



Pandemic, Panic, and Precarity:

Interviews with International Students Stranded in Ottawa During COVID-19

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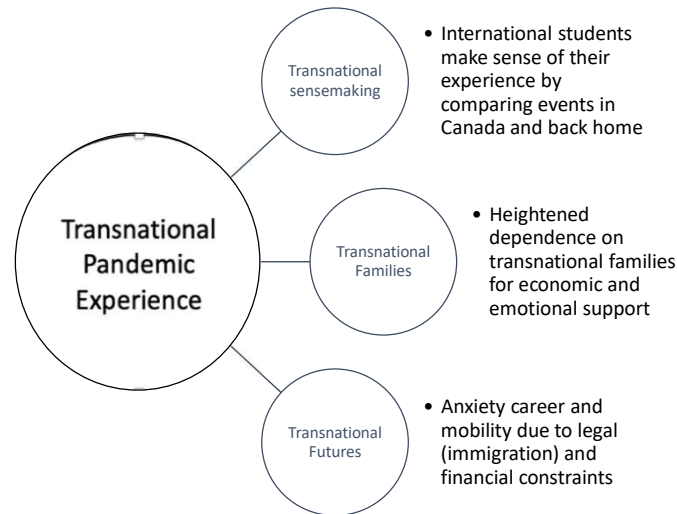
1

The Study

- N = 13 international students in Ontario
- *Objective:* Investigate how international students living in Canada are coping with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic
- *Theoretical framework:* transnationalism that understands mobility as broadly uninterrupted, continuing, and taken-for-granted
- *Literature:* International Student Migration (ISM) that views international students as the archetypal trans-migrants with frequent mobility and often multiple attachments to place.

2

Transnational Pandemic Experience



3

Transnational Sensemaking

“I think I shouldn’t have panicked for as long as I did, but I couldn’t blame myself for panicking for as long as I did, because everybody else was panicking...the reactions back at home, they are completely different. People were not that scared ...I guess people were calmer about everything and there was not that general atmosphere of panic.” [Jasmine, Uganda]

“That’s the biggest question in everyone’s mind. And if we don’t come back, for how long is it going to be? Is it going to be just the fall semester? Is it going to carry on to the wintertime? Are we looking at staying home for that long? But then again, we can’t stay here because of the expenses ...Will it affect our work permit or permanent residence if we get it?” [Noah, Rwanda]

4

Transnational Families

“It’s been a while since I’ve been totally dependent on my parents. Because before I came to Canada, when I finished my undergrad, I’d been working for two years. So, I’ve been independent, and I know how it feels. So, going back to dependent on my parents just felt really awkward... And also, it’s not very easy for them, because they’re going to be sending money from Nigeria to Canada. It’s going to be expensive and demanding, because of the exchange rate.” [Lucas, Nigeria]

“My experience of this pandemic is my mother calls me every day [...] I think now because obviously we both know that we may not be able to see each other for a pretty long while, it’s this need to talk, even when there’s nothing to say.” [Alice, India]

5

Transnational Futures

“I just didn’t know what to do with myself. I think I was buried so deep into fear that I was losing myself completely ... it was fear and anxiety of my future here, fear about what is happening, even the virus... I was supposed to be graduating, I was supposed to move out, I was supposed to apply for a work permit and get a job. So, how is it going to play out? I don’t have any other financial support other than, my family, my parents, which I am truly grateful for. I am coming to terms with [the fact that] I’m not in control anymore of the situation and I need to accept the fact that I don’t know what’s going to happen in a month or two.” [Ivy, Ivory Coast]

6



[Image Credit](#)

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8