the two high schools) to the students, the teachers collected the forms from the students in an envelope I provided them.

After two weeks, of the six classes, only one class returned all their forms allowing me to observe their classroom. I began my observation in late April of 2014 and observed the class Tuesday through Thursdays till the beginning of June for a total of 20 observations periods. During these naturalistic observations in Larton, I sat in the back of the classroom which had 6 rows of desks facing the front of the classroom and the teacher desk. I recorded my observations using OneNote on my laptop. My observation notes focused on capturing overall activities as well class discussions, student questions and interactions with each other and their teacher. I noted student behavior to consider students' levels of engagement in their class. During class if either the student or teacher spoke with me, I responded, however, I did not seek to actively become involved in the class discussion. In addition, I would speak with the students before class as they usually would say hello, ask questions or engage with me in some way.

Perth High School observations

To conduct the observations in Perth, I followed a similar procedure to Larton's process. I first approached the school district's assistant superintendent who was introduced to me by a University of Winnipeg professor. We met in Winnipeg in late July and I shared my research project with him. He arranged for me to meet with the other assistant superintendent the following day. During this second meeting, I shared my project with the assistant superintendent

¹⁸ These forms were also available in English and Spanish.

and he provided with me insights into the school district's beliefs and values. He also took me on a tour of the school district including the high school where I would be conducting my observations. In late August of 2014, the Superintendent approved my research project. Subsequently, I emailed the high school principal an outline of my project and requested permission to observe in the high school. Once approved, the principal contacted the high school civics teachers. Three teachers agreed to allow me to observe in their classrooms provided that the students' families also approved. In September of 2014, I presented my research projects in the teachers' three classes. As in Larton, I explained the project, what I would be doing while observing their classes, the ways I would protect their privacy and gave students a chance to ask questions. I then gave the students the IRB forms¹⁹ with an envelope for the teachers to collect the forms as they were returned.

Two of the three classes agreed to have me observe them and thus I followed a similar observation procedure as in Larton. I began observing both classes in October of 2014. In total, I conducted 15 observations in each class. In Perth, the classrooms were arranged in groups of desks so I would sit at the table with other students taking notes on my laptop. As in Larton, I did not actively seek to become involved but did respond to the students and teachers if they engaged me. Since I was sitting with the students, I spent more time speaking with the students during group work activities.

Reflective writing

After the second interview, I gave the students a notebook in which they responded to a series of prompts regarding their own identity, feelings of belonging, places that they felt safe

¹⁹ The forms were available in German, Russian, Tagalog and Spanish.

(see Appendix H). The goal of the reflective writing piece was to help the students reflect on their experiences in the community, school and family. These were topics that we had explored during our interviews and as the interviews were drawing to a close, I had the students complete the reflective writing so that it provided them with time for the students to revisit the questions we discussed and reflect on our discussions and their experiences. Recognizing that the students were sometimes English language learners, I encouraged them to write as much or as little as they would like and to write in their home language if they could convey ideas easier in that language. I took photos of their responses so that I could return their journal to them. We then talked about their responses during our third interview as a reflection tool. I uploaded their journal responses to Nvivo and used that as another source of data.

Analysis of Data

Analysis of the data occurred in two cycles. Immediately after the interviews and observations, I wrote memos that documented my reactions to the interviews, events that surprised me or student reactions. I also included some potential themes that I had heard from other students. Once the interviews were transcribed, I read through the interviews. These first readings would allow me to develop additional questions for the second and third interviews to expand on what the students were thinking. Once the interviews were complete, I began a systematic line by line coding of the data. I began the data analysis with some deductive codes based on my theoretical framework and my research questions. These codes included codes for citizenship, belonging, school, and teachers. Within these codes, there were subcodes that are listed in Table 4. These subcodes were based on the interview protocols which were based on the theoretical framework. While I had developed these codes prior to beginning my research, I

borrowed from grounded theory as I thought it important to develop codes based on themes that emerged from the data. In this way, I allowed the patterns I found to generate new codes. Some of

Table 4. List of Deductive Codes and Sub-codes

Master Code	Sub-codes
Belonging	Desire to belong Not wanting to belong * Thin sense of belonging *
Citizenship	Civic activities Definition Good citizen characteristics Learning Responsibilities Rights Role Models
Schools	Classes Home country school experiences * Larton High School * Negative experiences Perth High School * Positive experiences
Teachers	Attitude towards immigrant students Role in transition Teaching style

* Indicated a code that was generated inductively rather than deductively as initial coding occurred

these codes related to the deductive codes. For example during the interviews in Larton, I realized that one student did not want to belong to the school or the Larton community. This realization generated a question if other students have similar experiences. Therefore, I created a code that allowed me to keep track of this unexpected reaction by some students. Additionally, as I read through the data I realized having a code for the different schools as well as for parts of the data where students discussed their home school experiences would be important. Other codes that I developed inductively fell into the category of descriptive, in vivo, and emotion coding. In vivo codes came from the interviews and were short phrases or words from the interviews I conducted (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2013). For example, when the students talked about leaving Larton or Perth, one justification they would give would be that there was “nothing to do”. This

allowed for the students' voice to remain a part of the analysis process which I found important to continue to honor their words and ideas in this analysis. I also employed descriptive coding which "assigns labels to data" that eventually "provide[d] an inventory of topics" (Miles et al., 2013, p. 74). I used this code to demarcate data that I thought would be important to categorize. Lastly, I also generated emotion coding capturing the feelings that participants shared with me over the course of the interviews (Miles et al., 2013). Some of these labels included feeling powerless and being isolated. I chose to specifically examine the data for emotions that the students mentioned because of the evocative nature of feelings of belonging and I anticipated that students would use emotional language to discuss their experiences in places where they felt included or excluded. It is important to note that some parts of the data were simultaneously coded when the "data's content suggest[ed] multiple meanings" thus justifying the multiple codes (Miles et al., 2013, p. 81). Through the initial line by line coding process, I added codes as new themes emerged from the data and this resulted in 45 codes (for the coding list see Appendix I).

Prior to starting the second cycle of coding, I focused my attention and read each of the students' three interviews to understand their specific thoughts about citizenship and belonging as these concepts are the focus of this dissertation. I wrote up analytic memos for each student to document their thinking around belonging and citizenship separately. In the memos, I integrated students' responses to the ICCS survey and reflective writing as well as from own memos about their interviews. In the memos, I looked for patterns, similarities and difference between their understanding and others participants (for an example memo see Appendix J). These memos allowed me to holistically reexamine the students' words across all three interviews and gave new insights after having disassembled the data during the first coding cycle.

After completing this process, I transitioned to second cycle data analysis at which time I reviewed the initial codes. As the goal of second cycle coding is to "develop a coherent metasynthesis of the data corpus" (Saldana, 2009, p. 207), I reexamined the initial coding list for

codes that no longer fit the data whether because the codes were “redundant”, marginal or there were better way of describing the phenomena being captured in the code (Lewins and Silver, 2007, p. 100 as cited in Saldana, 2009, p. 207). For example, the code “unity” initially arose out of three students’ interviews; however, the code for “unity” did not become a pattern that other students discussed. Further, once I re-read the data in the code, it became clear that it fit theoretically well under the “citizenship” and “community” category as one student discussed unity in the context of her community’s divisions, the other two students thought about unity in regards to civic role models and citizenship construction at the national level.

I then turned my attention to the codes that contained large amounts of data such as belonging, citizenship, schools, classes, and teachers. I analyzed these codes making sure that the data fit in these codes. Once I felt satisfied that the data fit these categories, I again borrowed from grounded theory to use pattern coding which helped me “identify emergent themes...[that] pull[ed] together a lot of materials into a more meaningful and parsimonious unit of analysis” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 69). After having identified emergent themes from the initial codes, I used axial coding to interrogate how the concepts of interest, belonging and citizenship, fit together. To look at these different concepts, I reviewed my coding for both concepts. I began looking for intersections and through analytic memoing came to understand how the concepts overlapped in the students’ understanding of individuals who helped them feel a sense of belonging and also exhibited the characteristics of good citizenship. This understanding was documented in an analytic memo and was brought together with the help of Figure 2 that illustrated the overlap between the individuals that students saw as good citizens and those individuals who helped develop their sense of belonging. The figure and understandings will be fully developed in the third findings chapter, which specifically examines the intersections of belonging and citizenship.

Figure 2. The Interconnections Between Student' Belonging and their Understanding of



Ethical Concerns

Whenever working with people during qualitative research, researchers must concern themselves with how they will protect their participants' private information and handle the myriad of ethical issues that arise in a qualitative study. In this section, I discuss the different steps I took to ensure the confidentiality of my students and teachers as well as the districts that I worked with. Particularly since I was working with immigrant students whose immigrant status may make them particularly vulnerable, I took multiple steps to ensure the confidentiality of my participants. First throughout the dissertation process, I used pseudonyms for all participants and locations. Given that the schools and school districts have been grappling with this rapid demographic change and are located in small cities districts, I chose not to disclose the locations

of my research so as to protect the identities of my participants from potential political or professional repercussions.

Secondly, once participants indicated their interest in the study, I provided consent forms (see appendix B) in both English and if appropriate in their families' home language. These consent forms explained the amount of time they would need to participate in the study which allowed for them to make informed decisions about their participation (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). I met with parents if they had concerns regarding the research process. I ensured that both the parents and students consented to the research process and I continued to check in with the students prior to each interview to give them the opportunity to reconsider their involvement in the study (Legard, Keegan, & Ward, 2003). In addition, I spoke to the students in a private setting such as an empty classroom in the community center in Larton and a study room in the library in Perth. I was cognizant that some of the questions of about belonging and immigration might raise some feelings of discomfort and so throughout the interviews I paid attention to the students' body language as well as other cues that they might be uncomfortable. This sensitivity to the students' concerns helped me recognize when a student wanted to stop talking but out of potential concerns for disappointing me did not end the interview themselves. Therefore, I offered students opportunities to stop talking as well as to end the interview if they felt uncomfortable. I also did not press students for answers if they seemed reluctant or at a loss for words (Kvale, 1996; Legard et al., 2003). Additionally, I did not explicitly ask about the students' immigration status. This decision to avoid questions around their immigration status was deliberately made to protect students. If they chose to disclose their immigration status, I would keep it private and not use it in my research. By leaving the decision to disclose that information to the student, it gave them the discretionary authority whether to disclose or conceal their immigration status. Lastly, all materials related to the participants (ex. transcripts, reflective writing and surveys) were kept in a

private locations with password protection. In these ways, I protected the identities of my participants and the school districts I worked in.

Issues of Trustworthiness

In this section, I will address the reliability and validity of this study, which will help to substantiate the findings of this research. Within validity, qualitative researchers must contend with both internal and external validity also known as generalizability. Internal validity “refers to the correctness or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation, or other sort of account” (Maxwell, 2004, p. 106). External validity or generalizability concerns itself with “the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations” (Merriam, 2002a, p. 28). Lastly, reliability seeks to examine the extent to which my findings can be replicated by others. In this section, I will address each concern and the steps I took to ensure that my study met those considerations.

Internal validity

As Maxwell (2004) and others point out and with whom I agree, qualitative research is interpreted through myself as a researcher, thus my unique lens of viewing the world will influence how I understand the data in this study (Merriam, 2002b). While I influence the interpretation of the data, I took several steps to ensure that my own biases did not compromise the creditability of my interpretations of the data. First, to more fully understand my own assumptions and beliefs around political socialization and belonging, I wrote a memo that allowed me to reflect on my positionality as a researcher and child of two immigrants. I reflected

on my own political socialization and immigrant history and how this may influence my thinking about others' processes.

Secondly, I gathered a multiple forms of data that allowed me to triangulate my findings. That is, the different methods employed in this study which included document analysis, observations of classrooms, teacher and student interviews, reflective writing and surveys allowed me to examine my questions through multiple data sources. These multiple sources of evidence “reduces the risk of the chance associations and systematic biases due to a specific method, and allows a better assessment of the generality of the explanations that one develops” (Maxwell, 2004, p. 112). Triangulation provided a primary strategy to ensure that my findings are credible.

Thirdly, in my data collection in Larton, I had the opportunity to spend an intensive amount of time in the field. From late January till late July of 2014, I spent almost every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday in the Larton community whether observing classes, working at the community center or attending civic events. This time in the community allowed me to interact with many individuals informally and formally and provided valuable data on the workings of the community (Maxwell, 2004). I did not have the same opportunity to spend as much time in Perth but the other procedures remained in place to help ensure the internal validity of the findings.

External validity

Many qualitative researchers have questioned the extent to which external validity or generalizability is an appropriate consideration for qualitative researchers. For this comparative exploratory case study, I have worked within the parameters of bounded cases of two new immigrant destinations. The students were not randomly selected nor are they necessarily representative of the population of the whole even within the sites of the two case studies.

Therefore the goal of generalizability as conceived by quantitative researchers is not applicable to this research. However, as Yin points out “case studies, like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes” (2003, p. 10). Thus I have sought to generate a theory that may be extended to other settings as deemed appropriate by other researchers and readers. Firestone (1993) calls this case-by-case transfer or user generalizability as Merriam (2002a) discusses it. Thus I hope to provide through the depths of my data insight into how immigrant students experience a sense of belonging in their schools and how this shared sense of structural and social forces shape their political socialization (Seidman, 1998, pp. 44–45).

Reliability

As reliability is concerned with the ability of others to replicate my results, it will be difficult in qualitative research to have such replication occur perfectly since this depends in part on the relationship I established with the participants and my own decision-making processes. Therefore it matters more for qualitative researchers more that “results are consistent with the data collected” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 288 as cited in Merriam, 2002a, p. 27) To that end, I did take several precautions to help ensure reliability of my findings and explain how I arrived at my results (Dey, 1993, p. 259). First, triangulation supports not only the internal validity of my findings but also the reliability of my findings as multiple data points show how I arrived at the results. Secondly, through memos I kept throughout the dissertation process, I documented my thinking, initial feelings, hunches, and decision points. These memos have become an audit trail which provides a “running record” of my work on this dissertation (Merriam, 2002a, p. 27).

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. First, given the difference in time allocated to data collection in Larton versus Perth, the saturation of data did not necessarily happen in Perth as I felt it had in Larton. Given limited time, I visited Perth for a total five times with each visit lasting four to five days. Therefore, my familiarity with Perth, its culture and civic groups was less than in Larton where my extended visits in the community allowed me to get to know the town well. I did, however, collect the same types of data from both towns and therefore I had access to same diversity of data but it would have been enhanced had I had the time and opportunity to spend more time in the Perth community.

Further, given the time constraints, my limited knowledge of and access to community venues, I recruited students in Perth from within the school setting. Thus, I relied on a teacher to help with the recruitment process. This was necessary because of the reticence of many immigrant students who do not necessarily feel as if they have important contributions to share. Ms. Lehrer, this teacher who was a trusted figure helped the students feel that they did have something worthwhile to share. However, by virtue of the relationship that these students had with this teacher, they all had a stronger connection to the school than the students in Larton did. I recruited the Larton students from the community center after having developed a relationship with them independent of other adults. Therefore, my findings regarding the Perth school culture and climate might have been more positively tinged than the Larton students who did not have the same connections to their school. Had I anticipated the difference in collection procedures, I would have revised my data collection process in Larton to include students who were more involved in the school thus speaking to similar populations of students. Further, while the two communities share similar immigration history and patterns there were some notable differences that might influence the students' connections to their school and community. First, the high

school in Perth with approximately 2000 students is smaller than in Larton, which has more than 3000 students. The size of high schools can and does influence the overall climate of the schools. Thus while the students' feelings of belonging and the effects of this belonging has on their political socialization may still hold theoretically, it is important to realize these differences when examining the different school policies and how it may have shaped students' feelings of belonging in their respective schools.

Since my interviews were conducted in English, I could not necessarily include students whose English proficiency were limited. I could only speak with only students who had developed a sufficient command of English to ensure that we could understand each other. Even with this consideration, we occasionally still had to use Google translate to check our understanding of a word or phrase. Given these limitations, I was still able to speak to a range of immigrant students with a diverse set of experiences. Thus, the theory that this study seeks to explore benefited from immigrants who came from a variety of countries at various points in their lives. Finding commonalities across these differences suggest that the theory developed in the findings might hold explanatory power of the role belonging plays in helping to shape immigrant students' political development.

Chapter 5

Immigrant Students Define Belonging

Introduction

The students of Perth and Larton defined belonging similarly. These definitions aligned with previous findings about factors that develop feelings of belonging. Given the similarities, it makes sense to share the students' definition of belonging together in this first findings chapter. The initial research question asked: "How do immigrant students define belonging and where do they find places of belonging?" Since the students experienced belonging in different contexts and settings, the second part of the question "where do they find places of belonging" will be explored in chapter six.

This chapter examines the students' definitions of belonging as well as examples that they gave to explain what it meant to belong to a group. Sometimes students offered these examples in lieu of an actual definition but the examples aligned with the feelings and characteristics offered by other students. Overall, the students suggested that belonging to a group meant being known, respected, and cared for. They shared similarities with others in their groups, and therefore, there was an expectation of common values, hobbies and backgrounds. Many students also expected the relationships to be reciprocal.

The chapter will first explore the students' discussions of the feelings and characteristics involved in feeling a sense of belonging. These characteristics include being treated equally, being known and recognized, feeling comfortable and having similar backgrounds. These traits do not operate in isolation but for ease of interpretation, the chapter will unpack them in separate sections. The second part of the chapter will share students' examples of the various communities

that they belong to. These different discussions help illuminate how the students thought about belonging.

The last section of this chapter will discuss the concept I have named a thin sense of belonging. Students used this concept to explain their relationship to places where they spent a lot of time but did not feel a strong sense of belonging to. The students' claims of being part of a place they did not find a sense of belonging or even like as was the case in Larton surprised me. More surprising still was students who claimed this thin sense of belonging to places, which exhibited all the requisite characteristics of belonging such as in the Perth schools, which the students found to be a place where respect, kindness and caring occurred frequently.

There are two key findings in this chapter:

- 1) Students described belonging in both the feelings elicited from them, which largely aligned with the literature on belonging. These feelings included feeling comfortable, accepted, known, trusted and cared for. When students gave examples of belonging in relationships to the groups that they were a part of, these examples illustrated the same characteristics of belonging as those defined by the other students.
- 2) Many students relied on a thin sense of belonging to maintain a feeling of connection even when the students' experiences with the school and community did not warrant feelings of belonging. This thin sense of belonging allowed them to justify and claim their right to being somewhere even when the people and policies of that place did not warrant a feeling of belonging.

Feelings of Belonging

In discussing the concept of belonging, students focused on four main feelings: being treated equally, being known and recognized, being comfortable and sharing similarities. Through these discussions, it became clear that students also expected from groups where they found belonging there was also a feeling of trust and a sense of reciprocity. Therefore, students felt that they could trust the group with their personal lives, feelings and histories as well as expect members of the group to be mutually supportive. The following section provides examples of the students' thinking around these different concepts.

Being equal

Many students discussed the importance of being treated as an equal. While some did not explicitly discuss this in their definitions of belonging, it came out in their discussions of places that they felt a sense of belonging. Other students, however, equated feeling a sense of belonging to a group with being perceived as "equal" or the "same". While these students did not emphasize the other aspects of belonging, to feel like another person's equal meant that they needed to be known and accepted by the communities with whom they felt a sense of belonging. Being known meant that they had experiences with others and felt comfortable around them even though they may differ from each other.

Ayesha, one of the few Muslim students in Larton from the Middle East North Africa (MENA)²⁰ region of the world, explained that belonging to a community meant that you "feel so comfortable. You know what I mean? They don't really judge you for like [being] different, you know. I feel like we're all the same" (personal communication, 6/10/14). The absence of

²⁰ As a reminder, I use this identification as there were few immigrants from Ayesha's country but a larger population of MENA folks so this prevents her from being identifiable.

judgement and acceptance by the group to her meant that despite being different from other members of the group, she still felt treated equally and fairly. This feeling of being the same as others was important for Ayesha who in eighth grade decided to wear a hijab. While she chose to do so, she felt self-conscious and uncomfortable particularly in places like the Larton Area High School. She shared that when she first started wearing the hijab “Everybody just looked at me. At first, I did care if people looked at me. I used to get nervous and everything, but I never got bullied for it” (Ayesha, personal communication, 6/10/14). Though not bullied for wearing the hijab, she did feel different under the constant scrutiny of others at the school. While working at the Unity Project’s community center, she felt treated the same and this helped her feel accepted and comfortable even though she differed religiously from other community volunteers.

Students in Perth echoed Ayesha’s emphasis on being treated the same as the other students. Isaac, another seventeen year old student from MENA, explained that belonging meant “just being the same like everybody like we’re all the same. There’s no better and less. We’re all the same...Equal” (personal communication, 10/17/14). Being equal to others mattered to Isaac who discussed how nervous he felt when he first arrived in Perth because he did not speak fluent English. Therefore working with Ms. Lehrer in her English as an Additional Language (EAL) class, he found comfort and a sense of belonging being with other students who like him were learning a new language and had just moved to the area. As he explains:

Like [school] was really different. Like my English wasn’t the best, but no one judged me for it. I met Miss Lehrer and... she taught me stuff. She helped me with my English and I really liked the idea that we have a classroom from like...like all the students are from different countries and we’re all in the same level, so we’re like one big family or whatever... Because like in that classroom, we’re all like the same level, whatever. So we’re all friends. But when you go outside of that classroom and you go to like to other classes, they’re not with you.

(personal communication 10/17/14)

By being on equal footing with the other students, Isaac felt a sense of comfort and absence of judgement that he did not find in other classes where he worried about his language and worked hard to understand what occurred in those classes. While this feeling of comfort for Ayesha and Isaac centered on being accepted by their peers, other students explicitly acknowledged that to be comfortable with their peers, they also had to feel like they were known and recognized.

Being known and recognized

Many students talked about the importance of being known and recognized by groups they belonged to. By knowing those in the groups as well as being known by others, the students stressed the freedom it granted them to be authentically themselves. Thus, the students felt that they could comfortably express themselves trusting that this group would understand them.

Belonging to a group of friends meant that students felt known and understood. These feelings were expressed by Rebecca, a 17-year-old German student in Perth, who explained that her friends knew where she came from and how she interacted and she felt similarly about her friend group. Despite having moved 13 years ago to Perth from Germany, Rebecca still felt nervous speaking in class because of fear that her English was not fluent as native Canadians. Many of her friends were also immigrants who spoke with accents and felt nervous about their language abilities. Therefore, this reciprocity allowed for her to be more open and trusting with her friends than she would be with others. As she explains below:

Rebecca: Like when you belong in to a friend's group or something like where you're...you know each other and you understand everybody. I think that's belonging.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay. So, you know each other. You understand each other. What, what do you need to know to understand a person?

Rebecca: Like how they are and where they come from and what they like and, or if they are easy going like how do you talk to them, right?

Interviewer: Right.

Rebecca: They understand jokes and stuff. Yeah...I think it's always like if you have a group that you belong to, you're way more open like you can share everything...

(personal communication 10/17/14)

Feeling a sense of belonging to a group allowed Rebecca to be vulnerable and trust that she could share herself freely because she felt understood by the group and she in turn understood them. This understanding was based on knowledge of where they came from and appropriate ways to interact with each other.

In Larton, Gigi, a 17-year-old nursing student from the Dominican Republic, found a similar group of support from her peers in her nursing assistance program where she felt both known and recognized. These feelings of recognition allowed her to feel comfortable and connected with her cohort of nursing students and their teacher more than she did in classes unrelated to her program. These feelings extend Isaac's and Ayesha's focus on being equal by expecting to know and understand and be known and understood by others. As she explained in the following excerpt:

Gigi: Well, yeah, I feel like I belong because you know there are all the students there, like all my classmates there so I feel like---I do, like not all, not everybody, like, I guess you could say everybody because, you know, since we were all close so yeah...

Interviewer: Okay, that makes sense. So how do you feel walking into your nursing class and is it different than walking into a class that you really don't know?

Gigi: Yeah, it feels like--well, like all my classes I know everybody in Nursing. I mean, I'm used to it. So, I'm just like, okay. Like, this is, this is part of me so...in just a group.

(Gigi, personal communication, 5/20/14).

While Gigi struggled to learn the language and the new schooling system when she first arrived in Larton, she spent the majority of her high school career with a cohort of students studying to become nursing assistants. Therefore, she took many classes with these students and felt that they knew and allowed her to be herself as she said: “Like in, like in nursing, you know I feel myself, you know, and it’s like "Oh, I’m like, I’m comfortable with them" like, you know, and so, I know--and because of that, I don’t know, it feels like different” (Gigi, personal communication, 5/20/14). She notes that these other students are part of who she is and that the other students know and allow her to be herself making her feel comfortable and accepted by the group.

Another 17-year-old German-Mennonite student from Paraguay, Michael used very similar language in discussing feeling a sense of belonging to his friend group in Perth. Like Gigi, as a construction major, Michael spent most of his school time with the same group of peers and friends. They took classes and worked together to build a meeting building as part of their senior year project. This building involved being away from school with this group of friends. He, therefore, developed a good rapport with his peers whom he considers friends and whom he draws on when defining belonging in our conversation as seen below.

Michael: Belonging to a group, everything that fits in you get along with everybody and they accept who you are. Friends that they will help you out if you need the help. Of course, it makes the awkward noise if they make the joke but you are funny, everybody gets that.

Interviewer: So when you say that they accept who you are...what are they accepting?

Michael: There's a lot of guys that can speak German, right? And there's guys from Germany and Russia and Paraguay and there's from Winnipeg, even if they're born in Winnipeg, we just get along that's fine.

Interviewer: Why do you get along so well?

Michael: I guess we share common interests, I suppose, like in construction, all my buddies there.

Interviewer: You all have some kind of common interest?

Michael: Yeah.

(personal communication 10/16/14)

In this exchange, Michael expresses his comfort with this group of friends who accept him for who he is. Even though there might be good-natured ribbing that accompanies this acceptance, there is also an expectation that they would help each other if ever needed. This feeling of comfort and acceptance is predicated upon them all fitting together which goes back to feeling equal with each other. It also speaks to a sense of trust and reciprocity between the members of the group that they have shared interests despite their different backgrounds.

Being comfortable

Jacob echoed Gigi's and Michael's sentiments regarding feeling comfortable. Jacob, however, had moved to Larton after having lived in Honduras with his German-American mother and Honduran-born German father. As one of the few students in the Larton study whose parents had both been college educated, he felt very different from his peers in the Larton Area High School and his definition of belonging came out of his thinking about his family for whom he had a strong affinity. He defined belonging by saying that "It's where you feel most comfortable I think. When you think of home, that's where you think of as where you belong. Where you're accepted by the people, where you feel just comfortable" (personal communication, 5/1/2014). Yet, his definition reinforces what others had pointed out, namely the importance of feeling accepted by those around you. His statement implies that to belong, others need to know who you are to fully accept you. Further feeling comfortable is another important ingredient in his understanding of what it means to belong. He discusses home being a place that he feels like he belongs. Interestingly, no other students discuss this same feeling of belonging with his home and his family. This perhaps indicates that for many in the study who had recently left behind home

countries where they felt at home with many important family members. Others might not feel comfortable in their homes, as their families may be less stable.

Being cared for and recognized

A recently arrived 18-year-old Filipino senior at the high school, Miriam continues the comfort and acceptance that some of the other students consider important and extends it to include feeling cared for and recognized by the group. As a recent immigrant, Miriam has had difficulty transition to Canada. She found it challenging to make friends because she has felt like she is rebuilding her identity as she shared:

Moving here actually kind of deteriorated our [her mom's and hers] confidence. We have to start from zero....yeah, it's overwhelming and I'm so attached with my friends at home so the first few months here, it has been so hard for me, I've been staying only in Ms. Lehrer's room and I just talk to few people. Because I'm so shy and I just isolated myself....[but] it's not like you wake up and you're fine. It will just take time.

(personal communication, 10/16/14).

So while she had a hard time making friends in Canada in part because of her feelings of insecurity, it also explains the importance that she placed on feeling wanted, recognized and cared for. As she explains in her definition of belonging

Miriam: Belonging...it's like you really, in the group, you receive the feeling that you are feeling wanted, you are feeling recognized.

Interviewer: Recognize in what way?

Miriam: Like there are actually some groups that you are in the group but they don't really appreciate or really notice your presence.

Interviewer: That's interesting. So, you can still be a part of the group like theoretically, when you went to the Asian table, you ... sat but you weren't recognized by the table so that's what you're talking about? How does it feel when you feel that sense of belonging to that group?

Miriam: Of course there's actually a boost of self-esteem because if you feel like you're being loved and cared and being recognized, it just feel good to be yourself.

(personal communication 10/16/14)

In this exchange we discussed an incident that Miriam had shared where she had felt ignored by a group of Asian students who consistently ate lunch together (hence being known as the Asian table). Feeling ignored had deeply hurt Miriam who already felt isolated from others and had not expected to be completely ignored by a group of her fellow Asians. Her definition of belonging which emphasized being recognized and wanted built on these experiences.

Feeling this sense of belonging to groups that knew and accepted you seemed to imply a sense of care that Bianca another student made explicit as she discussed her feelings of belonging to her family. Bianca, a 16-year-old Dominican teenager in Larton, described the sense of belonging she felt when at her grandmother's house in the Dominican Republic by saying "I feel like they care about me because they always told me how I feel ... how I am doing if I am good or not... and I feel more comfortable with them" (personal communication, 5/22/14). Her family communicated to her a sense of belonging by consistently asking how she was feeling. These questioning check-ins showed they cared for her and allowed her to feel like she was a wanted and important part of the group. She did not feel this same sense of connections with her nuclear family with whom she lived. She found that her busy parents rarely checked-in with her and did not provide her with that feeling of being recognized and cared for.

Being similar in background

Lastly several students suggested that to belong to a group meant that they shared the same background as the group. Isaiah, like many of the Larton participants, moved a lot as a child and this mobility may have contributed to his understanding of belonging, which he defined as sharing the same background and being accepted for who you are. When asked what it meant to belong somewhere, he responded, “They got to have the same background” (Isaiah, personal communication, 6/10/14). This background meant that you shared similarities to the other person and therefore you were a known person. He also commented that belonging meant feeling accepted for who you are. Thus this meant that others had to know him/her before s/he could belong to a group.

As a 14-year-old Filipino boy, Andrew expressed a concern that when he first arrived in Perth he would have trouble making new friends. However, he found Perth “beautiful and people are good, kind, friendly. I thought it was hard to make friends but it's just like one day, I have a bunch of friends in different grades” (personal communication 10/16/14). He defined belonging as a

Interviewee: To me, it's like...what does you call that...it's like dividing into groups.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: For example, I'm an Asian, you belong here. But actually in here, it's like all of the people belong to Canada.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: It's like that.

Interviewer: So what happens—how do you feel when you belong to a group?

Interviewee: It's pretty good. Most of all, if you're treated equally, it's more of a good thing.

(personal communication 10/16/14).

Through this quote we can see that Andrew wrestles with the concept of belonging. First he affiliates himself with the Asian contingent but as he kept talking he realized that he felt that he was also part of the Canadian community. Interestingly Andrew's definition of belonging brought in a sense of belonging to an ethnic group as well as a country. This overlap of belonging and political socialization will be further explored in later chapters but it does the intertwined nature of the students' experiences in school and their communities. This interesting discussion of being in groups based on shared backgrounds whether ethnic, religious or more on shared interests fits with previous literature around belonging based on a shared set of commonalities (Theron et al., 2011).

Throughout these discussions, the students emphasize different points of belonging. However, these different aspects all function jointly to create a sense of connection for the students. As seen in the transcript, Andrew also stresses the importance of being treated fairly by his different groups. As discussed in the next section some students gave examples of feeling belonging rather than defining it. These examples help illustrate the concepts discussed above and further our understanding of how students define belonging.

Belonging in relation to groups

Many students defined belonging as either being or becoming part of a group. Therefore, their definitions of belonging were not as clear as above but rather through the conversation with these students, a definition of belonging emerged. Interestingly, while these students explained their definition of belonging through examples, the feelings that these groups elicited from the students were similar to the explicitly stated feelings above.

When asked to consider what it meant to belong, Charlie, a 14-year-old Dominican freshman at Larton, began with an example from his time in New Jersey where he said "Like in

New Jersey, I was always in community stuff. I think I like it because you're always busy, you got something to do. You're like, you make more friends and stuff like that. More sport is more stuff, more friends" (personal communication, 6/5/14). Charlie equated being involved with belonging to the community. Through his involvement, he made friends thus giving him the sense of being known and comfortable as discussed by other students above. Given his full days in New Jersey, Charlie felt that he had many friends and this meant that there was care for others, acceptance and support. He noted that on his old teams "When I used to be around basketball people there, they used to care about each other" (personal communication, 6/5/14). He continues saying "No, it's not that [having a place to play is good], it's just like, there is people in New Jersey that, like I told you, I [went] to Hoops of America and the coaches there, there is always someone to help you out in basketball" (personal communication, 6/5/14). Thus the groups that he was involved with provided him with more than just a space to play basketball and be involved; it gave him access to a group of friends and adults who supported and cared for him.

Another freshman girl in Larton, Maria, defined belonging as "combin[ing] into a group" (personal communication, 6/12/14). When asked to explain what that means she gave an example of working with a group of students on a project that allowed all students to excel. This suggests a feeling of being comfortable and contributing each members' unique strengths as she explains "Well like so you have classes like we're doing group work, like I combine with them and we all together and then we're like all of us each get grades on how we worked together and we like...someone could do something and another person can do another thing so it makes everybody by doing one part of like a project or something" (personal communication, 6/12/14). By each student doing his/her part, the project succeeded. This vision of belonging translated into her experiences both in and out of school. As a dancer, she participated in the high school dance club and became a leader because of her prior dancing experiences. She did not seek out this role but welcomed it as she explains

“I get shy all of a sudden [around new people] so we made a circles to dance, so I was shy to do that and everyone knew me in dance club they called me in so I was like so nervous. So I went in and I was doing some hip hop moves and then they were like she’s really good, and I was like yeah [I have been] dancing for four years. And they go wow, so they put me in the group so they made me to have to lead some of the groups. So I was like really excited about it”

(personal communication, 6/12/14).

This process of joining the dance team explained how she joined a group and began to feel a sense of belonging. At first, her feelings of shyness prevented her from fully expressing herself but with her peer encouragement, she showed her own unique skills and talents that she had worked on for four years so she not only joined the group but became a leader. Thus as others showed her kindness and recognized her talents, she came to feel a sense of belonging to the group which helped her feel a more general sense of belonging to the Larton Area High School.

Veronica defined belonging as “being part of something...Like, I think everyone needs somebody. Like, anyone could be alone like, “Okay. I could be alone. I can handle it.” But, everyone needs somebody....Like we have to be whole. Like, we are to stick together” (personal communication, 5/20/14). When further probed what made her feel part of something, she discussed how she had to feel known and trusted by the group. She pointed out the importance of feeling known to her group when she explained how she felt when she visited the Dominican Republic where not only did she know everyone, they knew her and her family. Further she explained that being part of the group meant being trusted, she pointed out that as a volunteer at the community center she felt that Rebecca and John, the directors of the Unity Project’s Community Center, trusted her. They demonstrated their trust in her by asking her to occasionally substitute for a teacher in the after-school homework help program. This act indicated to her that

the community center leaders knew her capabilities of effectively leading the homework sections, which made her feel both good about herself and as a valued part of the community center.

Thin Sense of Belonging

The concept of a thin sense of belonging emerged in my data as a way that many of my students would respond to my questions about their feelings of belonging to their school and community. The pattern of conversation would usually follow a flow where after discussing their experiences in LAHS and Larton, I would ask about their definition of belonging and then ask them more specifically if they felt a sense of belonging to their school and Larton. Initially, I had expected the students to answer negatively because of their various negative experiences in the school and community. However, many of the students would reply that they were a part of the school or some variation of this answer. They justified this answer saying that they attended school every day, followed the rules and therefore were part of the school. Being a part of the school, however, was notably different from belonging to a place as evidenced by the students' strong feelings of belonging to places like the community center in Larton or their families in Perth where they felt at home free to be themselves and felt known, respected and cared for.

Christopher's definition of belonging offered an insight into what it meant to have a thin sense of belonging. Christopher defined belonging as being a part of "it". Being a part of it did not however include an obligation to participate in various activities. As he explained in the following interview excerpt, his being present at the school was enough for him feel a sense of belonging.

Interviewer: What does it mean to belong to a community for you?

Interviewee: Being part of it.

Interviewer: Being part of it. And so when you talked about being part of your high school, it's because you're there.

Interviewee: Yeah, I'm there. I mean I don't participate in clubs and stuff, but I'm part of it.

(Christopher, personal communication, 6/24/14).

He felt a part of his school even though admittedly he did not participate in activities at school. He reasoned that it was enough for him to be in the school doing his work for him to belong to the school. While he felt that he was a part of the school, he noted that the teachers did not care about the students in the sense that they did not take an interest in their students. So while Christopher would like to speak with his teachers and get to know them, he notes that “teachers don't show interest in me like they just do their thing. So, I feel like I'm nobody” (personal communication, 6/24/14). This feeling of being a nobody contrasted to being part of a community particularly from the other definitions of belonging that the other students provided.

The notion that one could be part of the school even though one did not participate in the community was continued by Peter, a 17-year-old senior in Perth, who when asked whether he felt like he belonged to the school he replied in the following way:

Peter: Yeah. I do.

Interviewer: What makes you feel part of it?

Peter: I don't know.

Interviewer: Some of the questions are tricky.

Peter: I don't participate in any activities but I'm a student, I guess so that's kind of...

Interviewer: ...makes you part of it?

Peter: Yeah.

(personal communication 10/17/14)

While Peter felt a part of his school community, he recognized that he did not actively participate in any of the school activities afterschool because as he says “we don't have lots of free time, we have to work from 2 to 10 almost every day so combining hockey and work and school is a bit tricky” (personal communication 10/17/14). While Peter recognizes that because he and his brother (who is part of the “we” in Peter’s above quote) have many commitments he could not be more involved. He also does not feel the strong sense of connection that other students do to their school. Thus, he feels a thinner sense of belonging to the school than others do but he still feels that he can claim that he is part of his school community.

Bianca extended this notion that one could be part of the group but not feel a strong sense of belonging when discussing her relationship to other students in the migrant education program she had attended when she first arrived in Larton from the Dominican Republic. Interestingly, Bianca notes that when she participated in the migrant education program she felt like she was part of the group but still did not feel like she had friends there, which related back to her feelings of loneliness.

Interviewee: I was feel like I was part of the group.

Interviewer: The group?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Did you make friends there?

Interviewee: I talked to them but not like friends....

(Bianca, personal communication, 5/22/14)

This distinction between being part of a group and feeling a sense of belonging came up in other students’ definition. One could be part of a group but not necessarily have friend or feel a sense of belonging to the group. This feeling of being part of a group but not feeling connected or cared for was something that Bianca and other interviewees expressed eloquently time and again.

Charlie's answer to the question of whether he felt a sense of belonging to the LAHS provided another example of this thin sense of belonging. He had just finished explaining how he did not feel cared for by his teachers and he felt the discipline policies of the high school to be harsh and unnecessarily strict. In view of this, his positive feelings of belonging surprised me.

Interviewer: Yeah? You say that so confidently. Tell me why.

Interviewee: Because I am. I mean I go to school, that should just be it. I go to school.

Interviewer: So there you go. You'll go to school, your presence there.

Interviewee: Yeah.

(Charlie, personal communication, 6/5/14)

This feeling that merely being present in a place makes one part of the school community was echoed by another student, Jacob, who when asked whether he felt part of the school community replied "I do and I don't. I don't like to think of myself as part of Larton but I do at the same time because that is my school that I go to so I don't really have to try" (Jacob, personal communication 5/1/14). This desire to distance oneself from Larton while still maintaining the right to be part of the community highlights the notion of a thin sense of belonging where the students did not necessarily have to make themselves known to still claim this feeling of belonging for themselves. The implications of this thin sense of belonging will be further explored in the discussion chapter but sufficed to say that this thin sense of belonging may have a myriad of implications for the students' development of their civic consciousness whose connections with their first public institutions are mercurial and challenging at best. Also, it is important to note that more students in Larton than in Perth shared this thin type of belonging which indicated the differences in students' experiences in the schools in Larton and Perth which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Conclusion

This chapter illustrated how students thought about belonging. Despite their different contexts and lived experiences, the students' definitions of belonging echoed each other's statements. Furthermore while some students chose to stress certain aspects, it became clear that belonging to a group meant being known, respected, and cared for by a group of peers with shared interests. While there were similarities, the differences came from the emphasis that they placed on the different aspects of belonging. The students who felt their identity more in flux like Bianca and Miriam who emphasized being cared for, while other students who felt different because of their religion like Ayesha, the Muslim student in Larton, and language like Isaac, the student from the MENA in Perth emphasized the need to be treated as equals. This highlights that while belonging mattered to all of these students, their life experiences shaped their perceptions and components of belonging.

The chapter also explored the notion of a thin sense of belonging when students sought to assert a connection to a place that they had not developed the deep sense of belonging to which again involved feeling known, respected and cared for. However, as students, they continued to attend school thus they seemed to feel the need to connect in some way to these institutions. The students seemed to use this thin sense of belonging to justify their right to be present in their schools. The need to feel a sense of belonging and a right to be in an institution seemed to be important to the students that even after sharing experiences of racism and discrimination by their teachers in Larton the students still agreed that they were a "part" of the school. Further we see that in the one instance in which a Perth student felt a thin sense of belonging, this came out his lack of a connection to the broader school institution. This was due in part to his many out-of-school commitments which prevented him from getting further involved. He still wanted to claim

his right to be a part of the school though he could not claim the same feeling of belonging that other students had in Perth.

This chapter provides an understanding of how students experienced belonging. The following chapter will examine the places where students felt a sense of belonging. In those places, we see that students felt the sense of connection because they experienced the feelings discussed in this chapter. It also will highlight how policies, structures and individuals can make a difference in students' experiences of belonging in both school and community. As the next chapter will show, the school and communities in Perth and Larton took very different stances towards immigrant students and these differences translated into differing feelings of belonging for the students.

Chapter 6

Schools' Potential as Places of Belonging

Introduction

This chapter will answer the second part of the first research question in Larton and Perth, which was “how do immigrant students define belonging and where do they find places of belonging”? This chapter in particular focuses on how the schools may or may not foster students' feelings of belonging. Research has shown that schools play an important role in developing students' feelings of belonging particularly for adolescent students who developmentally seek to connect with others outside of their families as they explore their identity (Johnson, 2009). Additionally, when students feel like they belong to their schools, they are more likely to persevere in their educational pursuits, have better attitudes towards their schools, and are less likely to engage in anti-social behavior such as drug use and other forms of delinquency (Battistich, Solomon, Kim, Watson, & Schaps, 1995; Faircloth & Hamm, 2005; Osterman, 2000). However, students frequently report neither feeling supported nor a sense of belonging to their schools. Immigrant students in particular are sensitive to the supports that they may or may not receive at schools (Calderon, 1998). Indeed, much research has shown that the deliberate planning for spaces where students feel a sense of belonging can help immigrant students find the sense of connection needed to thrive (Gibson, Gandara, & Peterson Koyama, 2004). This chapter examines the feelings of belonging that the immigrant students in Larton and Perth experienced in their schools.

While most immigrant students in Larton did not feel a sense of belonging to their high school, their reasoning for this lack of belonging reinforces the definitions of belonging and extends the students' thinking about places where they feel a sense of belonging. In discussing

their school, the Larton students often perceived that school officials and teachers treated them unequally. Further, many students noted that they did not feel cared for by their teachers. While some students acknowledged that they learned a lot from their teachers, they did not believe that their teachers engaged with them or cared about their well-being. Nor did the students feel known or recognized. The two students who had connected with caring teachers in Larton felt a stronger sense of connection with the school even as they recognized the problems other students identified. Many students also cited what they perceived as the school's unfair policies as a further source of alienation. The students noted that the restrictive but arbitrarily enforced policies made for a chaotic school where the students often did not feel safe. Additionally, the students did not have access to information that they needed to enroll in appropriate classes, get involved with extracurricular activities, or properly prepare for their post-secondary paths. These frequently reiterated complaints served to reinforce the view that the Larton Area High School did not care for its immigrant students. Particularly, for these newly arrived students their reception in this school did not help foster strong feelings of belonging.

In contrast, many of the students at the Perth High School felt a sense of belonging to their school. They felt that their teachers treated them and other immigrant students fairly. The students believed that their teachers knew and cared for them. Further, the school's policies towards their students conveyed a sense of trust and care. Thus, the students felt safe but not restricted and they had adequate information to get involved in school activities if they so chose as well as enroll in appropriate classes that prepared them for their post-secondary aspirations. The combination of connected and caring teachers with policies that helped the students feel safe led many students to conclude that they belonged at the Perth high school. They overall felt happy to attend their school and felt a sense of belonging there. In the sections below, the students' words will highlight the important role that teachers have as well as how school policy may foster students' feelings of belonging.

By examining the role of these two schools in students' feelings of belonging, the chapter illuminates the conditions that affected their belonging. It shows how students' feelings of belonging to the school were shaped by the adults and policies of the school and highlights the importance of schools in immigrant students' transitions to their new country. The students shared experiences that illustrated the following findings:

- 1) Teachers' responses to the students shaped the students' experiences of schooling such that when students forged caring responsive relationships with teachers, students' feelings of belonging to the school existed even as those same students recognized the myriad of problems in their school such as bullying or the academic failures of many of their peers.
- 2) Policies influenced students' feelings about their relationship with adults and others in the schools. Policies that conveyed a sense of distrust of the students tended to stymie caring relationships with adults and others; therefore, the students felt excluded from their school. Further, when policies were implemented inconsistently, the students resented the policies and the school more.
- 3) Policies that supported the equitable distribution of information mattered for the success of immigrant students' integration in school. When schools created explicit webs of information for the students, the students' transitions to the new schools were easier and they could successfully navigate the myriad of choices they were expected to make.

To further detail the above findings, this chapter will have three sections. The first section will discuss the role of teachers in Larton and Perth separately and conclude with a comparison of the role of teachers in both schools and how they influenced students' feelings of belonging. The second section will focus on the role of policies in shaping students' feelings of belonging and

will follow a similar structure in which the findings from the two schools are discussed separately and then compared across schools. The conclusion of the chapter will discuss the insights gleaned from the roles of teachers and policies on students' feelings of belonging.

Teachers' Roles in Students' Feelings of Belonging

This section examines teachers' roles in helping or hindering students' feelings of belonging in Larton and Perth. In line with previous research, the interviewed students focused on teachers when discussing their schooling experiences indicating the important role that teachers play in shaping students' school experiences. This aligns with a long line of research that shows teachers impact students' school experiences. More recent research has shown that teachers also play a crucial role in supporting the transition and integration of immigrant youth in their new schools (Dabach, 2011).

In both Larton and Perth, teachers factored prominently in students' school experiences. Indeed when teachers treated students equally and showed that they respected, knew and cared for the students, the students indicated greater feelings of belonging – even when they acknowledged problems within the schools. In this section, we will explore how the teachers in Larton and Perth facilitated their immigrant students' integration into their school communities and their feelings of belonging (or not) to the school. Prior to comparing the two schools, the section will first examine how teachers interacted with students at Larton and Perth high schools respectively. The section will conclude with a comparison of the two groups of teachers' actions and their impact on students' feelings of belonging in their schools.

Larton teachers

By way of overview, in Larton, many students commented that their teachers did not seem to care, know or respect their students, components that they identified as important in their definition of belonging. They provided numerous examples of these experiences, which will be surveyed in this section. While some students suggested that their teachers were still effective, other students felt that their teachers' lack of engagement with their students made them mediocre at best. For Gigi and Maria, two Latina students, who had made connections with their Larton teachers, they expressed a greater sense of connection to their school even as they recognized the same problems within their schools that other students discussed including bullying, unequal treatment by staff and teachers, and many students' academic struggles.

A 14-year-old freshman from the Dominican Republic, Charlie captured the sentiments of many of the students in Larton when he suggested that his teachers in Larton did not seem to care about him personally. The teachers focused on students' learning and did not seek to connect with the students or demonstrate care for them. Having lived in several different states in the United States, he used his previous schooling experience in New Jersey to illustrate the lack of care exhibited by his Larton teachers. While he liked many aspects of his schooling experiences, Charlie noted that the feeling of care was absent in his teachers. As he explains it:

Charlie: Only thing I don't like about Larton is, sometimes like, let's see, well, I kind of like everything but it's just the problem with the teachers. It's not the same like in New Jersey, like teachers, they teach you like, not the same but, if you feel like, their view is like their son.

Interviewer: In New Jersey, they treat you like [a son]?

Charlie: Here it is like, you go up on the board and like, you just don't, I don't know, I learn here more. In New Jersey, I didn't learn like much but they have more like, care for you.

(personal communication, 6/5/14)

Interestingly, Charlie could differentiate his feelings of being cared for and his learning as he noted that he learned less in New Jersey but felt more cared for, and that teachers in his words treated him "like their son". While his Larton teachers did not show the same care, Charlie acknowledged that he learned more in Larton. Charlie's ability to differentiate between the two aspects of his teachers' relationship revealed a high level of awareness and one wonders how Charlie's learning would be augmented if he had felt the same care from his Larton teachers as he did from his New Jersey teachers.

Jacob, on the other hand, did not feel challenged or connected to his teachers whom he described as mediocre and unwilling to help him or other students with questions regarding classwork and homework.

"The teachers are mediocre but I am there with my friends so I was enjoying it... I don't feel that they're [teachers] professional. I really don't feel like they care about their students as much as they should because that's partly because it's such a large school. But they really just don't care about the students. There's one or two that care but for the most part, they don't really care. They don't really try their best at teaching there. It's more focused on getting good grades rather than learning"

(Jacob, personal communication, 5/1/2014)

Interestingly in this excerpt, Jacob suggests that part of the reason that teachers do not care about their students as much is because they work in such a large school. He notes that the emphasis seems to be on earning good grades rather than learning, which aligns with his feelings that teachers do not care about their students' well-being but rather only the grades that they earn.

Even when students want help, Jacob suggests that teachers are unwilling to help their students. He describes below how quickly teachers leave the building at the contractual end of the day.

They're very unwilling to stay after school and help because their contract is only till two-forty and then they can leave.... School gets out at two thirty-five so that can give me five minutes to run around to my teachers and ask them for help.... The teachers get out of the school as fast as they can. If you ever see them, they're – zooming [sound effect].

(Jacob, personal communication, 5/1/2014)

Interestingly, Jacob was one of the few students involved in extracurricular activities at school like soccer and the Key Club. Therefore, though he enjoyed time with his friends and his afterschool activities, Jacob did not feel like his teachers cared for or knew him nor did he feel like he could get the help he needed from his teachers. He had a stable group of friends and his parents were two of the few college-educated parents in the group of interviewed students thus Jacob had the social capital to realize that his teachers should care and provide more support.

Many of the students indicated that the teachers at Larton Area High School did not know or understand them. Christopher, a high school senior from the Dominican Republic, shared his experiences as a student first in the vocational program and then in the academic track of the high school. Christopher explained that early in his high school career he was interested in getting involved in extracurricular activities but did not know about the many opportunities available to him. As he spent time in school, it became clear to him that the school officials did not care what he did. Since he felt frustrated being a part of a largely lecture-based vocational program, he decided to transfer to the high school. He transferred from the career center to the high school without any guidance from either a teacher or a guidance counselor as to the types of classes to take or the new expectations of him. Christopher shared that he would have been interested in getting to know his teacher but as he explained the “teachers don't show interest in me like they

just do their thing. So, I feel like I'm nobody” (personal communication, 6/24/14). When asked what it means for teachers to do their thing, he replied, “they just stand and talk. That's pretty much it” (Christopher, personal communication, 6/24/14). Students reacted differently to this teaching model as he noted “Some of [the students] just sit there and listen like me but some of them just sit there and talk. They don't really care” (Christopher, personal communication, 6/24/14). Feeling like a nobody, Christopher disengaged from school and instead helped his family and became a basketball coach at a local youth program.

Having arrived in the United State only four years ago from the Dominican Republic, Bianca struggled with the English language and felt frustrated that her teachers did not seem to know her or understand her struggles. While some teachers did try to help her and make sure that she understood the work, she noted that many of her teachers failed to understand that she is still learning both the language and the academic content. As she says:

Interviewee: Sometimes [they help] but sometimes not because I think sometimes they don't help me.

Interviewer: Okay can you give me examples of a time that they helped you and then the times that they didn't help you.

Interviewee: Like some teachers because my history teacher she helped me, and she asked me if I understood something but like other teachers don't do that. They [are] mean sometimes.

Interviewer: Why they're mean?

Interviewee: I don't know because I think personally that they need to understand that I don't know like English as well so you know what I mean.

(Bianca, personal communication, 5/22/14)

Furthermore Bianca found that some of her teachers were racist toward newly immigrated Latina/o students such as herself. She explains that teachers distinguish between those students who speak English and those students who still are learning the language saying:

Interviewee: I feel like sometimes... like I say that the teachers don't understand because of our language and that all immigrant students say that they're racist... Those Americans people are racist because they don't understand you.

Interviewer: Right. So they're racist ... so all American people or just the teachers or they're both?

Interviewee: They're both...

Interviewer: Now, do you feel like there's a difference between students who are... Do you feel that all Latino students are treated the same way or do you think it's the immigrant students in particular that the teachers are racist towards?

Interviewee: Latinos.

Interviewer: All Latinos so even those who are born in the country, born in America?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: I mean only the...

Interviewer: Immigrants?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: So like people who came into the country don't speak the language.

Interviewee: Yes.

(Bianca, personal communication, 5/22/14)

Bianca's variable experiences with her teachers some of whom were helpful while others were outright racists made it difficult for her to develop connections to her teachers. She did not have any consistency with teachers and this resulted in her failing to connect with them even the ones

who helped her during class. She did not feel that they knew or understood her. Further, she felt that some teachers treated immigrant students unequally and disrespectfully. These experiences with teachers are antithetical to the feelings of care and respect that Bianca and others suggested were necessary to feel a sense of belonging. Furthermore, like many of the other interviewed students, Bianca did not participate in any extracurricular activities despite being interested in doing so, thereby preventing any potential connections with adults in the school who might have treated her with the care, respect, and equality that she longed for.

While the majority of the students in the study did not feel a strong connection to their teachers, the two students who did feel a strong connection to Larton teachers had a very different experience with their school and overlooked other negative experiences that they had there. Both Maria and Gigi connected with their teachers and therefore felt a stronger sense of belonging than their peers did. For example, while Maria recognized that many aspects of the school were chaotic, she felt comfortable and a sense of belonging to her school despite the “lot[s] of bullying going on around... Well, sometime when I walk in the hallway and there’s like a big crowd of friends there they’re all screaming and yelling and talking in some languages and the teachers just come screaming and yelling is like a big thing” (personal communication, 6/12/14). She also noted that many students fail classes and recommended that the school got more tutors to help students succeed. Maria, however, had successfully navigated the high school as she explained that despite all of this she still felt comfortable in the school because “Well, me and the teachers they’re nice and kind and the principal they’re like friends like truthful, I made some friends there” (personal communication, 6/12/14). Additionally, Maria participated in the dance club at the school and through this had developed a group of friends and taken on a leadership role in the group. This experience with the club helped her feel empowered. Thus given her extracurricular activities as well as her positive relationships with her teachers and administrators, she felt the sense of connection and belonging to her school that other students did not.

Unlike other students in Larton, Gigi trusted her nursing teacher and turned to her for guidance and support. Gigi had developed this relationship with her nursing teacher whom she had worked with for three years. Over this time, she felt that she could share her questions and concerns with her teacher.

Interviewer: In general, how's your relationship with your teachers? You said there's some good and some bad.

Gigi: Mm-hmm. They're all right. Yeah. All my teachers are good so I'm good with them.

Interviewer: That's awesome.

Gigi: I really like them so it's okay.

Interviewer: So do you talk to them about your plans or --?

Gigi: Yeah. My Nursing teacher, like I stay[ed with her]for three years so it's like we're really close.

Interviewer: Okay

Gigi: Yeah, so we talk about it.

(Gigi, personal communication, 5/20/14)

Gigi's connections with her nursing teacher made her feel a sense of connection to her school that other students did not feel. This ability to engage with her teacher coupled with her feeling of comfort and being known by her peers and teachers manifested itself in a feeling of belonging to her school something that I have called a pocket of belonging despite her general acknowledgement of the problems within the school.

These examples of students who had developed positive relationship with their teachers despite the often-chaotic school environment highlights the important role teachers have in fostering students' connections to their school. Indeed, only students who had managed to successfully connect with a Larton teacher claimed this full sense of belonging to the Larton Area

High School. The students who felt that their teachers did not know, care, respect or treat them fairly struggled to find a connection to their school even when they participated in extracurricular activities and had a strong friend group. Thus when talking about places where they felt a sense of belonging, these students who did not connect with their teachers would never say that they did not belong to the school, rather they invoked the concept of thin belonging. This thin sense of belonging gave them a right to be part of the school but it was not the rich feeling of belonging, which Maria and Gigi had in Larton and some of the Perth students had in their high school. This indicates to the different relationship the Perth students had with their teachers, which will be unpacked below.

Perth teachers

In Perth, students shared overwhelmingly positive experiences with their teachers. All the students reported that they felt treated fairly and equally by their teachers. While not every student interviewed had made a strong connection with a specific teacher, many students had made connections with teachers who eased their transition to the Canadian schooling system and helped them find their way in the large high school. The students felt that these teachers with whom they had connected knew and recognized the students. As Daniel, a 17-year-old senior from MENA, suggested that his teacher “is like their friend” (personal communication, 11/7/14). Therefore, the students in Perth more often felt a sense of belonging to their school. For those students who did not feel a sense of belonging, it seemed that this resulted from choosing to find their belonging elsewhere as was discussed in chapter five.

In Perth, all of the interviewed students felt treated fairly by their teachers. Interestingly, many of the students noted that most teachers understood their immigrant status and therefore supported them by altering assignment requirements and providing them with extra support if

needed. Thus, they felt treated fairly and that they received the appropriate supports to succeed. This vertically equitable attention allowed the students to feel a greater sense of belonging as they felt supported while still part of the general student population.

Isaac, an 18-year-old from MENA, felt very self-conscious about his English abilities when he first arrived in Perth. He spent most of his first semester working with Ms. Lehrer who helped introduce him to the school and worked with him to improve his English. When he did take classes with other teachers, he felt that the teachers treated him “like everybody else” (personal communication 10/17/14). Being treated this way allowed him to feel that the teachers and students did not single him out for his different accent and this helped him feel more a part of the school. As he adjusted to the school, Isaac became active in the school and eventually no longer needed Ms. Lehrer’s support. With her encouragement, Isaac joined the Loop Group, a group of students who helped new ninth and tenth graders navigate the school and its expectations. He enjoyed doing being able to help others as he himself had been helped.

Jason, a 19-year-old Filipino immigrant who had only arrived in Perth two month before school started, also discussed the equal treatment he received from his teachers. His teachers understood his situation as a newly arrived immigrant and gave him the appropriate considerations. In his own words, this allowed him to feel:

Interviewee: Just like a normal high school student. There's no favoritism or special attention to new immigrants here. They will give considerations for some, for like when you've got an assignment because we just moved in, we don't have any computers yet, printers, they will extend it for a day or two, the deadline...it's more like the same with other students. There's no particular special attention given to us, immigrants here.

(Jason, personal communication 10/15/14)

Like Isaac, Jason appreciated feeling like just another high school student. Yet, the teachers recognized that given his family’s recent arrival, they might not have had a printer or other

necessities to complete the work. Therefore, he received an extension that allowed him to complete his work. Importantly, the extension did not draw extra attention to himself rather it allowed him to be successful but not more conspicuous than he already felt.

Other Perth students shared similar experiences of feeling treated equally while teachers still recognized their unique needs. They knew their teachers understood their needs and through the teachers' consistently helpful and caring stances towards the students, the students came to trust and respect them. Miriam found evidence of teachers' care through their steady helpfulness and kindness. An 18-year-old Filipina student who arrived in Perth in January of 2014, she acknowledged her struggle to adjust. As she noted, she felt that her confidence deteriorated and that she was "so shy and I just isolated myself" (personal communication 10/16/14). One important factor in her adjustment had been the close relationship she has developed with her teachers. Due to cultural differences, this would not have happened in the Philippines. As she explains:

Miriam: I've to adjust really because the language itself and the you know teaching style and the teacher and student relationship is far different from the Philippines because you can't just talk to teachers like that, you should just say, "Ma'am", "Sir" and you should respect them, you can't just answer them just like that.

Interviewer: Are you saying in the Philippines or here?

Miriam: Here, in the Philippines, we have so much respect in teachers. I'm not saying that Canadians don't have respect but they are just so close to teachers but I find it so helpful though because back in the Philippines, if you'll think about it, there's a gap between a teacher and a student so I think that's actually not healthy. And there's actually a lot of help from Ms. Lehrer and Ms. Emma [an educational assistant]. They helped me a lot, they are like my heroes.... No, I think this is the best school for me to adjust and I'm actually talking to my other friends living in Toronto and she's having struggles like

there's actually a racism happening in there coming from a teacher actually. So, I think this is the best environment for me to adjust.

(personal communication 10/16/14)

In this excerpt, Miriam explains how her close relationship with her Canadian teachers and their consistent support has helped her adjust. Further, she shared that she has not experienced the racism that a friend in Toronto has. She calls Ms. Lehrer and Emma heroes for the many ways that they have supported her. While she does not enumerate them in this excerpt, they helped her navigate her choices of classes, assisted with her assignments, and encouraged her to join various student groups. These different forms of support as well feeling cared for allowed Miriam to begin reconstructing her identity, which she felt she had lost when she immigrated.

Rebecca, a German Mennonite senior, explained that the support of Emma, a caring educational assistant, helped her navigate difficulties with a math class first by helping her with the work and then connecting her with the guidance counselor. By doing so, Rebecca felt better and developed a strong relationship with Emma. As seen in the following quote, she compares the type of relationship that she has with Emma to a mother-daughter relationship.

Interviewee: It was kinda like I was scared, I had a scared feeling because I thought maybe it's getting really, really hard and my teachers won't understand. But, there was a moment in my life where I was like, "No. I can't do this anymore," because I had Math class. It was really hard for me. And then, I found Emma and that was just a lifesaver. And, yeah, and my life kept on going good....

Interviewer: That is awesome. So, when you say you found Emma, what did that mean? Like, how did you find her?

Interviewee: I wanted to go in that... Last year, they were in the G8 room. I want to go and study there, and then me and my friend. And so, all of a sudden, she came up and

she's like, "Hi. I'm Emma. If you need help, just ask me." So, I kinda just like open myself, I was like, "You know what? This is like horrible," and I told her everything. So, she's like, "Why don't we just go to the counselor and talk about it."... So then, I got moved to three different class... Yeah. I felt there was really, really nice. And now, it's like she's [Emma] just like my mother, she treats me like awesome, I just love it.

(personal communication 10/17/14)

In this example, Rebecca shared how Emma helped connect her with the right people to find a more suitable math class. Emma's caring presence and offers to help allowed Rebecca to share her struggles, which precipitated her moving to an appropriate class. As their relationship has developed, Rebecca has found a caring adult who treats her like a mother and whom she knows she can turn to if she has further difficulties in her school. From the excerpt, we see how Rebecca felt that Emma both understands and knows her and therefore she can trust her. By taking steps to connect her with a guidance counselor, Emma demonstrated to Rebecca her support and care.

Beyond just respecting, caring for and knowing the students, the teachers in Perth helped connect the students to extracurricular activities, which got them further involved with their school. Many of the students who worked with Ms. Lehrer mentioned that she made it a point to share with them opportunities to get involved in the school and she tailored her suggestions based on the individual students' interests. As Andrew, one gregarious 14-year-old Filipino student, shared Ms. Lehrer suggested that he consider joining the Student Council as he explains before:

Interviewee: I actually want to join the council?

Interviewer: Oh. The student council?

Interviewee: Yeah, because Miss Lehrer said it was fun... And you can get to meet more people...

Interviewer: So do you think you're going to run for that?

Interviewee: I think so... Oh, actually, student council is like a group of people that assists.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Yeah. It's like when the school was starting; there was this meeting and tour around the school. There's a group who helps arrange the schedules.

(personal communication 10/16/14)

Elaine, another Filipino student, mentioned that Ms. Lehrer encouraged her to get involved with the school's blog as she loved to write. She shared that:

Interviewer: So, oh, you're telling me about the blogging group at school.

Interviewee: Yeah. But, I haven't written anything yet.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Apparently, you should just send in something you write... Ms. Lehrer gave me an e-mail address and you can just submit...

(personal communication 11/6/14)

By understanding the different students' strengths and interests, Ms. Lehrer acted as an important conduit for her students to connect with the high school and others in the school. She shared with students different opportunities available to them and facilitated their participation in these clubs by providing important information about how to join the group. These small steps helped the students feel a connection to the school community and many of them felt a strong sense of belonging to the school

The students' feelings of being treated fairly made it possible for them to connect with their teachers. As shown by the numerous examples of teachers who treated the students equitably while still acknowledging their unique needs, the teachers facilitated the students' connections to the school. The watchful and supportive gaze of the teachers helped students navigate their high school whether it entailed choosing classes, extracurricular activities or

supporting their academic success. Thus, the students felt that their teachers treated them fairly, kindly and supportively. The students referred to their teachers as friends and parents rather than as distant authoritarian figure. They felt comfortable sharing their concerns with their teachers and this ensured that they could resolve any of the difficulties they encountered with the support of a concerned adult. While most students felt treated well by the adults in the high school, not all students made strong connections to their teachers. This seemed to be a choice the students made as to where they felt a sense of belonging. Those students, whose sense of belonging came from outside their school, did not seem as connected to a teacher. This was not for a lack of caring and fair adults but rather these students placed an emphasis on the role of other communities in their lives. Though these students did not connect with their teachers, they still felt that they were part of their school; this notion of thin belonging again granted them membership though not necessarily the strong connections that other students felt to their school.

Examining the similarities and differences in teachers

Both Perth and Larton teachers worked in large high schools with a growing percentage of immigrant students. However, as seen by the findings above, the students' experiences differed drastically. Many Larton students felt treated unfairly and callously, while Perth students uniformly agreed that their teachers treated them fairly. While only two students in Larton developed caring relationships with their teachers, many of the students in Perth had connected with either a teacher or an educational assistant who helped them navigate their school. Those students in Perth who had not developed close relationships with teachers did not feel unsupported or uncared for; however, for their own reasons and personal preferences they did not pursue those kinds of relationships. They still respected and liked their teachers. Larton students did not seem to have that option even if they had wanted to develop such a relationship with a

teacher. Many students did not perceive the Larton teachers to be interested in them and, therefore, they did not develop the types of relationships that Perth students had with their teachers.

Interestingly, in both Perth and Larton, the teachers treated the immigrant students differently. Unfortunately in Larton, the students relayed experiences that conveyed teachers' low expectations and prejudices to their students. In Perth, however, the students felt that their teachers treated them fairly but recognized that being treated fairly did not necessarily mean that they received the exact same treatment as every other student. Rather they noted that their teachers recognized their status as recently arrived immigrant students and that they required extra supports to be successful. They shared examples of teachers differentiating the supports that they received as well as making accommodations for their lack of access to technology, difficulty speaking in English and sending them for extra help with Ms. Lehrer, the EAL teacher. All of these different forms of support provided the Perth immigrant students with concrete examples of their teachers' care and concern for them. It allowed them to feel that their teachers wanted their students to adjust well and be successful in their classes. While not true of all teachers as some teachers were less supportive than others, most students could find the support that they needed from other adults in the school. This provided an important safety net for the students that allowed them to thrive even though they were not necessarily close with every teacher.

In Larton, many of the teachers expressed either overtly or through their actions their disinterest in supporting the students. As Jacob pointed out, many of the teachers would not stay after school to help the students but raced out of the building at the end of their contractual day to the dismay of Jacob and others who wanted extra support. Further, in class, as Christopher and others shared, teachers often talked over the students who were chatting and not paying attention, never stopping to ask if the students understood the material being explained. Rather the expectation seemed to be that the students would copy down their work and not ask questions. As

Bianca shared sometimes it seemed that the teachers forgot that she was learning the language and therefore were “mean” in her words when she asked for help or did not understand a concept. These different attitudes towards support demonstrated to the Larton students that their teachers largely did not care about their progress but rather focused on teaching the material without regards for students’ learning or well-being.

These different experiences with teachers affected more than just the students’ academic mastery. It suggested to the students their roles in their schools and communities. Many students in Larton felt marginalized by the adults in their schools. They did not connect with different adults, which prevented them from successfully navigating the new educational contexts. Many of them did not join extracurricular activities, understand the college process or the courses that they needed to take in order to prepare them for college. These different needs were left unfilled by either the teachers or the six guidance counselors that were available in the high school, many of whom only registered the students for classes but did not connect with them in any meaningful way. In Perth, the students felt supported and cared for by their teachers who helped ensure that they took the appropriate classes, had the opportunity to get involved in extracurricular activities and had the information they needed to continue their education if they chose to. Furthermore, the Perth students reported loving their school and more students felt a sense of belonging to their school than those students in Larton who did not enjoy the frequently chaotic and uncaring school. As seen in this section, teachers affected students’ school experiences more than just the learning that took place. The students wanted to rely on their teachers to support, care, respect, and nurture them, when that happened as it did in Perth, the students flourished. However, as we see in Larton these students had to turn to communities outside of their schools and felt largely disengaged from their schooling experiences. Fortunately, for many of the Larton students, they found the Unity Project’s community center, which gave them a space in their community where they felt connected and a part of a larger organization.

The Role of Policies in Fostering Students' Feelings of Belonging

Enacted policies at the governmental and school levels convey messages to citizens and students learn about “what government[s and public schools are] supposed to do, which citizens [students] are deserving (and which not), and what kinds of attitudes and participatory patterns are appropriate in a democratic society [and school]” (Schneider & Ingram, 1993, p. 334). Through overt policies that seek to support students, such as planned transition programs, or marginalize students, such as physical isolation from other students, students learn their role in their schools and by extension their communities and country (Dewey, 1899; Gitlin et al., 2003). In the two schools examined, students rarely directly commented on policies but through their discussion of their school experiences, policies’ role in supporting or hindering their feelings of belonging became clear.

In Larton Area High School, students experienced a number of disciplinary policies that conveyed a mistrust of the students. Additionally, many students noted that the policies were inconsistently enforced. As a result, the students resented the policies more making it difficult for students to feel a sense of comfort and belonging in the school. Ironically, these policies did not seem to have the intended effect of making the school safer as several students discussed the bullying and chaotic nature of their school. Lastly, the school did not to have an effective systematic policy of communicating information to students such as which classes they needed to take or about the many extracurricular activities available. This lack of information further marginalized the immigrant students and hampered their decision-making abilities.

Perth’s students did not feel treated unfairly by anyone in the school indicating that the policies were implemented in an equitable manner. Several students commented that they felt safe in their new school because of the lack of bullying and other incidents. One student noted that he felt safer in Perth even though he did not perceive any explicit safety measures. Other students

noted that the school rules were not as strict and that this facilitated a friendly relationship between teachers and students and allowed the students to feel more comfortable. Lastly, a couple of students discussed the importance of their time in their English as an Additional Language class which gave them an introduction to the school, a group of friends, and a supportive teacher for them to navigate their new school with. These different policies provided the students with the support that they needed to feel a sense of belonging if they chose.

Larton policies

Many of Larton's policies served to further alienate the students interviewed as they conveyed to the students a distrust of the students and a lack of concern about their full participation in the life of the school. By examining the restrictive disciplinary policies and the lack of consistent information dissemination policies, immigrant students felt that their school neither cared nor supported their integration into the school. This further marginalized the students from their school and teachers as evidenced by many of the students' thin feelings of belonging.

Discipline policies

Charlie notes that the school's strict policies regarding the metal detectors and bathroom passes amongst other things made the school atmosphere not conducive to feeling a sense of care or belonging. In this passage, he expressed frustration about the restricted use of the restroom, the candy and snack ban, and the presence of metal detectors in middle school.

Interviewee: Here is too strict like, so much like, every time I want to go to the bathroom, there is a pass to just to go to the bathroom.

Interviewer: In New Jersey, they didn't ask you for those thing?

Interviewee: No they didn't ask for those thing, they do give a pass but, they won't be like - overtime came, they'll go look for you in the bathroom....Like right now they just said, we can't bring no more, like candies and stuff like that to school.... Like at the beginning, we could, but now, we can't.

Interviewer: Right, right, that's frustrating....

Interviewee: Yes and all those stuff. Every morning, I got to take off my belt because of a metal detector....In New Jersey, we don't have that. We do have it but like in a middle-school. When I go inside to pick up my sister sometimes in Castle, they just you know middle-school...High School, I believe because we had that in New Jersey, we had that in Virginia but Middle-school, I don't think we need that.

(Charlie, personal communication, 6/5/14)

He notes that the school's strict policies were not necessary and often served as a distraction. He felt that the restrictive environment translated into the uncaring he witnessed on sports teams at LAHS which differed from the teams that he was on in New Jersey: "When I used to be around basketball people, they used to care about each other. Here, I don't know, the basketball team here is like, I don't know like, you know, everybody care about themselves, everybody is by themselves" (personal communication, 6/5/14). Coupled with his feelings about teachers who did not care or engaged him, Charlie did not feel a strong sense of belonging to the school.

Veronica echoes Charlie's sentiments about being constantly monitored by adults such that "there is a teacher, every single period, taking care of the bathroom. Checking the time of your passes, you have to sign out to the class, sign in to the bathroom, sign out of the bathroom and sign in back to class" (personal communication, 5/20/14). Meanwhile the security officials did not consistently enforce the policies. As Veronica explains:

Interviewee: Sometimes, like I can walk around and feel okay, I can walk around, I don't know though like the security guards don't make you feel safe, I mean.

Interviewer: What do you mean by that?

Interviewee: I don't know, I don't know how to describe it, like they're really cool some of them are really cool , but some of them are annoying and obnoxious like they don't care, like they have favorites.... Like you're walking to class, they'll be like "back to class," where do you think we're going? where do you think where going? its just so annoying like, and like, I don't know like if they see two kids doing the same exact thing they'll pick on like one rather than the other, than you know the other one, like if one is walking around with they're headphones, and they see one that they know that they're cool with they'll like "You, put your headphones away," when the other one is walking right there.

(Veronica, personal communication, 5/20/14).

While the consistent monitoring by adults bothered Veronica, this quote highlights how frustrated she felt by the inconsistency of the policies. The inconsistent implementation carried over into her feeling of safety, which was only sometimes present. Like other students, she did not want to admit that she did not belong to the school; however, she stated that she was part of the school despite her lack of connection to adults, the often-chaotic classroom environments and the arbitrary enforcement of school policies.

Information communication

Many of Larton students did not seem to know or understand their high school course choices and how it impacted their post-secondary options, nor were they aware of the myriad of afterschool opportunities available to them. This limited knowledge of the school's options as

well as the implications of their various choices made it difficult for them to fully engage in the life of the school. Some of the students ended up having to take extra classes while others did not engage in a variety of afterschool programs that may have interested them. This resulted in students who had few chances to cultivate a connection with a caring adult and successfully navigate the complex high school environment.

Ayesha provides one example of a student who did not know how to choose the classes that she took and therefore she enrolled in the classes that interested her. While she wanted to go to college, she did not understand the credit system nor that she would have to take certain classes to prepare her for post-secondary education. As she explains in the following interview:

Interviewer: How did you know which classes to take?

Interviewee: You mean, what did I need?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: I actually didn't know what do I need. I took the interesting classes that I wanted. I took computers. I took stuff like that.

Interviewer: Was that okay in terms of going to college then?

Interviewee: It was okay. Actually, everybody says that high school classes, they affect your college but it doesn't. It's like completely different thing. When I finished high school, nothing that I took in high school came with me in college. I was okay with it....

Interviewer: Your teachers or counselors, did they ever talk to you about schooling, like what classes you should have taken? Because you said you didn't know and you just kind of took them. Did any of your teachers or counselors talk to you about it or...

Interviewee: In my junior year, they were like, "You weren't supposed to take this. You have to take that and stuff." I had to take an extra class just to make it up because I didn't even know how to take based on credits.

(Ayesha, personal communication, 6/10/14)

As this excerpt shows, Ayesha attended school for three years prior to being told by a guidance counselor about her class requirements. Furthermore, she makes a comment that none of the classes that she took at high school transferred to her post-secondary education. This indicates a level of misunderstanding about how high school classes prepare students for college. This lack of understanding was never remediated in her time at Larton Area High School nor did she have a close teacher who could help her understand the importance of her courses and help her prepare for her future career.

Isaiah expresses a sense of frustration about the feeling of being lost in the school where he did not know what classes to take, whom to talk to or even how to navigate the school, feeling lost both metaphorically and literally. Moreover, after having settled into the school and the routine, he still does not know about many of the extracurricular activities available to him. Therefore, even though he would like to go to college, he did not know about the college prep afterschool program, nor did he know that he should take the SATs in his junior year.

Interviewer: So, was there anything else that would have been helpful for you when you first came to the high school?

Isaiah: I think they could if people like help me out from the beginning, because I was lost.

Interviewer: Yeah, like lost like in didn't know where you was going or lost?

Interviewee: Completely.

Interviewer: So you lost like you didn't know which classes to take, you were lost you didn't know what you were doing?

Interviewee: Yeah, in the class I didn't know what to do most of the time.

Interviewer: Yeah, like what the teachers wanted you to do?

Interviewee: Yeah....

Interviewer: So how did you feel about that?

Interviewee: I was a little mad and then I got use to it, I figure it out all by myself.

Interviewer: You did it by yourself, yeah. Did you have any friends like that you were kind of making along the way who could help you or did you just kind of figure it on your own?

Interviewee: No, I made a few friends on the way.

Interviewer: So they kind of help you figure it out?

Interviewee: Mm-huh.

Interviewer: But it wasn't like which classes to take and stuff like that?

Interviewee: Yeah.

(Isaiah, personal communication, 6/10/14)

Once in class, Isaiah found his experience with teachers to be variable. While one teacher challenged him and seemed to care about his well-being, he found other teachers boring and distant from the students. Therefore like his 14-year-old brother Charlie (also in this study), Isaiah felt that he learned more in Larton than in his other schools; he did not feel this same connection to the school. Additionally, Isaiah did not know about the many extracurricular activities that the school offered for him to get involved. The only activity he was aware of was basketball, which he did not participate in because he forgot to bring in his medical form.

Interviewer: Nice. Do you participate in any of the activities at the school, like soccer, football or what not.

Interviewee: I tried out for basketball club but I forgot my physical.

Interviewer: Oh no, so you forgot your physical as in like you forgot to get it done or you forgot to bring the form in?

Interviewee: I forgot to bring the form in....

Interviewer: Definitely you're going to make it like nice. So, basketball just because you love to play basketball. Did you know of other things you could do?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: No. So it wasn't like you knew about there is like a dance club or the future business leader of America?

Interviewee: No...

Interviewer: So, I'll tell you the dance club. I think there's 65 kids in the dance club and they do all sorts of things like; merengue, pachata, salsa.

Interviewee: Wow, no wonder they always know how to dance.

(Isaiah, personal communication, 6/10/14)

Clearly, even if Isaiah wanted to get more involved in the high school community, he did not know about the various extracurricular activities, which could have allowed him to make a deeper connection with his school.

While many of the students did not know about the numerous options available to them, other students could not engage in the after school options because of their responsibilities at home. As Christopher explained, he did not get involved in the various clubs for a number of reasons:

Interviewee: I don't know, I'm just lazy. Maybe I just don't have a ride. Like I can't get there. My mom is always working after school. I can't stay there I have to pick up my siblings.

Interviewer: Yeah, right, so there's a bunch of reasons why you're not participating. Do you know about the clubs, the different opportunities?

Interviewee: Not really.

Interviewer: Okay. Right, so that's an interesting thing. So if you had a ride, if you didn't have to pick up your sibling, if you knew about the clubs, you might participate in some of those things?

Interviewee: Well I was interested in 9th grade, but you know, I just have a lot of responsibilities.

(Christopher, personal communication, 6/10/14).

While Christopher was initially interested in extracurricular activities in ninth grade, his lack of knowledge about the available clubs and the many responsibilities, he had at home such as picking up his younger sibling and transportation issues ultimately caused him to not become involved in activities in school.

These different students' experiences exemplified the lack of consistent information that the students received not just about extracurricular activities but also about the classes that they needed to take and the process to attend college. This meant that the students as shown above took the classes that interested them but not necessarily the ones that they needed to graduate, missed opportunities to sign up and prepare for the SATs. Coupled with feeling disconnected from their teachers as discussed in the previous section, I expected to find the students to report not feeling a sense of belonging to their school. Instead, students would not say that they did not feel a sense of belonging; the students suggested that they were still part of the school even though they had all of these other negative experiences to contend with in their school. This justification of their right to be there and be part of the school is what I am calling a thin sense of belonging. Students did report a stronger feeling of belonging to other parts of their community such as the community center.

Perth policies

To many of the new students, Perth's policies seemed permissive and yet they respected their teachers and felt safe in their new school. Many of the students commented on the

differences in the treatment of the students by the teachers, which made them seem more like friends than teachers. Despite these differences, the students felt treated fairly and had not encountered any bullying. This safe, comfortable environment helped them feel happy and thrive at their schools.

Discipline policies

Perth's policies towards discipline seemed notably absent to the author. When first arriving at the school, one notices that many of the building's doors are left unlocked and unguarded during the school day. Similarly, the school did not employ security guards nor did students or visitors have to walk through metal detectors. Instead, teachers walked the halls during each period greeting and talking with students they knew. The absence of these various security measures struck the author during the first visit to the school as I walked into school and while I introduced myself to the school staff assistant, it was only after first having gotten lost in the school.

The lack of security measures also struck some of the immigrant students whose schools in their home countries had to take security measures in order to keep their students safe. Andrew, a 14-year-old freshman from the Philippines, noted the safety he felt in the Canadian schools as compared to his hometown where roaming gangs of boys would bully students. As he explains in the following interview excerpt:

Interviewee: When I was in Elementary, I actually studied in a public school like this, but it's different kind of public place, there's like a lot of...police. There are a lot of things going on.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: There's like street boys going around there. ...

Interviewer: Okay, so you're as—yeah, right, you had to walk. So you said that in the public school, there's a lot more police and street boys?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: What are street boys or who are street boys?

Interviewee: Like...guys who are like bullies....They like bugging people...

Interviewer: Okay. So do they bully you?

Interviewee: No, not me.

Interviewer: Okay, but they did bully other kids?

Interviewee: Yeah, I can just—yeah, I actually said that because they bully other kids.

Interviewer: Oh, that's not good. And so that's why the police were there because the street kids were there as well?

Interviewee: Yep.

Interviewer: Okay. That's tough. So then here where there's no police in school...

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Did you notice that right away?

Interviewee: It feels safer.

(personal communication, 10/16/14)

In this excerpt, Andrew highlighted how different the two schools felt with one having a police presence which presumably kept the students safe from the street boys and yet he notes that the Canadian school felt safer without a police presence. In Canada, he does not worry about the gangs of street boys who roamed the street after schools as he says that in Canada “everyone welcomes you” and “they always greet you”(personal communication, 10/16/14). The openness of the public schools and the people that he met there assured Andrew that he was in a safe and caring environment.

Michael, a 17-year-old Mennonite boy from Paraguay, also highlighted the difference between the Canadian school and his old school in Paraguay whose rules were in his opinion too strict. He noted that in Paraguay the students had to remain on school property during school time, wear a uniform, and maintain very high grades.

Interviewee: I guess they are not forcing too many rules on you here. There [in Paraguay] they are the force. They actually overkill the rules there.... There you have to...grade 7 to grade 12, you got to get higher marks [in] each course to pass. You wear uniform every day. If you wear anything that you're not supposed to wear you get suspended and you're not allowed to leave the school grounds by any means ever.

(personal communication, 11/5/14)

In Canada, the students could leave the school to get lunches when needed, as well not wear a uniform or maintain a high GPA²¹. The relaxed environment allowed Michael to feel that “I get treated fair here and it's fun, I get along with my teachers and everything, I can trust them” (personal communication, 11/5/14). Interestingly, while Michael felt that he could trust his teachers, the rules also conveyed a feeling of trust to the students as they were allowed to come and go as needed with the expectation that the students would attend their classes and keep their school safe. These open and permissive policies were implemented fairly. These conditions created a sense of safety and trust amongst the students in Perth who felt respected and cared for but also trusted by their teachers and administrators thus fostering in many of the students a sense that they belonged to their school community.

²¹ A requirement of Michael's school in Paraguay

Information and communication

The students in Perth felt that they understood how their school worked and knew about a variety of options for them to get involved in the school through extracurricular activities. The information sources that the students shared included other students, counselors and teachers. Thus, the Perth students received the information they needed to understand their high school and connect to it in as many ways as they chose to. This access to information allowed for the students to enroll in the appropriate classes, learn about their post-secondary options and the extracurricular options available to them.

Perth students' introduction to their high school involved the Loop Group, which paired a group of incoming ninth and tenth graders with a more advanced student who mentored and guided the group. Isaac, a 17-year-old from MENA, shared that the Loop Group helped introduce the new students to the school and make them feel less nervous. As an incoming immigrant student, Isaac worried about being an outsider because he did not know the school rules and expectations and worried about his English. While Ms. Lehrer supported him with his English development, the Loop Group helped him navigate the new school. Therefore, when Ms. Lehrer suggested that he join the Loop Group as a mentor, he took up the opportunity, which involved an eight-hour training session in the summer in addition to the time commitment during the school year.

Interviewee: Like I'm in the Loop Group ...so...what you could say, because I'm in a Loop Group and summer, I actually went for 8 hours for training, to help then Grade 9s and 10s here...

Interviewer: What is the Loop Group? I'm sorry.

Interviewee: It's a group that helps Grade 9s and 10s to feel comfortable in their new school.

Interviewer: Oh.

Interviewee: So basically like what they did to me.

Interviewer: So you did it for others?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: That's wonderful. Okay. So, you, what is your role then in that group?

Interviewee: Just a leader. We're all leaders. We get a group, we help them, we tell them about the school, and ways everything and how to have fun, or whatever. Help them with their courses. If they don't understand anything, like something, we help them.

(personal communication 10/17/14)

By creating a student-facilitated group that introduced the students to their school, the new students met a more advanced student who helped them navigate the school. As Isaac mentioned they learned about ways to have fun and also how to navigate their classes. This group of students provided an initial support network of peers for incoming students such that until they established their own networks, they had a group of peers who they could talk with and ask questions of.

In addition to the support of other students, teachers and counselors, the new students also had physical support in the form of a map, which allowed them to navigate the sprawling high school complex. As Andrew, a 14-year-old freshman, explained the map along with the guidance of Ms. Lehrer who took each of her EAL students to their classes on the first days helped ensure that he did not get lost as he tried to find his way in the early days of his time at Perth.

Interviewer: And did you have any teachers who helped you?

Interviewee: Yeah. Miss Lehrer.... She toured us around for our next class.

Interviewer: What do you mean toured you around for your next class?

Interviewee: Oh, she brought us one by one by our next class.

Interviewer: Oh.

Interviewee: She brought us to our room.

Interviewer: Oh, that's awesome. So she showed you where the rooms were?

Interviewee: Yeah. So I just have to kind of...

Interviewer: Found?

Interviewee: I actually ask for some maps.

(personal communication 10/16/14)

Between Ms. Lehrer guiding the new students to their class and the physical map, Andrew managed to navigate the new school environment successfully. He noted that while he was initially nervous between the support he received from Ms. Lehrer, the Loop Group and the availability of a map, he made his way through those first few days of school. This positive introduction to school set Andrew and the other students up for the opportunity to successfully integrate into their new school. They did not spend time physically lost which helped support their integration into their new school communities.

In addition to the support students received in the early days, they also had access to counselors and teachers who supported their class choices. As Isaac, the 17-year-old from MENA, explained, Ms. Lehrer helped him understand all of the available class options. Thus, he learned about the different majors (vocational tracks) as well as academic classes. With this new understanding, he elected to enroll in the courses that best suited him and as he says this helped him become who he is today.

Interviewee: She was really nice to me when I first came here and she helped me to become who I am today, like she helped me pick classes and everything that I need to know.

Interviewer: So, she set you up for success here. Nice. In terms of choosing classes, did she ask you about your interests or how did she help you choose classes?

Interviewee: She told me about each class and she explained what each class does and everything and majors.

(personal communication 12/17/14)

In this exchange, we see how Ms. Lehrer helped explain the different options available to Isaac such that he could successfully choose the classes that he wanted to take. In addition, to helping students choose classes, I observed Ms. Lehrer acting as an advocate for her students which included attending meetings with school guidance counselors to ensure that the students would be placed in the correct section of the class that matched the students skill level and educational goals.

It was not just Ms. Lehrer who helped the students find the appropriate classes for them, it was also school counselors. Elaine, a 20-year-old from the Philippines, explained that she plans to attend college to become a nurse like her mom and aunt. In talking to her guidance counselor Mr. Dreisbach, he shared with her the necessary credits she would have to take and then asked her about her aspirations and suggested appropriate classes. In doing so, Elaine took the best classes for her. Additionally, she knew she had the support of Ms. Lehrer who continued to check in with her. As Elaine explains:

Interviewee: My guidance counselor Mr. Dreisbach, he basically just asked me like he gave me a list of the subjects I needed to take to like or credits to graduate so I just chose from that list...

Interviewer: So did he gave you kind of ideas like teachers that you want us to take or like different like did he give you any guidance about that or did he just say here all the classes you could take?

Interviewee: He just asked me what I wanted to like take in college or university and then he said oh these are the list of like the courses that universities will recognize that you need to take so.

Interviewer: Nice, so that was the way that worked.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: They're just cool, very cool. So in terms of the teachers, so you obviously saw Mr. Dreisbach and he was helpful. What about the teachers, how have they helped you in the kind of transition process?

Interviewee: Well, Ms. Lehrer is really helpful....She was like always asking you, 'what do you need? What can I do for you?' like that.

(personal communication, 10/17/14)

As the excerpt shows, Elaine explained to her counselor her college plans and then he helped her pick the appropriate classes for her given how many credits she would need to graduate. She received further support from Ms. Lehrer who checked in with her more regularly. The two-pronged approach helped Elaine access the available resources she needed to find the appropriate path for herself.

In addition to support from peers and school officials, the school also planned a day of visits by various colleges in the Province that helped introduce students to their potential post-secondary options. This day known as Choices included visits from bible colleges, vocational institutes as well as local and regional universities. The program helped the students see the various options available to them as they considered their post-secondary paths. In the excerpt below, 17-year-old Rebecca, whose family emigrated from Germany 12 years ago, discussed her post-secondary plans and the uncertainty around her future. Attending Choices helped her consider some possible options but also helped eliminate some options as she explains below:

Interviewee: Well, I usually I, like in Grade 11, I really wanted to [go to college], but now it's kinda like I don't know if I should, if it's... Because now people go to college, they learn and then they end up with no job. I know some people in church and stuff. So, I'm like I don't know if I should, but maybe I'll try it out. It's always good.

Interviewer: Yeah. Right. See what it's like... Did you go to Choices yesterday then?

Interviewee: Yeah. I went, too...

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: ...because I have to work at 12:30, so I went to the Bible, College Bible thing.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Was it good, too for you?

Interviewee: I don't think it's really my type.

Interviewer: Okay. Why not?

Interviewee: I don't know. It's just... It sounds so like... I don't know how to say this.

Like it sounds like it could be for me, but I'm just not interested in stuff, you know.

(personal communication, 10/17/14)

By attending Choices, Rebecca helped narrow down the options available to her by realizing that even though she enjoys attending her own church she might not want to attend a Bible college because as she says she is "just not interested in stuff" (personal communication, 10/17/14).

While still uncertain about the best path for her, at least she realized that she would not be attending a Bible college in the fall. This type of programming helped the immigrant students know more about the opportunities once they graduated from high school.

The Perth High School provided many points of access to information for the immigrant students who felt that they knew and understood how to navigate the school and find the

information that they needed to fully participate in the community. Despite the many information sources, some students did note some gaps in potential access to information. Several students pointed out they would have appreciated more information on the general college process in Canada as well the financial aid process. These gaps are important to consider when designing schools that support immigrant students whose families do not have the possibly assumed background knowledge to supplement school programs and therefore rely heavily on the school and community organizations.

Comparing Larton's and Perth's policies

When looking across the policies in Larton and Perth, it becomes clear that these policies shape the students' experiences in these different schools. In the case of disciplinary policies, Larton's policies convey a sense of mistrust of the students that belittle their autonomy and convey feelings of injustice as they are implemented by school officials in a haphazard manner. Meanwhile Perth's policies towards discipline allowed for an open school environment both physically and emotionally. When it comes to information access, Perth has developed a network of information points, which allow students to gather the information they need from a range of individuals. In Larton, the students' lack of information indicated that they did not know where to find either the information they needed or the appropriate individuals who could help them. Therefore, these students did not access the information that allowed them to enroll in the appropriate courses given their aspirations, engage with extracurricular activities, and navigate their post-secondary options. This section examined these different policies, as it seemed that these policies strongly influenced the students' thinking about their schools, second only to their relationships with their teachers. This next section will take a closer look at the comparative impact of the policies on students' feelings of belonging.

The appropriate role of disciplinary policies

Both Perth and Larton had disciplinary policies in place; from this common starting point, the two schools diverge in how they implemented and used those policies. In Perth, the students felt treated fairly by the school officials whom they saw as “friends” rather than adversaries who constantly monitored their movements as it was suggested in Larton. Despite the absence of visible discipline policies such as metal detectors and logbooks, the students felt safe in their school. By in large, they noted the absence of bullying in the schools with one exception of a student who shared a story of being made fun of by a couple of students as he struggled to read a passage aloud in class. While this made him feel bad at the time, he did not discuss other incidents nor did he think bullying was widespread. Interestingly, some students felt that Perth’s discipline policies were too relaxed. These students who came from very strict countries believed that the school would benefit from more discipline policies. Daniel, a 17-year-old from MENA, explained that even though he liked everything about the school a stricter policy would ensure more people attended class regularly:

Well, no. I like everything about my school. Maybe I would make the rules a little bit more strict because, like people are skipping a lot. And, if you make like something, if you skip more than 10 classes a year, you get, I mean without valid reason, you get banned from the class. Maybe people would be more willing to go to class even if they don’t wanna go.

(personal communication, 11/7/14)

While Daniel liked the school, he recognized that more strict policies would force more students to attend school. However, it seemed that the Perth school district chose to err on the side of fewer discipline policies in favor of an open and trusting environment between students and teachers. Daniel also noted that he loved the relationship he had with his teachers because he felt

that “I got used to the rules in school, the courses, to how teacher behave and I actually like teachers in Canada. They are always smiling to you, willing to help you if you don't understand” (personal communication, 10/17/14). Thus though he suggested a stricter discipline policy, one wonders if the same relationship he had with his teachers would be possible if teachers spent more time disciplining students.

In Larton, the teachers and staff spent a lot of time on enforcing discipline policies. As Veronica, a 17-year-old senior from the Dominican Republic noted “there is a teacher, every single period, taking care of the bathroom. Checking the time of your passes, you have to sign, you have to sign out to the class, sign in to the bathroom, sign out of the bathroom and sign in back to class” (personal communication, 5/20/14). This time intensive process was resented by many of the students as they noted the inconsistency with which these policies were enforced and the ineffectiveness of the policies with the students. Therefore, the students did not have faith in the policies that were present. While the students did not have an official dress code, there were types of clothing that they were not supposed to wear but as Marie states “what is the point in this, this is your uniform and nobody follows it” (personal communication, 5/20/14). Therefore, even if students would want more discipline in their schools, they do not feel that the policies have been implemented fairly, thus they feel disillusioned with the existing policies. This seems to be one of the major differences between the two schools as students in Perth felt that their school was effective and safe and therefore some students suggested additional disciplinary measures because they saw its effectiveness; whereas in Larton as Marie pointed out the discipline policies did not lead to a safe or fair school so the discipline policies were seen as ineffective. The difference in implementation of the discipline policy contributed to the students’ differing view of the school and their feelings of belonging. Further, for Larton students who did not feel secure and had not made a secure connection with an adult in the school, this was just another reason they disliked their schools.

Therefore, it seems that the best disciplinary policies promote a feeling of safety and security without being too strict so as to prevent the connections between students and adults. Indeed, in Perth, the students felt trusted such that they could leave the school campus when needed and while not all students made good choices as Daniel mentioned, the majority of students interviewed felt safe and secure in the school. The fair application of the policies allowed students to trust their school and the adults in the school further facilitating the possibility of students feeling a sense of belonging to their school. It also has repercussions for how the students viewed the government and their teachers. This will be explored in chapter seven.

Access to information

Students' access to information varied widely between the two schools. In Larton, many of the students did not seem to have consistent access to information regarding their schooling process. Thus, they did not know or understand which classes and tracks would be the best possible option for them to enroll in. They did not seem to understand how their post-secondary plans should influence the classes that they take in high school and how to plan appropriately. Despite the numerous²² extracurricular activities available to them, many of the students did not seem to know about the different clubs or groups that they could join. This limited their opportunities to engage with their school in a meaningful manner that could have opened up possibilities for connections between the students and teachers. Therefore, many students ended up feeling lost and disconnected in their high school. Thus, even when students wanted to participate in the life of the school, they found many obstacles to their participation in school activities.

In Perth, the students could learn about their school through many different venues including student mentors, counselors and teachers. This network of support and information

²² Including sports, there were over forty different options for students to get involved in at LAHS

ensured that the students found their way literally²³ and metaphorically as they navigated their transition to the high school and Canadian school system. Thus, the students entered the school and spent time with mentor students who guided them through the first few days and ensured that they understood the process of their school including how to have fun, which entails ways to get involved in the school. In addition to the mentor peers who welcomed the students into their new school, the students met with counselors who helped them understand the credit system and requirements to graduate as well as the courses they needed to successfully pursue their aspirations. Additionally, through their Choices program, the school brought in a variety of post-secondary alternatives that allowed the students to learn about the different pathways open to them. This type of conscious planning helped the student feel more connected to the different aspects of the school. Lastly, teachers provided another important source of information. Ms. Lehrer in particular helped the students find the right activities and classes. Her consistent and persistent support of the students reinforced the earlier finding of the importance of teachers in helping students connect to their school.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the role that schools had in fostering students' feelings of belonging in their respective schools. In particular, the chapter focused on the role of teachers and policies as these were the aspects of schools that the students most often discussed as important when reflecting on their schooling experiences and how they influenced their feelings of belonging to the school. Throughout the chapter, the important role teachers have in shaping students' schooling experience becomes clear. In both Perth and Larton, we see that teachers' treatment of the students intricately influenced how they felt about their school.

²³ With the help of available maps

In thinking about the types of relationships between students and teachers that influenced the students' feelings of belonging, we see that these relationships were characterized by many of the aspects contained in the students' definition of belonging unpacked in the previous chapter. Teachers must treat students fairly which implied that teachers treat them respectfully. In addition, students looked to teachers to know them and understand their aspirations, strengths and weaknesses. When Christopher discussed feeling like a nobody, he highlighted how the Larton teachers did not know him as a person full of talents and ambitions. Rather, they saw him as just another student, who though better behaved than other students in his classes, was not recognized as an individual; they did not support his work in classes nor did they help him navigate the complex system of secondary and post-secondary schooling. In Perth, we see how teachers who understand the students and know their unique talents and gifts gently supported them in their transition to a new school. When Miriam explained that she just isolated herself, she did so in Ms. Lehrer's room where she could trust that Ms. Lehrer and Emma would support her and allow her time to reconstruct her identity. Ms. Lehrer and Emma by respecting Miriam's own process showed that not only did they know and understand her they also cared for her. This combination of care, knowledge and respect led Miriam to conclude that the Perth High School was the best place for her to go to school and transition into the Canadian system.

More significantly, even in Larton Area High School, which faced challenges stemming from the large and chaotic nature of the school, when students felt connected to teachers they felt a greater sense of belonging. Thus, we see both Maria and Gigi feel a sense of belonging to the school, even though they acknowledge many of the same issues that the other students talked concerning teachers and policies. This ability to feel connected to the school despite the myriad of concerns students raised such as mediocre teaching, strict but poorly and unevenly enforced discipline policies, emphasizes the important role teachers play in supporting students in school.

When focusing on the policies that supported students' feelings of belonging, the students in both Larton and Perth commented on the importance of schools' discipline policies. Moreover, information dissemination that supported students' integration into the life of the school both academically and socially helped the immigrant students connect with others and enroll in the appropriate courses all of which helped foster a feeling of belonging for the students. More importantly, policy implementation mattered in the success of the policy and in students' views of the policies. When the policies were implemented fairly and consistently, students accepted the enforcement about the policies. However, inconsistent enforcement of policies raised frustrations and left students feeling mistrustful of school officials.

From the two schools' different approaches to their discipline policies, we see that students needed to feel safe in the school's space. However, in Larton, school officials' inconsistent enforcement of the discipline policies sent a message to the students that rules were not fair which students sometimes attributed to the racism of the school officials or just the favoritism towards some students. Either way, the students learned that they could not trust the school officials. Given this inequitable enforcement of the policies, it raised questions for the students of the effectiveness of the discipline policies particularly as they saw their school as chaotic and often times not safe for them. Further, the students often questioned the necessity of the strictness of the policies, which they saw as unnecessarily harsh particularly in light of the ineffective and often capricious enforcement of the policies. In Perth, however, the students had different experiences in their school as they considered their school safe and fair place. While this differed from some of the students' schooling experiences in their home countries, many of the students commented that this open environment allowed the students to have a better relationship with their teachers than they had in their home countries or then that they would have otherwise been able to have. The discipline policies in Perth conveyed to the students that they were trusted

to make good choices and that their teachers were not there to be enforcers but rather mentors, friends and allies.

The schools' differing policies towards information sharing also highlighted the important role in having a consistent web of information that provided the students with multiple access points to that information. Thus in Perth, if the students did not get the information from the announcements there were also peer groups, supportive teachers and counselors who guided the student in Perth towards the appropriate classes, various post-secondary options and the myriad of extracurricular options available for them. This systematic planning for the students' engagement ensured that the students understood how their school worked and the different opportunities offered. This proactive approach helped students feel connected to their school and helped foster their feeling of belonging to the school. In Larton, the students did not have access to the same system of information networks and therefore many of the students did not seem to know or understand the various options available for them from the types of class that they could take to the extracurricular offerings. For example, while many of the Larton students I interviewed wanted to attend college, they were enrolled in vocational programs indicating a mismatch in their aspirations and the preparation they received at school. Additionally, they received little to no information about the steps necessary to apply to various post-secondary institutions. Thus, the students missed important deadlines and opportunities to prepare for the college process. Given their families' limited understanding of the college process, they had little access to information outside of their schools. Therefore, the lack of consistent information prevented students from fully participating and taking advantages of the resources available and feeling connected and integrated into their schools thereby limiting many students' feelings of belonging to LAHS.

When looking at the role of teachers and policies in supporting students' feelings of belonging to the school, it suggests that students who felt the most connected had developed

caring and supportive relationships with their teachers who also provided a point of information access for them. In addition, when the school planned for the distribution of information through multiple avenues the students learned about the different options available to them and this allowed them to connect with their school in as many ways as they wanted to. Furthermore, policies that were implemented fairly and consistently taught students to respect the rules and allowed for relationships to develop with adults that were based on trust and mutual respect. This occurred in Perth where even when students did not develop close relationships with their teachers, they still trusted and respected them. The policies seemed to provide the possibility for developing relationships with the students.

This chapter shows the importance of teachers and policies in facilitating the development of schools that welcome immigrant students. In creating safe, inclusive environments, school leaders and teachers need to ensure that the policies in place provide students with the information that they need to connect with their school as much as students choose to. With the support of policies that create these kinds of safe, supportive environment, teachers have a fundamentally important role in helping students connect with their schools. Students developed close relationship with teachers also were those who felt the strongest feelings of belonging to their school – even if they had not yet establish a strong group of friends or joined extracurricular opportunities. The prominence of teachers in shaping students’ feelings of belonging then reinforces the crucial work that teachers do above and beyond conveying information. This research points to the importance of teachers cultivating relationships with their students to provide them with the support necessary to successfully navigate their new schools. In particular, for immigrant students whose identities have been challenged as they immigrated to a new country and have had to reckon with their feelings of difference and insecurities, teachers can create feelings of safety and belonging students desperately need to successfully adjust to their new schools and countries. Further, as we will see in the next chapter, students’ relationship

with their teachers will also support their understanding about the role of their new government in their life. Thus, students viewed teachers as exemplary citizens whom they watched model the work of citizenship in their daily work in their schools. This important and understudied role will be explored in the following chapter.

Chapter 7

The Role of Belonging in Students' Civic Thinking

Introduction

This chapter will present the findings on students' thinking around belonging and how it relates to their civic development. This chapter will begin to answer the question "How do immigrant students understand their political socialization process and are they influenced by their experiences of inclusion or exclusion in their schools"? This chapter will present findings from the Larton and Perth students together as they shared similar understandings of citizenship and belonging. The chapter will begin by examining the students' definitions of citizenship which tended to fall into two categories: legalistic and relational. These categories, however, are not mutually exclusive as will be shown in the third section of this chapter as the students shared similar interpretations of the characteristics of good citizens. Therefore their definitions of citizenship differed more in what they emphasized than the enactment of citizenship. Those who defined citizenship legalistically focused on the rights and responsibilities associated with citizenship while other students honed in on the relational and lived experiences of citizenship. Interestingly two students explicitly connected citizenship and belonging, which fit within the relational category and will be examined within that subsection. The third section of this chapter will explore the common characteristics of good citizenship and the role models that students shared. These characteristics and role models highlight the intimate connection between how students think about belonging and whom they consider good citizens. We see that the students' citizen role models exhibit the characteristics of a good citizen and also exemplify individuals who help students feel a sense of belonging both to their schools and communities.

This chapter will present the following findings:

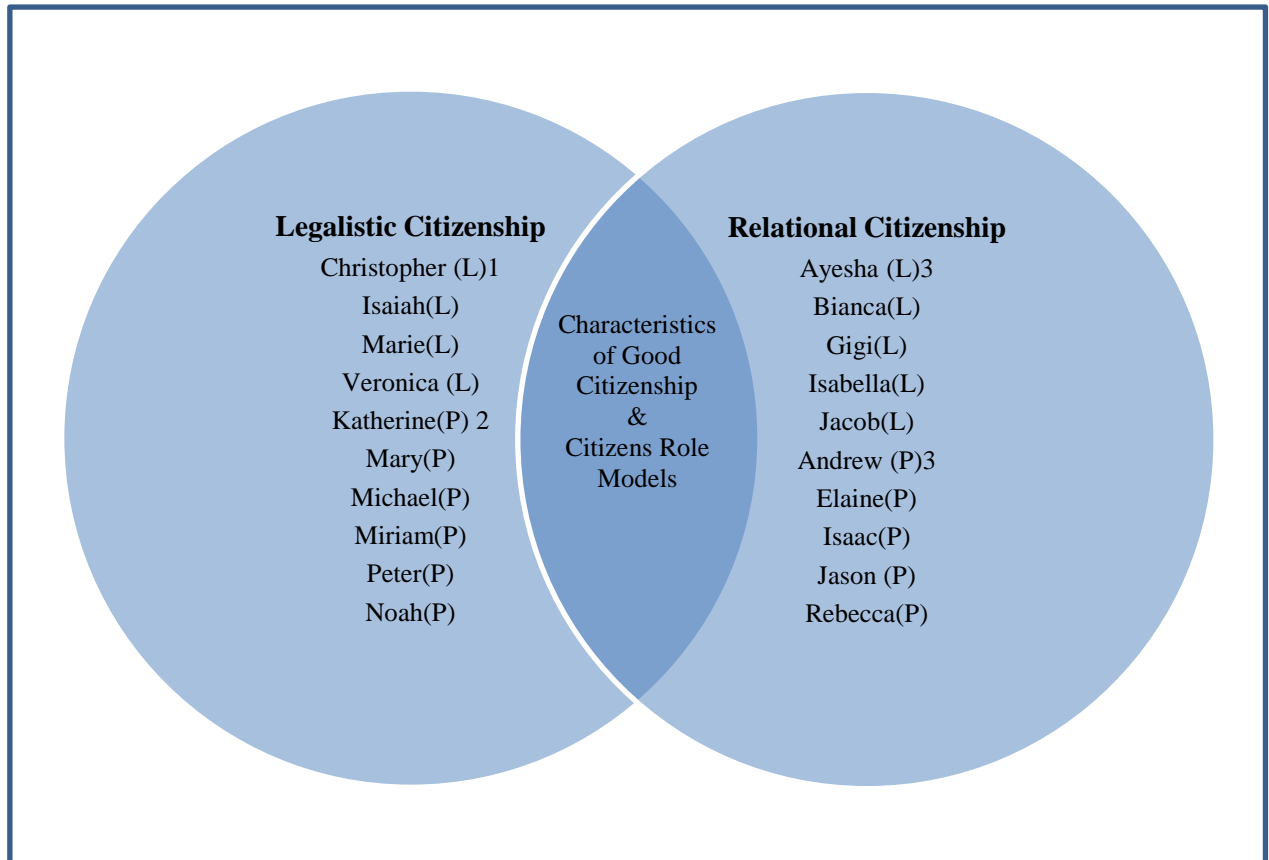
- 1) Students had varying understanding of citizenship. One group of students tended to define citizenship in legal terms of the rights and responsibilities entailed in citizenship. The other group of students focused on the relational aspects of citizenship. However, while the students differed in their various emphases on the priority of citizenship, they shared a similar understanding of what the characteristics of good citizenship entailed.
- 2) The relationship between belonging and citizenship became the most clear when students discussed the characteristics of a good citizen and those that they considered citizen role models. These good citizens shared the characteristics with people who helped create places of belonging for the students. We see that the students' role models exemplify individuals who both help students feel a sense of belonging to their schools and communities as well as model good citizenship for the students.

Students' Understandings of Citizenship

Students understood citizenship in two dominant ways. Some students defined citizenship by the legal rights and responsibilities gained as a citizen. These rights included the right to work and not be deported, identified responsibilities included for example serving in the military and voting. Other students focused less on the legal aspects of citizenship and more on the enacted everyday citizenship of living in a community, which I call relational citizenship. Two students explicitly linked citizenship to belonging to a community and their definitions will be explored within the relational understanding of citizenship. While some scholars might consider these definitions as a "thin" understanding of citizenship, the definitions indicate students' understanding of citizenship and thus it is important to honor their definitions as they reflect the

totality of the students' lived experiences and emergent understandings. Figure 1 highlights that while students have different emphases in their understanding of citizenship, they share an

Figure 1. Overview of the Students' Views on Citizenship



¹Denotes a student from Larton

²Denotes a student from Perth

³Explicitly connected citizenship and belonging

understanding of the characteristics of good citizens that lay at their core of their understanding of citizenship and as we will see later in the chapter their understanding of belonging. Figure 1 also shows that students are roughly split in thinking about citizenship in legalistic and relational terms. Figure 1 also illustrates that despite the different emphases the students put on their definitions; these definitions were not mutually exclusive. Therefore, while the students might have begun by focusing on their rights and responsibilities entailed in their definitions; over the course of the conversation they would also talk about the relational nature of citizenship by discussing the characteristics of good citizenship. This becomes evident in the third section on

characteristics of belonging. The following sections will unpack the students' views on these two forms of citizenship.

Legalistic understanding of citizenship

The students who defined citizenship legalistically converged on the legal rights and responsibilities that one derives from being a citizen. In this group, students tended to name either a right or a responsibility at first and then upon further discussion would include examples of the other part of the legal understanding of citizenship. The focus on responsibilities can be seen in Christopher's definition of citizenship. As a Larton senior and immigrant from the Dominican Republic, Christopher explained that being a citizen meant that he could call himself an American. As he explains in the following excerpt this means that he is a "part" of the nation and therefore has responsibilities to the nation.

Christopher: I mean you're just an American...

Interviewer: All right, so what does that mean to you?

Christopher: That means you, to me that means I'm part of this nation, I've got to go out and support this country in any way I can.

Interviewer: So in terms of thinking about that, what are some of those responsibilities to support your country? What do you think they are?

Christopher: I mean if we ever had a draft out... I would go.
(personal communication 6/10/14)

For Christopher, being a part of the country meant that he had to support his country even if it meant going to war. Recognizing that to be part of the country meant that he would have certain responsibilities, I asked about any rights that being an American that citizenship may provide. Interestingly he did not feel as if he knew many as he said, "I don't know just pretty much the rights we have; freedom of speech, freedom of religion and all that" (personal communication

6/10/14). Thus, Christopher tended to focus more on his responsibilities and the role that he had to play rather than the rights accorded to him.

The emphasis on fulfilling responsibilities to the nation was also evident in Michael, a 17-year-old Perth senior from Paraguay who defined citizenship similarly to Christopher. For him, being a citizen meant that s/he “follow[ed] all the rules, I suppose that are usually there” (personal communication, 10/16/14). Thus he expected to obey the Canadian rules. Similarly to Christopher, I asked him if there were other benefits to being a citizen to which he replied that “I guess I have what everybody else has the right to. I am not different in any way” (personal communication, 10/16/14). Like Christopher, Michael’s focus was on complying with the obligations of citizenship rather than enjoying the benefits of it. Other students concentrated on the legal rights one gained from being considered a citizen.

Isaiah provided one example of a student who defined citizenship by the rights that he gained from being a citizen. Therefore, for this Larton high school senior from the Dominican Republic, being a citizen meant the security to live and work in the country without fear of repercussions, which is seen in the following interview excerpt.

Interviewer: What does that mean, citizenship?

Isaiah: Basically it’s getting the papers to work here and do your stuff.

Interviewer: So, what are some of those things that you have to do as part of your stuff?

Isaiah: You got to like vote. You get the right to stay and not get deported, you got the right to own a house.

(personal communication 6/10/14)

For Isaiah becoming a citizen meant that he could feel secure in his right to be in America. It means that he has the right to vote as well as become invested in the community through work and home ownership. The focus that Isaiah has on the security one gains from citizenship is telling in part because of the focus on “illegal” immigrants in Larton from the local political establishment in

the mid-2000s. While he did not explicitly connect his definition to the events in Larton around illegal immigration, one wonders how much his focus on the rights of citizenship came from the threat of removing immigrants' rights to live and work in Larton.

Other students also focused on the rights that one gains from being a citizen but named different rights such as the right to vote in elections. Noah an 18-year-old Paraguayan senior in Perth echoed Isaiah's focus on rights. In his words, "citizenship it's like you belong to the country like you have the right to vote or something else and I got that like [while I was in] South America" (personal communication, 10/15/14). Noah's emphasis on rights indicates that the belonging to a country provides certain privileges, which much like Isaiah means that you can engage in certain activities. Noah contrasts the automatic rights he has as a citizen with those of his mother who had to gain her citizenship once she moved to Canada. Having been born to a Canadian father who moved to Paraguay, Noah held Canadian citizenship even though he was born in Paraguay. Further Noah's definitions show that belonging for him implies a more abstract sense of community rather than the other students who defined citizenship in terms of belonging to local groups. For Noah, belonging granted certain rights in the country but did not foster the feelings of a sense of belonging to a local community

While the students' beliefs in this section might have varied in their emphasis on rights and responsibilities, overall the students emphasized the legal benefits and obligations that came from citizenship. This view indicated that they understood that citizenship held legal implications whether they were certain responsibilities or benefits. In the following section, students who thought of citizenship within the community context will be explored.

Relational citizenship

Two groups of students fell into the category of relational citizenship. The first group of students thought of citizenship in relationship to where they lived. This meant that they defined citizenship as some variation of a ‘citizen is a person who lives in a city’. Initially this seemed like a very thin definition of citizenship. However, as the interviews continued the students usually expanded their definitions to include other elements of participation in that community they lived in. This participation could include the fulfillment of and enjoyment of legal rights and responsibilities of a citizen such as was seen in the students who prioritized legalistic citizenship, or it could include the more relational aspects of citizenship such as citizens caring for and helping the communities that they live in. Thus these students as well as for the two students who explicitly defined citizenship in the context of belonging, we see an overlap between their understanding of belonging and their definitions of citizenship.

A typical example of a relational understanding of citizenship came from Jacob, a 17-year-old junior from Larton who defined a citizen as “somebody who lives in whatever part that they’re calling themselves a citizen” (personal communication, 5/1/2014). The first part of this statement exemplifies the focus on the local and residential aspect of citizenship. As a follow up question, I asked him to clarify this statement, to which he replied “just caring for your community. Trying not to bring it down. Try to bring it up in whatever way that is” (personal communication, 5/1/2014). This second statement brings in the element of care, a key component in students’ understanding of belonging. Therefore for Jacob it is not merely a matter of living in a community, a citizen must also care for and work to improve that community “in whatever way that is” (personal communication, 5/1/2014).

Other students who focused on living in the community also tended highlight the responsibility to care for the community one lived in. Gigi, an 18-year-old Dominican senior in

Larton fits that pattern. Her initial response to my question asking her to define citizenship was “like people, like just part of the city” (personal communication 5/20/15). I asked her what it meant to be part of the city she responded “like everybody should support each other, I don’t know...like other people, like people don’t support each other so it’s like... they don’t even try to care about each other a lot of times” (personal communication 5/20/15). This definition of citizenship highlights how for the students many times citizenship and belonging overlap as we see that Gigi finds it important to be part of the city by supporting other citizens. Support in her definition meant to care about others who lived in the city with her. Gigi’s quote also shows that her own experience in Larton has not mirrored her expectations for good citizen as she noted that “they[being Larton residents] don’t even try to care about each other a lot of times” (personal communication 5/20/15). The difference between her experience in the community and her expectations for good citizens highlights the important role of role models in students’ civic development and will be shown in the section on citizen role models.

In Perth, students echoed and extended their Larton peers’ sentiments. Elaine, a 20-year-old senior from the Philippines, defined a citizen as a person who had “been living in the country for long time and that you know the country. Not necessary everything but, you basically know how things work” (personal communication, 10/17/14). As Jacob and Gigi discussed, Elaine focused on a place that one lived but added that one must know about the community. This extension continues to build the connections between citizenship and belonging as one of the requirements of belonging was knowing and feeling comfortable in a space. In that excerpt, Elaine explicitly makes that connection to knowing and being comfortable in a community where one is a citizen. Knowing how the community operates and how to navigate the community also would theoretically allow for Elaine and others to participate more effectively.

The importance of knowing a place was extended by Rebecca who included in her definition a feeling of love for one’s country. As a 17-year-old senior from Germany, Rebecca

has spent 12 years in Canada and therefore she too discusses the importance of knowing a place. Having lived in Canada for so long, Rebecca feels that she cannot return to Germany because she no longer knows the country but now knows and loves Canada. Thus even though Rebecca knows that she is a citizen of Germany, she feels that she belongs in Canada and want Canadian citizenship because she feels she knows, loves and feels comfortable in Canada.

Rebecca: Citizen? I think it always means like the people that live here.

Interviewer: Yeah. So, I mean because it's interesting. So, a citizen is a person who lives at some place. You live in Canada, but you're not a citizen of Canada. Is there something different about being a citizen versus just living in a city or can...

Rebecca: Yeah. Like if you go to the [United] States, you always have to go in and sign papers and, you know, because you are not a citizen. [But] like I lived here my, well, almost my whole life. Like, I think I belong here. I will love... I wouldn't wanna like move back. I wouldn't think I belong to Germany or something.

Interviewer: Right, what about Perth? Do you feel like you belong to the community of Perth?

Rebecca: Yeah. I think so because it's always, because I lived here, too, in Perth and I know Perth really good and, yeah. I would say so.

(personal communication, 10/17/14)

As Rebecca explains even though she is not technically a citizen of Canada because of the long time she has lived in Canada, and Perth specifically, she feels comfortable and like she belongs in Perth. She would not want to move back to Germany in part because as we discussed later in the second interview "because I live here and I do not really know anything about Germany anymore" (personal communication, 11/25/14). Like the other students who discussed needing to know your community, Rebecca notes that because of her time in Canada she does not know anything about Germany even though she was born there and retains her German citizenship.

While this group of students does not explicitly define citizenship in terms of belonging initially, as they elaborate on their reasoning, the overlap between the students focus on the residential aspects of citizenship and their understanding of belonging becomes clearer.

While only two students specifically defined citizenship as belonging, since they specifically related citizenship to belonging, I felt it important to understand what they understood the relationship between the two concepts to be and whether they thought of belonging to a country as an abstraction such as the imagined community of Anderson (2006) or whether they thought of it in the more concrete sense.

The first student who defined citizenship in terms of belonging came from Larton. Ayesha a 21-year-old who emigrated from the Middle Eastern North African (MENA) region to Larton understood citizenship to mean belonging to a country. In the following excerpt, I asked whether belonging to a country meant the same thing as belonging to the community center a place that she has discussed feeling a strong connection to in an earlier part of the interview. Her affirmative response indicated that for Ayesha belonging to a country feels more personal than the imagined community that Anderson discusses:

Interviewer: When you think of the word citizen, what does that mean to you?

Interviewee: Citizen?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. To be like a citizen of a country.

Interviewee: Like you belong in this country.

Interviewer: Okay. Does the belonging to the country feel the same way as the belonging to the community center?

Interviewee: Mm-hmm... Yeah. I think so, because when I feel like I'm a U.S. citizen. That's like my country, not the country where I came from²⁴. I grew up here and I learned here and everything so I feel like this is my country.

(personal communication, 6/10/14)

²⁴ This quote has been slightly altered to preserve her anonymity.

In this excerpt, we see that belonging for her means to her that she is a part of this country. She knows and understands America and like her feelings about the community center where she feels comfortable and accepted, she feels the same way about her adopted home country. She knows it and feels a part of it. This feeling of belonging that Ayesha suggests highlights the overlap between belonging and citizenship. It shows that she thinks of her citizenship in the context of her belonging to the country through her knowledge, comfort and understanding.

In Perth, Andrew, a 14-year-old Filipino student in Perth also understood citizenship to mean belonging to the community. As he explains in the following excerpt:

Interviewer: When you hear the word 'citizen' what does that—what do you think of when you hear the word 'citizen'?

Andrew: A citizen? It's like you live in a certain country or place and you belong to that community.

(personal communication, 10/16/14)

This response echoes of the previous responses which focused on the residential and local community. In the second interview, I asked whether he felt like he belonged in Canada and Perth given his definition of a citizen, he responded by affirmatively agreeing explaining:

Andrew: Okay. For the short time I've been here, for the first few weeks, I'm not really interacting with much people. But when I started going to school and there's these friends, they're growing and growing. They'll be like "isn't it fun in Canada?" And I said, "Yes." "Are you living here?" I also said, "Yes." Then they said, "Welcome here and now you're living here, you're like a citizen here right now." And you're a part of this place now and this country. They'll be like, "Welcome to Canada."

Interviewer: So, you've had friends say this to you?

Andrew: Yeah. And teachers too.

(personal communication, 11/6/14)

Through this conversation, we see that Andrew valued belonging to the Canadian and Perth community but that his feelings of belonging and citizenship came for the personal interactions he had with his peers and teachers. The invitation by his peers and teachers shaped Andrew's positive perceptions of Canada and intricately connected him to his new community.

Throughout this section, students focused on living in and being a part of their community. In doing so, the overlap between their definition of belonging and their understanding of citizenship becomes clear. We see that the students believe that to live in a community means more than just being from a place. It requires caring for and supporting the community. It also includes elements of knowing and feeling comfortable in these different communities. The following section will examine students' understandings of the characteristics of a good citizen, and further illustrate the interconnections between belonging and citizenship.

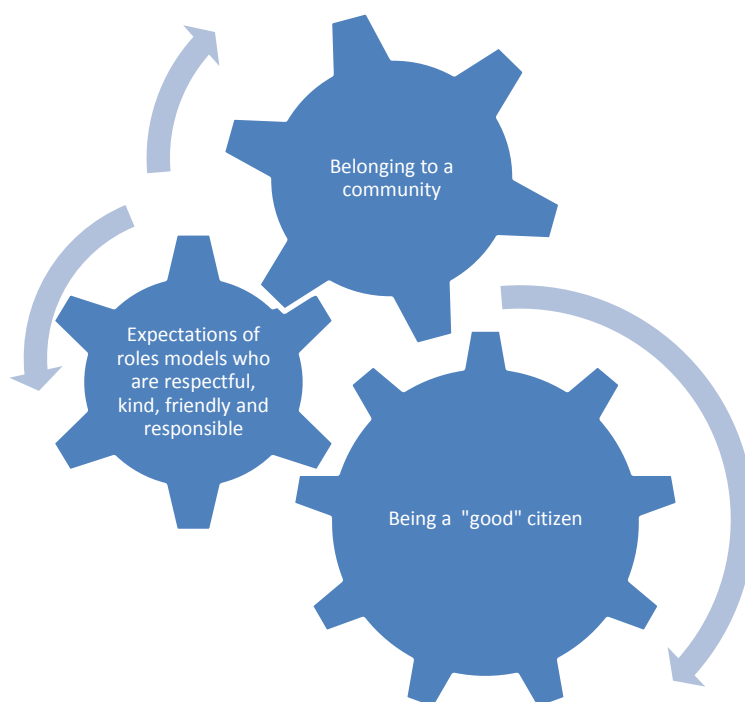
Good Citizens Model Inclusive Behaviors

The relationship between belonging and citizenship became the most clear when students discussed the characteristics of a good citizen and those individuals that they considered citizen role models. These good citizens shared the characteristics with people who helped create places of belonging for the students. The students describe the characteristics of a good citizen as someone who is respectful, helpful, kind, friendly and responsible. For the students, the citizens they held up as role models were those individuals who also helped them connect to their communities (whether in or out of school) thus facilitating for the students an entrée into their first public communities. As these adults helped the students enter and learn about these welcoming public communities, students came to understand how to engage in these communities. Being helpful and kind allowed the students to feel safe and that they belonged to

these new communities. It then makes sense that when describing the characteristics of a good citizen, they would focus on first the characteristics that created a community in which they felt they could be included before focusing on more traditional political activities. These individuals by their actions and deeds helped them feel like they belonged to a community beyond their immediate families and friends.

Figure 2 provides an example of how this relationship between belonging and citizenship

Figure 2. The Relationship between Belonging and the Characteristics of a Good Citizen



may work. From the figure, we see that the lynchpin in feeling a sense of belonging to a community and being a good citizen are people who share characteristics such as being respectful, helpful, kind, friendly and responsible. Thus being a good citizen involved creating an inclusive community. As will be shown in this section, the students' discussion of these characteristics and citizen role models illustrated that for the students the very basic level of citizenship began with how they wanted others to treat them and how they wanted to treat others.

For students, this provided one of the basic levels of engagement with a community that welcomes and accepts them. Therefore, the role models of good citizens for these students were those who helped create for them a sense of belonging. Thus for most of the students in Larton who did not feel a strong sense of belonging, these role models existed outside of the schools and in places where they did find a sense of belonging such as at the Unity Project community center or family members. One of the two students in Larton who did feel a sense of belonging to their school named her teacher as role model of good citizenship. In Perth, more than half of the students identified teachers as individuals that they considered to be their citizen role models. These teachers helped create a sense of belonging for them and in doing so also inspired their understanding of what it meant to be a good citizen. In the following section, the students' words will highlight the characteristics of a good citizen. Following that, we will examine how their citizen role models embodied these characteristics and how this not only taught the students about the role of good citizenship but also how it helped them feel a sense of belonging to their communities that they shared with these individuals.

Characteristics of the “Good” Citizen

When students discussed characteristics of a good citizen, they included traits such as respectfulness, helpfulness, kindness, friendliness and acting responsibly. They did not distinguish between the school community and their broader community. As seen in this interview excerpt from Charlie a 14-year-old freshman from the Dominican Republic, he begins by talking about the general community but then provides examples from his school. This quick slip into the school as an example highlights that for the students like Charlie there is no separation between school and their broader community. The school is their community and as Charlie explains people act the same inside and outside of the school community.

Interviewer: What do you think a good citizen needs to be? To be a good citizen.

Charlie: Like community, being respectful you know, like I said. Coming in helping out people. Saying thank you. Saying good morning when the teachers come in, and not taking class like a joke, see?

Interviewer: Yeah. So in school you have to be taking class seriously, being respectful to others. What about when you're not in school? Are there other things that you have to do as a citizen?

Charlie: Well, you see everything that you're going to do in school, you're going to do it outside too.

(personal communication, 6/10/14)

In this quote, Charlie clearly explains the connection between school and the outside community, which he perceives as the same and thus a good citizen will act in a similar manner in school as outside of school. Therefore, the respect students' show in class, the offers to help, all translate to how one would behave outside of the school according to Charlie's thinking. By extension, when students perceive that their teachers do not respect them, help or care for them not only does this disengage them from their school community, it extends into the students' thinking about the broader community and how other adults can and will treat them. Therefore as will be shown later Charlie's citizen role models come from the Unity Project community center where adults treat him and others with respect and kindness as well as respectfully engage with him and his ideas for the community there.

Other students shared Charlie's emphasis on being a good citizen by actively taking care of one's community. Marie, a 17-year-old Dominican junior noted that a good citizen needed to "be a part of their community" (personal communication, 6/10/14). By being a part of her community, she expected citizens to care for the community around them. These expectations came through in her interview excerpt below:

Interviewer: What makes a person a good citizen?

Marie: Like if they are part of the place

Interviewer: Okay. What makes --

Marie: [interposing] If they could take care of it. By help[ing], cleaning and keep it nice. You have to be positive all the time.

(personal communication, 6/10/14)

In this excerpt, Marie shares that to be a good citizen one has to care for the community, which directly ties back to belonging to a community. A good citizen exhibits his/her care for the community “by help[ing], cleaning, keeping it nice” (personal communication, 6/10/14). This care necessitates action on behalf of the community whether keeping it clean or keeping it nice. Further, she expects good citizens to be positive. This positivity and care will be highlighted in the next section on citizen role models.

Perth students also believed that being helpful was an important characteristic of good citizens. Daniel, a 17-year-old senior from the MENA region, noted that a good citizen must be kind, helpful, and nice. These characteristics allowed citizens to be open to other people which then fostered the kind of interactions that create both a sense of belonging as well as the basis for an inclusive civic community. Daniel also suggested that good citizens should know about the country which extends the other students’ thinking about being a good citizen by adding in this other element that the students discussed in their definition of belonging which included being known and recognized.

Interviewer: So, can you describe the characteristics of a good citizen?

Daniel: Good citizen?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Daniel: That means kind person, smile, always smiling, always willing to help other people, just being nice and yeah.

Interviewer: Do you think you need to know certain things to be a good citizen?

Daniel: Well, absolute. You need to know how to be a Canadian because Canadians are really good citizens....You have to know the history, Canadian history, how it happened, and, yeah.

Interviewer: And, what does knowing those things help you do? Do they help you do anything or is it just important to know?

Daniel: Oh, it's just important to know because it's your country, that's where you live and every person need to know something about where he lives.

(personal communication, 11/7/14)

In this excerpt, Daniel integrates the concepts that the other students introduced such as being helpful and kind but extends it to include knowing the history of the country and knowing about the country. This extension further develops Elaine's earlier notion of the importance of knowing one's community and combines it with the other characteristic of a good citizen. Thus good citizens are not only inclusive they are also knowledgeable.

Other students also suggested that knowing one's country was an important characteristic of a good citizen. Jason emphasized that a good citizen must first "know the culture and know how people think so that it's like you're getting used to how they live. Then, in order to be part of the culture" (personal communication, 11/5/14). His understanding of the characteristics of a good citizen extend beyond being knowledgeable about the culture and how they live, a good citizen must also become involved in his community, elect capable leaders and love one's country as seen in the following excerpt:

Jason: A good citizen must be involved in the community.

Interviewer: Okay.

Jason: He or she must partake in making decisions....

Interviewer: What does it mean?

Jason: Yes, voting for people. I think you must yes, vote wisely. Knowing which person's the right sort of position.

Interviewer: Ah, okay. Right, vote wisely. So, what do you think a good citizen would do to be able to vote wisely? Like, what are those things that they have to do?

Jason: He or she must look up on the profile of the candidate and what are the things that certain candidate have done previously and then based on those strengths, he must weigh if he or she is eligible or qualified for that position. ...A good citizen must [also] love his country.

Interviewer: Okay yes. So, love his country. Now, country is big, right?

Jason: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you think you need to love your country or love your community or both or like just your country is more important.

Jason: Yes, both.

(personal communication, 11/5/14).

In this excerpt, Jason connects the theme of knowledge and being involved in the community by electing wise leaders and loving one's country. Some like Rebecca and Jason explicitly discusses the importance of loving one's country. In some of the other conversations where students discussed being kind, helpful and nice to one's fellow citizen, the implicit motivation for these actions also seemed to be the underlying love of one's country. Further, for Jason, one must know and love both the larger country as well as the local community. This understanding of a love that traverses from the local to the national suggests that citizenship for Jason is both abstract and deeply personal as indicated by his feeling that to be a good citizen he must both know and understand the culture that he is living as well as participate in it.

From this section, it becomes clear that the type of characteristics that the students value in good citizens: being kind, knowledgeable, helpful, respectful, and involved, also were

necessary components of places where students felt a sense of belonging. Thus, it makes sense that in the following section that the citizen role models students named had these characteristics and therefore helped students find a sense of belonging in their schools and communities. In the next section, the role models that students name as good citizen often times work in the places that the students feel a sense of belonging. Thus for the students in Larton, many of their citizen role models work in the Unity Projects community center or were family members. Given that many Perth students felt a sense of belonging to their high school, a number of students named teachers and educational assistants as their citizen role models.

Citizen Role Models

When asked to name a person that they believed was a good citizen, the students named individuals who were not just good citizens; they were also individuals who through their words and deeds helped create a place of belonging for the students. While students named family members or friends, the majority of students named people who worked in either their school or community. Naming family and friends align with the political science literature which finds that both family and friends shape students' civic development (Bloemraad & Trost, 2008; Jennings, Stoker, & Bowers, 2009; Tedin, 1980). Table 1 provides an overview of the categories of individuals that students named when discussing citizen role models. We see that nine students named individuals that worked in either their school or the Larton community center. The students who named someone from school also felt a sense of belonging to their school. Therefore given that only two students in Larton discussed feeling a sense of belonging to school, it makes sense that the majority of Larton students named individuals who were family, friends, or community center volunteers. In Perth, as more students felt a sense of belonging to their school, we found students often named teachers and other educational staff as citizen role models

which highlight the important role belonging has in fostering positive relationship necessary for role models. Students suggested that good citizens were those whose characteristics also made

Table 1 An overview of the categories of students' citizen role models

Family/friend	School	Community Center
Isabella (L) ¹	Gigi (L)	Ayesha (L)
Marie (L)	Andrew (P)	Charlie (L)
Veronica (L)	Daniel (P)	Jacob (L)
Christopher (L)	Mary (P)	
Elaine (P)	Miriam (P)	
Isaac (P)	Rebecca (P)	
Michael (P)		
Peter (P)		

¹(L) denotes Larton Students; (P) denotes Perth Students. Importantly, five students did not name good citizens. They were Bianca, Isaiah, Maria, Jason, Katherine.

them individuals that helped create places of belonging. In this intersection, these individuals

invited the students not only into the community center or school but also into a safe and

supportive public community where they could learn to be citizens themselves. These citizen role

models exemplified the students' list of characteristics of good citizens and in doing so enacted

the type of everyday citizenship that is at the basis for an engaged, inclusive community. The

students' discussions illustrate how through their everyday interactions with these adults, the

students witnessed these citizen role models modeling good citizenship through their inclusive practices.

In her observations and interactions with the Unity Projects community center volunteers,

21-year-old MENA student, Ayesha found that she appreciated and learned from the volunteers'

interactions with others and herself. Her observations taught her about what she valued in others

as she explains in this excerpt "Coz I'm watching and I like the way [Hector, the executive

director of the community center] acts himself... I have learned that actually because of him” (personal communication, 6/24/14). From watching him she felt that:

“after I met him I feel like there's a good chance of like anybody could become like him because ... he's just like cares and he tries to his best and I think he is really educated person and I've never seen like that here actually, honestly. I think he is like my biggest example I can use even when I move.... [because he] talks to people a lot like to make them feel better; he helps others a lot. He's very, very responsible and he does his work honestly and like not play around”

(personal communication, 6/24/14)

The example that Hector set of a hard-working, respectful and helpful person who tried his best and cared helped Ayesha realize that everyone can aspire to be like Hector including herself. His example informed her thinking about the characteristics of a good citizen. The care and dedication that Hector put into being the executive director of the community center also helped foster Ayesha's feelings of belonging to the community center. Hector's example and dedication to helping others at the community center translated into a place where Ayesha felt “comfortable...It didn't take me long to know everybody here, and I got along with everybody in here.... They don't really judge you for like different. I feel like we're all the same” (Ayesha, personal communication, 6/10/14). The feelings of comfort that Ayesha had at the community center were coupled by the role models she saw in Hector and the other community center volunteers whom she felt she knew and trusted. Further she learned from watching these volunteers the meaning of citizenship and the values she found important, lessons which as she acknowledges she could take anywhere.

Like Ayesha, Charlie, a 14-year-old student from the Dominican Republic found his citizen role models at the community center. Charlie shared Ayesha's focus on citizen role

models who were nice and helpful. Charlie viewed good citizens as those who valued “community, being respectful...[and] helping out people” (personal communication 6/10/14). Therefore, he named Sophia, the community center’s chef, and Steven, the community center’s athletic director, as his citizen role models. Sophia’s pleasant greetings and work at the community center shows her caring as compared to his own teachers whom he views as being unnecessarily mean as he explains in the following excerpt:

Charlie: She's always nice. She's always saying, "Hey" when we're snacking, you know. She's always being nice to people... Because I know some other people that would always try to be mean. You say, "Can I go to this place?" and they say, "No." Just like that.

Interviewer: Who are those people?

Charlie: Well, like I said, my teacher.

Interviewer: Okay. You were talking about--

Charlie: I asked him to go to the bathroom and they're like, "No, wait for a little second." Just let me go right now because I need to use it.

(personal communication 6/10/14)

This interview highlights how Charlie does not separate the work and learning that happens in school and the examples in his everyday life. He values individuals like Sophia who contribute to the life of the community through her respectful and caring ways. But Sophia’s attitude stands in stark contrast to teachers who seem to Charlie to be unnecessarily mean and in his words “try to be mean” (personal communication 6/10/14). The arbitrary nature of his teachers’ interactions detracts from the respectfulness that he expects from a citizen. Steven, the community center’s athletic director, provides another model of a good citizen for Charlie who says:

Charlie: [Steven] is always talking about what we should do in this program. Like to walk, because it's better for us.... I told him to bring a coach here to help us out. He said, "Just give me ideas."

Interviewer: So listening to you?

Charlie: Yeah. Like listening, he understands. Well, he's always being nice and stuff you know? A good citizen, like I said, he's always trying to be the best person. What can I say? He's always trying to help out. If I want to be like a principal one day, I want to be a nice person to the kids. I don't want to be known for being a bad person you know?

(personal communication 6/10/14)

In this example, Charlie wants to be like Steven in his contributions to the community by taking seriously the ideas of the students. He values that Steven listens to him and feels that he can talk to him about his ideas for improving the community center. Not only do these actions make Steven a model citizen, they also help Charlie feel like a valued member of the community center and foster his feelings of belonging to the community center.

Students in Perth echoed their Larton peers by naming individuals who modelled traits that they found admirable in a citizen and who helped them feel a sense of belonging in their schools and their community. Most Perth students felt a strong connection to their schools; they therefore mentioned their families or teachers as individuals who exemplified good citizenship. Many of the same traits that the Larton students mentioned were echoed by the Perth students and therefore they chose individuals who exhibited characteristics that exemplified both model citizenship and inclusivity. While some Perth students discussed family members as role models, there was a stark difference between the Larton and Perth students to see how many more Perth students named their teachers or other school staff members as their citizen role models. This aligns because Perth students felt a stronger sense of belonging to their school and therefore it

makes sense that they would also more often than their Larton peers name teachers as models of good citizenship.

One example came from Daniel, a 17-year-old from the MENA region, who named his management teacher as a good citizen who in his words was:

Daniel: “a good citizen. He is always in a good mood. He is always helping other people. He is just a nice person....

Interviewer: So, what did you learn from him as being about being a good citizen?

Daniel: Well, that you have to be more open to people because he, he doesn't mind joking around to his students even if he is older than them, like he is like their friend... So, if you would be more open to people, people will like it and they will think you're a good citizen.”

(personal communication, 11/7/14)

For Daniel, the security of knowing that his teacher was kind and willing to help him facilitated Daniel's understanding of the actions of a good citizen by developing his understanding the reciprocity of being a citizen as one who is open and helpful to others within a community. Daniel defined a good citizen as a “kind person, smile, always smiling, always willing to help other people, just being nice....Canadians are really good citizens” (personal communication, 11/7/14). These traits are important not only in crafting an inclusive classroom but also in fostering Daniel's comfort with his school and his teachers. This comfort also translated into Daniel viewing the actions of his teacher as exemplifying the actions of a good citizen in so far as they made him feel welcome in the school community. While Daniel did not engage in the school given his work and hockey responsibilities after school, his interactions with his teachers provided him with role models for how citizens should engage with others.

Miriam echoes Daniel's sentiment that a good citizen needs to be helpful and kind but extended it to include conventional understandings of citizenship such as voting. This aligns with

Miriam's definition of what it means to be a good citizen which as she explained included "Abiding a law, voting, conscious about the social issues...I guess every person when you think about any issues, he or she will have something to say on it" (personal communication, 11/6/14). After completing the ICCS survey, she extended her thinking about good citizenship saying that participation was important because "Cause you can't be a good citizen if you're just thinking about yourself" (personal communication, 12/17/14). Given her understanding of the characteristics of a good citizen, she suggested that Ms. Lehrer provided her with a citizen role model because not only did she follow the rules of good citizenry but she also cared about her students' well-beings as shown in the little gestures as Miriam explains below:

Miriam: She votes, I guess. She lives here in Canada. She is following the rules and the law and she is just a good citizen. I can see that....

Interviewer: You gave example of Ms. Lehrer. Does she meet all of those criteria that you're talking about?

Miriam: Yeah, she is. I've learned from her [that] even the smallest thing can have a big impact to a certain thing. [Like] Helping a student in terms of a certain subject. Ms. Lehrer, she's so kind, she's so nice. She let you borrow her phone and tablet. I don't know how to explain it.

(personal communication, 11/6/14)

In this example, we see that Miriam supposes that because of Ms. Lehrer's actions in school, which include the "small" things such as being kind and nice and letting "you borrow her phone and tablet", she believes Ms. Lehrer would act as a good citizen outside of school. This faith in her teacher because of her in-school actions provides an interesting and important insight into how students learn from their citizen role models. Miriam did not explicitly know whether Ms. Lehrer voted. However, Ms. Lehrer's behavior in school suggested to Miriam that Ms. Lehrer would also act as a good citizen outside of school. However, as a person who created places of safety and

belonging for the students, Miriam and possibly other students made a logical leap to assume that Ms. Lehrer was also a good citizen in other parts of her life.

This logical leap could potentially be problematic for students' political development particularly if the students' faith in teachers is disappointed which could lead to disillusionment about the civic process. However, the overlap between adults who created feelings of belonging and their students' perception of them as good citizen highlights that these immigrant students valued learning about the public sphere in places where they felt a sense of belonging. This data cannot explain how the relationship between belonging and citizenship develops but it seems that for the students they must feel a sense of belonging to the community before they name citizen role models from those spaces. Therefore, none of the students named a citizen role model who worked or was identified with a place that they did not feel a sense of belonging to. Further, evidence of the interconnectedness of the two concepts can be seen in the similarities of the words that students used to describe both their definition of belonging and their characteristics of good citizens. The characteristics of a good citizen would create spaces in which students would feel a sense of belonging i.e. they would feel treated equally and respectfully by others who knew and cared for them.

Conclusion

This chapter shows the overlap in how the students think about belonging and citizenship in several key ways. First, we see that the students define citizenship in two ways. One group of students tends to think of it along more legalistic terms such as the rights they gain and the responsibilities that they have towards their country. This group's focus on the legal aspects of citizenship contrasts with the other groups more relational understanding of citizenship which tended to focus on the local communities that one lived in. However, when the students discussed

what it meant to be a citizen of a community, it brought up actions that related to creating a caring and inclusive environment. Within this environment, the students also discussed other traits that created communities where they may have felt a sense of belonging. This unexpected overlap in definitions of citizenship and belonging highlights that the students value communities where they find a sense of belonging whether that is in school or other community venues.

This chapter also shows the overlap between the characteristics of good citizens and the characteristics necessary to create places and spaces of belonging. Students believed that good citizens should be respectful, a necessary ingredient in a place of belonging where students' expect to be treated equally. Secondly, students argued that good citizens must be kind and helpful, another important component in students' definitions of belonging. Interestingly, students also shared the importance of knowing and understanding the country and the culture. For some this explicitly meant knowing how their new country operates and how they can get involved. All of these factors would be necessary according to the students to be a "good citizen" as well as create a sense of belonging in their new countries.

Lastly, the chapter spotlighted some of the community and school actors that provided the students with citizen role models. These role models served in multiple roles for the students. That is, that these individuals all worked or volunteered in places where students felt a sense of belonging. By being the types of individuals who created places of belonging for the students, these individuals also modelled the type of citizenship that the students hoped to enact themselves. Significantly, students did not name individuals who existed in places where they did not feel a sense of belonging thus in Larton only one student named a teacher as a citizen role model while in Perth where many of the students felt a strong connection to their school, five students named teachers or other staff as role models for them. This finding illustrates the importance of both belonging in the civic learning of the students and the role of adult role models in developing students' civic understandings.

Chapter 8

Discussion and Implications

Introduction

Researchers, philosophers and educators have long acknowledged the important role of schools in cultivating educated citizens interested and engaged in our public, political communities (Brady, Verba, & Schlozman, 1995; Dewey, 1899; Gutmann, 1999). This long-standing role of the school matters all the more now as globalization and war has increased the flow of immigrants across national borders raising questions of integration into new communities and countries with unique cultures and democratic practices. In Canada and the United States, arriving immigrants and refugees²⁵ have increasingly chosen to settle in smaller suburban and rural areas outside large cities, traditional immigrant destinations²⁶. Often times, however, immigrant arrivals in these new immigrant destinations raise concerns about crime, economic worries about an often already stressed public infrastructure, and fears of growing competition for scarce jobs may create contexts of reception which isolate and marginalize immigrants and their children (Massey & Capoferro, 2008; S. Wortham & Contreras, 2002). Thus, the purpose of this comparative embedded exploratory case study was to investigate how immigrant students who lived in two new immigrant destinations in Canada and the United States made sense of their reception at their schools, their resulting feelings of belonging and their political socialization. The research assumed that schools provide an important context of reception for immigrant students and that this context of reception not only supports the students' acculturation into

²⁵ Refugees are not the focus of this study but for clarity are defined as according to the 1951 Refugee Convention as someone who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country".

²⁶ E.g. New York City, San Francisco, Toronto, Vancouver

society; it also introduced students into the public political community of the United States and Canada. Thus, the dissertation was guided by three research questions. The first question asked what is the relationship between immigrant students' feelings of belonging to their school and their political socialization process? Subsidiary questions included:

1. How do immigrant students understand belonging and how does this shape their feelings of belonging to the school?
2. How do immigrant students understand their political socialization process and are they influenced by their experiences of inclusion or exclusion in their schools?

Using the findings of this dissertation, the following section will present conclusions drawn from the findings. I will address the subsidiary questions first in the conclusions before pulling together the findings to respond to the overarching question. The third section of this chapter will present the implications of my research for theories of political socialization as well as policy and practice. The last section will suggest future directions for this research.

Belonging by Design

My research revealed several important findings that builds on previous research in the field of political socialization and belonging and adds depth to how education shapes students' understanding of citizenship and their role in the public, political community. The first subsidiary question sought to establish how immigrant students understood belonging and how that influenced their feelings of belonging in the school setting and therefore asked:

- 1) How do immigrant students understand belonging and how does this shape their feelings of belonging to the school?

As seen in the first and second findings chapters, immigrant students in both Perth and Larton felt that belonging to a group meant being treated equally, feeling comfortable, known, cared for and recognized and sharing similarities of backgrounds or interests. The students' definitions varied but all included elements of these concepts. Further in discussing this concept, it became clear that students expected there to be an element of reciprocity in belonging to a group thus they expected each member would contribute and receive the same feelings of equal treatment, respect, care from individuals who knew them. This understanding of belonging has been largely discussed in the psychology literature albeit with different terminology. As discussed in this literature, feeling a sense of belonging to one's school is more than just a matter of liking the school or feeling comfortable but involves feeling cared for, respected and being an important member in the community (Goodenow & Grady, 1993). In the following section, I present implications of my findings regarding belonging to schools.

Students choose where they belong

While belonging mattered to the students, belonging did not automatically occur because of a positive school climate. As seen in the Perth case, many students found a sense of belonging in their school where they felt treated equally, respectfully with kindness and care by their teachers. These students overall seemed happy to belong to the school community. However, some of the students in Perth, despite the positive school climate, felt a greater sense of belonging to their families, peers, and their churches. While this dissertation did not have the room to explore this important understanding, it is interesting to see that despite the existence of a positive school climate and the presence of caring adults, some students still felt a greater sense of connection outside of school. While in their interviews, they did not express this feeling of connection as a choice that they made, it seems that these students valued more their spaces of

belonging outside of their school. This notion of choosing to belong to a community has begun to be researched by psychologists who recognize that belonging is a subjective feeling and therefore differs from a school climate (Obst & White, 2007). Sociologists, like Yuval-Davis and others, noted that the social construction of differing groups create situations in which individuals feel more at home and thus a sense of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2012). Some Mennonite students whom I interviewed felt a stronger connection to their families and churches. Given the strong identification the group seems to inculcate in its members, it makes sense that they then found their place of belonging there. This finding highlights that belonging to a place means more than just a positive school environment it also involves individuals choosing to identify with a place or space.

Another example of choosing not to belong came from Jacob, a 17-year-old student with a German background who attended Larton Area High School. Jacob consciously made the choice not to belong to the high school and the larger community of Larton. . Thus even though Jacob was one of the few Larton interviewees who participated in extracurricular activities at the high school, was college-bound and enrolled in several honors courses, he distanced himself from Larton and the high school. Explaining this choice Jacob noted that he did not want to feel a sense of belonging in Larton, as he believed that the school was “mediocre” and the community’s attitudes conservative and regressive. This element of choosing whether to belong to a school and/or the broader community introduces an important part of belonging that has been discussed in the literature around communities but not specifically in high school communities. This raises interesting and important questions for further research.

Longing to belong: How thin belonging connected disconnected students to their school

Another important finding is what I am calling thin belonging. When asked if they felt a sense of belonging to their high school, many Larton students responded that they were “part” of the school even as their experiences spoke to their marginalization in school. With this response, the students potentially accomplished two related acts. First, they claimed their right to be part of the school even though they had spoken of many negative experiences with Larton teachers and policies. Being a part of the school meant that they attended their school daily, followed the rules, and did their work. However, the two sentiments, being part of the school and belonging to the school, implies very different set of attachments and sentiments. Whereas belonging provides a rich sense of membership in the life of a group, being a part of a school for the students merely meant being present. This claim of thin belonging seemed to assert the right of the students to be present in their schools despite the poor relationships many Larton students had with their teachers and other educational staff.

Secondly, by claiming this thin sense of belonging, students may have sought a protective mechanism allowing them to feel a sense of connection to the school without the full sense of belonging. The need to feel a sense of belonging has to be understood as a powerful motivation for students (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Osterman, 2000). These students sought a way to establish their presence in the school and their right to that presence even when their experiences prevented them from fully belonging to their school. Given that these students had post-secondary aspirations and therefore would continue to pursue their education rather than dropout, the students seemed to need to claim their right to be part of the school. By providing both an assertion and protection against the alienation that the students felt at school, the students highlighted the strong desire to feel connected even when their schools did not necessarily meet the students’ desires to belong. It is important to note that while they claimed this space for

themselves, I do worry about the implications of this thin belonging for students who may never develop a richer concept of belonging to a public community in either their schools or elsewhere.

Caring adults foster students' feelings of belonging

The findings also indicated the important role of a caring adult in fostering students' feelings of belonging. The two students in Larton who did feel a sense of belonging to their high school, Maria and Gigi, both connected with teachers and a supportive peer group. While other participants also developed a group of friends in the high school, they did not have that same relationship with a caring adult at the school and therefore they did not feel comfortable in or a sense of belonging to the Larton Area High School. Importantly, both Maria and Gigi identified the same problems that other students in Larton discussed such as the frequent unfair and inconsistent enforcement of rules, instances of bullying, and disengaged teachers. However, since they found a connection to the school through a caring adult, Maria and Gigi felt a sense of belonging that eluded the other students in Larton. Other students in Larton found connections to caring adults through their volunteering at the Unity Project Community Center where they worked with adults who treated them equally, respectfully, kindly and took an interest in getting to know them and recognize their abilities. These community center adults helped the students find a sense of belonging in a community that did not know how to react to the influx of immigrants. The community center gave the students a chance to positively engage with adults and their peers and find a place where they felt a sense of belonging outside of their families and friends.

Establishing such a community provides adolescent students the opportunity to develop their identity apart from their families and interact with other adults who help shape their understanding of themselves and their role in the community. As students engaged in observations of adult volunteers at the center, they came to recognize the traits they themselves

valued. Much like the apprentice in the situated learning theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991) or the child in Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory, these adults provided role models for the students' developing understanding of themselves and their role in the public community. Role models have also been seen to be important in the development of political efficacious students who looked to adults to model their own political engagement (Beaumont, 2010). Teachers' supportive responses to students' queries can support projects that ultimately change policy and practice teaching students how to work with adults and other students to challenge the status quo and win (Serriere, 2014). Though not an easy role to balance, when done well, adults can support students' efforts without taking over (Mitra, 2005).

My research then adds an important role for community adults and teachers in creating an inclusive and caring environment where students can connect with adults if they choose to. This qualification respects the autonomy of the students who may not want to connect with their teachers. However, the research has shown that teenagers do seek outside connections and thus the responsibility of adults lies in creating the potential for a caring relationship to exist if the teenager so choose. This desire to connect provides teachers and community adults a tremendous opportunity to act efficaciously and effectively by taking a caring and open stance towards teenagers. This stance does not require the support of other policy actors or conditions and can offer an opportunity for connection and belonging that these students desire thereby supporting the development of connected and concerned citizens. The implications for this stance will be further explored in the section on recommendations for policy and practice.

Fair policies and equal access to information support students' feelings of belonging

Lastly, the findings highlighted how students' feelings about school policies and information diffusion helped foster or hinder the students' feelings of belonging. Larton's

students resented their school policies as they felt the policies reflected a vision of students as dangerous and untrustworthy. These policies included a strict bathroom use policy, long waits to go through metal detectors, and the detailed dress codes. The students particularly resented the lack of uniformity with which administrators and teachers implemented and enforced the policies. Thus, by coupling strict but spotty enforcement of rules, students came to view the policies and adults who enforced them as ineffective and unfair. Furthermore, many students reported instances of bullying and shared that they did not feel safer despite the security policies in place at Larton Area High School. For Larton students, the policies became symbolic of their lack of welcome in the school as they contended with both an unsafe and uncaring school environment and unfair and unjust policies.

Perth students, however, attended a school where the policies around security, student movement and dress code did not presume that students would engage in problematic behaviors. Rather the students noted that lack of visible security measures in the school as well as the lack of strict rules. As one student, Andrew commented, the school felt much safer than his school in the Philippines, which had armed police officers present to protect against “street boys”²⁷. In Perth, the school doors remained unlocked throughout the day. The students had a bathroom pass they took with them when they went to the restroom but did not have to sign in and out of the class as they did in Larton. The bathrooms were not monitored by staff nor did students have to sign in or out of the bathroom. While a dress code existed, students did not complain about the lack of enforcement nor did they feel that it was unfairly enforced. The students interacted with adults who approached them in a friendly and fair manner. While this relaxed stance surprised some of the students as they had viewed teachers in their home countries as distant authority figures, they also noted that these types of informal and friendly interactions with the adults allowed students

²⁷Street boys was the term Andrew used for gangs of young boys and teenagers who would bully others students.

to form positive relationships with their teachers based on mutual respect, kindness, caring and recognition of the students' uniqueness. These relationships helped facilitate students' feelings of belonging to the school and inspired students' feelings of comfort with and respect for their teachers.

In addition to the policies towards discipline, the students' experiences in Larton and Perth diverged on access to information. While the Larton Area High School offered over 20 different clubs and 24 different athletic teams, the majority of the students did not know about the different opportunities to get involved. Thus, even if the students had been interested in getting involved, they had neither the access to the necessary information about the existence of the extracurricular activities nor the knowledge of how to join activities. In Perth, the students seemed to know about the variety of opportunities to get involved in the school and many of the Filipino and MENA²⁸ students took advantage of these opportunities. Their involvement in these extracurricular activities provided the students with an additional opportunity to connect to caring adults and peer groups thus furthering their sense of belonging to their schools. While the schools' differing sizes might have exacerbated these issues, I suggest that the policies in place at both schools mattered more in the way information was shared with students an implication for practice I will explore in subsequent sections.

Thus, we see that both the rules and information diffusion in these two schools facilitated differing access points for the immigrant students. The policies communicated different messages to the students regarding how the school staff perceived the student and the role of the student versus the role of the authority figure. Much like the notion of the social construction of the recipients of target policies developed by Schneider & Ingram (1993), students in Perth perceived themselves to be seen as capable individuals able to make appropriate choices about their clothing and bodily needs (i.e. when to use the restroom or when not to) as well as a sense of trust in the

²⁸ Students from the Middle Eastern North African Region

students that they would not need to be screened prior to entering the school. Thus, the 178 word dress code policy in Perth assumed that students could make appropriate choices based on the guidance provided by the document. Rather than being buzzed in through locked doors and metal detectors, students entered and exited when appropriate in Perth. Meanwhile in Larton, the seven-page dress code policy included explicit prohibition as well as pictures of appropriate outfit choices. However, despite the detailed description, this policy, like the others in Larton, was not consistently enforced. The students perceived that the policies were unfair. Further, the students did not feel as if they were seen as trusted or capable members of the school community as they had their clothing, bathroom needs and entrance and exits all regulated and closely monitored by teachers and other staff. These perceptions coupled with the lack of opportunity to engage with the extracurricular activities in Larton made it difficult for students to connect with teachers or know them as anything other than distant authority figures.

The school environments in these two schools communicated very different messages to their students about their role in the school and by extension their role in the broader political community. In Larton, students were expected to passively follow the clearly established rules. In Perth, the rules served as guides for students to make appropriate decisions about their behavior thus encouraging active choices and pro-social behavior. These differences in rules established a clear difference in the expectations for the students as well as the role of the adult. In doing so, the schools communicated to the students views about how society perceives students, adult figures and the nature of rules themselves. In Larton, the rules, however clearly defined, were frequently violated but only occasionally punished depending on who the transgressor was. Thus, rules became an arbitrary judgement by the authority figures rather than a consistent and fair guide for students' behavior. In Perth, students perceived the rules to be fairly and consistently enforced by the administration and teacher thus showing that rules were there to preserve the schools' ability to function as a community rather than as a punitive measure to be doled out at

will. Consequently, immigrant students in Perth and Larton had very different understandings of the nature of a school community and the role of adults in their lives. In Perth, we see that teachers and rules helped enhance students' experiences and sense of belonging. In Larton, the rules and teachers distanced and regulated the students' interactions in the community thus distancing students from their teachers and their fellow community members.

Towards A Developmental View of Citizenship

Students' descriptions of citizenship tended to fall into two categories: legalistic or relational. The students who defined citizenship in legalistic terms tended to view citizenship through the rights and responsibilities that they had stemming from their status as a citizen. The students who defined citizenship in a relational way focused on their role as community. These roles tended to emphasize their altruistic stance towards the community. Many citizenship scholars would describe these views of citizenship as displaying a surface level understanding of citizenship. However, in the interviews with students, it became clear that for students, citizenship grew out of a care for and feeling of belonging to the community. Therefore, rather than dismissing this understanding of citizenship, we should honor these students' notions of citizenship and their developing understanding of what it means to be a citizen.

Students' feelings of belonging in public communities prepares them for full citizenship

If we accept that citizenship grants citizens membership in a public community, we must also recognize that membership in these communities involves individuals' sense of connection to that community. Students learn about their role in public communities through their involvement in various public places. As one of the first place in which they spend a large share of their young

adolescence, schools teach students about their roles in these public communities through their interactions with other adults in that community. Thus, the Larton students encountered a school in which they struggled to find a community where they could feel a sense of belonging, as they felt largely marginalized and discriminated against in their own school. For these students, their teachers did not enact the type of behavior that they valued in an inclusive community members or good citizens. It makes sense then that the majority of Larton students did not find their citizen role models in school. Their feelings of exclusion affected their understandings of their teachers and citizens. Thus, they defined good citizens as those individuals who helped create an environment conducive for the students and others to feel a sense of belonging. This suggests that if everyone acted as the students believed good citizen should act, they would create a community of inclusive and helpful individuals. In Perth where many of the students did find a sense of belonging in their school communities, the students perceived their teachers to not only be inclusive and fair teachers but also good citizens. The interconnection between students' feelings of belonging and their views of citizenship suggest that political socialization scholars and educationists need to take students' need to belong to a community seriously.

Many of the students in Larton had mediocre school experiences at best; at worst, they experienced outright discrimination. To find a place to belong like the Unity Project's community center helped these students find caring adults who they could look up to and learn about being a caring and competent citizen. Thus, for students to develop as active and fully engaged citizens, they may need the chance to feel a sense of belonging to a public space. This finding is all the more important when for long time political socialization experts had suggested that simply being a caring, competent citizen is too thin for full citizenship. While an incomplete view of citizenship, the findings suggest that belonging to an inclusive public community may be an important part of students' political development. Thus before seeking to engage in the full, and at times, contentious political sphere, it makes sense that teenagers may need to feel that they are

seen as secure and valuable members of a public community. Expecting students to gravitate to the often-conflictual world of politics fully ready to engage seems unrealistic. Students may need to develop this sense of belonging and membership in a community that embraces them and their contribution. While some students' path to political citizenship may diverge and they may choose to enter the political sphere irrespective of their personal feelings of welcome and belonging²⁹, I would argue that if students develop an identity as a valued and respected member of a public community they may also develop the confidence to further voice their opinions as citizens in the public and political sphere.

Arguably some students can and do develop this confidence to engage in the public sphere from other places. It can come from their families who engage them in political debates which results of the families' own involvement in politics. These early experiences with family's politics has been shown by many researchers to matter in young students' development of a political identity (Shani, 2009; Verba et al., 1995). Isabella's family in Larton also provides an example of a family who has been deeply involved in the politics of Larton as well as politics at a state and nation level. Therefore, Isabella's citizen role models was her grandmother and uncle who together shaped her understanding of the political system. Isabella's family engaged her and her younger family members in political discussions during their family gatherings. These family experiences showed her that despite the contentious family discussions, she felt secure in her family's regard and care for her. Though Isabella did not feel a sense of belonging to her school, she had found a place for herself as an engaged volunteer at the community center and in her own family. Thus she felt an obligation to engage with the political future of her country and actively sought opportunities to get involved in her community and country. One of her aspirations was to

²⁹ An example could be found in marginalized youth with little to no political experience mobilizing after a particularly egregious violation of their rights or the rights of their peers.

join the military, which she saw as further service to her country. However, Isabella was only one of a few students who had experiences in their families that prepared them for public life.

For other students in Larton, their citizen role models came from community center volunteers who did not actively engage them in political discussion but did demonstrate for them the basic level of care that they needed to feel a sense of belonging. This belonging to a community beyond their family seems an important precursor to full political engagement. These students' connections to these public communities allowed them to develop an important aspect of citizenship, the care of others. Given the interactions with the adults who developed places for students to belong to and their understanding of citizen role models, students valued these people not just for creating a warm and caring place they created for the students but for bringing them into a public community in a safe way. These students' positive experiences in public community prepared them to become more fully engaged in public communities. This experience may not be enough for full effectual citizenship, as students do need to develop the other aspects of a political identity including the political knowledge, efficacy and interest. However, by finding a safe place where they can participate in a public community, these students have experienced positive interactions in the public community thus encouraging future engagement. Students still need to engage in the political sphere and to do that they need to begin to make the connections between their various microsystems and the political exosystems that create the situations that they have experienced in the microsystems. However, by having positive experiences in their public communities, I argue that this provides students with the encouragement to engage again in their public communities.

Thus for students to become fully engaged citizens, they need to develop a sense of belonging to public community. If they find this sense of belonging in schools and community centers, students are more likely to feel a sense of connection to the broader political community even if as Torney-Purta, Henry Barber, & Richardson (2004) note the broader political

community provided only negative examples of corruption and dysfunction. These researchers found that students' positive experiences in schools mattered more in the development of political trust than those negative distant examples of government dysfunction, which shows how the different environments influence the student. Thus for students the more immediate environments shape the students' experiences of political communities more than those found in the exosystem and beyond.

Schools mirror community politics

While this dissertation did not have space to delve fully into the relationship between the community and the school and the politics of the school, the Larton Area High School was surrounded by a community uncertain about the implications for the community of the arriving immigrants. For many in Larton, the incoming immigrants were just like others in the community whose families had emigrated themselves (Brezicha & Hopkins, forthcoming). Others, however, saw the immigrants as "invading" the community and felt that they drained economic resources and brought crime and drugs to the area (Brezicha & Hopkins, forthcoming). Thus, students experienced these ambivalent feelings and often felt that the community members in Larton saw them as a problem. Many students shared personal experiences with neighbors and other White residents that conveyed the residents' feelings of ambivalence, discrimination, or outright racism. While the students did not attribute racism to their teachers, their experiences in the community suggested that behind the favoritism and unfair implementation of security and dress code policies existed potentially racist undertones highlighting yet another connection between the school and community. Thus for these students the role of the community center with its welcoming stance towards the students became a place that they not only found a sense of belonging; they also developed a positive sense of identity as they felt they were perceived by the

adults there as capable, competent and trustworthy, all feelings that they did not feel in the school or their broader community. It then makes sense that their positive citizen role models came from the community center.

In Perth, where the community's response to the immigrant influx was more proactive and welcoming, students reported positive interactions with their community members. The school's reaction to the influx of immigrant students mirrored the community's proactive stance towards the growing community population with definitive stances being taken towards respecting cultural diversity and incorporating inclusive practices. Further Ms. Lehrer, the English as an Additional Language teacher, took many steps to ensure that students in her class had access to the right classes, extracurricular activities of interest, and a supportive class environment that fostered a sense of security and belonging in the school. Many students I interviewed noted that her continued care and encouragement of them even after they had transitioned out of her program created a sense of hominess in her classroom to which they often returned. It was unsurprising then given the connections for students between those that created inclusive environments and citizenship, that many students named her a good citizen. Even as one student admitted that they did not know about Ms. Lehrer's life out-of-school but because of her inclusive and helpful stance in school, they assumed that she remained a good citizen outside of school. This observation continues to highlight the connections student make between schools and their outside communities. Unlike the divides in some political socialization research, the students see their school behavior as a continuation of their behavior in general. Thus for them those who act as good citizens in school will likely remain good citizens outside of school.

I see then several important implications that come from this research as well as potentials for future research to build on these findings from this exploratory case study. I will unpack these implications first for theory, then policy and finally practice. I will conclude this chapter with a discussion of areas of future research.

Implications for Theory, Practice, and Policy

Theoretical implications – Expanding the understanding of what political socialization entails

My findings highlight the important role context had in shaping immigrant students political identity. While scholars have increasingly begun to consider context in immigrant students' political socialization (some examples Abu El-Haj, 2007; Lay, 2012), my study highlights the important role of students' feelings about their communities. This then adds to our understanding of what shapes immigrant students' political socialization. By demonstrating these connections, I nuance the political socialization literature by helping to understand the elements involved in students' engagement in political sphere. While further research is needed, I suggest that when students develop confidence that comes through feeling a sense of belonging to a public, political community, they become more likely to seek opportunities to engage in the political community again. My findings show that students understand citizenship through their interactions with others and that help them feel connected to a broader community, thus it underlines the importance of community in students' political socialization. By using Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory to begin to understand students' political development, it helps bring together the view of students as active and engaged members in a community who are constantly shaped and reshaped by interactions of its community members. Thus by recognizing that students' experiences in their schools influence their interactions in other parts of their lives, we see that if students feel marginalized by their school communities, these feelings of exclusion may also influence their views of their communities. For the students in Larton, the opportunities that they found in the community center to connect with others and caring adults helped them feel more connected to the community despite their negative experiences in school and broader community. In Perth, the students' strong relationships with their teachers and school positively

shaped their views of their community as well as their future expectation for their own involvement. By recognizing, the important and active role that the school community has in shaping the students' feelings towards their political socialization it will help to develop a more nuanced view of students' political socialization. Furthermore, by using Bronfenbrenner's lens to understand students' political socialization, this dissertation research helps bridge largely separate fields and helps provide future research with a more complete view of students' political development.

In addition, my research reveals the connections between citizenship and students' feelings of belonging. The findings point to the many ways that students understand citizenship. Thus, for students who are marginalized by their school system or communities, my findings suggest that they are less likely to feel a sense of belonging to other public spaces. By not having the opportunity to connect with caring adults in schools, students may not develop the confidence to become fully active citizens. Thus I suggest that one way students develop their interest in and engagement with their political community is through a sense of inclusion in a community that values their contribution and recognizes the deep intrinsic need that students have for belonging to a community. I recognize that it is not enough for students to feel connected to their community. However, for students to develop the abilities to engage in the more conflictual elements of the political sphere, students may first need the confidence to feel that their presence matters. For students who have been ignored and excluded in various public communities, to find adults who welcome and care about their presence validates and encourages their engagement in public communities.

Implications for policy

My findings offer several implications for educational policy makers. First the diverse context of receptions that the immigrant students received in the two schools highlight the importance of an explicit focus on inclusivity and support for diverse learners. As seen in the context chapter, at both the provincial and school division level, the Perth schools benefitted from the explicit focus on inclusion in their schools. Thus, at both the provincial and division level, resources had been allocated for the development, support and introduction of initiatives at the school and division level for greater inclusivity of diverse learners. By contrast, in Pennsylvania we see that both the State and district were surprisingly silent on the education and integration of their immigrant student population. Thus, the little guidance provided by the state focused on fulfilling the legal mandates of state and federal laws rather than an emphasis on inclusive educational practices. Thus even though the Perth School Division did not participate in all of the provincial programs and initiatives, the policies and leadership coming from the provincial level translated into proactive policies in the division and schools that supported the integration of immigrant students. This suggests that to support the integration and inclusion of immigrant students, state and provincial level governments must provide explicit guidance for their districts and divisions on how to support the development of programs that meet more than merely the technical requirements of educating immigrant students. To provide the types of supports that foster in immigrant students' feeling of belonging and a sense of inclusion, state and provinces must work with their local educational agencies to develop initiatives that actively create inclusive environments. Particularly in the United States where the focus on accountability has obscured other missions of education (Hinde, 2008), if states want to provide the type of education that fosters immigrant students integration, they must actively encourage and develop plans to support their local school districts and schools.

At the school district/division and school level, the findings suggest that school leaders and teachers can do much to foster immigrant students' feelings of belonging, however, both the district and school needs support to do so. At the school district level, the school board must provide the leadership to address the arrival of immigrant groups. By naming and recognizing the changes in their schools, the school districts can set the tone for the community wide conversation that will inevitably occur as demographic shifts as large as those seen in both Perth and Larton happen. This however requires that the board members and district/division leadership have the skill and sensitivity to recognize these changes and address them in a proactive manner. Additionally, by working with State and Provincial level officials, school board members and district leadership can leverage resources available at multiple levels of government to address the changing needs of their schools. The district wide leadership provides a crucial pivot point in the policy process as they can effectively communicate with stakeholders in the state/province, school and community. Importantly, school boards and district-level leadership do not need to accomplish this work alone, rather they can choose to collaborate with other community organizations such as the Unity Project in Larton to facilitate the development of policies that foster inclusive environments in the community. The partnerships can support the development of a network of community organizations that provide a holistic support system that can address the complex needs of immigrant families. By working with other groups, schools can create a synergistic network that can leverage diverse resources and multiple stakeholders in the service of integrating immigrant families into the communities.

Lastly, at the school level, while supports from these other policymakers would facilitate a more comprehensive network of policies and supports, the school level administrators and teachers have tremendous amount of policymaking ability. Therefore as we saw in Perth the policies at the school level provided opportunities for students to connect with other students, teachers and administrators. While the ideal policy environment would include system-wide

support, it is certainly feasible at the school level to create and implement policies that support the development of caring and inclusive communities. Possible policies include the development of peer-mentoring programs, small group mentorship programs consisting of one teacher and several students, and positive discipline policies that focus on building community rather than punitive measures to ensure students' good behavior. These different policies could all foster the connections that the students in this study longed for and in some cases found. In classrooms, teachers can create spaces of belonging by providing the opportunity for students to connect with them. Further the types of discipline policies teachers practice in their own classrooms can further support or alienate their students. Thus even if teachers work in schools where the environment may not facilitate inclusive and caring relationships, teachers' individual actions can support the development of trusting and caring relationships with their students. These relationships in turn support students' developing understanding of themselves and their role in the community. Though ideally teachers would have the support of their administrator and school policies, teachers can create in their own classroom a caring and inclusive haven which provides a powerful vision of professional educators who support marginalized students' need for belonging and care in the public sphere. By carefully crafting policies at the state, local and school levels, policymakers can facilitate the creation of inclusive and caring schools that will better support the development of engaged and caring citizens.

Implications for practice

My findings have several implications for educational practice. They highlight the importance of developing inclusive schools that support students' developing understanding of themselves. My findings also offer suggestions on how to develop this type of school. First, students need to have the opportunity to develop caring relationship with educators and school

staff. Secondly, school level policies need to communicate to students a respect for their autonomy and facilitate the development of positive relationships between students and school staff. Lastly, school leaders need to support the development of an inclusive and caring school community by actively fostering fair and caring relationships between teachers and students and developing fair discipline policies and effective information distribution.

Provide opportunities for students to develop caring relationships with teachers

The findings indicate the important role positive caring relationships with teachers play in fostering students' feelings of belonging as well as their developing understanding of citizenship. As seen in Larton, the students who had developed feelings of belonging to their school had done so through relationships with caring teachers. These students could turn to these teachers with questions and concerns. Gigi noted that because she had been with her nursing teacher and peers for three and half years she had developed a close relationship with them. This type of long-term relationship with an adult provides one possible avenue for schools to consider in creating caring and inclusive communities. Particularly for large schools, creating a caring close relationship with students will be a challenge, however, considering potential structures, such as small group mentoring programs, that match students with teachers might be an important first step. In these programs, students meet with one teacher over the course of their time in school. Indeed this approach has been done in schools across the country and I would recommend that it be considered by more schools. Interestingly, Perth did not seem to have a similar program in place but it would be worthwhile for schools to consider structuring a setting in which students had the opportunity to develop close supportive relationship with adults.

My findings showed that students who had close relationships with their teachers were likely to name them as citizen role models. Teachers, therefore, not only influenced students'

academic learning but they also shaped students' understandings of citizenship. Fostering this type of powerful relationships with students should become a priority of schools. One effective and important avenue for supporting student-teacher relationships would open opportunities for youth-adult partnerships and increases in student voice. Youth-adult partnerships form when schools work with students to identify problems and suggest solutions at either the school or broader policy level. These partnerships give adults a unique vantage point as the adults learn from the individuals most impacted by the policies and practices of the schools. When implemented well, youth-adult partnerships can improve student-teacher relationships and foster student attachments to schools. As Mitra (2004) showed when students engaged in youth-adult partnerships, students developed "(1) greater connections to caring adults; (2) greater connections to teachers in general; and (3) greater connections to the school" (p.669). These partnerships would support the developing feelings of civic and political efficacy.

Craft school policies that respect students' developing autonomy and foster relationships between adults and students

Further, teachers and administrators need to carefully consider the implications of the policies which are created and enacted. Students in my research noted and resented school-level policies that raised questions about students' autonomy, capabilities and trustworthiness and created distance between students and teachers. The policies present in the high schools in Larton and Perth communicated two very different perceptions of the students and the findings revealed that students noticed the difference. The Larton students resented the restrictive and arbitrary nature of the policies that they felt were neither effective nor fair. In creating such policies, the Larton students came to see their school as an unfair place. Even the students who had connected to teachers recognized the arbitrary nature of the rules of the school. In Perth, as one participant

noted the relaxed policies towards students allowed students to develop better relationships with their teachers thus facilitating their feelings of belonging. These different stances towards discipline and other policies highlight that policies carry messages to their recipients about their status in their community and the value placed therein (Schneider & Ingram, 1993). When designing school-level policies, educators and policymakers need to consider the messages being conveyed to students. These policies should be designed to foster inclusivity of students and encourage students' autonomy. When coupled with strategies such as the youth-adult partnership discussed previously, these types of policies can foster students' feelings of belonging and sense of efficacy all efforts that can help them develop a better sense of their role in public communities.

School leaders need to facilitate the creation of an inclusive and caring school

Lastly, school leaders play an important role in facilitating the development of inclusive schools. In the case the Larton and Perth, the school leadership's stance toward immigrant students differed and the results verge. School leadership can provide signals to faculty and staff of the importance of creating an inclusive and welcoming environment. They can do this through a variety of ways. One way would be to actively foster students' inclusion in the policy making process through the student-adult partnerships as discussed previously. This involves creating a climate of trust amongst staff and students so that these partnerships are not seen as a threat to teachers authority or yet another thing that teachers must do, coupled with the appropriate differentiated supports for teachers implementing these new approaches (Brezicha, Bergmark, & Mitra, 2014; Mitra, Serriere, & Stoicovy, 2012). Another way would to help create structures that support the development of caring relationships. This would require shifting the focus away from the ever-growing demands of school accountability towards a relationship focused on students.

Future Research

This dissertation presents the results of an exploratory comparative case study; as such, there remain many avenues for future research. Firstly, the results of this research should be broadened to include findings from the community and the influence of the community on the students' political socialization. This dissertation did not have the space to consider the role of the community to conduct a full analysis of the communities' context of reception. Including the cities' policies and support structures for immigrant students would further strengthen the argument advanced in this dissertation that students' political socialization cannot ignore the contexts in which the students live, learn and develop. To conduct a full ecological analysis of these communities would illustrate how these two communities' perceptions intimately shaped these students' understandings of themselves as political actors. Future research will delve into the role of the exosystems such as the school board and city policies to examine how these shaped the schools' responses to the immigrant students. Further examination of how the state and provincial level policies around the integration of immigrant students into their local community schools would provide insights into the constraints and supports that the schools, teachers, and leaders received. Viewing schools as a nested system provides a powerful analytic lens with which to analyze educational policies and the implications that they may have on our students.

Further, this research focused on the role of belonging in developing immigrant students' sense of political selves but I suggest that future research should examine the role of belonging both for immigrant and non-immigrant students. Feeling a sense of belonging is a powerful human motivation. Many of our marginalized students may not feel a sense of belonging to their schools much like the exclusions the students in Larton felt. The civic empowerment gap that we see in the United States may in fact come from students who feel alienated from their schools and communities by systems of policies and practices that disengage and exclude them (Levinson,

2012). Thus future research should examine how schools can create communities for their students that help empower them and develop their political identities. It would also be interesting to document how the role of belonging may function differently for different groups of students. Is it more important for students who already feel connected through their families and other community venues to feel a sense of belonging to their school or does the effect of belonging become amplified in cases where students do not feel that connection elsewhere in their lives?

Lastly, future research should consider how in thinking about citizenship through an ecological perspective, we can create communities of resiliency that foster inclusion and democratic practices. In educational systems as decentralized as the United States and Canada how can local communities work to create coherence and inclusiveness in their communities? What role do educational leaders have to play in this work? Particularly in new immigrant communities, where questions of identity and belonging come to the forefront, how can school systems respond and help lead the community to a more inclusive and less fear based response to their new immigrant populations?

Conclusion

As this dissertation was being written, the world has watched as an estimated 4 million desperate Syrians flee their war-torn homeland while another 7 and half million Syrians have been displaced internally (World Vision, 2015). It is estimated that half of these refugees are children. While some have found refuge in neighboring countries of Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq, an increasing number of refugees have attempted to escape to Europe on overcrowded, underpowered boats in hopes of escaping the violence and hopelessness of four years of a brutal civil war. As the Middle Eastern and European countries struggle to respond to these refugees, the questions of this dissertation become all the more relevant. Where do these refugees belong?

How will the educators and community members receive these arriving refugees? How long will these refugees be sojourners in these new lands? Will they become citizens with all the attending benefits and responsibilities? If they end up in Europe or the United States or Canada, how will their previous experiences in Syria with its years of rule by the Assad regime influence their understanding of democracy and Western liberal understanding of citizenship? How will the children come to learn about democracy and how will their identities as children who escaped from a bloody civil war shape their understandings of who they are as democratic citizens? While these questions will be answered in the coming years, educators need to acknowledge and honor the broader role education has in shaping the lives of our next generation of citizens.

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Appendix A: Institutional Review Board Approval

PENNSSTATE



Vice President for Research
Office for Research Protections

The Pennsylvania State University
The 330 Building, Suite 205
University Park, PA 16802

Phone : (814) 865-1775
Fax: (814) 863-8699
Email : orprotections@psu.edu
Web : www.research.psu.edu/orp

Date: March 10, 2014

From: The Office for Research Protections - FWA#: FWA00001534
Courtney A. Whetzel, Compliance Coordinator

To: Kristina F. Brezicha

Re: Determination of Exemption

IRB Protocol ID: 44944

Follow-up Date: March 9, 2019

Title of Protocol: My Country, 'Tis of Thee: Examining the Relationship Between Immigrant Students' Feelings of Belonging and Political Socialization in America

The Office for Research Protections (ORP) has received and reviewed the above referenced eSubmission application. It has been determined that your research is exempt from IRB initial and ongoing review, as currently described in the application. You may begin your research. The category within the federal regulations under which your research is exempt is:

45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

PSU Exempt Category (7) Research in which participant interaction is limited to providing a response to a non-physically invasive stimulus (e.g., reading/writing tasks, computer tasks, video games, viewing media, internet searches, etc.) (i) if the research is social science based and falls

under the purview of the PSU IRB, (ii) poses *no more than minimal risk* to participants, and (iii) does not include any of the following: federal funding or federal training grants, FDA regulated components, procedures that would fall under the purview of the Biomedical IRB, Sponsor or other contractual restrictions, clinical interventions (including clinical behavioral interventions), Prisoners as subjects, children as subjects, the use of deception, receipt of an NIH issued Certificate of Confidentiality to protect identifiable research data **NOTE: This category does not exist in the federal regulations under Title 45 Part 46 Subpart A 46.101(b) and is used solely by The Pennsylvania State University as per the terms of its Federal wide Assurance with the government.**

Given that the IRB is not involved in the initial and ongoing review of this research, it is the investigator's responsibility to review [IRB Policy III "Exempt Review Process and Determination"](#) which outlines:

- What it means to be exempt and how determinations are made
- What changes to the research protocol are and are not required to be reported to the ORP
- Ongoing actions post-exemption determination including addressing problems and complaints, reporting closed research to the ORP and research audits
- What occurs at the time of follow-up

Please do not hesitate to contact the Office for Research Protections (ORP) if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for your continued efforts in protecting human participants in research.

This correspondence should be maintained with your research records.

Appendix B: Full Study Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form for Social Science Research

The Pennsylvania State University

My Country, 'Tis of Thee: Examining the Relationship Between Immigrant Students' Feelings of Belonging and Political Socialization in America and Canada

Title of Project: “My Country, ‘Tis of Thee: Examining the Relationship Between Immigrant Students' Feelings of Belonging and Political Socialization in America and Canada”

Principal Investigator: Kristina Brezicha Educational Theory & Policy 301 Rackley Building, University Park, PA 16802. kfb126@psu.edu, 917-628-3865

Research Advisor: Dr. Dana Mitra Education Policy Studies 300 Rackley Building, University Park, PA 16802. Dana@psu.edu, 814-863 7020

1. **Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between immigrant students' sense of belonging to their schools and communities and its relationship to their political socialization process. Data will be collected through a one-on-one semi-structured interviews, survey, reflective writing, and focus groups. I will inquire about your perspectives on your school and community, your experiences as an immigrant or non-immigrant student, and lastly, your knowledge and involvement in the political process.

2. **Procedures to be followed:** You will be asked to participate in 3 1-1 ½ hour recorded interview and 1 1-1 ½ hour focus group and to review a transcript of the interview for accuracy. You will also be asked to complete a survey, and a reflective writing piece. I will also ask that you be available for follow up questions if more information is needed or if I need help understanding an answer given during the formal interview. The interview will be recorded with a digital recording device, and the principal investigator will be the only person with access to this recording. The principal investigator will transcribe the interview and then return it to you to check that the transcription is an accurate reflection of what was said in the interview. Finally, after I have analyzed data, I will ask you to review my research findings and how I have interpreted the data collected to learn if they make sense to you and you could agree with the conclusions I have drawn from data.

3. **Discomforts and Risks:** Some of the questions are personal and might cause discomfort, and you are in no way compelled to answer any question. The principal investigator will take the highest precaution to minimize any risk to you. The principal investigator will use a pseudonym for you, and your true name will not be recorded in any way. The principal investigator will not collect any other personal identification information from you that could lead to your identification by someone other than herself.
 This study is being conducted primarily for dissertation-related research, though the findings of the study may be later submitted for publication to a scholarly journal or presented at conferences. Though the research findings may be disseminated in different formats as those immediately listed above, the participant's personally identifiable information will not be revealed; pseudonyms will be used at all times.

4. Benefits: The benefits to you include an opportunity to share your experiences as a student in the Perth High School and how it has impacted your feelings of belonging in the local community as well as your understanding of your civic role. This is an area of research that has not yet been studied in depth. As the topic of education for immigrant students' political socialization has not been widely studied, yet given the growing population of immigrant student it is increasingly important that immigrant students' perspectives are known. Thus you will have an opportunity to contribute your experiences and thoughts to an important area of investigation and will help spark a conversation in the educational community about how to better serve the political socialization process of immigrant and non-immigrant students alike.

5. Duration/Time: Participants will be asked to participate in a 3 1-1 ½ interviews and 1 1-1 ½ focus groups. It is also likely that an additional 15 minute commitment will be needed to verify accuracy of the transcribed interview. Completion of the survey is not expected to exceed an hour. The reflective writing should not exceed an hour.

6. Statement of Confidentiality: Your participation in this research is confidential. The data will be stored and secured in the primary investigator's home in a locked drawer. In order to minimize the risk of legal liability for research participants, no personal identification information will be collected from research participants. You will be given pseudonyms, and your real names will not be recorded. In addition, you will not be asked your legal status, nor will you be asked about the legal status of other people with whom you have contact. Any and all electronic documents will be kept in password protected files that are accessible only to the principal investigator. The principal investigator will be the only with access to the digital recording of interviews given by you. The recording device will be kept in a locked drawer, and the recordings will be kept on the recording device. The Internet might be used to schedule meeting times between you and the principal investigator. The Internet will be used by the principal investigator to transmit a transcription of the interview to you. The purpose of the transmission is so that you can verify that the transcription is an accurate reflection of what you said in the interview. Your confidentiality will be kept to the degree permitted by the technology used. No guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties. The Pennsylvania State University's Office for Research Protections and Institutional Review Board, and the Office for Human Research Protections in the Department of Health and Human Services may review records related to this project. In the event of a publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared.

All participant records will be held confidential and all participants will be assigned a pseudonym. All documents will be in password protected files and destroyed after 5 years.

7. Right to Ask Questions: Please contact Kristina Brezicha at (917) 628-3865 with questions, complaints or concerns about this research. You can also call this number if you feel this study has harmed you. If you have any questions, concerns, problems about your rights as a research participant or would like to offer input, please contact The Pennsylvania State University's Office for Research Protections (ORP) at (814) 865-1775. The ORP cannot answer questions about research procedures. Questions about research procedures can be answered by the research team

8. Voluntary Participation: Your decision to participate in this research is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. Refusal to take part in or withdrawing from this study will involve no penalty or loss of benefits

you would receive otherwise.

You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to take part in this research study. Therefore, please sign and have your parents sign below indicating that you and your parents allow you to take part in this research study and the information outlined above, please sign your name and indicate the date below.

You will be given a copy of this consent form for your records.

I do give permission for my child to participate in one-on-one interviews.

*I do **not** give permission for my child to participate in one-on-one interviews.*

I do give permission for my child to participate in small-group interviews.

*I do **not** give permission for my child to participate in small-group interviews.*

I do give permission for my child's survey results to be used in this study.

*I do **not** give permission my child's survey results to be used in this study.*

I do give permission for my child's reflective writing to be used in this study.

*I do **not** give permission my child's reflective writing to be used in this study.*

Participant Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

Person Obtaining Consent

Date

Appendix C: Overview of Participants

Larton

Ayesha is a 21-year old student from the MENA region of the world. She has lived in the United States for nine years moving first to New Jersey and then to Larton seven years ago. Her father works as a truck driver and her mother stays home. She lives with several younger sisters and her grandfather. Ayesha graduated high school in the spring of 2014 and planned on pursuing an associate's degree in sonography obstetrics.

Bianca is a 16 year old Dominican student who arrived in Larton four years ago. As a sophomore at LAHS, she still receives English supports; however, we were able to conduct our interviews mostly in English with some help from Google Translate. She lived with her older brother and younger sister and both parents. Both her parents work for Logging Sleeping Company a national mattress manufacturer. She would like to go to college and become a lawyer.

Charlie is a 14 year old Dominican boy in ninth grade at LAHS who moved to the United States when he was two. His family has returned to Larton three times after having lived in Virginia, New York, and New Jersey. He lives with an older brother and mother. His mother worked in an outlet for Crafters R Us a national crafting store. He is in special education and is enrolled in the Vocational Center's plumbing program, which he very much enjoys.

Christopher is a 16 year old Dominican boy who is a senior at LAHS. He moved to the Bronx and reunited with his family when he was eight years old. In the Dominican Republic he had lived with his grandmother and only his younger siblings when they were two and four respectively. He moved to Larton in sixth grade with his two younger siblings and mother who works for Amica a large online retailer. His father commutes between the Bronx where he works as a salesman and Larton on the weekends. Enrolled in the high school, Christopher transferred from the vocational center after he found the automotive program too lecture based and not enough hands on work. He is unsure of what he would like to study but wants to go to college just not in the Larton area which he finds has a limited number of higher education opportunities.

Gigi is an 18 year old girl who moved to Larton after having lived in the Dominican Republic till she was in seventh grade. Her mother left her in the care of her grandmother and her other sister was born in the US. She is enrolled in the Vocational Center's nursing program because she loves working in the medical field and dreams of becoming a pediatrician. After high school, she will attend college in the Dominican Republic and hopes to return to attend medical school in the United States.

Isabella is a 16 year old girl born in the United States to a mother of Dominican and Puerto Rican descent but who was also born in the United States and a immigrant father from the Dominican Republic. She moved to Larton with her mother when she was one and lived with her mother and amongst her extended family including her grandmother and grandfather who acted like a father figure to Isabella while her father was absent from her life for the first 14 years. She has an older brother from her mother and several half-siblings on her father's side whom she does not know. She is in the Vocational Center's nursing program and wants to be a radiologist in the one of the

branch of the military which she sees as a way to pay for college. She would like to attend the local state university campus for the first two years and then transfer to Stanford for her last two years.

Isaiah arrived in the United States when he was five years from the Dominican Republic. He reunited with his mother after having lived with his younger brother Charlie who is also in this study and his grandmother. The family originally moved to Larton because Isaiah's aunt lived in Larton and helped his mother find a job. Since then, he has lived in Larton three times after having lived in Virginia, New York, and New Jersey. His mother works in an outlet for Crafters R Us a national crafting store. At 17, he attends the academic high school and plans on attending college to study architecture.

Jacob, a 17 year old senior at LAHS, moved with his family to the Larton area after his father took a job there. He was born in Philadelphia area but moved to Honduras with his parents when he was four. He lived there for four years and after a brief stay his mother's hometown in Central Pennsylvania moved to Larton in the second grade. His father was of German descent but was born and raised in Guatemala. His mother is a trained teacher who works part-time now. Both his parents speak fluent Spanish and Jacob speaks fluent English and Spanish. He will study international business in college which is what his father does.

Maria moved with her mother and father to Larton five years ago, prior to that she had lived in New York City and Lancaster County. She is a ninth grader enrolled in the high school. Her mother moved from the Dominican Republic, while her Puerto Rican father was born in New York City. Her parents moved to Larton on the recommendation of Maria's aunt who found it cheaper to live. Neither parents work but her dad volunteers with a community group to support Dominican residents. Maria loves to sing, dance and model and dreams of becoming a doctor.

Marie is a 17 year old Dominican student who studies culinary at the vocational center. She was born in Puerto Rico and lives with her mother and sister, Gigi (who is also in the study), her 24 year old sister and her sisters' children. Her mother used to work in a chocolate factory and own a store but no longer does. She moved with her mom several times from PR to New York to Rhode Island finally settling in Larton in fifth grade. She would like to become a psychologist to work with special education students who have autism which both of her younger cousins have.

Veronica is a 17 year old Dominican girl who was born in New York City but whose family moved to Larton in elementary school. Both of her parents work for a large office supply company in the warehouse. She attends the culinary program in the vocational center. As an 11th grader, she plans on attending college and is considering studying psychology. She frequently volunteers at the community center tutoring the elementary school students during the homework help period.

Perth

Andrew is a fourteen year old Filipino boy who has been in Canada for two months. He is in the ninth grade and has become involved in intramurals and the local Catholic Church choir. He lives with his mother and two older sisters. His mother works in a local medical factory Pilula

Manufacturing. They moved to Perth because his aunt lived there and helped them find an apartment prior to their arrival. He would like to become a nurse, which his mother was in the Philippines.

Daniel is a seventeen year old student from MENA who is a senior at Perth High School. He lives with his father who washes trucks for a living and his mother who works at a glass factory and his identical twin brother Peter (who is also a participant in this study). They have lived in Canada for three years. He plans on attending college after graduation and is considering a career in law enforcement or engineering. In his free time, he works two days a week washing trucks and also plays on the Perth community hockey team.

Elaine is twenty year old senior. She moved from the Philippines with her mother and younger brother and sister two months prior to beginning our interview (her younger brother Andrew is also in this study). Elaine was enrolled in college in the Philippines but decided to enroll in high school to work on her English and give herself an opportunity to learn about the Canadian system. She would like to attend college and become a nurse like her mother and aunt.

Isaac arrived in Toronto three years ago from MENA though his family migrated to the area from Russia. They left MENA because of the continuing war. After six months in Toronto, his mother, father and younger sister moved to Perth father got a job as a truck driver. His mother stays at home to take care of his deaf younger sister. He speaks three languages and studies welding and plans to either go to college and become a realtor or continue in a vocational trade program after high school.

Jason moved to Perth two months ago from the Philippines. He is a 19-year-old senior at Perth High School but in Manila he had been in his senior year of college studying accounting. His family of three brothers, mother and father all moved to Perth. His oldest brother worked in Pilula Manufacturing, while his father works for a construction company and his mother worked for a chicken processing plant.

Katherine arrived in Perth with her four siblings and mother and father from Germany though her parents were born in Russia. Therefore she speaks three languages; German, Russian, and English. They chose to live in Perth because of easy access to a larger city with good doctors available for her younger diabetic brother. She is 16-year-old senior at Perth High School from the Mennonite community. Her father works at a construction company and her mom stays home to take care of a younger diabetic brother. She plans on getting a job after college.

Mary is an 18 year old German senior at Perth High School. She arrived with her family approximately a year and a half before we met. Both of her parents emigrated from Russia to Germany and then to Canada. Her father builds furniture for a living and her mother stays home to take care of her 11 siblings. She is part of the Evangelical German Christian church in Perth. After high school, she is considering going to college or work at a store in town.

Michael had lived in Perth twice before finally settling in Perth two years ago. He had moved back and forth from Paraguay with his mother, father and younger brother and sister each of the previous times. He speaks high and low German as well as Spanish, Guarani (a language indigenous in Paraguay), and English. Both of his parents work in the agricultural sector as well as have their own farm they run. He studies construction in school and plans to enter the construction field when he finished high school this past May.

Miriam, an 18 year old senior at the high school, moved to Perth from the Philippines in January of 2014. Her mother and five siblings moved with her to reunite with her father who had been living in Perth for five years. In the Philippines she had been a third year college student studying nursing. Her mother was a teacher in the Philippines but now works at a cheese factory as an inspector. Her father works as a construction worker._

Noah is an 18 year old senior at Perth High School. He is a German Mennonite student whose family moved from Paraguay 12 years ago due to his father's health. Both his father and mother work in a local chicken processing plant. He lives with his parents and three younger siblings and plans on enrolling in a continuing vocational program after high school to improve his construction skills.

Peter, the twin brother of Daniel (also in the study), is a seventeen year old high school senior who moved to Perth from the MENA region three years ago. His mother works in a glass factory and his father works washing trucks. Peter plays hockey and works part-time washing trucks as well. After high school, he plans on going to college to become a police officer or engineer.

Rebecca is a 17 year old senior at Perth High School who moved from Germany over 13 years ago. Her mother stays at home with her eight siblings while her father works as a welder. She is part the evangelical church community. She speaks German but admits that English is becoming her dominant language. She currently works at a deli in a local supermarket. She is debating whether she wants to go to college. Rebecca would ultimately like to work in an office.

Appendix D: Student Interview Protocols

First Interview Protocol

Thanks for meeting with me today. Since I would like to learn more about immigrant students' experiences, so I'll be asking you questions about your school, community and citizenship. There are no right or wrong answers; I'm just here to learn from you.

Go through Verbal Assent Form.

- 1) How long have you been in Larton/Perth?
 - i. Where did you come from if not born in Larton/Perth?
- 2) How did you come to Larton/Perth?
 - a. Where were you born? Where were your parents born?
 - b. How long has your family been in the United States/Canada?
 - c. What does you mom/dad do for a living?
- 3) What is it like to go to school here?
- 4) How long have you been at this school? What was it like starting here?
 - a. Did you know what classes to take?
 - b. Did your teachers or counselor explain the school to you?
 - c. Did you make friends easily?
 - d. Are you comfortable as a student here? What would make you feel more comfortable?
 - e. What other kinds of support did you receive?
 - f. What else would have been helpful to you?
 - g. Do you participate in any activities at school? Outside of school?
- 5) How do you feel Latino students are treated by the teachers?
- 6) Do you feel a part of your school community?

Now I am going to ask you some questions about different words we will talk a lot about. I just want you to define them as best you can and it's okay if you don't know what they mean.

- 7) What does belonging mean to you?
- 8) When you think of when you hear the word citizen? What does it mean to you?
 - a. What are the rights and responsibilities
 - b. Do you feel like you are an American/Canadian
 - c. Do you want to feel like an American/Canadian
 - d. Do you want to feel like you belong to Larton/Perth?
 - e. When you feel like you belong how does that change what you want to do in that space? Do you feel like you have different duties? Where would you want to have more connections? What does family need with help that you need to go?

- 9) When you think of when you hear the word politics? What does it mean to you?
- 10) What activities are you involved? What places do you spend your time? Other than school and home where else do you spend your time?
- 11) Where do you get support other than your immediate family?
 - a. Where beyond families do Latino find support and tend to spend their time?
- 12) Are the groups or institutions that are important in your life (family, school, church, club, etc.)?
 - a. What makes them important to you?

This protocol is designed to establish a baseline for the students about their feelings of their school and give a basic definition in the belonging and their understanding of citizenship. It also probes other institutions that might play a significant role in their lives. At the end of this interview, I gave them the instruction to complete their survey.

Second Interview Protocol

Thank you for meeting with me again. I look forward to our conversation. Before we begin I would like to go through the verbal assent just to make sure that you are still okay with your participation.

Proceed with Verbal Assent

- 1) In our last interview you said ...
- 2) Tell me about completing the survey?
- 3) Anything surprising?
- 4) On your survey, you said...
- 5) Can you describe the characteristics of a good citizen? Specifically, what knowledge, skills, and attitudes do good citizens have?
- 6) Can you give an example of a person you think is a good citizen? Why do you think this person is a good citizen?
- 7) What have you learned from this person about being a good citizen?
- 8) What kind of activities do you think teach you most about citizenship? Can you give some examples?
- 9) Do you think it's important for citizens to work with others, or can citizens be equally effective working on their own?
- 10) Thinking about the citizenship activities you're engaged in, what are the ones in which you work with others? Would you say that the people you work with are similar to you or different? In what ways?
- 11) Do you volunteer? What sorts of issues do you volunteer for? Why do you are about that? With whom do you work on citizenship activities with?
- 12) Do you think it's important for people to try to understand each other, even if they strongly disagree? Why or why not?
- 13) Do you think it's important to always stand up for what you believe in? Why or why not?

- 14) Have you ever stood up to a friend when you disagreed with them about something important? If so, can you describe what happened?
- 15) What responsibilities do you have to your community here?
- 16) What rights do you feel that you have a member of the Larton/Perth community?
- 17) Who do you talk to about your community and its politics?
 - a. Your family?
 - b. Teachers?
 - c. Friends?
- 18) Do you feel like you could change something in your community or school if you wanted to?
- 19) As an immigrant (or daughter/son of an immigrant), how do you feel about America/Canada?
- 20) How do you feel that America/Canada feels about immigrants like you (or your parents)?
- 21) How do you feel that Larton/Perth feels about immigrants like you (or your parents)?
- 22) Do you see yourself in your future being involved in your community?

Third Interview Protocol

This interview will conclude our interviews and will be a wrap up of any outstanding questions as well as final reflections on their experiences during this project.

Before we begin, I would like to go through the Verbal Assent Form one more time.

- 1) In our last interview you had said ...
- 2) In your writing you had said...

As you know this is our last interview, so a couple of questions will ask you to consider any final reflections and I have some wrap up questions for you to consider.

- 3) When you think of the word citizen, what do you think of now?
- 4) Have your thoughts about Larton/Perth changed?
- 5) Do you have any thoughts you want to share about the project?
- 6) Do you have any final thoughts or questions you want to share now?

Appendix E: Teacher Interview Protocol

Thanks for meeting with me today. As you know, I'm here today to learn more about immigrant (and non-immigrant) students' experiences, so I'll be asking you questions about your school, community and citizenship. There are no right or wrong answers; I'm just here to learn from you. You have the right not to answer any question you don't want to and at any time request that we stop the interview.

Go through Verbal Assent

- 1) How did you get hired/what were you doing before LAHS/PHS?
- 2) How long have you been a teacher here at LAHS/PHS?
- 3) Can you tell me about your teaching philosophy?
- 4) How long have you taught the civics course at LAHS/PHS?
 - a. Did you want to teach the civics course?
- 5) Tell me about your experiences teaching at LAHS/PHS.
- 6) How do you approach teaching civics at LAHS/PHS?
- 7) What is your definition of an ideal citizen?
- 8) What are the challenges of teaching at LAHS/PHS?
- 9) As you know Larton/Perth has many students who are either immigrants or children of immigrants, can you share your experiences working with these students?
 - a. Does this differ from students have been in America a long time?
- 10) Can you share your experiences working with these students's parents?
- 11) Can you tell me your perceptions about the relationship between immigrant students and non-immigrant students at LAHS/PHS?
- 12) Do you think the school and school district provides adequate support for these students?
- 13) Can you tell me your perceptions about the relationship between immigrant students and the teachers at LAHS/PHS?
- 14) Can you tell me your perceptions about the relationship between immigrant students and the administration at LAHS/PHS?
- 15) Can you tell me your perceptions of the relationship between immigrants and non-immigrants in Larton/Perth?

Appendix F: Observation Informed Consent

Informed Consent Form for Social Science Research

The Pennsylvania State University

My Country, 'Tis of Thee: Examining the Relationship Between Immigrant Students' Feelings of Belonging and Political Socialization in America and Canada

Title of Project: “My Country, ‘Tis of Thee: Examining the Relationship Between Immigrant Students' Feelings of Belonging and Political Socialization in America and Canada”

Principal Investigator: Kristina Brezicha Educational Theory & Policy 301 Rackley Building University Park, PA 16802. kfb126@psu.edu, 917-628-3865

Research Advisor: Dr. Dana Mitra Education Policy Studies 300 Rackley Building University Park, PA 16802. Dana@psu.edu, 814-863 7020

1. Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between immigrant students’ sense of belonging to their schools and communities and its relationship to their political socialization process. Data will be collected observations of the social studies class your student is currently enrolled in.

2. Procedures to be followed: The observations will take place during the class time. The student will be observed but the researcher will not ever identify the student in her notes as she will use pseudonyms for all students in the class.

3. Discomforts and Risks: The discomforts and risks associated with these observations are minimal. Some students might feel embarrassed to have an outside observer watching their class but all measures will be taken to place the students at ease.

This study is being conducted primarily for dissertation-related research, though the findings of the study may be later submitted for publication to a scholarly journal or presented at conferences. Though the research findings may be disseminated in different formats as those immediately listed above, the participant’s personally identifiable information will not be revealed; pseudonyms will be used at all times.

4. Benefits: The benefits to you include an opportunity to share your experiences as a student in the Larton Area High School and how it has impacted your feelings of belonging in the local community as well as your understanding of your civic role. This is an area of research that has not yet been studied in depth. As the topic of education for immigrant students’ political socialization has not been widely studied, yet given the growing population of immigrant student it is increasingly important that immigrant students’ perspectives are known. Thus you will have an opportunity to contribute your experiences and thoughts to an important area of investigation and will help spark a conversation in the educational community about how to better serve the political socialization process of immigrant and non-immigrant students alike.

5. Duration/Time: The observations will occur every class period Tuesdays through Thursdays.

6. Statement of Confidentiality: Your participation in this research is confidential. The data will be stored and secured in the primary investigator's home in a locked drawer. In order to minimize the risk of legal liability for research participants, no personal identification information will be collected from research participants. You will be given pseudonyms, and your real names will not be recorded. In addition, you will not be asked your legal status, nor will you be asked about the legal status of other people with whom you have contact. Any and all electronic documents will be kept in password protected files that are accessible only to the principal investigator. The principal investigator will be the only with access to the digital recording of interviews given by you. The recording device will be kept in a locked drawer, and the recordings will be kept on the recording device. The Internet might be used to schedule meeting times between you and the principal investigator. The Internet will be used by the principal investigator to transmit a transcription of the interview to you. The purpose of the transmission is so that you can verify that the transcription is an accurate reflection of what you said in the interview. Your confidentiality will be kept to the degree permitted by the technology used. No guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties. The Pennsylvania State University's Office for Research Protections and Institutional Review Board, and the Office for Human Research Protections in the Department of Health and Human Services may review records related to this project. In the event of a publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared.

All participant records will be held confidential and all participants will be assigned a pseudonym. All documents will be in password protected files and destroyed after 5 years.

7. Right to Ask Questions: Please contact Kristina Brezicha at (917) 628-3865 with questions, complaints or concerns about this research. You can also call this number if you feel this study has harmed you. If you have any questions, concerns, problems about your rights as a research participant or would like to offer input, please contact The Pennsylvania State University's Office for Research Protections (ORP) at (814) 865-1775. The ORP cannot answer questions about research procedures. Questions about research procedures can be answered by the research team

8. Voluntary Participation: Your decision to participate in this research is voluntary. Refusal to take part in or withdrawing from this study will involve no penalty or loss of benefits you would receive otherwise.

You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to take part in this research study. Therefore, please sign and have your parents sign below indicating that you and your parents allow you to take part in this research study and the information outlined above, please sign your name and indicate the date below.

You will be given a copy of this consent form for your records.

I do give permission for my child to be observed.

*I do **not** give permission for my child to be observed.*

Participant Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

Person Obtaining Consent

Date

Appendix G: Survey of Civics and Civic Education

(Source: ICCS, 2009, PISA, 2000)

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Your answers are confidential and will not be shared with your parents, teachers or others without your permission. For most of them there should only be one checkbox per question. We will review your answers at our next interview so anything you are uncertain of, leave blank and we will discuss it. If you have any pressing questions or concerns, please contact me either via phone (917.628.3865) or email (kfb126@psu.edu).

Name: _____

1) Which of the following degrees do you expect to earn?

- Less than High School Diploma
- High School Diploma
- Associates Degree or Technical Certification
- Bachelors Degree
- Masters Degree
- Professional Degree (JD, MD etc)
- Doctorate

2) What is the highest level of education completed by your father or male guardian? (Leave blank if you don't know or do not have a male guardian you identify with)

- Less than High School Diploma
- High School Diploma
- Associates Degree or Technical Certification
- Bachelors Degree
- Masters Degree
- Professional Degree (JD, MD etc)
- Doctorate

3) What is the highest level of education completed by your mother or female guardian? (Leave blank if you don't know or do not have a female guardian you identify with)

- Less than High School Diploma
- High School Diploma
- Associates Degree or Technical Certification
- Bachelors Degree
- Masters Degree
- Professional Degree (JD, MD etc)
- Doctorate

4) How interested are your parent(s) in political and social issues? (*Please only tick one box in each row*)

	<i>Very Interested</i>	<i>Quite Interested</i>	<i>Somewhat Interested</i>	<i>Not Very Interested</i>	<i>Not interested at all</i>
Mother/ female guardian					
Father/ male guardian					

5) On a normal school day, how much time do you spend doing each of the following activities outside of school? (*Please only tick one box in each row*)

	<i>No time</i>	<i>Less than 30 minutes</i>	<i>About 30-60 minutes</i>	<i>About 1-2 hours</i>	<i>More than 2 hours</i>
Watching TV, videos, DVDs for enjoyment					
Doing homework or studying for school					
Using a computer or internet for enjoyment					
Reading for enjoyment					
Chat with friends over the phone or internet (including text or instant messages)					
Spending time with friends					

6) How often are you involved in each of the following activities outside of school? (*Please only tick one box in each row*)

	<i>Never or hardly ever</i>	<i>Monthly (at least once at month)</i>	<i>Weekly (at least once a week)</i>	<i>Daily or almost daily</i>
Talking with your parents about political or social issues				
Watching TV to learn about national and international news				
Reading the newspaper to inform yourself about national and international news				
Talking with friends about political and social issues				
Using the internet to inform yourself about national and international news				
Talking with your parent(s) about what is happening in other countries				
Talking with friends about what is happening in other countries				
Participating in a youth group (such as Scouts of Canada, Girl Guides of Canada, a church group)				

7) Have you ever been involved in activities of any of the following organizations, clubs or groups? *(Please only tick one box in each row)*

	<i>Yes, I have done this within the last twelve months</i>	<i>Yes, I have done this but more than a year ago</i>	<i>No, I have never done this</i>
Youth organization affiliated with a political party or union			
Environmental organization			
Human rights organization			
A voluntary group doing something to help the community			
An organization collecting money for a social cause			
A cultural organization based on ethnicity			
A religious group or organization			
A group of young people campaigning for an issue			

8) At school, have you ever done any of the following activities? Please think about all schools you have been enrolled at since the first year of elementary school. *(Please only tick one box in each row)*

	<i>Yes, I have done this within the last twelve months</i>	<i>Yes, I have done this but more than a year ago</i>	<i>No, I have never done this</i>
Voluntary participation in school-based music or drama activities outside of regular lessons			
Active participation in a debate			
Voting for class representative or school government			
Taking part in decision-making about how the school is run			
Taking part in discussions at student assemblies			
Becoming a candidate for class representative or school parliament			

9) When discussing political and social issues during regular class, how often do the following things happen? (*Please only tick one box in each row*)

	<i>Never or hardly ever</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Often</i>
Students are able to disagree openly with their teachers				
Teachers encourage students to make up their own minds				
Teachers encourage students to express their opinions				
Students bring up current political events for discussion in class				
Students express opinions in class even when their opinions are different from most of the other students				
Teachers encourage students to discuss the issues with people having different opinions				
Teachers present several sides of the issues when explaining them in class.				

10) In this school, how much are students' opinions taken into account when decisions are made about the following issues? (*Please only tick one box in each row*)

	<i>To a large extent</i>	<i>To a moderate extent</i>	<i>To a small extent</i>	<i>Not at all</i>
The way classes are taught				
What is taught in classes				
Teaching/learning materials				
The timetable				
Classroom rules				
School rules				
In extra-curricular activities like sports or clubs				

11) How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about you and your school? (*Please only tick one box in each row*)

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
Most of my teachers treat me fairly				
Students get along well with most teachers				
Most teachers are interested in students' well-being				
I feel like an outsider at my school				
Most of my teachers really listen to what I have to say				
If I need extra help, I will receive it from my teachers				
I am afraid of being bullied by other students				
I make friends easily				
I feel like I belong				
I feel awkward and out of place				
Other students seem to like me				
I feel lonely				
I do not want to go to school				
I often feel bored at school				

12) How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about student participation at your school? (*Please only tick one box in each row*)

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
Student participation in how schools are run can make schools better				
Lots of positive changes can happen in schools when students work together				
Organizing groups of students to express their opinions could help solve problems in schools				
All schools should have a student government				
Students can have more influence on what happens in schools if they act together rather than alone.				

13) There are different views about what a society should be like. I am interested in your views on this. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (*Please only tick one box in each row*)

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
Everyone should always have the right to express their opinions freely				
Political leaders should not be allowed to give government jobs to their family members				
No company or government should be allowed to own all newspapers in a country				
The police should have the right to hold people suspected of threatening national security in jail without trial				
All people should have their social and political rights respected				
People should always be free to criticize the government publicly				
Security agencies should be allowed to check letters, phone calls and emails of anyone suspected of threatening national security				
All citizens should have the right to elect their leaders freely				
People should be able to protest if they believe a law is unfair				
Political protest should never be violent				
Differences in income between poor and rich people should be small				
When faced with violent threats to national security, the government should have the power to control what appears in the media				

14) How important are the following behaviors for being a good adult citizen? (*Please only tick one box in each row*)

	<i>Very important</i>	<i>Quite important</i>	<i>Not very important</i>	<i>Not important at all</i>
Voting in every national election				
Join a political party				
Learning about the country's history				
Following political issues in the newspaper, on the radio, on TV or on the internet				
Showing respect for government representatives				
Engaging in political discussions				
Participating in peaceful protests against laws believed to be unjust				
Participating in activities to benefit people in Perth				
Taking part in activities promoting human rights				
Taking part in activities protect the environment				
Working hard				
Always obeying the law				

15) How interested are you in the following issues? (*Please only tick one box in each row*)

	<i>Very interested</i>	<i>Quite interested</i>	<i>Not very interested</i>	<i>Not interested at all</i>
Political issues within Perth				
Political issues in Canada				
Social issues in Canada				
Politics in other countries				
International politics				
Environmental issues				

16) How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about you and politics? (*Please only tick one box in each row*)

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
I know more about politics than most people my age				
When political issues or problems are being discussed, I usually have something to say				
I am able to understand most political issues easily				
I have political opinions worth listening to				
As an adult I will be able to take part in politics				
I have a good understanding of the political issues facing this country				

17) There are different views about the roles of women and men in society. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (*Please tick only one box in each row*)

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
Men and women should have equal opportunities to take part in government				
Men and women should have the same rights in every way				
Women should stay out of politics				
When there are not many jobs available, men should have more right a job than women				
Men and women should get equal pay when they are doing the same jobs				
Men are better qualified to be political leaders than women				
Women's first priority should be raising children				

18) People are increasingly moving from country to another. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about immigrants? (*Please tick only one box in each row*)

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
Immigrants should have the opportunity to continue speaking their own language				
Immigrant children should have the same opportunities for education that other children in the country have				
Immigrants who live in a country for several years should have the opportunity to vote in elections				
Immigrants should have the opportunity to continue their own customs and lifestyle				
Immigrants should have all the same rights that everyone else in the country has				
When there are not many jobs available, immigration should be restricted				

19) How much do you trust each of the following groups or institutions? (*Please tick only one box in each row*)

	<i>Completely</i>	<i>Quite a lot</i>	<i>A little</i>	<i>Not at all</i>
The Federal Government of Canada				
The Local Government of Perth				
Courts of Justice				
The police				
Political parties				
The Legislature (House of Commons and Senate)				
The media (television, newspaper, radio)				
The Armed Forces				
Schools				
The United Nations				
People in general				
Manitoban Provincial Government				

20) How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about Canada? (*Please tick only one box in each row*)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The Canadian flag is important to me				
The political system in Canada works well				
I have great respect for Canada				
In Canada, we should be proud of what we have achieved				
I would prefer to live permanently in another country				
I am proud to live in Canada				
Canada shows a lot of respect for the environment				
Generally speaking, Canada is a better country to live in than most other countries				

21) There are different political parties in Canada (for example: Conservative Party of Canada, Green Party of Canada, Liberal Party of Canada etc). Is there any political party that you like more than others?

Yes No

If yes, how much are you in favor of this party?

A lot
 To some extent
 A little

22) How well do you think you would do the following activities? (*Please tick only one box in each row*)

	<i>Very well</i>	<i>Fairly well</i>	<i>Not very well</i>	<i>Not at all</i>
Discuss a newspaper article about a conflict between countries				
Argue your point of view about a controversial political or social issue				
Stand as a candidate in a school election				
Organize a group of students in order to achieve changes at school				
Follow a television debate about a controversial issues				
Write a letter to a newspaper giving your view on a current issue				
Speak in front of your class about a social or political issue.				

23) There are many different ways how citizens may protest against things they believe are wrong. Would you take part in any of the following forms of protest in the future? How well do you think you would do the following activities? (*Please tick only one box in each row*)

	<i>I would certainly do this</i>	<i>I would probably do this</i>	<i>I would probably not do this</i>	<i>I would certainly not do this</i>
Writing a letter to a newspaper				
Wearing a badge or t-shirt expressing your opinion				
Contacting an elected representative				
Taking part in a peaceful march or rally				
Collecting signatures for a petition				
Choosing not to buy certain products				
Spray-painting protest slogans on walls				
Blocking traffic				
Occupying public buildings				

24) Listed below are different ways adults can take an active part in political life. When you are an adult, what do you think you will do? (*Please tick only one box in each row*)

	<i>I would certainly do this</i>	<i>I would probably do this</i>	<i>I would probably not do this</i>	<i>I would certainly not do this</i>
Vote in local elections (i.e. for mayor, school directors etc.)				
Vote in state elections (i.e. for governor or state legislature)				
Vote in federal elections (i.e. for President)				
Get information about candidates before voting in an election				
Help a candidate or party during an election campaign				
Join a political party				
Join a trade union				
Stand as a candidate in an election				

25) Listed below are different actions that you as a young person could take during the next few years. What do you expect that you will do? (*Please tick only one box in each row*)

	<i>I would certainly do this</i>	<i>I would probably do this</i>	<i>I would probably not do this</i>	<i>I would certainly not do this</i>
Volunteer time to help people in the local community				
Talk to others about your views on political and social issues				
Write to a newspaper about political and social issues				
Contribute to an online discussion forum about social and political issues				
Join an organization for a political or social cause				

**Thank you for taking for completing the survey!
Please bring it to our next interview and we will go over it.**

Appendix H: Reflective Writing Prompt

This is a me-diary. There is a list of prompts for you to respond. The prompts are meant to be open-ended so that you can answer as you wish. Therefore, when responding to the prompts about school, you do not have to talk only about your current school but any school that you want to. In addition to the prompts, you may also draw or write about other topics. You can share anything you would like to. Your notebook is yours to personalize as you wish. Your answers will not be shared with anyone including your parents or teachers.

- 1) My name is...
- 2) I was born in... on ...
- 3) My family...
- 4) I speak ...
- 5) I am ...
- 6) My favorite place is...
- 7) My favorite memory ...
- 8) My scariest memory ...
- 9) I feel safe ...
- 10) I enjoy ...
- 11) I feel like I belong ...
- 12) My school ...
- 13) My favorite teacher ...
- 14) My favorite class ...
- 15) My friends ...
- 16) In the future, I ...
- 17) I dream ...
- 18) I want to ...
- 19) I feel like I belong...
- 20) My community ...

Appendix I: Initial Codes

1. Belonging
2. Care
3. Citizen
4. Classes
5. Community
6. Comparative perspectives
7. Compliant or compliance with the system
8. Conflict
9. Culture
10. Desire to leave
11. Extracurricular
12. Extracurricular activities
13. Family
14. Feelings
15. Friendships
16. Gender roles
17. Highly mobile
18. Ideas to improve the school
19. Immigrant student experience
20. Immigration story
21. Information Sources
22. Lack of professionalism by school adults
23. Lack of support and information
24. Language
25. Larton Community center
26. Nothing to do
27. Not questioning
28. Peers
29. Perception of Immigrants
30. Perception of Inequality
31. Perceptions of America
32. Perceptions of Canada
33. Perceptions of School
34. Perth Immigrant Center
35. Place
36. Politics
37. Responsibility
38. Silence
39. Sources of Support
40. Student ethnic identification
41. Student's aspirations
42. Students' Personality

43. Survey reasoning
44. Teachers
45. Unity

Appendix J: Sample Memo

Memo: Larton's Students Feelings of Belonging
Date: 2/9/15

I have now read through 5 Larton students' interviews. These students include Christopher, Bianca, Veronica, Jacob, and Bella. Some overarching patterns have begun to emerge that I would like to document. First four of the five students feel that the teachers treat immigrant students unfairly in some way. While they all acknowledge that there are some teachers who treat them fairly, they suggest that the majority of the teachers do not treat students fairly. This feeling of injustice comes across in a variety of manners for the students from having the dress-code being not uniformly or equally applied to students feeling that the students' don't care for them.

Beyond being unfair, the general feeling of the first four kids was that teachers in Larton are ineffective. They all describe various groups of teachers who do not seem to care about their students' understanding of the material and a general unwillingness to help their students. Thus they describe being talked at rather than talked with. One math teacher just writes the problems on the board and expects the students to copy down the problems without questions.

Inconsistency was another common theme that the students experienced. As Bianca says in this exchange between herself and I:

Interviewer: Do you feel like the teachers are supporting you, did you feel supported by the teachers?

Interviewee: Sometimes but sometimes not because I think sometimes they don't help me.

Interviewer: Okay can you give me examples of a time that they helped you and then the times that they didn't help you.

Interviewee: Like some teachers because my history teacher she helped me, and she asked me if I understood something but like other teachers don't do that. They mean sometimes.

Interviewer: Why they're mean?

Interviewee: I don't know because I think personally that they need to understand that I don't know like English as well so you know what I mean.

Interviewer: Yeah I do.

Interviewee: And sometimes they don't care.

Interviewer: That they don't care yeah that's a big word care so do you feel like your teachers care about you?

Interviewee: No.

VITA
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SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Brezicha, K., Hopkins, M., (Forthcoming) Levers of Change: Exploring the Role of Community Boundary Spanners. To appear in a special issue of *Peabody Journal of Education*

Brezicha, K., Bergmark, U., Mitra, D., (2015). One Size Does Not Fit All: Differentiating Leadership to Support Teachers in School Reform. *Educational Administration Quarterly* 51(1), 96-132.

Fleishman, S., Brezicha, K., York, T. (2014). Service Learning Among “Nontraditional” College Students: Contexts, Trends, and Implications. In A. Traver & Z. Perel Katz (Eds.) *Service-Learning at the American Community College: Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives*. Palgrave-MacMillan.

PRESENTATIONS

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Research Assistant, *The Pennsylvania State University*, 2012-2013; 2014 –2015
Academic Consultant, FTCAP, *The Pennsylvania State University*, 2012
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