The Role of Digital Media in the Everyday Lives of International Students

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My research uses a systematic empirical case study at the University of Leicester to investigate international students' digital practices before, during and in leaving United Kingdom Higher Education (UKHE) relative to personal, social, academic and professional lives. Rich empirical data centres on students' voices of experience and by charting their everyday digital practices. I explore the differentiated experiences, emotions and identities of international study and students' lives. Mixed methods employed an online survey (229 responses from 37 nationalities), six qualitative focus groups (27 students across 14 nationalities) and 18 individual interviews (15 students of 10 nationalities; three university administrators). I follow the student journey, examining digital practices during entrance into UKHE, uncovering the key role of prior place within international study futures. My geographical stance presents a spatially distributed view of digital networks. In Leicester, I chart students' diverse, dynamic social/academic digital relationships, evidencing highly differentiated students, who can also act as digital agents. Neoliberal employment pressures shape digital practices as students exit UKHE, although digital networks present how international study also exists post-UKHE. I provide student views of what digitally networked UK international study feels like. Here, Facebook usage includes digital collective difference and digital belonging. Student networks, sustained by constant digital connection, involve a social/digital nexus which shapes emotionally/digitally saturated experiences, reducing the material effect of place. Digitally contagious emotional centres infect student subjectivities and identity positions. Student digital practices also reflect circumscribed agency involving pedagogy and language. I uncover how international study shapes dysfunctional digital practices. My findings evidence how international study is a complex, multiply-located phenomenon, which is being transformed by digital media, but it is also transforming digital media practices too. This recursive relationship permits a reconsideration of student mobility through their digital networks. My research generates nine bottom-up policy recommendations to improve student experiences.

Acknowledgements

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BOS	Bristol Online Survey
BUILA	British Universities' International Liaison Association
C-BERT	Cross Border Education Research Team
CDM	Chinese digital media
CEDEFOP	Centre for European Development of Vocational Training
DBIS	Department for Business Innovation and Skills
d/l	Distance learning
DM	Digital media
EU	European Union
FE	Further Education
FG	Focus group
f/t	Full time
HE	Higher education
HEA	Higher Education Academy
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEI	Higher education institution
HEP	Higher education provider
HEPI	Higher Education Policy Institute
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
HoR	Hall of residence
IBC	International branch campus
ICT	Information and communication technology
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
IHEI	International higher education institution
IPS	International Passenger Survey
IRB	Institutional review board (ethics)
I.S.	International student: also termed student(s) (singular and plural contexts)
ISM	International student mobility

LLM	Latin Legum Magister (Master of Laws)
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MMR	Mixed methods research
MOOCS	Massive Open Online Courses
M.Phil	Master of Philosophy
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development
ONS	Office for National Statistics (UK)
Ph.D	Doctor of Philosophy (research student)
PRC	Peoples Republic of China
P/G	Postgraduate
P/G.I.S.	Postgraduate international student
PGR	Postgraduate (research)
PGT	Postgraduate (taught)
RQ	Research question
SM	Social media
SNS	Social networking site
THE	Times Higher Education
TNE	Transnational education
TRI-ORM	Training Researchers in On-line Methods
U/G	Undergraduate
U/G.I.S.	Undergraduate international student
UKHE	United Kingdom Higher Education
UKHEI	United Kingdom Higher Education Institution
UKCISA	United Kingdom Council for International Student Affairs
UKVI	United Kingdom Visas and Immigration
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UoL	University of Leicester
VPN	Virtual private network
WUR	World university rankings

Blogs	Blogs often involve one person writing a tightly defined and frequently updated online discussion, allowing reader engagement and discussion (Duermyer, 2016).
Bulletin board	A digital site where users can post comments about a particular issue or topic and reply to other users' postings (Google, 2017).
Channel	A means of communicating digitally (Krogh, 2013).
Chatroom	Digital space where users can communicate. Chatrooms are often devoted to a specific subject.
Digital	'Signals or data expressed as series of the digits 0 and 1, typically represented by values of a physical quantity such as voltage or magnetic polarization' (Google, 2017).
Digital domain	'A distinct subset of the Internet with addresses sharing a common suffix or under the control of a particular organization or individual' (Google, 2017).
Digital media	'Digital media refers to audio, video, and photo content that has been encoded (digitally compressed). Encoding content involves converting audio and video input into a digital media file allowing it to be easily manipulated, distributed, and rendered (played) by computers, and is easily transmitted over computer networks'. Examples: WMA, MP3, JPEG and AVI. (Microsoft, 2011).
Digital morphologies	The form, shape or structure of digital socialities through digital networks (relative to place, space, distance and time). This compliments ideas about 'digital cartographies' (Kinsley, 2014:370).
Digital streaming	'Streaming media is video or audio content sent in compressed form over the Internet and played immediately, rather than being saved to the hard drive'. (WhatIs.com, 2009).

Everyday	The happenings, situations and events as perceived and subjectively experienced by us as individuals everyday (Horton and Kraftl, 2014).
Folksonomies	'A user-generated system of classifying and organizing online content into different categories by the use of metadata such as electronic tags' (Google, 2017). Also termed social software.
Forums	A discussion area on an interactive website. Discussions can be tightly defined or more general amongst site members (community). Non-members can often view content.
International student	Full-time postgraduate students (taught/research) from nations outside of the 28 EU member states, who have left their prior place (e.g. domicile/elsewhere) and moved to UoL for international study.
International study	'International study' involves international education existing via complex spatialities (Madge et al. 2015). I.S. and educators are emotionally and politically networked together. International study is not a discrete point in time. It involves the time before and post-UKHE where I.S. can change the settings they are located within.
Image/Video share	'The publishing or transfer of a user's digital photos online where websites offer services such as uploading, hosting, managing and sharing of photos (publicly or privately)' (Google, 2017).
Intranet	A local, restricted private digital network using www technology.
Mash-ups	A web page or application created by combining data or functionality from different sources (Google, 2017).
Micro blog	Content is usually much smaller than a blog (140 characters or less). Microblogs can also enable image, vlog and podcast transfer.
MOO	A MOO (MUD object-oriented) is a text-based online virtual reality system connecting many users simultaneously (Wikipedia, 2017).
MUD	Multi-user dungeon: a computer-based text or virtual reality game which several players play at the same time, interacting with each other and characters controlled by the computer (Google, 2017).

Nexus	'A connection or series of connections linking two or more things', or 'a central or focal point' (Google, 2017).
Platform	Digital tools realising communication strategies (Krogh, 2013).
Podcast	'A digital audio or video file or recording, usually part of a themed series, that can be downloaded from a website to a media player or computer.' (Dictionary.com, 2017).
Prior place	I.S. 'come from' a range of places and can have complex biographies.
Social/digital nexus	The point where social (or academic) relationships are augmented through digital connectivity as a mutually co-constitutive experience (i.e. one space recursively (re)produces other space).
Social media	'Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.' (Oxford Dictionary, 2017) (via Web 2.0 internet involving user generated content).
SNS	Social networking service/site. 'An online platform that is used by people to build social networks or social relations with other people who share similar personal or career interests, activities, backgrounds or real-life connections' (Google, 2017).
Vlog	A blog where the postings are mainly in video form.
VPN	A virtual private network is often constructed through the public internet to connect to a private network (as a type of intranet).
Website	A set of linked web pages using a single domain name.
Web 1.0	The first stage in the World Wide Web (the internet), comprising web pages connected by hyperlinks which involves static websites not enabling interactive content (Technopedia, 2017).
Web 2.0	'The second stage of development of the Internet, characterized especially by the change from static web pages to dynamic or user-generated content and the growth of social media'. (Google, 2017).
Wiki	'A website or database developed collaboratively by a community of users, allowing any user to add and edit content' (Google, 2017).

Quotation Annotation System Sequencing:

[Gender (F1/M2/T); Study level (MA/M.Sc/Ph.D); Nationality; Data collection method (I/FG/S/A/SML/abridged/withheld)].

Key

Gender:

F[1]	Female [e.g. quote from first female in a focus group exchange]
M[2]	Male [e.g. quote from second male in a focus group exchange]
T	Transgender

Study level:

MA	Master of Art
M.Sc	Master of Science
Ph.D	Doctor of Philosophy

Nationality:	By country of domicile

Data collection method:

I	Interview
FG1-6	Focus Group (one to six)
S	Survey (Bristol Online Survey)
A	Alumni quotation
Abridged	Key data extracted from transcription
Withheld	Total anonymity applied

The Role of Digital Media in the Everyday Lives of International Students

James Donald Booth

Dedicated to my 11 year old son, Harris, to show what can be done.

Learning is life. Always question life.

Chapter 1 Introduction

This research provides an empirical analysis of the everyday lives of international students (I.S.) at a UK (inter)national university: the University of Leicester (UoL). Its focus is to uncover the role of digital media during the UK international study journey. Using mixed methods, I investigate full-time, non-EU postgraduate (P/G) I.S. everyday experiences, emotions and digital practices during international study (Madge et al. 2015: see glossary). The definition of international student and rationale for focusing on this group are detailed in the methodology chapter (3.3.1). My research draws on the voices of I.S., as there have been no systematic empirical studies of I.S. and digital practices in the UK (and only limited work elsewhere). Findings have a policy relevance whilst also enabling a re-evaluation of international student mobility (ISM) via I.S. experiences, emotions and digital practices. Two primary research motives exist.

First, I.S. represent 14% (+312,000) of full time students in UKHE in 2014/15 (HESA, 2016) and they are a vital UK economic concern adding +£25 billion to the UK economy and supporting +206,000 jobs (Universities UK, 2017a,b). As such, I.S. facilitate the UK in being a key global provider of international study. However, education is in 'flux' in mature capitalist political economies (Thiem, 2009:154), creating concerns for UKHE. I.S. numbers entering UKHE have fallen over the last six years (UKCISA, 2016), owing to increasing competition from established and emerging global HE providers. It is thus a timely moment to place I.S. centre stage in understanding the current UKHE eduscape.

Secondly, I.S. are relatively under-researched. I.S. voices of experiences and emotions remain under investigated. Waters and Brooks (2012:22) argue I.S. 'have been conspicuously absent from extant debates' (in migration), noting 'empirical studies of transnationalism have largely ignored the potential significance of I.S. (2012:23). I suggest I.S. represent a highly significant social, cultural and intellectual group who network with other globally dispersed actors and groups, contributing to societal progression by providing (in)direct present/future benefits to the UK. Also, in addition to economic benefits, I see I.S. as agents of intellectual, social and cultural knowledge transfer processes which contribute to the UK's, and notably UKHE's, global presence.

My research is first contextualised by the discussion of international study and international students, digital socialities and digital media in UKHE below.

1.1 Research Contexts

1.1.1 International Study and International Students

The post-cold war global political, economic, social and cultural restructuring facilitated by neo-liberal reforms, has created a historically unprecedented rapidity of political and economic change. This restructuring has greatly changed global mobilities, perhaps no more so than in the international study sector, evidenced by increasing numbers of internationally mobile students over the last three decades (see Appendix 1 for an in-depth statistical presentation). In 1975, 0.8 million I.S. engaged in ISM, rising to 4.5 million in 2012 (OECD, 2015). I.S. numbers are anticipated to rise to seven million by 2020 (UNESCO, 2015) and exceed eight million by 2025 (OECD, 2014). Within these increasing numbers of I.S., complex regional spatialities and vectors of mobility permeate the field. UNESCO (2015) statistics show 3,542,302 I.S. from 204 nations were involved in international study during 2013 (most recent data). For most I.S., international study involved citizens physically moving to a geographically unevenly distributed 'core' of international study providers, led by USA, UK, Australia, France, Germany, Japan and Canada, who collectively account for 52% of provision (OECD, 2015). Mobile I.S. are often postgraduates. On average, 21% of all first time entrants at Master's level are I.S. and 40% of students entering doctoral study are I.S. (OECD, 2015). So what is the situation of international education in the UK?

The UK has historically been an important host of international study. By I.S. intake the UK is the second largest provider globally, after the USA. Non-EU I.S. made up 14% the full time student body 2014/15[1] or 312,010 I.S. (HESA, 2016). International study is a strategic contributor to the UKHE and the UK economy. In an IPPR Report (September, 2016), Morris et al. value I.S. at £17.5 billion, where I.S. fees and expenses account for a staggering 'three-quarters of earnings within the education sector' (ibid:4). Recently, Universities UK (2017a,b) revised value estimates to £25 billion. While the estimated economic value of I.S. varies, they clearly make a vital contribution to the UK economy and to UKHE. This input occurs at a time of national uncertainty for UKHE which faces on-going funding cuts from the UK Conservative government and Brexit, while the 'immigration debate' (Blinder, 2015a; Waters, 2015a; Brooks, 2015a; Burns, 2016;

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[1] +1% on 2013/14's 310,195 I.S (13%). EU I.S (2014/15) 124,575 (down from 125,300, 2013/14) (HESA, 2016).

Morris et al. 2016) and securitization poses added concerns (Dalby 2008; Marginson, 2015; Mavroudi and Nagel, 2016; Lazaridis and Wadia, 2015; Reidy, 2017; Fazackerley, 2016, 2017) (see Appendix 1). International challenges to UKHE also exist.

International challenges threaten I.S. recruitment into UKHE, during a 'global race for I.S.' (British Council, 2017). For example, Singapore and Malaysia, are emergent providers, changing ISM vectors in South East Asia (Postiglione, 2014). German HEIs are now free of tuition fees for all, including I.S. whilst also offering English-based courses which are attracting increasing numbers of Chinese I.S. (Goube, 2014; OECD, 2016; Matthews, 2017). Digital technologies are also shaping distance HE and networked learning communities (Madge et al. 2015; Beetham, 2016a), evidenced by the rise of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCS) (Lawton and Lunt, 2013; Gaebel, 2014) and non-credit education abroad (UWN, 2016). Non-UKHEIs also operate international branch campuses (C-BERT, 2016). Many factors thus challenge internationalising UKHE. In this flux, I now discuss the current situation of I.S. in UKHE.

In 2000/01, 136,290 I.S. entered UKHE: 72,685 were postgraduate I.S. (P/G.I.S.) (HESA, 2002). By 2010/11 this had peaked at 140,935 full time P/G.I.S. out of 258,800 non-EU I.S. (U/G and P/G) (HESA, 2014). Figures show a decline of P/G.I.S. to 139,550 in 2011/12 and to 135,215 2012/13 (-3%). Indeed, 2013 recorded the first drop in EU and non-EU I.S. entering UKHE in 29 years of records as the UK's share of I.S. in the top English language providers of international study fell from 36% to below 33% (British Council, 2014a,b). In 2015-16 Australia, Canada, Germany and USA all increased growth, but in 2015-16 the number of UK universities in the top 400 fell from 52 to 45 (Hobsons/BUILA, 2016). All non-EU I.S. (U/G and P/G) are briefly considered below.

In 2013/14 there were 310,195 non-EU I.S. in UKHE, which represented 13% of students in UKHE. In 2014/15 enrolments rose by only 0.59% (to 312,010: HESA, 2016) (Appendix 1 provides a 13 year statistical overview). However, all first year enrolments fell by 3% in the same period, subject to sharp declines in I.S. from emerging markets (ICEF, 2016). Morris et al. (2016) viewed the overall situation as a six year period of decline resulting in the current stagnation. Gordon Slaven of the British Council (2016) argued the static market was 'alarming', where 'urgent steps' were necessary to stem this decline. In this schema, where do postgraduate I.S. stand in UKHE?

In 2014-15 P/G.I.S. signified a massive 46%[2] (HESA, 2016) of all full-time entrants to UKHE postgraduate programmes, accounting for 61% of entrants to taught UKHE Master's courses (f/t) (PRC P/G.I.S. made-up 25%: HEFCE, 2016a,b). The figures prove P/G.I.S. are an important nationally strategic financial concern to the UK economy and UKHE. However, in 2014/15 P/G.I.S. numbers fell by 0.9%: 800 P/G.I.S. lower than 2013-14. Analysis by individual nation reveals deeper concerns. HEFCE (2016a,b) discloses Indian entrants reduced by 11% (670)[3], Bangladesh -26% (225), Pakistan -14% (190) Nigeria -8% (390) and Malaysia -6%. Analysis of the top ten enrolments by nation over a five year period presents worrying international trends affecting UKHE. For instance there is a slowdown in Chinese growth (see Appendix Table 1.2).

Data show I.S. from China, India and Nigeria are the most numerically significant in UKHE, but all are falling due to various reasons, including new Eastern, African and Middle Eastern ISM vectors with increasing I.S. studying in-situ (Waters and Leung, 2013a,b; Leung and Waters, 2013a,b; OECD, 2016). Concerns also exist about over-dependency on key national groups, presenting exposure to risks aligned with political/economic volatility elsewhere. Waters (2015c) addresses HESA 2013-14 figures showing there were more first year Chinese I.S. in UKHE than from all EU countries combined. If Chinese ISM vectors suddenly changed away from UKHE, this could pose serious consequences to internationalising UKHE, which is dependent upon income from Chinese students. These concerns exist at a time of increasing (inter)national marketization of UKHE.

As UKHEIs increasingly reach out globally, UKHE spatialities are transforming (Hall, 2015). Waters and Leung (2012:2.1) argue UKHE cannot be regarded as a national and internally-driven affair. The many (inter)national statistical agencies (and UKHEI corporate affairs offices) monitoring UKHE values, growths and reputations in (inter)national rankings evidence the economic importance of the UKHE sector internationally. However, Waters (2008:40) warns about 'the practice of international education and the dangers of unfettered market involvement'. The Conservative government White Paper (2016) 'Success as a Knowledge Economy', sets out a future UKHE dependent on market-led HE. I view the White Paper (2016) a step closer to full-

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[2] Also 46% in 2013/14 (HESA, 2016)
[3] Enrolments from India also dropped 8% in 2013-14 (HESA 2015).

marketization of UKHE based on neo-liberal logic and an increasingly politically and economically aggressive edu-market (Hall and Appleyard, 2011). Here, matters beyond the economic are less considered by UK governments and UKHEIs. I.S. create cultural capital and a global outlook from within UKHE. However, I feel the educator/student relationship is increasingly tested and pressured through the neo-liberal agenda.

In a UKHE climate that is driven by monetary concerns, UK students are feeling unhappy (Hall, 2015; HEPI-HEA, 2016; Neves and Hillman, 2016; Weale and Perraudin, 2016). This raises many questions about how I.S. feel. For instance, UKHEIs increasingly rely on I.S. as alternative funding sources (Madge et al. 2009a). Issues of ethical care and responsibility towards I.S. are raised, notably when I.S are coming from diverse cultures and might hold marginal agency relative to the host UKHEI. In moving beyond economic discourses, I argue there is an urgent need to understand better the ethical, social, academic and political impacts of internationalisation at individual and group level. My human focus aims to promote internationalising UKHE 'from within' by enhancing I.S. experiences. However, I.S. voices, from within UKHE, are seldom heard.

Many questions exist about how I.S. feel during UK international study. For instance, UKHE is potentially financially onerous. I.S. tuition fees vary from £10,000 to £42,000 p.a; non-London living costs average £12,000 p.a (London £15,000) (QS, 2017). Emotional stresses also present wellbeing issues relative to the pressures to succeed. Through international relocation, I.S can experience frictions and be affected by higher stresses than UK/EU students relative to absence from home, pedagogic differences, language issues and visa concerns. To gain insight into I.S lives, my research places I.S. voices centre stage, charting subjective everyday experiences, emotions and I.S. digital practices, as a reflection of the education journey, where 'digital socialities' matter.

1.1.2 Digital Socialities

My study occurs at a time of proliferating digital/social connectivity. Internet live stats (2018) reveal 3.834 billion global internet users. Current scholarship is increasingly focused upon human/digital interactions and how this affects social relationships in society. This involves how 'the social' is shaped through combined on/offline life (see Tsatsou, 2014:212). For instance, cultural geography, sociology, media studies,

environmental psychology, cultural anthropology and migration studies explore new socialities 'through digital media' (see 2.3; 2.3.3). These disciplines question individual and group sensory engagement with the social/digital, practically, cognitively and emotionally. Concepts centre on social theory (see Fuchs, 2017:33-51 for a review).

Digital socialities concern social relationships, participatory culture and the concepts of communication power through socially connective digital communication networks (Van Dijck, 2013). In the digitally networked society, Fuchs (2017:6-7) debates social theory and social philosophy and the many forms of 'the social', which include information and cognition, communication, community, collaboration and co-operative work. Fuchs (2017:7) argues that when considering 'social media', many meanings of 'the social' exist (e.g. 'sociality, media, society, power, democracy, participation, culture, labour, communication, information, the public sphere, and the private realm'). Here, diverse meanings fuzzy understandings of 'social' media. Thus, 'social media' is a complex term, involving many meanings relative to digital socialities.

Rose (2016a:336) argues 'digital technologies saturate everyday life'. In the UK, digital technology has reduced internet access costs and raised data transfer speeds, prompting an explosion in digital practices. Deuze (2012:x) captures the essence of digital socialities: 'You live in media. Who you are, what you do and what all of this means to you, does not exist outside of media'. In a short time period, digital media have become embedded in many people's daily habits, leading Meek (2012) to suggest they are becoming 'invisible' in daily life. Where geography studies of I.S. digital practices remain rare, diverse digital/human behaviour studies shape my research approach. For example, work has explored individual/group agency relative to social isolation (e.g. alienation), social cohesion (via enabling and constraining lenses), difference (e.g. changes in social status), belonging and (performed) identity (Bakardjieva and Smith, 2001; Elias and Lemish, 2009; Metkova, 2010; Moores 2012; Madianou and Miller, 2012; Hine, 2012). In following this work, I examine the role of local (inward) and dispersed (outward) digital networks in everyday I.S. lives during the UK international education journey (i.e. before, during and upon exiting UKHE). Here, we might begin to see how 'the digital' is inculcated within the co-construction of complex education space (Massey, 2012:91; Brooks et al. 2012), as considered below.

1.1.3 Digital Networks in UKHE and International Students

I now consider UKHE and the role of I.S. digital networks in social and academic life. My research takes place at a time when UKHE is digitally saturated (academically and socially). For instance, Facebook (with over two billion monthly active users), Twitter (328 million monthly active users) and LinkedIn (467 million members) are three global networks which are promoted by UoL (Stastica, 2017a,b,c). Selwyn and Facer (2014:482) argue 'digital technology is now woven so tightly into the fabric of everyday life that there can be few areas of education that go untouched by "the digital" in one form or another'. Figure 1.1 lists some current news headlines about UKHE and 'digital students', revealing how the digital mundanely infects UKHE and I.S. lives.

Figure 1.1 Recent UKHE (Inter)national 'Digital Student' News Headlines

'Some of our students now graduate with the attention span of a tweet' [Baty, 2017, THE].
'Is the traditional research university doomed to extinction in a digital age?' [Beddington, 2017, THE].
'London university tells students their emails may be monitored'. 'King's College London notice about its Prevent duty prompts criticism from student and staff unions.' [Weale, 2017, Guardian].
'Why universities should start taking social media far more seriously' [Struwig & v.d Berg, 2016: The Conversation].
'How Social Media is Changing University Student Recruitment' [Mulder, 2016: Status].
'Universities face student cheating crisis' - 'Almost 50,000 students at British universities have been caught cheating in the past three years amid fears of a plagiarism "epidemic" fuelled disproportionately by foreign students' [Monstrous and Kender, 2016: The Times].
'One in four students uses social media to contact university staff' [Par, 2015: THE].
'Where is the love? Majority of international students in the UK do not feel welcome' [Garner, 2014: Independent].
'Email is dead for today's students who prefer Twitter' [Philipson, 2014: The Telegraph].
'University students spend SIX HOURS a day on Facebook, YouTube and sending texts'- 'Even during lectures.' [Petre, 2014: Mail on Sunday].

Figure 1.1 evidences the role of digital technologies on digital campus cultures. However, there remains a surprising dearth of research about I.S. digital networks in UKHE. The rise of the internet and proliferation of digital media have revolutionized life, raising many questions about UK international study. I will investigate I.S. digital social and academic networks (where I view I.S. as transnational subjects: see 1.3.2). I will explore the role of UK international study digital networks in I.S. lives: their subjectivities (self-awareness in the world), identities (unique facts distinguishing a

person from others) and emotions (notably belonging and difference). Questions involve sense of place and the digital paradigm. I thus explore place perceptions and digital networks which can simultaneously connect local and dispersed centres. As such, I.S. lives might involve 'digitally' multi-located, multi-scalar, socially constructed, relational and performed matters (Smith et al. 2013; Yulval-Davis, 2011; Rivzi, 2001, 2005; Anderson and Harrison, 2016). I evaluate UK international study space 'through' I.S. digital networks (see 2.3.4). Many questions exist about I.S. digital practices.

Are digital media over-used and problematic for I.S., or are digital networks improving UK international study experiences? How might digital media from different network centres shape I.S. life? Elsewhere, digital political problems exist: Twitter libel cases (Baksi, 2011; Sherwin, 2013; Kennedy, 2017) and political use (Jungherr, 2016). Given such digital politics, how might web legacies shape current-day digital practices? How does digital connectivity shape I.S. positive and negative experiences bodily and vice versa (e.g. frictions relative to expansive/constrictive networks, UKVI, securitization)?

At this critical juncture for UKHE, I argue many questions exist about I.S. lives, and that the role of digital media during UK international study needs urgent investigation. My research diverges from economic perspectives, with a clear focus upon human/digital issues. I seek answers via analysis of the voices and digital practices of the subjects of education: international students, as they journey through UK international study.

1.1.4 Summary

The research contextualisation has set-out the economic import of UK international education, although due to various reasons, current I.S. recruitment is in an apparently precarious position. In this current climate, I have argued it is timely to move beyond economic discourses, where I.S. digital networks can present an incisive bottom-up view to how it feels to be involved in UK international study. I submit there is a surprising dearth of work exploring the I.S. journey and digital media. My research will make a timely input via I.S. experiences and emotions and what this means for UKHE.

The rest of this chapter is structured as follows: the research rationale is discussed (1.2), this is followed by a consideration of the key concepts and research contributions (1.3). Finally, Section 1.4 describes my thesis structure.

1.2 Research Rationale

Several issues emerge out of the proceeding discussion. Firstly, international study is a key concern for the United Kingdom's political economy in new millennium. However, the social, cultural, academic and professional impacts of internationalising UKHE are under-researched. It is therefore an appropriate topic of study. This is more the case since digital networks are having huge impacts on the way UKHE is marketed, consumed and experienced. Thus, a study examining UK international study and the role of digital media in the present day is an important topic worthy of consideration.

Secondly, there is a pressing need to undertake such studies with the student voice taking centre stage. Simultaneously, there is appreciation that this I.S. voice is not homogenous, but diverse and variegated according to social, spatial and temporal variations. This provides a mandate to research UK international study and digital media. This is a pressing matter given the current lack of detailed work on the everyday role of digital media during UK international study. There is an urgent need to gather detailed, empirically rich data to explore this relationship. It is therefore fitting that I.S. voices are placed centre stage in my study. Additionally, I.S. are diverse, but there is also an appreciation that I.S. are on an educational journey, which starts before they enter their place of study, and goes on after they finish their studies. An approach which is attuned to the role of prior place (or student 'home'), and how this interacts with the current study location, and any future aspirations, is important to capture a sense of the mobility of the student, their digital networks, and the interaction between the different places that they occupy in their education journey.

Thirdly, the above discussion hints the I.S. journey is replete with various experiences which are pragmatic, social, academic, professional and emotional. However, an understanding of how these experiences interleaf with the digital is less considered in the literature.

Finally, clearly I.S. play a significant role in UKHE. This presents a policy imperative to try and understand how their experiences might be improved. An ethical, caring view towards I.S. aims to enhance their experiences. This might promote internationalising UKHE 'from within' (i.e. through I.S. international study digital networks). Arising from the study rationale I employ four interconnected research questions.

1.2.1 Research Questions

Research Question 1

How do non-EU full time postgraduate international students employ digital media during entry, attendance and exit of international study at the University of Leicester?

Research Question 2

What, when and why are digital media used, or not used, in everyday international student life at the University of Leicester?

Research Question 3

How do digital networks effect international study experiences, emotions and identities at the University of Leicester?

Research Question 4

From the findings of this thesis, how might a clearer view of the role of digital media in international students' everyday lives promote and enhance international student study experience at UoL and in the UKHE sector?

During 2013-14 (the year I collected empirical data), UoL received +2100 full time P/G.I.S. from 45 nations. UoL is globally acknowledged as an international university. Times Higher Education (THE) positions UoL 41st (world) for HEIs with the highest percentage of I.S. (Bhardwa, 2017b). THE World University Rankings places UoL in the top 20 UKHEIs and top 1% of world universities. In 2015/16, 32% of the on campus study body were I.S. (UoL, 2016g: U/G.I.S and 5% EU students). UoL is subject to, and shapes international study processes, and the people who are the subjects of these processes, creating neoliberal HE space. UoL is thus a fitting case study to gain insight to neoliberal HE spatialities, investigated through I.S. voices and their digital practices.

1.3 Key Concepts and Contributions

This section considers three key study concepts: international study spatialities and digital media (1.3.1), differentiated everyday I.S. life (1.3.2) and digital worlds (1.3.3). I then summarise my research contributions (1.3.4) and thesis structure details (1.4).

1.3.1 International Study Spatialities and Digital Media (Networks)

This section addresses *'multi-scalar place/space'* (Marston et al. 2005), or what Singh et al. (2007:198) term 'the spatial problematic', *and digital media*. I view neoliberal HE spaces as non-neutral, highly politicised, power-laden and interconnected. I define HE

education spaces as 'international study' (Madge et al. 2015:681) where complex networked spatialities link I.S. and educators, emotionally and politically together. Waters (2012a:A1) notes intriguing questions exist through 'the spatial differentiation of education (at different scales)'. Here, multiscalar, transforming structures, permeate UK international study. My stance allows insight to 'locality', 'the complexity of space' and the 'social construction of scale' (Collyer and King, 2015:187) within HE structures.

International study restructuring (ISR) is 'the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education' (Knight, 2003:2). ISR is shaped by World Trade Organisation concerns (Sidhu, 2006, 2007; Robertson, 2012). ISR commonly follows a neo-liberal rationale shaping the global knowledge economy and world class universities (Peck, 2010; Anderson, 2015; Gulson, 2016). I.S. perceptions of gaining economic capital connected to globally orientated employment pressures drive uneven ISM vectors (Punteney, 2012; O'Connor and Bodicoat, 2015; Hoyler and Jöns, 2008; Jöns and Hoyler, 2013). ISR (and/or) is influenced by (supra)national bodies (European Higher Education Area: Hoogenboom, 2013, 2015), supra-national alignments (Tuning Project: Kim, 2010; Bhandari and Blumenthal 2011), national strategies (O'Brien, 2012; Haugen, 2013; 2015; Sidhu et al. 2016) and many HEI policies (Robertson, 2012; Knight, 2012, 2014; Tannock, 2013). Indeed, according to Bode and Davidson (2011:81) ISR 'is unstoppable'. ISR is complicit in producing complex spatially uneven eduscapes.

ISR is spatially expansive, producing multiple and nebulous experiences in different places. Waters and Leung (2016:1) regard this spatial extension 'the reaching outwards of educational institutions and pedagogies, or an externalisation process'. Place and space reiteratively shape I.S. experience (Waters, 2015a:1) and social morphologies (Waters and Brooks, 2012:21). These I.S. experiences also involve digital media which further the development of new education spaces (Collins, 2012b:248). I consider that I.S. experiences exist at multiple scales (Cresswell, 2015 [2004]), being processional (Carlson, 2013) and constructed through multiple places (Lefebvre, 1991[1947]). The place of HE also constructs local and global experiences via education networks (Hopkins, 2010, 2011), notably through social and academic digital networks.

Digital media are viewed as complicit in transforming and extending these multi-scalar international study spaces. Digital networks interweave and interconnect HE place/space at micro, group, local, national, international and transnational scales. Place/space is thus regarded as 'hybrid, interconnected, and translocal' (Phillips and Robinson, 2015:411) through digital networks. This presents a blurry inward/outward networked view of international study spatialities existing through digital practices which connect local/dispersed actors (Hjorth and Pink, 2014). Digital practices broker, disrupt and actively constitute encounters of self and world (Leszczynski, 2014:3) inferring a type of elasticity of place/space through digital networks which can permit 'portability, strong place bonds, and permanence' across physical distance 281); this involves concepts of digitally mediated HE place/space.

Adams (2009:214) argues 'communication is at the heart of every major aspect of the cultural turn'. It is important to understand this spatially. This blurry HE place/space involves digital mediation (Leszczynski, 2014:3) aligned to Leszczynski's (2014) 'material/digital nexus'; here regarded as the social/digital nexus (where the social and the digital are interconnected, see glossary). I.S. international study experiences involve this interface between human/technical/material realities (Rose, 2016a). Concepts involve I.S. agency via 'transformations and the networks of social action that students create, move in and act upon in their daily lives' (Singh et al. 2007:198). UoL is ideal to investigate this international study social/digital nexus. I now consider I.S..

1.3.2 Differentiated Everyday International Student Life

The second concept views I.S. as *'complex, differentiated and agentic'* (Madge et al. 2015:682), where I.S. subjective perceptions and emotions are key to *'everyday'* life experience. I view UK international study to be encountered differently by different social groups and individuals. For instance, Waters (2012a:A2) contends the 'often alien environment changes embodied cultural capital'. Everyday life tends to be forgotten in economic discourses. Geddie (2015:244) argues UK governments have treated I.S. as 'valuable but scarce assets' and a 'competitive economic issue'. Waters and Leung (2014:58) highlight the need to elevate 'young people's voices', where Waters and Leung (2016:3) submit 'counter-narratives offer possibilities of redefining

dominant discourses through everyday practices'. I view I.S. not simply as economic, or undifferentiated universally constructed objects, but as emotional and differentiated beings subject to everyday life. 'The everyday' allows insight to wider structural issues.

Everyday life has often been overlooked by geographers (Horton and Kraftl, 2014:184) who have previously focused too intently upon place and space (Rigg, 2007:2). Sociologists have lead the field relative to microsociology everyday theory. As Sztompka (2008:1) notes, everyday sociological analysis involves 'in-depth, interpretative, and qualitative procedures that focus on the visual surface of society' relative to social existence. In a review of everyday life sociology, Adler et al. (1987:217-218) point out 'everyday life is an umbrella term encompassing several related but distinct theoretical perspectives: symbolic interactionism, dramaturgy, labelling theory, phenomenology, ethnomethodology, and existential sociology'. Adler et al. (1987:218-219) highlight the major tenets of everyday life sociology, which acts as the critique of macro sociology, where natural context involves individual relationships with consciousness and interaction relative to social structure(s). These views involve the development of sociological theory and insights from seemingly mundane daily settings. Here, everyday life refers to ' "life in its most concrete materiality" ' (Horton and Kraftl, 2014, after Siegworth, 2005:245: see glossary). I.S. life is far from transparent. I.S. are blurry, mobile subjects with messy relationship networks and uncertain agency limits, 'circumscribed in everyday life' (Ley, 2004:151). Using everyday I.S. voices will provide better insight to differentiated complexity, while enabling alternative methods to investigate HE structures and I.S. agency.

I regard I.S. as transnational subjects, connected via everyday life practices to the places they move through, and are imprinted upon during UK international study processes (Ley, 2004; Holloway et al. 2010; Collins, 2010). Placing I.S. centre stage is paramount (see Holloway et al. 2010:583). In answering Holton and Riley's (2013:68) call to break-down 'monolithic dualisms' of home/international students, the voices of I.S. everyday international study experiences, emotions and their digital practices, can present wider social and academic issues to help break-down boundaries. This is key research tenet (see 3.1.3). I next consider emotions, and particularly I.S. emotions.

Within everyday theory, emotions are a growing field, both for sociologists and geographers (for a review of emotionality and irrationality see Adler et al. 1987:222-225). Emotions pose elusive definitional grounds (Anderson and Harrison, 2006), however, emotions are conceived as the 'atmosphere felt in the body' (McCormack 2008:6) (personal and biographical) which are 'culturally descriptive' as a 'sharable social construct' (Horton and Kraftl, 2014:228). Longhurst (2016:125, after Ahmed 2004) views emotions never 'wholly internal or private', and relational to the self and others. Following Collins (2012b:24), I consider that ISM is not an 'unproblematic movement across frictionless space'. The UK international study journey also involves an emotional journey (see 2.2.6) as I.S. individually differentiated emotions shape experiences and can also transform over the period of study. Concepts involve thinking through emotions as theory and methodology (Bondi, 2005; Zembylas, 2007). I do not separate emotion from affect (after Bondi, 2005; Bondi and Davidson, 2011). These are major study contexts. I now consider 'digital worlds'.

1.3.3 Digital Worlds

The third concept, '*digital worlds',* concerns materially/digitally augmented life (Ash and Gallacher, 2011, 2015) via connective media (Van Dijck, 2013). The digital world evades easy measurement, being simultaneously creative, technical and nebulous (Smith, 2013), but can unnoticeably mediate everyday life (Meek, 2012). Digital worlds are also termed polymedia (Madianou, 2011) and include text-based communication (instant messages, SNS, blogs, wikis, tweets, emails, websites; voice/image-based and mixed media) and ICT devices (often using multi-functional (a)synchronous connections). Digital media occupy a broader part of the digital spectrum than social media (see McCay-Peet and Quan-Haase, 2017). Figure 1.2 sets-out some of the different forms of digital media. Digital practices can be singular (up/downloading) or networked (multiple actors). In my research I have used the overarching term digital media, with the aim of capturing digital life, although the focus is upon social media networks.

Figure 1.2 Examples of Nebulous Digital Media (adapted from Murphy, Hill and Dean, 2014)
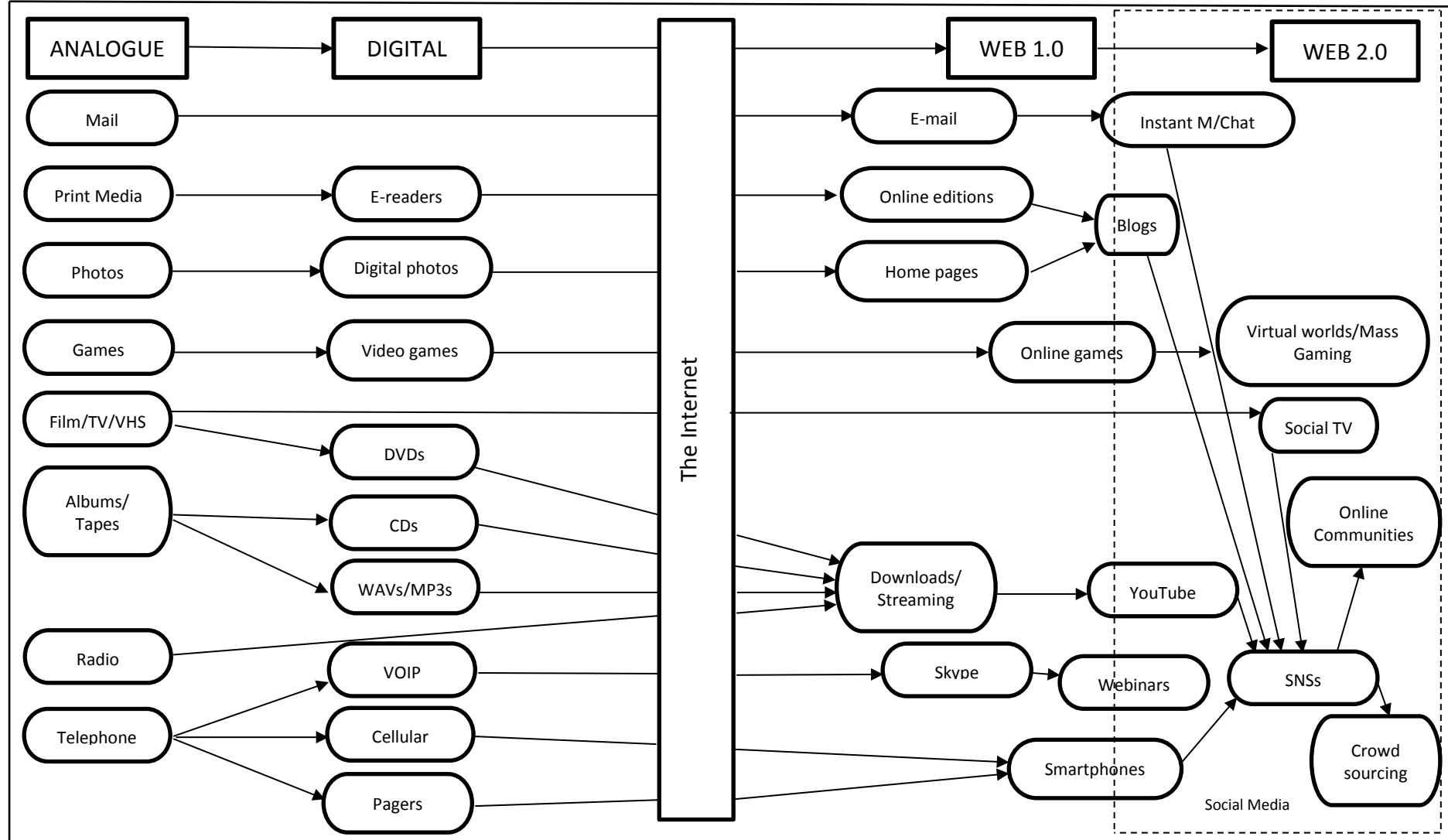
Digital media are inescapable in life. Rose (2016a:334) argues 'digital technologies for the creation and dissemination of meaning have become extraordinarily pervasive and diverse'. Here, prosumerism (re)produces network environments (O'Reilly, 2005) through 'the practice of expanding knowledge by making connections with individuals of similar interests' (Gunawardena et al. 2009:4). Cheung et al. (2011:1337) regard this digital network space important for the footing and maintenance of social capital. Importantly, digital worlds align with the concepts of translocalism and transnationalism (see Brooks and Waters, 2011; Brooks et al. 2012), although 'very little is known about the dramatic transformations occurring in domestic HE landscapes, and in society more broadly, as a consequence of transnationalisation' (Waters and Leung, 2014:57): thus *'digital transnationalism'* is discussed below.

Digital transnationalism (also see 2.3.3 'digital translocalism') concerns 'linkages between people, places and institutions crossing nation-state borders' (Vertovec, 2009:1) through digital networks. It can include 'relationships, patterns of exchange, affiliations and social formation' (ibid:2) across globally intensified relationships taking place 'paradoxically in a planet-spanning yet common-however virtual-arena of activity' (ibid:3). Waters and Brooks (2012:23) express surprise about the limited 'commentary upon the specifically *transnational* nature of student's practices, interactions and experiences' notably as I.S. '*appear* to be archetypal 'trans-migrants''. More so, this research gap is noticeable given the manner in which digital networks are enabling such transnationalism. I now set-out my key study contributions.

1.3.4 Key Contributions

Firstly, this is an important moment in UKHE (falling I.S. enrolment, the White Paper (2016), digital society and Brexit are key news foci). UKHE exhibits 'flux' and faces many challenges. It is timely to better appreciate I.S. social and academic lives from within internationalising UKHE (notably given some of the wider shifts in UKHE).

Another contribution involves originality. My research centres on a fine grained empirical analysis of I.S. experiences, emotions and their digital practices during the education journey (i.e. pre-attendance/attendance/exit of UoL). This holistic stance presents an incisive view of how prior place ('home') interleafs with international study

futures. A social and academic spatial analysis of I.S. and their digital practices has not been conducted on a UKHE campus before. Generally, a consideration of I.S. digital networks, as a key factor in international study experience, remains scant in the UK, and internationally. I present how digital networks link pre, existing and post UoL I.S. relative to prior, current and future place. My findings suggest how ISM can be re-evaluated via I.S. experiences, emotions and international study digital networks.

My analysis centres on I.S. voices and their digital practices during the UK international study journey. This allows a differentiated view of international study experiences and emotions. Placing I.S. centre stage allows a rare insight to hidden processes 'through' I.S. embodied/digital behaviours. This allows an alternative view of studentified space. I also reveal how I.S. can act as digital change agents via international study networks, which brings benefits to all concerned. This matter is omitted in much of the literature.

By placing I.S. centre stage, the reiterative relationship between I.S., place, digital practices and emotions is unveiled (i.e. between people and things that bring the space of international study into being). I uncover the sheer depths of emotions which saturate I.S. experiences 'and' digital practices. This 'reflective' education space introduces a policy angle. I assume an ethical and caring approach towards I.S., which in diverging from the economic, seeks to understand better the social, academic and political impacts of UK international study upon the subjects of education 'and' their affiliates elsewhere. I offer nine 'bottom-up' policy recommendations to aid I.S., staff and UoL. My findings also aim to support wider UKHE I.S. recruitment tactics.

Finally, a policy view can be improved through the 'geographical imperative' (Ley and Waters, 2004). Analysis that recognises the importance of distantiated places during ISM (Waters, 2012a:59) and how digital networks mediate I.S. lives between places is important. This follows calls from Holloway et al. (2010:18) to diverge from 'northern centricity' to provide a 'more balanced global vision' (ibid:18). As an original research approach, I consider I.S. emanating from diverse centres, where a counter-hegemonic view explores digital practices emanating from multiple global places.

In sum, research contributions revolve around: timeliness, empirical detail, differentiated I.S. voices of experience, emotionally involved education policy and the importance of the geographic perspective. Finally, I discuss the thesis structure below.

1.4 Thesis Structure

Chapter 1 has introduced my empirical study at UoL, the research contexts, rationale, research questions, key concepts, contributions and the thesis structure.

Chapter 2 comprises my literature review. This is formed at the intersection of geographies of education and digital geographies. There is a relative void of work at this intersection. Both literature reviews funnel-down, exploring education and digital media knowledge gaps, establishing my research mandate. The first section addresses contemporary social and cultural geography approaches needed to understand I.S. experiences, using six sub-sections. I ground my study in geographies of ISM and networks before introducing geographies of education. I narrow the focus to discuss student geographies, everyday international study and then I.S. agency via digital practices. Finally, I consider emotional geography and I.S.. The second section, digital geographies, also uses six sub-sections. Work is explored to justify the 'through' the digital paradigm. The first three sub-sections explore geographies *of, produced* and *'through'* the digital. I then examine education *through* the digital, before I.S. and digital media. Lastly, I detail my research niche, I.S. international study experiences, emotions, identities and digital practices, citing knowledge gaps to justify my research.

Chapter 3 details the research design, methodology and UoL case study rationale. Very little prior empirical data existed in my research field. To provide an encompassing and rich view, mixed methods research (MMR) investigates the everyday experiences, emotions and digital practices of I.S., addressing the research questions through extensive and intensive fine grained analysis. Sequential fieldwork at UoL first used a quantitative online self-completion survey (229 viable responses from 37 nationalities), followed-up by six qualitative focus groups (27 I.S. across 14 nationalities) and by 18 individual interviews (15 I.S. of 10 nationalities; three UoL administrators). Sampling, data collection methods and data analysis are considered as is a discussion of ethics, informed consent, anonymity, power relationships, reflexivity and positionality.

Chapter 4 examines research question 1, exploring how I.S. used digital media before coming to Leicester and during the entrance process. Little work has considered the significance of prior place during international study (prior place is not always home). Digital legacies, as digital practices emanating from other places are explored in

connection with choices made during education decisions. Findings evidence complex spatialities. For example, how the digital divide can influence access to user information about international study, or how some I.S. viewed digital media with scepticism, and were non-users in their prior place, which affected their study experience at UoL. A particularly interesting finding was how violent conflict in prior place also spilled-over via digital media to shape UK international study experience. Thus, this chapter shows how prior place shapes international study futures, as well as micro I.S. digital socialities: indeed, I find place is 'digitally contagious', acting as a foundation for future digital practices. The focus on the pre-UoL world also evidences the reiterative relationship between international study and digital practices.

Chapter 5 addresses research question 2, extensively empirically charting the differentiated personal, social, academic and professional roles of everyday digital practices at UoL. After outlining some of the new digital encounters experienced at UoL, the chapter reveals how digital media are used to make new social connections in Leicester, as well as retaining links with 'home'. I chart the different channels and platforms used by I.S. revealing the importance of Facebook, entwined social and academic digital practices and face-to-face contact. Differentiated individual and group digital practices are then examined showing gender, nationality and study level differences. This chapter provides a crucial understanding of digital practices and also evidences the recursive relationship between place, international study, digital practices and I.S. experiences, through UK international study digital morphologies.

Chapter 6 investigates research question 3, delving into micro and group perceptions and emotional manifestations of UK international study. I begin by outlining the key role of place perceptions and emotional atmosphere, finding that emotions are interwoven through digital practices. I establish the importance of constant digital connection (as a translocal phenomenon). My analysis reveals digital practices involve much more than information sourcing: usage is entwined with emotions which circulate digitally, as geographically dispersed emotional centres also shape UK international study experiences. I find that Facebook practices involve ideas of digital collective difference and digital belonging. I then dig deeper, exploring I.S. digital behaviours relative to social and academic subjectivities and identities. I find that

digital practices can variably weaken or strengthen the effects of place. As such, 'the digital' can also shape I.S. subjectivites, and national, intercultural and cosmopolitan identities. I next discuss variegated digital communities, examining informal social groups and research networks. My findings present an alternative view to knowledge geography and academic identity formation theory. I argue that I.S. can act as digital change agents, influencing wider society and culture via everyday (vernacular) digital practices. I then consider digital intellectual subjectivities, finding that I.S. informal digital approaches to pedagogy and language represent circumscribed agency. I next address dysfunctional international study digital behaviours which I argue 'reflect' UK international study dissonances (these frictions inform policy directions, see below). Finally, I argue UoL-exit does not end international study, which continues to exist through alumni digital networks. This chapter shows how I.S. social and academic experiences, emotions and sensibilities can exist through international study digital networks. This recursive social/digital nexus presents complex multiply-located (translocal) education space. I suggest that mainstream ISM studies should be re-evaluated via this matrix which for I.S. is 'real' education space.

Chapter 7 addresses research question 4. I discuss my findings according to each research question and existing literature, before providing a summary of my key contributions to knowledge beyond the literature. I.S. voices and their digital practices also reflect positive and negative emotional geographies. Here, a synthesis of the three analysis chapters acts as an incisive foundation to deliver nine policy recommendations. I close the chapter by outlining four research limitations and suggest future research directions. Finally, I submit that an epistemology employing the 'through the digital paradigm' should be integrated within existing human geography studies (and other disciplines), notably student geographies and work that focuses upon international study.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

My research, at the intersection of geographies of education and digital geographies, involves better understanding of I.S. experiences, emotions, identities and digital practices during international study. Waters and Leung (2014:58) argue 'bottom-up accounts, which take seriously the views and experiences of students/graduates are sorely lacking' where 'student-centred perspectives on the transformation of HE through transnationalisation are critical'. This explicit concern with elevating I.S. views within geographies of education is fulfilled in this thesis by engaging with I.S. voices through their journeys/geographies of education (Holloway et al. 2010). Moreover, Holton and Riley (2013:69) call for new conceptualisations in student geography, arguing the 'pressing need for more research that takes us into the everyday 'lifeworlds' of students and in particular into the non-institutionalised spaces (such as their leisure and living spaces) which make up a significant part of their student experiences'. My study addresses this need by focusing on everyday I.S. lives (inside and beyond classrooms). Simultaneously, calls have grown for theoretical and empirical work to 'better understand the conditions of geographic technologies' (Wilson, 2014:535), thus a focus on digital media in variegated education spaces is a prescient one. Literature is next explored to site knowledge gaps as follows.

Chapter two is divided into three sections. I funnel-down through the literature. Firstly, examining contemporary approaches to understanding diverse education spaces (2.2), I ground my research in the geographies of I.S. mobility and networks (2.2.1) before introducing the social and cultural methods of geographies of education (2.2.2). My focus narrows through student geographies (2.2.3), everyday geographies of international study (2.2.4), I.S. agency and pedagogies, language skills, onward mobility (2.2.5) and I.S. emotional geography (2.2.6). Section 2.3 introduces digital geography and also uses six themes. Geographies *of, produced by,* and *produced through* the digital are discussed in 2.3.1, 2.3.2 and 2.3.3. I narrow to focus upon (inter)national education *through* the digital (2.3.4) and I.S. and digital media (2.3.5) before discussing my research niche, international study experiences, emotions, identities and digital practices (2.3.6). Lastly, Section 2.4 provides some final thoughts upon this chapter.

2.2 Contemporary Approaches to Understanding the Diverse Spaces of Education

2.2.1 Geographies of International Student Mobility and Networks

ISM is an expanding phenomenon. Neoliberal education restructuring has created major rises in the numbers of globally internationally-mobile I.S.. Beech (2014a:333) notes 'the past six years have witnessed an explosion of ISM literature'. For instance, Riano and Piguest (2016) review '81' selected works. Brookes et al. (2012:31) argue literature has 'ignored the presence and experiences of I.S.'. My research answers this call, while stepping back to unpack how digital networks (as socially and academically embedded relationships) across place, space and time shape experience, emotions and embodied transitions (Brooks and Waters, 2010, 2011a; Beech, 2014a). For instance, while the role of I.S. networks in HE are appreciated (Madge, 2009a; Brooks and Waters, 2010), Beech (2014a:333) argues 'we know little about how I.S. utilise these networks or their effects'. While Graham (2013a:77) submits 'academia and the networks of knowledge and information that it is embedded in are changing.' I.S. social and academic use of digital networks remains under-researched. I now provide ISM contexts which guide my study. However, I suggest that within the ISM frameworks considered below, digital media may have been part of I.S. experiences and emotions but as embedded process, a full reflexion of their importance is seldom considered.

I.S. are omitted from most migration studies (see Waters and Brooks, 2012:21-24). King and Raghuram (2013:128) argue it is 'remarkable how so many textbooks on international migration either fail to mention student-migrants or dismiss the phenomenon in a few lines'; echoed by Luthra and Platt (2016:317) 'student migrants are generally omitted from migration research'. These limits are surprising: Britain is the second largest international study provider; I.S. play a key role to international migration. My research aims to address omissions by placing I.S. digital socialities centre stage and moves away from 'mainstream ideas' more centred on mobility.

Mainstream ISM work examines patterns, flows and trends of mobility (often using OECD statistical data). For example, 'sending and receiving' nation trends (Bhandari and Blumenthal, 2011) in Europe (Teichler et al. 2012), USA (Ruiz, 2014), Africa (Kritz, 2015) (for I.S. flows see Perkins and Neumayer, 2014). These studies involve different analysis scales: supranational (UNESCO; Council for Europe), national government

(HESA; UKCISA; King et al. [HEFCE Report] 2010; Becker, 2012; Haugen, 2013; Mosneaga, 2015) and HEI level, including I.S. recruitment (Hulme et al. 2014) and competitiveness (Knight, 2012; 2014a,b). Whilst work gives detailed analysis, most neglects I.S. experiences and emotions. My study departs from 'inert' ISM depictions.

Inert ISM studies can objectify and homogenize I.S.. Depicting I.S. as disembodied, neutral agents, flowing as scarce assets between sending and receiving HE nodes for profit (Madge et al. 2009a, 2015; Geddie, 2013). Kell and Vogl (2008:viii) argue I.S. are too often seen as passive, isolated individuals, in a global market, without any capacity for agency. Findlay (2011:165) considers that many ISM studies 'treat the topic in an unproblematic fashion seeing the process as temporary, invisible and not worthy of theorization beyond building simple behavioural models of the choices made by students'. Waters and Brooks (2012:33) reflect upon how governments and HEIs can construct an image of I.S. as 'unencumbered', 'unburdened' by 'messy' social entanglements. The social and academic interlinkages provided via digital networks during the I.S. journey (Findlay, 2011) present complex interrelational ideas which are ignored by inert ISM studies. I view I.S. as inherently heterogenous (Holton, 2015:21); their differentiated voices inform my research which operates from a caring viewpoint.

Geographers seek to understand I.S. views. Some work sees I.S. as problematic (e.g. partial UKHE mixing; inability to understand UKHE pedagogy). Madge et al. (2009a,b) explore post-colonial migration networks, conspicuously reflecting upon care, responsibilities and the need to listen to I.S.. Increasingly, geographers are listening to I.S. experiences: segregation (Fincher and Shaw, 2009), embodiment (Collins, 2010b) identity issues (Fincher, 2011) afford key examples of I.S. views. It is also recognized that ISM may create many personal stresses to I.S. (Albert and Hazen, 2005, 2013; Ye, 2005, 2006a,b; Kim, M, 2010). Embodied understandings of ISM remain under-researched in UKHE. My research incorporates I.S. networks and embodiment.

Furthermore, while I.S. experience has been considered (Singh et al. 2007; Sidhu and Dall'Alba, 2012; Gunawardena and Wilson, 2012) work often involves distinct (non-networked) place. Jindal-Snape (2016:266) notes the over-emphasis on the 'immediate physical environment of the I.S. in the host country'. Collins, Waters, Leung and Beech have formed a strand of analysis exploring personal networks, the internet and

student group experiences. Waters (2012a:2) argues geographers must pay more attention to HE which is 'increasingly spatially (and socially) differentiated'. Collins (2012b) contends study motivations cannot be viewed in isolation. Beech (2014a:333) argues 'considerations of *how* students make the decision to study overseas, and in particular how they mobilise their social networks in doing so, are underdeveloped'. My research explores fluid, multiple place/space through I.S. digital socialities (see 1.3.1), scrutinising relational topologies of past, present and future place/space/time (Allen, 2016; Massey, 2005). Much capacity exists to examine networks before, during and for exiting UKHE. Here, little work studies emotions. ISM networks might develop, inform, support or change ISM trajectories by emotional meanings of different network centres. Few studies examine I.S. networks holistically and emotionally.

Work often views I.S as elitist (Findlay et al. 2012). Waters (2006a,b) examines cultural capital acquisition and international social exclusion. While Waters (2012b:125) deliberates jagged uneven HE landscapes, suggesting 'internationally mobile students are invariably privileged' (ibid:128) (see Hall and Appleyard, 2011; King et al. 2011; Beaverstock, 2012). Waters and Brooks (2011) review 'cosmopolitan elites'. By contrast, Luthra and Platt (2016:319) argue I.S. are non-elite. Whilst some I.S. are no doubt elite, many are also non-elite educators (see Kraftl, 2015). For instance, in studying Chinese migrants' vernacular and emotional cosmopolitanism, Wang and Collins (2016a,b) diverge from elites. Cheng (2016) describes 'rooted', 'learned' and 'unanticipated' cosmopolitanism. I use a 'middling' view (Conradson and Latham, 2005; Collins, 2009; Ho, 2011) of 'average' I.S., in a non-northern-centric analysis.

Northern-centric ISM involves ISM from Southern to Northern nations (Wei, 2013; Zheng, 2014) but ignores other HE centres. Geographers increasingly appreciate the importance of other centres of education (Robinson-Pant and Merriam, 2008). Neoliberal economic restructuring involved the initial ascendance of education in the Global North. Madge et al. (2015:692) argue Euro-America-Australia treatises have obscured 'other places, networks and connections'. A large new literature about other HE hubs (Olds, 2007) is emerging, notably on Asian regional dynamics e.g. Singapore, Malaysia and South Korea (Sidhu et al 2011a,b; Kang and Abelmann, 2011; Collins, 2014a,b; O'Neill and Chapman, 2015; Falk and Graf 2016). Following Holloway et al.

(2010:595), I depart from northern-centric analysis by scrutinizing local and dispersed I.S. digital socialities employing a more distributed view of networks (UCL, 2017), to re-evaluate mainstream ISM work. Here, networked circulations become important.

Finally, importantly, Raghuram (2009, 2013) examines knowledge formations viewing I.S. as knowledge circulation agents. Raghuram's ideas support interrelational networks reproducing space. Madge et al. (2015) provide a conceptual re-evaluation of ISM, using ideas of (de)centred HE (simultaneously multiply (dis)located: as detached and implicated in local social reproduction). Madge et al. (2015:682) contest normalizing ideas of internationalization via educations multiple-located-ness, being 'more distributed, unsettled and decentred' (2015:691), which 'challenges simplistic dichotomies of here/there and unsettles the spatial imagination'. Ideas depart from binary/push-pull ISM, or 'staying and returning' (Geddie, 2013), towards (im)mobilities. My research is an antithesis to centred/binary work. I.S. digital networks as (dis)located/(de)centred/(trans)local phenomenon compliment Madge et al., where I aim to test these ideas. My research employs current ideas from the narrower and more recent sub-field of geographies of education, as considered below.

2.2.2 Introducing Geographies of Education

Contemporary investigations of education spaces use empirical social and cultural geography methods, forming a vibrant, dynamic, extensive and expanding literature reflective of the wider 'spatial turn' within education studies (Gulson and Symes, 2007). Waters (2012a:1) observes the 'notable and exciting surge in interest in the *geographies* of education, from both within and beyond the discipline'. Geographies of education have emerged as a sub-field over the last decade (see Robson et al. 2013; Holloway, 2014 for reviews). This recentness invites on-going debate over sub-discipline status, with Waters and Leung (2014:58) arguing 'education is not just a credible sub-field of enquiry, but an increasingly important one'. Some key literatures, which ground my research, are considered below.

Thiem (2009:154) argued that education spaces are shaped by, and shape, wider social processes where education processes/spaces had previously been viewed as derivative of other processes (especially political-economic ones). Thiem considered the

recursive/productive ways in which education operated upon other realms. Thiem advocated the importance of a decentred, outward-looking studies (relating to education systems, HEIs and practices) applied towards theory-building projects, arguing national systems were no longer domestic concerns. Importantly, Thiem (2009:157) argued that 'education makes space', discussing the need to 'think through education' (ibid:167). This paper was a call to recognise the importance of the geographical perspective and complex (inter)national spatialities implicit in education systems. However, Thiem (2009) was critiqued by Holloway et al. (2010).

Holloway et al. (2010) accepted Thiem's contributions, but assessed an over-emphasis upon political-economy, which ignored social and cultural geography, and input from other disciplines (ibid:584). They argued for the need to 'focus on the voices of, and ideas about, a group of social actors who are curiously invisible in much of the research' i.e. the students themselves (ibid:586). Their critique was thus to promote contemporary social and cultural geography approaches to wield better understanding of student geographies, to view young people as 'subjects rather than objects' that are 'imprinted upon' during education. This imprint could be personal, local, regional and transnational. Importantly, student-centred spaces were viewed as knowledge spaces (ibid:590), reflecting neoliberal restructuring which affected individuals differently (by gender, race and class) (ibid:593). Holloway et al. (2010) also stressed that global South I.S. were under-researched, stressing that work centred on experience, wider social morphologies and transnational networks was urgently needed. This education experience involved 'voices and subjectivities' of 'the here and now' of 'knowledgeable actors', 'worthy of investigation' (ibid:594). This call led to an important orientation in the literature towards a more student-centred socio-cultural approach.

Holloway and Jöns (2012) provided a conceptual framing of this emerging field of geographies of education and the complex global spatialities created by the production and consumption of (in)formal education in/outside of classrooms. Four key themes were evolving. Firstly, educational provision and restructuring, which included education inequalities; secondly, subjectivities in diverse (in)formal learning spaces involving geographical and social identities in different worlds (pre-school to HE); thirdly, skills, employability and careers, which linked to the fourth theme, mobility

and globalised education networks. Holloway and Jöns (2012:485) amalgamated education work from multiple roots, asserting that geographers must move beyond existing analysis frameworks, via intra and inter-disciplinary and international studies. The complexity of education places/spaces was hence emerging through cultural views of differentiated subjective education experiences. Horton and Kraftl also excel here.

Horton and Kraftl (2005, 2008, 2009a,b) present evolving complexities. By exploring emotions/embodied experience beyond classrooms, they insert debates about voice and agency, and the materialities and practices that make up everyday educational lives (Kraftl, 2006b,c). Horton et al. (2008:338-345) consider nine key re-directions: attention to differences, diversities, identities and inter-relations; everyday spatialities (see Kraftl, 2006a:3); critical self-reflection; the 'hitherto-often-unregistered importance of emotion' (ibid:341); time-space routines in 'becoming'; societal/political institutions; teaching and learning practices, and finally sub-disciplinary liaison.

In sum, geography of education viewpoints continue to reveal the importance of social and cultural approaches which can be applied to HE, I.S. and international study. New research directions through education deliver a key opportunity to expand I.S. geographies. I aim to capitalise upon the rich, although minimally tapped socio-spatial education work, developing subject-centred empathies applied to international study. Much capacity exists to explore I.S. experiences, emotions, subjectivites and identities. I now further narrow the focus to consider student geographies.

2.2.3 Student Geographies

This section considers student geographies (Smith, 2009) which some scholars have placed within geographies of education (especially Holton and Riley and Holloway et al.). I use three literature-sets, at macro to micro scales of investigation (works do over-lap). Firstly, I discuss the international scale, examining ISM spatialities; secondly, national to local accounts concern studentified places/spaces; thirdly, recent work which investigates student micro (personal/embodied) experiences.

Firstly, international scale student geographies often take on an historical perspective. Fahey and Kenway (2010:637-638), for example, assert 'we cannot garner a thorough understanding of the complexities of the international mobility of researchers in a

global world without considering such phenomena in terms of wider social, political, ideological and historical contexts'. King and Raghuram (2013:136) suggest there is 'scope for a much richer understanding of the role of I.S. in producing and spreading knowledge'. Global knowledge geographies and intellectual skills circulation (Hoyler and Jöns, 2008; Kim 2008; Adorno, 2009) conceptually align with international study, but the role of I.S. remain under-researched, although I.S. have been viewed as change agents (Robinson-Pant, 2009; Madge et al. 2015) and knowledge brokers (Bilecen and Faist, 2015:220). Holton and Riley (2013:68) call 'for a re-evaluation of the student mobilities debate within geography'. I argue I.S. digital socialities represent one view of 'the porousness of the lecture room walls' (Madge et al. 2009a:37) encompassing the 'individual's intellectual biography' (Fahey and Kenway 2010:627) which need considering within historical explanations. Thus, studies of student geographies, at the international scale, not only recognise the wider implications of international study, but also that I.S. can make a key contribution to understandings.

Secondly, studentified places/spaces explores impacts of (im)mobilities: from home (Patinios and Holdsworth, 2005; Holdsworth, 2006a, 2009a), UK student migrations (Duke-Williams, 2009; Smith, 2011; Findlay et al. 2011; Waters et al. 2011), exclusion (Chatterton, 1999) and neoliberal experience (Chatterton, 2010). Studentification examines contested urban spaces, decline, renewal and gentrification (Smith, 2005, 2009; Allinson 2006; Smith and Hubbard, 2014), UKHEI accommodation (Hubbard, 2009) and de-studentification (Sage et al. 2011). This literature centres on UK students: examination of I.S. places/spaces in UKHE is very rare. Holton and Riley (2013:65) stress little is known about I.S. studentified spaces. International work leads, for example Fincher and Shaw (2009) segregation; Collins (2004, 2011, 2012c, 2014b) (trans)national lives, urban space and diasporic cultural networks. Through I.S. geography, my research can focus upon I.S. studentified space in UKHE and elsewhere.

Thirdly, local geographies explore the campus and student experiences, being closest to my study. In his call for 'critical geographies of the university campus', Hopkins (2011:157) calls for better understandings of how the contradictory, contested everyday spaces on campus are experienced. These might include activism, resistance, empowering or exclusionary experiences giving insight to HE structures and processes.

Linking to Hopkins, Andersson et al. (2012:502) also discuss 'disparate campus groups', where 'difference' can transform subjectivities (termed 'exclusive geographies' by Holton, 2016c:70). The university can act as a local/global interface within diverse life experiences and differentiated campus encounters. I.S. can lead as technology adopters, but insight to how the digital campus shapes experiences are limited. This under-appreciation reflects wider limited work in HE, although awareness is changing.

Given the burgeoning work on schools and children, students remain surprisingly neglected. Holton and Riley (2013:68) argue 'much more work is needed on the diversity of experience *within* and *between student groups'*, beyond local, non-local or traditional and non-traditional students (favouring more fluid, heterogeneous groupings). They argue the 'pressing need' to study student everyday lives, non-institutional spaces, home, decisions and transitions which also involve identity issues (ibid:69). Campus spaces positively and negatively evolve student identity (Holton and Riley, 2016:623). Holton's work, involving UK students, notably informs my research.

Holton (2013, 2015b, 2016b) explores student living spaces, arguing (2016b:57) 'much of the literature considers the notion of 'student home' without ever really engaging with it as lived space in which students make, organise and perform social interactions'. Holton (2013, 2015b, 2016c) examines student identities and socialising, of 'being' or 'becoming' students (2015b:2373); also embodied social capital during transitions (ibid:2016a:63). While, Holton (2013, 2015a,c) explores the role of place in student life and Holton (2017) considers student emotional geographies. This work investigates individual/group adaptive experiences (between the body and the place of study). Importantly, we begin to see how I.S. geographies also involve many layers.

In such contexts, studies of local I.S. geographies are limited. Holton and Riley (2013:65) argue 'what is less clear is how the international migration of students ties into the discussions of more local geographies of HE students, particularly regarding how I.S. both utilise and experience studentified spaces'. Much capacity exists to explore I.S. spaces/embodiment. Some work has examined EU I.S. identity (Van Mol, 2013; Mitchell, 2012, 2015). Elsewhere, Gu et al. (2010) examined self-mediation between UKHE and home university positions (also see Brown, 2009; Gu 2011, 2016; Gu and Schweisfurth, 2015). I.S. are complex subjects. '(Dis)connections and

(dis)associations' (Matthews and Sidhu, 2010:60) might interplay with shifting identities and transforming cultures (Robinson-Pant et al. 2010b). 'Outsider' categorisation might present a 'separating process', encoded in UKVI, UKHE; also UK and other I.S. (Robinson-Pant, 2010b; Madge et al. 2015; Beech, 2016:143). Research on I.S. sensibilities is limited. Moreover, work integrating the role of the digital campus and digital media during UKHE and evolving I.S. experiences remains rare. I aim to explore I.S. identity issues on the digitally networked campus.

Similar to Holton and Riley's (2013:66) post-1992 university, internationalisation has opened-up access to UKHE. This restructuring necessitates a re-evaluation of UKHE sited in neoliberal structures, where everyday international study is considered below.

2.2.4 Everyday Geographies of International Study

This section considers the burgeoning field of international HE and everyday I.S. voices. Waters and Leung (2016:1) argue the 'spatialities of education are being transformed through internationalisation'. Madge et al. (2009a:36) claim work has focused more on I.S. pedagogy in Anglo-American HEIs, migration and ISM issues, and wider processes of international HE, rather than I.S. voice (ibid:44). My study follows calls to examine changing HE spaces, but in a manner that recognises differences (Collins, 2012; Holton and Riley, 2013; Holton, 2015a,b,c, 2016a,b,c; Sidhu et al. 2016) and transnational lives (Collins, 2010; Waters and Brooks, 2012). Thiem (2009:154) argues 'education extends into new spaces and times of the lifecourse'. Cook and Hemming (2011:1) see international HE embedded in social/cultural processes which structure everyday lives. My study follows these leads, aiming to add to nascent internationalisation work via a nuanced, discrete, daily analysis beyond the economic, centred on everyday I.S. voices.

International study involves variable mobility at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. It exists via the continuing belief of national economic competiveness in neoliberal economies, as individuals skill-equip to engage in global employment (Waters, 2006; Findlay et al. 2011). In 2017, this remains an extremely dynamic, yet globally uneven, constantly developing field (see 1.1). The production and consumption of education continue to create diverse (inter)national spatial effects (Brooks and Waters, 2011; Brooks et al. 2012). Much of UKHE is subject to neoliberalisation (Beck, 1999; Albach,

2009; Robson, 2011; Robertson, 2005a,b, 2006, 2012; Brooks et al. 2015). This neoliberal HE space is blurred by multi-scalar structures. Madge et al. (2015:692) argue spatialities involve 'simultaneously a local, interregional and intercontinental mobility'. Waters and Leung (2016:1) argue domestic UKHE 'increasingly represents the internalisation of foreign education'. I place I.S. voices of international study experience and emotions centre stage, to better see the hidden workings of the 'black box' (Latour, 1999) of neoliberal HE space. I.S. are an extremely important aspect of the international study industry; although I.S. geographies remain an emergent field.

Holloway and Jöns (2012) advise geography has largely ignored international study until the twenty first century. They uphold work principally involved structural 'top-down' changes (citing two threads: firstly, the multi-scalar state and unequal education access; secondly, uneven education provision connecting the less privileged and ethnic minority students, linked to Global North/South studies) (also see Thiem, 2009; Holloway et al. 2010 for reviews, and below). To expand methods, I employ 'bottom-up' everyday international study to also view neoliberal space. Via the quotidian, I aim to 'theorise-up' (Rigg, 2007:7) by better seeing 'critically important 'why' questions' where 'overarching perspectives and grand studies often shield from view the eddies of difference that are so central to building explanation' (Rigg, 2007:8) (see Horton and Kraftl, 2014:184-194). Waters and Leung (2012:1.2) argue students 'form an integral and yet surprisingly under-researched part of this whole 'internationalisation' process'. Much capacity exists to explore HE spatialities via everyday I.S. lives (see 3.1.2; 3.1.3).

Everyday I.S. lives are understudied. I follow Holton and Riley (2013:67), who view habitus as too fixed and ordered to explore the intricacies of differentiated student lives. For Lefebvre (1991:21[1947:40]) daily life is viewed as a dialectic intersection 'defined by contradictions: illusion and truth, power and helplessness; the intersection of the sector man controls and the sector he does not control'. By uplifting I.S. voices, as the facts of actors and groups (Latour, 2005:22), I examine neoliberalism (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2011; Horton, 2016) 'touching-ground' at UoL. This departs from a priori theoretical deduction. A fine-grained analysis of daily I.S. experiences, emotions and practices (Horton and Kraftl, 2014:181) gives an alternative view of HE structures, notably uneven material geographies (Tannock, 2013; Graham 2014a) enabling vision

of individual, group and institutional issues. This also links to the call from Holloway et al. (2010) to understand better life-chance limits and education inequalities.

Little work has explored HE place/space differences. Anderson and Harrison (2016) argue reflexive studies of daily life give insight into how ''place', 'the subject', 'the social' and 'the cultural' and quite how 'space', 'power' and 'resistance' operate and take-place' (ibid:7). I aim to explore relational pathways (UKHE entrance, the study period and futures). Here, I.S. voices might reveal complex spatialities (Massey, 2005), non-linear place (Harvey, 1996) and social assemblage (Anderson and McFarlane, 2011): to 'see remarkable things in quite mundane settings' (Silverman, 2013:6). This stance privileges I.S. as substantive witnesses, enlivening my study via I.S. dialogic life narratives to expose wider issues. One major question involves 'home'.

'Home' means many things: being multi-dimensional, social, cultural, emotional and imaginary (Wu and Wilkes, 2017:125). Collins (2010b) views 'home' as decentred consciousness. Ralph and Staeheli (2011:519) see home as 'messy, mobile, blurred and confused'. Anderson (2012) views constructs of security, attachment, belonging, as transnational self in multiple places (ibid:327). Holton and Riley (2016:626) view 'home' as elastic, multi-scalar and key to place sense. After Holton (2016:57), 'much can be drawn from focusing on the micro-geographies of non-local students within their term-time homes'. Many questions exist about I.S. 'home' involving place, attachment, belonging and digital networks. For example, how do views of 'home' vary among different I.S.?

'Home' involves social relationships elsewhere. Waters and Brooks (2012:31) note 'very few studies have examined the specific role that 'significant others' play in I.S. mobility'. Collins (2009:52) suggests 'transnational spaces are constituted through the situated everyday practices and experiences of individuals, families, communities, and states'. Study questions involve (often) invisible others. I.S. might be children, parents or deeply nationally (or in other ways) identified. Work that explores other actors during mobility often focuses on family migration for employment (Huang and Yeoh, 2005; Waters, 2005, 2006b, 2015a). Networked social morphologies remain under-theorised (see 2.3.6). The everyday 'stuff' of HE also matters, as considered next.

2.2.5 Pedagogy, Language, Onward Mobility and International Student Agency

This section considers non-formal education spaces (Kraftl, 2006a; 2006b) through I.S. self-directed approaches to pedagogy, language, and student futures. I explore I.S. behaviours beyond UoL classroom walls (Kraftl et al. 2007; Horton et al. 2008; Kraftl, 2013b, 2014, 2015a). Geographers are challenging unproblematic student experiences (Collins, 2012b). Questions involve student negotiation with difference (Holt, 2007, 2015) and their (circumscribed) agency (Ley, 2004; Kraftl, 2013a), operated from a caring view (Raghuram et al. 2009; Madge et al. 2009a,b; Noxolo et al. 2012). Interest in pedagogies formed first, before studies examined issues beyond formal teaching (e.g. skills, employment and careers). I follow this schema.

Firstly, regarding pedagogy, Madge et al. (2015:694) note 'HE is not a pure self-existing unit within which pedagogic practices occur; rather it is constituted through the flux of mobile bodies (including students and educators), ideas and things'. Pedagogy literatures have developed over decades. Madge et al. (2009a:36-37) review works, citing two fields. Firstly, earlier work involved making I.S. recognise, adapt and conform, 'fitting' I.S. into UKHE conventions, here I.S. are viewed as 'the problem'. Secondly, scholars tried to tie teachers, and I.S., closer together in dialogic pedagogic processes by UKHE adopting alternative, more appropriate pedagogies (e.g. Confucian). Recent pedagogy work involves I.S. experiences and changing education practices (Campbell et al. 2016), although studies often involve national contexts: for example, USA (Alberts and Hazen, 2013; Fanning 2015), Germany (Zhu, 2016), Australia (Tan and Hugo, 2016). I.S. have diverse educational backgrounds, this continues to present challenges in UKHE.

Whilst much work investigates formal pedagogy, more scope exists to examine students' informal practices, which includes digital practices as self-regulated support. Madge et al. (2009c) investigated UK students, finding Facebook practices were more for socialising and talking to friends about work than for actually doing work. The scarcity of work resulted in Madge et al. (2009c) being extensively cited outside of geography (Wilson et al. 2012; Hew, 2011; Kabilan et al. 2010). Within geography there remains much capacity to explore I.S. informal practices, as the personal learning

environment (Dabbagh and Kitsantas, 2012; Dabbagh et al. 2016). My study examines informal individual/group learning experiences necessary to negotiate UKHE pedagogy.

Secondly, more capacity exists to study I.S. informal language development practices. Le Ha (2009:201) argues 'stories and experiences of individuals appropriating English to their advantage have not yet been highlighted in the literature on I.S..' English remains the majority language on the internet (MiniWatts, 2016; W3 Techs, 2016). International study to acquire language skills appears as a key aspect of cultural capital acquisition relative to careers (Waters, 2006, 2009, 2015; Findlay 2012). Waters (2015:285) notes 'the allure of 'fluency' in the English language would seem to be a primary motivation underpinning the educational migration of East Asian families' where 'linguistic migration' drives mobility. Language deficits/advances involve 'embodied competencies' (Waters, 2008:9). Waters (2015:287) argues body capital 'necessitates living overseas in particular places'. Here, little is known about informal digital practices in processes, although Ye (2005:154), in the USA, found that the internet was used for information, entertainment and social use. Ye (2005:154) also found 'fear, perceived hatred, perceived discrimination and cultural shock' stresses during international study. However, negative views were of lower importance where higher English language skills were evident (being linked to the number of hours spent on English language websites). My research aims to explore the role of digital media within I.S. informal language development practices.

Thirdly, research on factors that shape I.S. futures during international study is limited (Geddie, 2013; Mosneaga and Winther 2013), digital explanations remain rare, although Junco et al. (2011) studied tactical Twitter usage in career strategies. Anglophone-centred accounts have led ISM literature. Collins et al. (2016:1) assert the 'need for scholars to examine not only student mobility itself but the way this unfolds into after-study lives'. This matters, as ISM networks developed through international study might be socially (re)productive. For instance, as I.S. move elsewhere, their futures might link (digitally) to those left at UoL (social/academic links) whilst new networks might also develop during their ongoing mobility, however, few studies have considered this holistic perspective. Digital media and I.S. futures remain under-researched, where I particularly focus upon digital media and careers.

International study is a space of employment pressure involving global employability skills, shrinking labour markets subject to increased graduate numbers, employability discourses and wider structural changes concerning demographics/employment dynamics (Punteney, 2012; O'Connor and Bodicoat, 2016:1; Goodwin and O'Connor, 2012). I aim to capture a contextual snap-shot of digital practices in career mobility, whilst exploring I.S. self-promotion, distinguishing (Brooks et al. 2012) and development (professional identity and career-based confidences). I do this appreciating the neoliberal/multi-directional pressures I.S. may face.

'Pressures' expound how UKHEIs should care for I.S.. HE is unpredictable, contradictory, contested (and resisted) (Madge et al. 2015:695). I.S. face many challenges inside the classroom (Kim, 2011:286). Some studies maintain the perspective whereby I.S. are seen as "the problem", rather than promoting ideas surrounding an insensitive learning system (Zhou et al. 2008). Teaching the teacher (Madge et al. 2015:688-691) about different pedagogic cultures (Welikala, 2015), and language issues comes to the fore, but what about outside of the classroom? Madge et al. (2009a:43) argue care needs to go '*beyond the classroom*, to understand how political structures, institutional cultures and policies shape I.S. experiences and recruitment'. Madge et al. (2015:695) advocate the need for an 'emotionally fertile' approach to I.S.. These ideas present a more nuanced view to understand the complex experiences of daily I.S. life. I.S. are deeply emotionally invested individuals. I now consider I.S. emotional geographies.

2.2.6 Emotional Geography and International Students

This section first considers wider emotional geography (see 1.3.2), before emotions in education spaces and I.S. (linked to I.S. transitions). Emotional geography is burgeoning in education and in geography. I.S. emotions are a recent part of education work.

Emotional geographies involve the emotional interactions between people and places, or what Thien (2017:1) describes as 'theoretical and substantive considerations of emotions, space and society'. Wyatt et al. (2017) define emotional geography as how 'people's emotional lives impact upon how they interact with and within the places they move through every day. In turn, the way space has been organised and places

shaped can impact upon people's emotions'. While these definitions are open-ended regarding the digital and emotions, they perhaps show how work tends not to consider digitally networked emotions (i.e. (de)centred emotional circulations), where the focus instead falls upon emplaced experiences of place/space. I.S. mobility experience often involves large physical distances from home and major life upheavals. Here, international study emotional geography is under-researched and poses a key interest.

Emotions are evoked in time, spaces, encounters, journeys, relationships and landscapes (Horton and Kraftl, 2014:222) and geographers are increasingly exploring emotions and embodiment (ibid:223). Dr Mann, in the film Interstellar (2014), captures the importance of emotional geographies: 'You have attachments. But even without a family, I can promise you that…that yearning to be with other people is powerful. That emotion is at the foundation of what makes us human. It's not to be taken lightly'. Emotional geographies involve intensities felt between joy and sadness (Deleuze 1978; 1988), or, as Kraftl (2013a:13) argues, anxiety (citing Nayak, 2003) and hope (citing Pain et al. 2010). Emotions in education spaces frame ideas of lived spatialities (Collins 2009a, 2010b) and structure, voice and agency (Kraftl, 2013a:13) (as affective and discursive forces) (see Zembylas and Schutz, 2016 for recent methodologies).

International study is too often depicted as rational (Sidhu 2007; Robertson 2011) and emotionally inert (Kenway and Youdell, 2011) (see 2.2.1, p.23). Emotional geographies can reflect many aspects of complex I.S. lives. Student emotions (Holton, 2017) and notably I.S. emotions are under-researched (Waters et al. 2011; Tse and Waters, 2013). This is surprising, given that emotions shape 'student experience' (a key buzz-phrase in contemporary UKHE management practices). Zembylas (2012:164) contends hardly any work 'puts explicitly on the table a theorisation of educational implications for examining how emotions are entangled with transnational migration experiences'. I explore the I.S. emotional journey within everyday, (non)-institutionalised space. Emotional entanglements exist through ISM: the 'frictions and freedoms', 'the pleasure and pain of living between places' (Collins, 2009:52). I will explore emotions between people in different places. I view ISM experiences as emotional movement (McCormack, 2008; Bissell, 2010a,b; Svasek, 2010; Mendoza and Moren-Alegret, 2012), emotions being singular and collective (de Zavala et al. 2009; Park et al. 2009;

Kuo, 2013), influenced by technical objects (Ash, 2013) and atmosphere (Mitchell, 2016). I.S. emotions also involve (mis)matched expectations and dystopian reality (Waters and Leung, 2012; Hanke and Hearne, 2012; Waters, 2016). I.S. are also potentially emotionally vulnerable (Sherry et al. 2010; Park, 2010). Emotions might also interplay with embodied transitions such as changing subjectivites and identities.

Jindal-Snape and Rienties (2016:1) view transitions as 'an ongoing process that involves moving from one context and set of interpersonal relationships to another'. Yet, little is known about I.S. emotions, subjectivity and identity transitions and digital media, where my focus falls upon how place shapes digitally networked emotions (see 2.3.6, p.49). Longhurst (2016:122) asserts 'emotional encounters are contextual and contingent whether they take place online, offline or combined'. Very little work has explored what it feels like to be an I.S. across spatial realms. I explore the on/offline, and the plurality of emotional worlds involving different I.S. emotional centres (prior place, UoL and futures, inside/outside the classroom). This includes individual and wider social and academic morphologies (family, friends, colleagues) relative to UoL (see 2.2.1). I.S. geographies are potentially shot-through with emotions.

My approach diverges from economic discourses (of policy and academic matters), whilst transcending inward/outward dichotomies, to provide a fresh, enlivening angle. I examine some of the 'costs' of the I.S. emotional journey. For example, stresses, homesickness and coping (Brown and Holloway (2008a,b), loneliness, isolation (Sawir et al. 2008), disaffection and (limited) cultural interchange (Brown, 2009), fear of failure (Sidhu et al. 2016), difference, exclusion, marginalisation (Holt, 2007, 2008, Collins, 2010b; Hopkins, 2011; Andersson et al. 2012; Possamai et al. 2016), cross-cultural ignorance (Singh, 2009:198; Brown, 2009), stigmatisation and categorisation (Hopkins, 2011; Jackson, 2015; Madge et al. 2015; Brown et al. 2015; Smeltzer and Hearn, 2015), feeling 'desired' and 'unwanted' (King and Raghurham, 2013:127), or a 'risk to society' (Kell and Vogl, 2008). Alternatively, I.S. may accept, or feel very proud of their 'international student' status, recognising emotional costs are part of the cognitive appreciation of international study as a beneficial transitional process. By placing I.S. voiced emotions centre stage this caring stance can better inform policy matters. I now move to discuss digital geographies.

2.3 Digital Geographies (Digital Media and Digital Worlds)

Over the past two decades geography has undergone a 'digital turn'. It is recognised that 'the digital is reshaping the production of space, place, nature, landscape, mobility and environment' (Ash et al. 2015:13). Rose (2016a:336) argues geographers lead in conceptualizing digital phenomenon and geographers have evolved various approaches to understand the digital. It is a fast moving field. Longhurst (2016:135) notes 'over the past few years digital media have emerged rapidly and it has been challenging for geographers and others to keep pace with understanding the political, social, cultural, gendered, emotional and affectual nuances of these newly emerging online spaces'. The digital turn has major epistemological corollaries by producing new types of knowledge through both digital and conventional methodologies (Elwood and Lesczynski, 2013; Leszczynski, 2014; Allen, 2015, 2016). Internet research is increasingly creating new research opportunities (Madge and O'Connor, 2004; Madge 2010; Hewson, 2014), although ethical dilemmas govern directions (Madge, 2007; Sparks et al. 2016; Beninger 2017). Digital geography remains a rapidly evolving field, and a centre of current debate.

The digital turn is currently a key debate in academic geography. Kinsley (2014:364), for example, notes geographers are wrestling with the spatial characteristics of digital mediation. While Adams (2009:1-3) considers media/place/space interrelationships, in terms of 'media in space', 'spaces in media', 'places in media' and 'media in place'. Despite this interest in the digital turn by geographers, Adams (2016:1) still argues 'work remains disorganized and lacks a unifying paradigm'. Many debates exist: one being whether digital geography should be established as a sub-discipline, or whether to continue using ideas about the digital in many geographies (i.e. the digital mediates knowledge production). Another discussion questions different digital spatialities (i.e. digitally immersive spatialities, see Crang et al. 1999; Graham et al. 2013) and different ontogenic bases (see Kinsley, 2016). What constitutes the digital is also debated.

Many scholars (but not all) view 'the virtual' and 'cyberspace' dated terminology. Kinsley (2014:365) argues the virtual faded in popular parlance, where the ascendance of mobile digital media makes 'allusions of a cyberspace feel dated'. Kinsley (2014:365) contends the 'need to move beyond the frictionless immateriality of "virtual

geographies" towards a greater attention to the material conditions of contemporary digitally inflected spatial formations'. Wilson (2014:177), for example, considers how web-based structures make digital social interactions feel more significant, 'discursively and materially'. Marlowe et al. (2016:1-2) argue 'the virtual' is integrated within the everyday 'real world', mediating people/places/spaces by digital information. Calls therefore exist for more material (Kinsley, 2014), discursive (Wilson, 2014) and social/digital (Marlowe et al. 2016) studies. My empirical research centres on I.S. voiced experiences of the social/digital world during international study at UoL.

New work builds upon previous studies, although earlier ideas involve 'stable cultural objects' and centred place (see below). Geographers have often focused upon the primacy of place within sensory experiences, such as in feelings of belonging, identity and mobility (Buttimer, 1980; Hall, 1990, 1991, 2005; Cresswell, 2004, 2006, 2014). Indeed, these concepts have been viewed as 'profoundly geographical' (Horton and Kraftl, 2014:160). However, most earlier geography studies did not consider the effects of the digital inculcated within everyday on/offline experiences and emotions. My view of digital geography here aligns on (dis)located experience 'through' digital networks. Such a taxonomy of networks implicates concepts of nonlinearity, decentralisation, interconnectedness, interdependence and multiplicity (Lima, 2011, 2014, 2015).

Ideas are continually developing. Rose is a key exponent in digital geographies. Rose (2016a:334) argues the need to move away from 'stable cultural objects' to 'instead focus on mapping the dynamics of production, circulation and modification of meaning at digital interfaces and across frictional networks'. Rose (2016a:334) debates the need to rethink cultural 'objects' *through* digital technologies where 'studies must begin to map the complexities of digitally-mediated cultural production, circulation and interpretation'. Indeed, Rose (2016a:340) contends experiences should be re-theorized through the concepts of 'interface' (including the biological and inorganic, such as human practices, hardware devices and software code) and 'the network' (including hardware, software and the human experience which is inherent within an interface). The digital geography approaches involving geographies *of, produced by and produced through* the digital are discussed below. I employ the latter epistemology, where *through the digital* is the most recent digital geography paradigm.

2.3.1 Geographies *of* the Digital

Ash et al. (2015:4) note early geographies of the digital used existing methodologies in theoretical and empirical explorations of specific digital domains (e.g. the internet, cyberspace, virtual worlds and digital games). Literatures often linked to ideas about socio-technical assemblages which involved the 'geographical domain with its own logics and structures' (ibid:4). Six key contributions are summarised below.

Firstly, geographers investigated cyberspace experiences (Kitchin, 1998; Crang et al. 1999), which often involved material objects (e.g. screens, hardware, network technology) in relation to the human body (Zook et al. 2004). Cyberspace was often visually surveyed (as an outcome of screens, routers and servers). Work did consider embodied experiences, but as separate worlds. Secondly, feminist approaches explored the online as socially productive. Early work by Madge and O'Connor (2002, 2005, 2006) and O'Connor and Madge (2004) explored mother's networks, questioning how the internet re-orientates social production online via communities (also see Valentine and Holloway, 2001, 2002; Valentine and Skelton, 2008). Thirdly, literature explored spatialities of video games and social media. Approaches conceived user experiences developed new forms of spatial awareness (Ash 2009, 2010, 2012) and geopolitical imaginaries (Warf, 2009). Fourthly, ubiquitous computing explored environmentally embedded digital objects and processes (Galloway, 2004), 'domesticating the digital in our world' (Ash et al. 2015:9). A fifth branch examined actual technologies and infrastructures which shaped economic processes as internet supports (Malecki, 2002). Finally, big data involves algorithms underlying digital media in relation to spatial data geographies (Kitchin, 2014; Kitchin and McArdle, 2016; Lazer et al. 2014; Kitchin et al. 2016). Big data involves quantitative, longitudinal, mass data (Laney, 2001) for computational social sciences and digital humanities.

Geographies of the digital tend to focus upon distinct digital spheres, as 'parallel worlds' (i.e. non-embedded processes) to the 'real world' (for an example, see Hwang and Chen, 2017 on Cloud data), although work is evolving (see Halford and Savage, 2017; Salmond et al. 2017). I now consider geographies *'produced by'* the digital.

2.3.2 Geographies *produced by* the Digital

Geographies *produced by* the digital concern how digital technologies augment the production of space to transform socio-spatial relationships. Studies centre on digital infrastructures which transform daily life activities. Work has explored ICTs, the internet, 'fluid' information economy and new spatial organization involving space-time compression (Castells, 1996; Graham and Marvin, 2001). One focus explored global business networks (Dicken, 2001) and instant connections among dispersed actors (Dicken and Malmberg, 2001). Although often involving ICTs, work usefully depicts nested interrelational scales (Marston et al. 2005) as digital technologies are implicated in spatial expansion and wider social production. This work frames ideas about expansive and contractive phenomenon produced by digital technologies.

Work involves both local and globally sited digital infrastructures. For example, digital technologies enable city development, producing digital urban management (Amin and Thrift, 2002). Ideas further narrowed, exploring code and space (Kitchin, 2005) within new socio-techno-spatial relationships. Another field investigated social/spatial polarisation produced by the digital divide (Castells, 1996). Dodge and Kitchin (2002) argued the digital divide was multiple (by class, city locations, urban and rural areas and between nations). Ash et al. (2015:9) note an on-going issue with skewed online content (citing Graham et al. 2014; Graham 2015). Issues of digital hegemony and online representation of other cultures are raised (Longhurst, 2008; Taneja and Wu, 2014). Instrumented spatial regulation and human behaviours (Caragliu et al. 2011; Kitchin, 2014; Rose, 2016b) also entered into work produced by the digital.

While these perspectives usefully evidence interrelational nested scales (from global to coded space), geographies produced by the digit*al* tend to focus on technical infrastructures within wider social and economic transformations. My study does not involve technology structures, being centred on human experiences through digital practices. Geographies produced by the digital do not include ideas about experience as a mutually co-constituted social/digital augmented reality (i.e. a recursive human/digital relationship). I therefore consider geographies *'through'* the digital.

2.3.3 Geographies *produced through* Everyday Digital Practices

I view geographies *of the digital* too centred on parallel worlds, and geographies *produced by the digital* too fixated upon technical infrastructure. My study uses the recent concept of geographies *produced 'through' everyday digital practices*. This paradigm involves co-constituted, (co)-reciprocal/reiterative social/digital reality (Ash and Gallagher, 2011, 2015) and (dis)located/networked place. Martin and Rizvi (2014:1017) regard digital issues as 'an unprecedented transcendence of local place'. Ideas of 'digital' translocalism, transnationalism and situated mobility inform my views.

Grainer and Sakdalpolrak (2013:376) define translocality 'as complex socio-spatial interactions in a holistic, actor-orientated and multi-dimensioned understanding'. Translocality (Appadurai, 1996) and translocal subjectivites (Conradson and McKay, 2007), align with transnational networks (Freitag and Oppen, 2010), being 'the social glue of transnationalism' (Vertovec, 2009:54), and are well established. Brickell and Datta (2011:3) apply the term 'situatedness during mobility'. Leszczynski (2015a,b) might view this as 'the enmeshing of physical spaces and codified content' or 'digital-material embodiment of enactments of space and place': the 'material/digital nexus'. The matrix that I explore involves the role of digital media in everyday social and academic international study experiences, emotions and identities, being the niche and core of my research. I therefore rather employ the term the *social/digital nexus.*

Geographies *produced through the digital* is a very recent idea, and is a key research tenet that understands I.S. everyday life experiences are reiteratively produced through digital practices (see Elwood and Leszczynski, 2013; Rose, 2016a,b). Ash et al. (2015:13) argue 'a critical human geography *produced through* the digital has, always been a dual project: one engaging with the digital as a site, mode, and object of/for spatial knowledge production in the service of enacting alternative economic, social, political and cultural geographies; and simultaneously, one of engaging with digital technologies and platforms by critically evaluating the ways that they themselves engender particular modes of knowledge production that make possible and circumscribe particular kinds of spatialities and spatial epistemologies'. My research centres on this epistemology.

Geographies produced through the digital evolved from feminist, queer, qualitative and participatory GIS (Schuurman, 2000; Leszczynski, 2009a,b). Decisively, knowledge production is not limited to GIS, and digital media are equally valid for capturing human/digital interrelationships. Ideas contest dominant theory, exploring social relations, notably inequalities (e.g. race, class and gender). This paradigm directly links to digital socialities (1.1.2) and ideas *produced through the digital* are re-shaping social understandings. Crang (2015:2) argues 'the impact of new media is not just on what we study but how we think', as digital practices 'render the back and forth of social life perceptible to analysis' (ibid:4). These ideas shape my view of education space.

Education space is viewed as constructed through human/digital interactions and complex (trans)local (networked) issues (Hjorth and Pink, 2014), or the 'social/digital nexus' (Marlowe et al. 2016). This involves what Miller and Horst (2013:12) regard as a new way of experiencing the existing world, and how the digital changes mobility experiences, and as such personal geographies (Zook et al. 2004). Using Massey's (2005) relational view of space and social formations, I explore (un)bounded communities, trans(local) consciousness, (dis)embodied sensibilities, national and (inter)cultural (re)production *through I.S. everyday digital practices*. I focus upon I.S. (dis)located life through their everyday digital networks during UK international study.

Framed through the social/digital lens, I view UoL as reciprocal, (dis)located place/space. Conceptually, UoL is the site of social, communicative and knowledge constructivism, shaped by wider structures, and through I.S. digital practices (which bring the education space into being). Longhurst (2016:135, citing Zook et al. 2004) notes ''there remain few empirical studies of 'how digital communication technologies actually do their "work" at the level of the individual, everyday performances of space'''. I apply this idea to I.S. digital lives, as a means of seeing social-spatial effects: as an epistemology and means of knowing (Leszczynski, 2014:3) to better see hidden social/academic issues often missed in macro-scale analysis.

I question I.S. experiences and emotions of everyday digitally networked international study. Kitchin et al. (2013, citing Macgilchrist and Böhmig, 2012:97) note how quotidian social media practices involve ''minimal politics', which 'challenge hegemonic formations'. Here, Kinsley (2016:794, citing Ranciere, 2011:13) argues it is

not a simple matter of ''voices from below against one of discourses from above, but a way of 'questioning the very functioning of these pairs as opposites'''. Through I.S. digital socialities, I aim to glimpse multi-scalar spatialities and interrelationships, often hidden within/comprising international study space. I investigate micro I.S. interactions with digital media, using small data to illuminate macro issues. Kitchen (2017:34) argues 'small data studies can be much more finely tailored to answer specific research questions and to explore in detail and in-depth, the varied, contextual, rational and irrational ways in which people interact and make sense of the world, and how processes work. Small data can focus on specified cases and tell individual, nuanced and contextual stories'. This epistemology offers an enlivening, exciting, new approach to gain insight into I.S. geographies and UK international study spatialities 'through international students'. I now consider international education through the digital.

2.3.4 International Education through the Digital

This section considers the very limited field of international study education space and digital media. Indeed, work examining this education space remains scant. Diverse views help to capture this blurry HE space. For instance, Andrejevic and Burdon (2015:19-20) argue the 'increasing passive-ication of interactivity' through 'pervasive, always-on passive […] digital devices'. However, Leszczynski and Elwood (2015:13) argue pervasive technological effects vary widely 'in (some) everyday lives' where 'technologies are never neutral and universally inclusive, but rather encode and generate social exclusions along multiple axes of difference.' I explore the social/digital matrix through I.S. voiced experiences. Education and digital geography are evolving fields where a co-reciprocal view aims to give better understandings through HE and the digital, of international study socio/digital-spatialities.

There is a relative dearth of literature investigating I.S. experiences and digital media. Only a few scholars have produced work; their ideas help frame my research. The first work considers UKHE. Madge et al. (2009c) explore UK students' Facebook practices, finding UK undergraduates developed 'virtual friendships' (ibid:144), during the pre-registration period and transitions into UKHE, whilst they also kept 'home' networks. Facebook supported settling into university life, and helped to organise social events

(ibid:146), also being a social channel to discuss work (ibid:148-151). Facebook, as a key social tool (and not a pedagogic aid), was described as *'social glue'* (ibid:152). This work reveals complex social relations embedded in mobility processes for UK students, aided by Facebook, elucidating how the digital can bring education space into being.

Madge et al. (2009c:152) argue 'there is clearly potential for further research which gives a more disaggregated view of *which* students are using *Facebook*, how and why' given 'there are many axes of difference that might affect the role, purpose and non-use of *Facebook* and other SNS, which require greater attention' (citing disciplinary background, social capital, ethnicity, digital inequalities, differences between Ph.D and Masters I.S. relative to language, accessibility and cultural issues). Madge et al. (2009c:153) noted, to date, most studies have involved Anglo-American students, contending 'compelling questions' exist about I.S. digital practices 'that will require serious research attention in the immediate future to gain a more nuanced and broader spectrum of understanding on SNS and their role in HE'. I investigate many of these hitherto unresearched issues. In doing so, I research well beyond Facebook.

I explore differentiated I.S. social and academic routines and digital media emanating from many different cultural centres. Lim et al. (2016:2147) note 'the subtle frictions that derive from migrants' embeddedness in digital and offline social fields, shot through with power asymmetries that may simultaneously imply empowerment on the one hand, and surveillance and control on the other'. By interrogating how social media such as Line, WeChat and Viber fit into international study processes we might begin to see how alternative place-centred digital media implicate place (prior/current/future) in counter-hegemonic digital practices (Leszczynski, 2012). As such, dispersed digital networks might overcome physical realm challenges?

In sum, Madge et al. (2009c) is 'the' key UKHE study. However, as this work involves UK students, I draw upon Collins, who investigated international students in New Zealand higher education. Collins' work, framed through ISM/I.S. digital behaviours, evidences how the geographical perspective can incisively examine complex international study processes.

2.3.5 International Students and Digital Media

Collins is a key scholar in the field of I.S. and digital media. Collins (2012a:302) notes I.S. 'represent an exciting field for human geographers' calling for 'a wider repertoire of methodological approaches'. Initially, Collins (2008a) explored how overseas agents support international study by (in)direct support and I.S. social relationships, finding I.S. mobile and emplaced' (ibid:401), embedded in non-neutral transnational networks as 'vessels of knowledge' (ibid:413). International study processes were 'dependent on other forms of mobility and the sorts of transnational activities that have developed in their wake', importantly finding I.S. mobility cannot be viewed as 'individuals operating independently of other actors and processes' (ibid:413). This early work points towards complex networks supporting international study, as examined next.

Collins (2009a) then explored South Korean students' use of Cyworld, describing the culturally centred platform as 'social glue' and a Janus-like bridge, where transnational actions involved identity issues and isolation from other cultures (easing and limiting everyday lives) (2009a:841). Collins notes an interrelationship between on and offline digital practices (2009a:842) describing Cyworld as a transnational diary founded on images of life in South Korea and Auckland where the 'very banal everyday-ness' (2009a:848) of Cyworld 'seems to become an affective place' (2009a:850) as networks easily mediated friendships while 'acting as a window to lives that are now physically distant' (2009a:851). Cyworld acted to 'ground' I.S. life, maintaining 'offline relationships online', to negotiate I.S. positive and negative international study experiences through friendships in Auckland, South Korea and elsewhere (2009a:853). Cyworld was also an inclusive and exclusive space, where language barriers directed encounters with co-nationals, preserving national identity and social formations via co-national relations (2009a:855). Collins notes the importance not of 'online personalities but offline experience' (ibid:857) where increased time in Auckland increased local networks reducing transnational interaction. A digital/real world overlap was also identified, although place was viewed fundamental in relationships.

Collins (2010b:51) debates corporeal friction, for instance racism, as the 'pleasure and pain' of international study 'shared' via offline/online practices where local co-national interpersonal networks allowed negotiation of urban (real) space, while virtual space

(using internet cafes) was of equal import. Café connections to 'home' interplayed with social reproduction, the maintenance of familial relationships and national identities (ibid:55) where networks 'overcome the enforced estrangement of being 'different''(ibid:60). This paper reveals how networks can shape embodiment. Collins (2012a) thus re-examined urban transnationalism evidencing how I.S. are mobile and emplaced through Cyworld homepages. This issue demands much more research.

Furthering Cyworld ideas, Collins (2012b:245) re-contemplates his 2009 study, arguing 'students' choices about their education are ongoing and ever-changing and are influenced significantly by the social networks that they are positioned within' describing international study as 'embedded in a complex web of social relations with other students (current, former, and potential future), families and friends, agents and other intermediaries as well as institutions and government bodies in countries of education' (2012b:250). Collins (2012b) conjectures how the internet might form new identities across different places. Questions are asked about the internet as 'bridgespace', as cyber-spatialities virtually mediate mobilities (ibid:247), arguing ISM appears 'particularly useful in understanding these connections between cyber-spaces, everyday life and mobility'. Where I.S. are leading-edge technology users, Collins (2012b:248) calls for more research into how technology forms 'new education spaces and mobilities', asking 'can the internet help to mediate the difficulties of life abroad or does it serve to isolate further overseas from local students inside and outside the classrooms?' Collins (2012b:249) notes 'the small literature that investigate I.S. use of the internet' implies limited understandings (where mainstream ISM studies view the internet solely for information gathering). I will consider and extend these questions.

Digital media have boomed in participatory culture since 2009 (Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn users growing by over a factor of ten[4]), as numbers of I.S. have greatly increased. Using and advancing upon Collins ideas, I examine multi-nation/cultural micro/group I.S. experiences of polymedia from many global centres. I explore social 'and' academic morphologies, whilst privileging I.S. as vessels of experience 'and' emotion, including practical and emotional experiences with digital media. I consider user gratifications, questioning why certain digital media are used, or not used (see

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[4] Users (millions) 2009/10: Facebook [Q1,'09] 197; Twitter [Q1,'10] 30; LinkedIn [Q1,'09] 37: (total *264m*) (Statistica, 2017a,b,c).

p.50). Waters (2008:9) views 'the acquisition of academic credentials is only one aspect of cultural capital'. I use ideas of digital capital within daily support (Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe, 2007), exploring resource needs (e.g. information capital) and emotional needs (coping capital). Post-Collins, work has been limited, until recently.

Finally, Marlowe et al. (2016:1) explore digital belongings of 24 HE students in Auckland, tentatively suggesting connective media shapes social cohesion. Marlowe et al. (2016:2) stress their work is limited, arguing 'there remain only limited explorations of the role of virtual environments on the experience of belonging (both locally and transnationally)', contending 'digital spaces on people's sense of belonging remains relatively under-theorised' (ibid:2). I also examine I.S. experience of digital belonging, or 'digital home', and how digital practices might enhance and extend social cohesion locally and transnationally. Anderson (2012:327) claims 'little attention has been paid to students' lives beyond classroom contexts and the concept of 'home''. I examine how does 'feeling *digitally* connected to roots' (Anderson, 2012:43: digital added) shape I.S. sensibilities? How might feeling closer to 'home' mediate international study frictions (Collins, 2010:52)) and digital belonging? Alternatively, how might UoL-centred networks affect matters (Beech, 2016)? I next discuss my research niche.

2.3.6 International Study Experience, Emotions, Identities and Digital Practices

This section addresses I.S. experiences, emotions and identities 'produced through the digital'. Collins (2010a:56) views the internet 'thoroughly embodied space', 'thoroughly affective' evidencing 'the inextricable bind between the virtual and real' (ibid:57). Digital saturation via continuous digital connection infuses I.S. lives and UK international study (Selwyn and Facer, 2014; Wilson, 2014). This involves place perception, identity and social (and academic) formations which are assumed to be mutually constituitive rather than discreet processes (Massey, 2005; Ash and Gallacher, 2011, 2015; Lorenzana, 2016). This embodied/affective space concerns 'multi-scalar relations and attachments across multiple forms of identity' (Marlowe et al. 2016:3). Here, ideas of 'flickering' (transforming) identity (Madge and O'Connor, 2005:83) involve the 'intersecting and simultaneous nature of the virtually real and the actually real' which blur the discreteness of place, enabling the on-line and off-line to

be 'understood as a process as well as a site' (ibid:83). In essence this represents a liminal education space in I.S. life, and imposes an added dimension of blurry and interwoven complexity to existing, intricate multi-layered HE space.

Holton (2015a:22) argues UKHE shapes weaker place sense, and Holton (2015b) uses material home in ideas about dynamic interactions, identity and transitions. Rizvi (2005:177) debates 'reimagining identities, social affiliations, and national obligations'. However, how might the social/digital nexus affect place-sense? I.S. might (variably) see themselves 'students' or intercultural subjects, or learning a new culture may not matter to I.S. intent on returning home post-UKHE (Kim 2010:37). However, how might digitally networked UK international study space mediate education mobilities (Collins, 2012b:248)? Many questions exist: how is international student socialisation affected? How are subjectivities and identities shaped, as the digital interleafs with cultures, languages, pedagogy, religion, mobility and belonging experiences (Madge and O'Connor, 2005; Valentine and Skelton, 2008; Meek, 2012; Martin and Rivzi, 2014; Marlowe et al. 2016). Here, I investigate (trans)local identity issues of national, cultural and cosmopolitan identity (Sakamoto, 2011; Sidhu and Dall'Alba, 2012; Kim, 2009, 2010). This brings into question the digital and emotions.

Emotions have been viewed contagious through social networks (Kramer et al. 2014; Booth, 2014). Longhurst (2009, 2012, 2013a,b,c, 2014), studying visual digital media during maternity experiences and emotions, is a key exponent of digital emotions. Longhurst (2016a:121) notes 'some' work involves geographies of media and geographies of emotion, although 'there is room for additional work to be done in this area', notably regarding the emotional impacts of polymedia (ibid:124). The concept of polymedia (Madianou and Miller, 2011, 2013a,b) recognizes multiple digital media can produce diverse embodied influences (see Lim and Pham, 2017 for a review). Longhurst (2016:125) asserts emotion 'moves through bodies and through media' (where the different emotional capacities of polymedia affected 'real' space perceptions). Here, I interrogate how digital media are entangled with I.S. emotions through 'scales of fluid experience' (Fetcher and Walsh, 2010:1203). I explore micro and group, local and dispersed, practical to acutely emotional sensations (see 2.2.6), to understand better the reciprocal emotional costs and benefits of digital practices.

There have been many USA-centred studies of student/digital behaviours. Work often involves Facebook. My study aligns with Saw et al. (2013:156), who, in an Australian study, argue that I.S. social media usage is 'not all about Facebook'. UoL I.S. emanate from many different culturally disparate centres. This diversity means that I.S. are likely to use 'a constellation of different media' (Madianou and Miller, 2012:3). I will provide a view upon diverse digital practices emanating from multiple cultural centres.

Facebook can also be an important aspect of educational and cultural adaption. Ryan et al. (2011) examine first year Ph.D students Facebook usage, finding that Facebook aided knowledge exchange, eased apprehension and enabled socialization and building community. Digital cultural practices have also be investigated. Park et al. (2014) considered SNS, acculturation stresses and psychological well-being among East Asian students; Mikal et al. (2015) Facebook and the integration of Chinese students; Wang (2012) Facebook and cross-cultural adaption in Taiwanese students, while Forbush and Foucault-Welles (2016) explore Chinese student social media usage. Many questions exist about acculturation stresses, adaption, transitions and the digital. Here, given the importance of Facebook for students, I also investigate Facebook usage at UoL.

Cheung et al. (2011:1338) explore Facebook usage via four theoretical lenses. Firstly, 'We-intention' (Bratman, 1997) where social representation involves performing a group act. Secondly, 'social influence theory' (Kelman, 1958) considers changes to attitudes and actions. Thirdly, 'uses and gratifications theory' (Katz, 1959) explores why specific communication media are used according to needs fulfilment (relative to community social enhancement and entertainment). Finally, 'social presence theory' (Short, Williams and Christie, 1976) understands the importance of the presence of others in a virtual environment, as (in)direct human contact, akin to face-to-face contact (ibid:1338). I present a view of Facebook and other digital behaviours connected to individual, group and face-to-face (non)digital socialities at UoL.

The uses and gratifications theory poses interest relative to networked information needs, socialisation and community engagement. Park et al. (2009:729) found that Facebook groups fulfilled four key needs: socialising, entertainment, self-status seeking and information, although gratifications varied by gender, age, year of study and geographic origin. Raacke and Bonds-Raacke (2008:169) found students immersed in

friend-making sites (Facebook and MySpace) in a situation which was equal between men and women, and across ethnic groups. Ifinedo (2015:192) found that undergraduates gained via 'pervasive adoption of SNS's', where 'the cultural factor of individualism-collectivism' positively impacted on 'students from more individualistic cultures'. My research will investigate differentiated digital practices, focusing upon (non)use by nationality, gender and study level differences.

I.S. may have many life roles (King and Raghuram, 2013:127). Family and gender issues pose interest. Huang et al. (2008:4) note 'transnational families' are under-examined and under-theorized. Whilst Jöns (2011:184) argues that little is known about gender relations during transnational academic mobility (of researchers and academics). Work exploring women's student experiences outside of classrooms is limited. Waters (2010:63) argues 'we still have little parallel knowledge of men'. I question family and gender positions (Madianou and Miller, 2013a,b) and how new relationships in the host society are affected via networks by loved ones and family elsewhere? How might matters change over time? Study level presents another differentiated perspective.

According to Bilecen (2013:669) I.S. studying at Ph.D level 'are in a phase of transition from being consumers of education to producers'. Rizvi (2010:159) argues doctoral study space is transnational. This education space remains under-researched (Robinson-Pant, 2009, 2010; Bilecen and Faist, 2015). Work exploring Ph.D I.S. digital practices remains very limited. I examine digital networks and academic identity and knowledge circulations (Madge et al. 2015). I also recognise that digital circulations are not limited to academic matters where digital imaginaries present interest.

Collins (2008:412) observes 'positive nostalgic imaginings of place and enthusiastic accounts of the experience' can affect future I.S. mobilities as 'imaginings'. Vernacular knowledge of place (Wang and Collins, 2016) and imaginations (Beech, 2014b) might be important, as place can be 'imagined through a range of different media as well as stories' (Beech, 2014b:170). More recently, Cantó-Milà et al. (2016:2399) viewed imaginings as liminal 'non-moments', and falling into 'imaginative worlds'. I explore the role of the social/digital nexus disseminating I.S.-centred place interpretations, and how such depictions might involve imaginings. Matters concern online personality.

Work, which often involves Facebook, has also explored SNS and personality traits (neuroticism, extraversion and open-ness, self-esteem, loneliness and narcissism). Amichai-Hamburger and Vinitzky (2010) found a strong connection between impression management and Facebook behaviours. Mehdizadeh (2010) submits that Facebook usage involved narcissism and self-esteem, finding that students higher in narcissism, and lower in self-esteem, were connected to higher levels of online interaction. Chen and Marcus (2012) found that collectivistic individuals were least honest in their online self-presentations. We begin to see recursive social/digital/place behaviours, though matters remain under-examined relative to UK international study.

Finally, the internet is mostly viewed as beneficial to users, nonetheless, a darker side exists. Problematic internet use (PIU) results in negative life outcomes where internet addiction and overuse interferes with offline socialisation, and can be related to other pschosocial conditions (Davis, 2001; Huang, 2010; Wheeldon, 2010; Kim and Park, 2015). For instance, social media anxiety syndrome (SMAD) is an emergent issue concerning obsessive compulsive disorder (ETEC 510; Jacobs, 2016). Caplan (2007:234) defines PIU as 'a multi-dimensional syndrome consisting of cognitive and behavioural symptoms that result in negative social, academic, and professional consequences.' Digital networks can also increase loneliness (Takahashi et al. 2009; Morrison, 2010). Turkle (2013:13) argues digital connections involve 'weak ties' and connections that are more 'friction free', which damage meaningful human relationships. Problems involving college students have been explored (Ghassemzadeh and Shahraray, 2008; Valenzuela et al. 2009). Skues et al. (2012:2414) found that lonelier students have more Facebook friends, where loneliness was linked to a lack of offline relationships. Ndasauka et al. (2016) found that excessive Twitter use involved negative impacts to face-to-face social interactions, where this relationship was mediated by loneliness. Kim et al. (2009:451) established that loneliness was a key cause effecting PIU, which harmed 'other significant activities such as work, school, or significant relationships'. Loneliness and isolation amongst I.S. is a key study concern (see p.37) which prompts questions about I.S., PIU and psychosocial well-being. For instance, how might UoL experiences be related to digital addiction? International student PIU is very under-researched. I investigate this topic. I now conclude my literature review in Section 2.4.

2.4 Final Thoughts

I have grounded my research within burgeoning ISM studies. I argue complex I.S. lives pose many questions, where contemporary geographies of education provide incisive social and cultural methods. Student geographies present how we can also investigate I.S. lives, notably questions of I.S. agency. By using emotional geography, I aim to advance more inert/disembodied ISM studies. At this juncture, digital geography, centred on the social/digital nexus, also permits an exploration of UK international study networks which I link to translocalism. This is an original study angle to doing I.S. geography, as the education/digital interface can produce knowledge differently.

The social/digital niche, examined via I.S voices, can allow knowledge gaps to be explored. By seeing the reciprocal relationship between I.S. experiences, emotions and digital networks, I aim to provide insight into UK international study phases, such as entrance opportunities, attendance, exit and on-going I.S. interconnectedness dynamics. I aim to advance social/digital debates, while creating a doubled-edged contribution to geographies of education and digital geography through I.S. lives.

An holistic view of I.S. digital networks involves local (inward) and dispersed (outward) embodied experiences. This stresses the importance of I.S., as the subjects of neoliberal HE, where I am better able to assess complex socio-digital spatialities. This adds a further layer of intricacy to already complex international study. Inward explorations involve experience, emotions and sensibilities which might outwardly reflect ISM structures/networks and internationalisation processes. I examine different international study meanings: I question place perception, 'home', invisible others, belonging, subjectivities, identities, transitions, social and academic negotiations, imaginations, internet legacies and PIU. Importantly, by unpacking I.S. experiences and emotions, my research is ideally placed to produce valid policy recommendations.

Finally, my research enables a re-theorisation of international study through I.S. experiences, emotions and digital networks. I aim to present the importance of I.S. in cultural, social, academic, professional, economic and knowledge circulations. I.S. geographies (of education through the digital), centre on human stories, (in)formal spaces and structures. This epistemology might also be transferable to other inter- and sub-disciplinary branches. I now discuss my research methodology.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This chapter details my robust research methodology. Directed by the research questions, I used mixed methods research (MMR) in a case study at UoL, which involved a Bristol Online Survey (BOS), focus groups and individual interviews. These conventional methods were ideal to address the research problem enabling a rigorous investigation of everyday differentiated I.S. international study voiced experiences, emotions and digital practices to fulfil my research questions. Below, an overview of the research design (3.1) is followed by discussion of the UoL case study (3.2), sampling procedures (3.3), data collection methods (3.4) and analytical processes (3.5). I conclude by considering ethics, informed consent, reflexivity, anonymity practices and positionality (3.6). See Appendix 3 for selected data tables and Appendix 4 for copies of research documents.

3.1.1 Research Overview

A purposive sampling strategy guided primary data collection at UoL between November 2013 and September 2015. A sequential three phase MMR design (Leech and Onwuegbuzie, 2009) used BOS (229 replies), six focus groups and 18 interviews, employing concurrent, reflexive, fine-grained data analyses between techniques. The weighting of each method was of equal importance. BOS provided quantitative significance and guided subsequent focus groups and interviews. Figure 3.1 summarises the MMR data collection strategy. Two minor supplementary methods also added further layers of detail:

i. Three I.S. compiled social media logs recording digital practices over seven days.

ii. My research diary, which recorded field notes and reflections on my research.

Holton and Riley (2013) and Holton et al. (2015:1) argue 'enlivening methodologies' offer 'exciting prospects for geographers of education': I.S. voices and digital practices provide an enlivening methodology. MMR permits a flexible research methodology (De Lisle, 2011) to deliver an enlivening, exciting and new approach by 'embracing the messy-ness of entangled worlds' (Dowling et al. 2016:3). MMR, 'through' I.S. everyday voices of international study experience and digital practices is a highly suitable methodology, where I aim to do I.S. geography differently.

Figure 3.1 MMR: Sequence of Research and Three Phase Data Collection

UoL Desk Based Research (Oct. 2013-Oct. 2013)   **(Preparation and Dept. Approval)**
Literature review (knowledge gaps); concepts identified.
Main outputs: research contextualisation and conceptualisation: what is (un)known about I.S. experiences and digital practices, academic and social identities; research questions developed. Methodology defined. Online surveys examined, BOS selected, survey questions designed, BOS programmed, piloted (via supervisors, I.S.), refined.

BOS Online Questionnaire Survey (Open: Nov. 2013-Jan. 2015)   **(Phase 1)**
BOS emailed to 2100 I.S. at UoL; two launches.
Main outputs: 229 responses (11%) from 37 nationalities attending 35 UoL Depts: Schools and Research Centres across Arts, Humanities, Law, Medicine, Biological Sciences, Psychology, Science and Engineering; I.S. ages 22 to over 61 years. Fine grained data analysis of extensive BOS results; detailed focus group schedule developed, tested (through supervisors), piloted (via colleagues/I.S.) and refined. Headline finding: + 98% of respondents used diverse digital media evidencing complex spatialities (pre/at UoL).

Six Focus Groups (Feb.-July 2014)   **(Phase 2)**
FG interview times 71-103 minutes; 27 I.S.; 14 nationalities. Schools: Arts, Humanities, Medicine, Biological Sciences, Psychology, Science and Engineering; ages 22-57 yrs; concurrent reference to BOS.
Main outputs: rich data involving individual/group international study experiences, emotions, subjectivites and identities. How I.S. feel. How everyday digital practices relate to this experience. Assessment of emerging themes; gap analysis; transcription and concurrent analysis provides deeper insight into emerging themes; data immersion, interview questions developed and tested through supervisors. Headline finding: I.S. complex, emotive, digitally networked lives inside/outside UoL.
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18 Semi-Structured Interviews (Sept. 2014-Sept. 2015)   **(Phase 3)**
Ten current I.S., five alumni (aged 24-46yrs), three UoL administrators. Duration 48-98 minutes. Concurrent reference to BOS results and focus group themes. Five question schedules developed for: current students (x1), alumni (x1), managers (x3); questions tested and refined through supervisors.
Main outputs: I.S. micro-experiences and emotions; international study impacts upon subjectivites and identity. How emotions and digital media relate (directed by themes generated during focus groups and BOS responses); some interviewees asked to keep a social media logs. Alumni: retrospective outputs (transformation views). UoL administrators: I.S. management strategies and institutional views. Headline finding: international study is emotionally saturated for I.S., this includes digital practices. There remains a gap between UoL policy aims and I.S. experiences.

Document Update (Throughout Research Project)   **(Context & Transferability)**
On-going literature review and data updates (academic, UoL, government, grey data). Outward links considered for the UoL case study.
Main outputs: research contextualization with literature evidencing 'flux' in HE. Outward (inter)national inter-linkages of some research findings. Headline output: I.S. differentiated, some vulnerable, marginalised and frustrated. Policy needs addressing; digital media might play a role to improve experience.

3.1.2 Doing International Student Geography Differently and MMR

Madge et al. (2015:694) call for academics to 'make the international differently'. In answering this appeal, MMR employs I.S. voiced experiences and emotions of everyday differentiated international study experience. In 'doing I.S. geography differently', this involved listening and rethinking 'intense, affective, emotional and embodied relationships' between I.S. experiences and digital media (after Dowling et al. 2016:2). My conceptual framing of I.S. shaped my MMR strategy.

I.S. transitory life-spaces are complex. Collins (2012:296) notes complex I.S. lives involve mobility, temporary emplacement and displacement which can present methodological challenges. My enlivening MMR methodology recognised the human complexities of I.S. engaged in messy, entangled international study structures, in the process of acquiring intellectual, social and cultural capital (Waters, 2006; Holton, 2016a). Prior to the research little was known about international study social/digital relationships and it was essential to apply methods that examined population wide digital practices, while also gaining understanding at group and individual level. For example, Madge et al. (2009c) described Facebook as 'social glue', at a wider population level, but knowledge of individual and collective experiences is very limited. MMR provided an encompassing approach to knowledge production which captures general patterns as well as detailed understanding.

3.1.3 The Everyday, Digital and MMR 'Turns'

My research is formed at the intersection of everyday international study experience and digital practices (see 1.3.2/2.2.4). The digital also affects 'how we think as well as the effect of their content on what we think about' (Crang, 2015:2) as 'new cultural forms and practices [are] created through digital media' (ibid:3). These ideas involve 'digitally inflected spatial formations' (Kinsley, 2013:365). Thus, everyday I.S. experience is viewed through the social/digital nexus (Marlowe et al. 2016). Ideas involve experience, where the digital paradigm comprises part of, or being 'the social' (Ash et al. 2015:56/57) and, by interference, 'the academic', although I regard this as an complexly entangled matrix (which might reciprocally reflect complex I.S. lives).

In this fuzzy field, the methodology sought to clarify the nature of digital practices, where an extensive survey asked I.S. to cite usage of 12 different categories of digital channels and name favoured academic and social platforms (see glossary and Appendix 4, Table 3.6). This strategy accorded breadth and depth to define tightly digital practice parameters which was complimented by intensive focus groups and individual interviews to provide insight into the role of digital practices within everyday I.S. lives. This approach allowed my research to understand better potential questions of translocalism (see 1.3.1/1.3.3/2.3.6) and social/digital co-constitutive relationships (Collins, 2012:247). The research of such phenomenon was enriched through MMR.

My methodology reflects the MMR turn across social sciences (De Lisle, 2011) where 'the methodological ruptures in human geography raise exciting prospects for geographers of education' (Holton et al. 2015:2). The MMR design recognised the benefits of interlacing quantitative and qualitative research paradigms to produce an incisive empirical study (Johnson et al. 2007). The blended approach using a descriptive survey combined with focus groups and interviews were complimentary methodologies (Mayoh and Onwuegbuzie, 2015). McKendrick (1999[2010]:41-42) argues MMR is ideal when faced with weakness in existing data; permitting revision during deployment, breadth to understanding 'and' is ideal for case study research. MMR provides strength by offsetting the weaknesses of individual methods (Warshawsky, 2014:160). Sui and DeLyser (2012, 2013) DeLyser and Sui (2014) argue that MMR, as a way of integrating research, embraces diversity to provide 'holism in ontology pluralism/open-mindedness in epistemology' (Sui and DeLyser, 2012:111). BOS and face-to-face methods allowed further triangulation through an online/onsite methodology, permitting a more nuanced, fruitful analysis (Madge, 2010:174).

Finally, MMR employed postpositivism, understanding knowledge is partial and situated (Jackson and Neely, 2015) and what is observed is influenced by researcher values, theories, background and knowledge (Collins, 2002:624). My flexible, dynamic and pragmatic MMR, combined with a close consideration of ethics and researcher positionality, was able to overcome purist divides and permit a closer insight into complex digitally enabled and entangled I.S. worlds, where I.S. voice was central to the methodology. MMR enabled the breadth and depth necessary for incisive

understanding of innately complex, multi-layered and entangled phenomenon. MMR is ideally suited for case study approaches where ontological and epistemologically diverse perspectives strengthen research, from data gathering to final analysis and interpretation. The role of definitions, and an appreciation of 'what a case study is', are central to the research methodology.

3.2 The University of Leicester Case Study

This section describes what a case study is, the advantages of case study research (3.2.1), justification of using a single UKHEI (3.2.2), why UoL was chosen as the site of research (3.2.3) and why individual case studies matter (3.2.4).

3.2.1 What is a Case Study?

The case study approach is an ideal framing tool to investigate I.S. experiences and digital practices. Yins (2009:15) describes case studies as generalizable/theoretical propositions defined as 'an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident' (ibid:18). A case study approach creates a powerful research tool providing six key advantages closely aligned with the advantages of MMR. Firstly, a case study suits my everyday stance as this permitted research of contemporary, in-situ I.S. experiences and digital practices. Here, my literature review, in citing many knowledge gaps, shaped the best case study design to explore gaps. Secondly, the UoL case study offers a detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events, conditions and relationships, being 'particularistic' to a certain phenomenon, enabling depth of investigation and rich description of phenomenon. Thirdly, thoroughness was provided by the case study which examined different scales of I.S. experience, permitting insight to complex individual and group layered processes. Fourthly, the case study permitted flexibility and multipoint analysis perspectives. Niches and gaps identified by one method could be explored with other methods. Fifthly, responsiveness enabled flexible solutions to fieldwork problems. Finally, as noted by Savin-Baden and Major (2013), a case study appeals to a variety of audiences, while a successful methodology proves the benefit of the case study design for future studies. These advantages offer research rigour,

internal and external validity and reliability. An awareness of potential issues, and how to overcome them, was also necessary, as considered below.

The case study approach can present challenges; however, awareness of challenges can strengthen research. In using I.S. voices, a prime concern was invasive harm to participants. I sought to minimalise harm by using a continual reflexive approach, where ethical reflection of I.S. vulnerabilities was constantly reviewed (see 3.6.1). Another issue involves the overly situated case study, making research too singular or too bounded (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013). The UoL was viewed as a world class university, where the decision to use a case study at a single UKHEI centred on three points of rationale, as detailed below.

3.2.2 Why Choose a Single UKHE Institution for the Case Study?

This section cites three justifications for using a single UKHEI case study. Firstly, I.S. are an important but under-researched community in the UK, UKHE and internationally (Madge, 2009a,b). To my knowledge the UoL case study of I.S. digital worlds is unique in the UK. My literature review proves critical geographic UK campus-based studies are scarce (Hopkins, 2011; Holton and Riley, 2013; Holton 2016), notably from the social/digital angle. Few studies have explored I.S. experiences/emotions during ISM processes involving digital practices. Work exploring networks beyond classroom walls is rare and little is known about the reiterative relationship between digital media and emotions during international study: a case study permits such an examination.

Secondly, national UKHE geographies remain highly uneven (Andersson et al. 2012:501), permeated by 'unsettling unevenness' (Madge et al. 2015:695). Experience formed in place cannot be viewed a priori, and is 'deeply contextual and place specific' where 'commonalities and differences' might exist at all times (Madge et al. 2009a:43). I.S. experience plays out differently in different places and at different scales, shaping education spaces, hence the need for a locationally specific analysis. This is proven by recent student geography debates which 'highlight the complexities surrounding the environment where students live and who they live among' (Holton, 2016a:63). Also, everyday life needs to be studied in one place (Gielis, 2011), although findings are not fixed to single place.

Thirdly, micro-campus geographies connect with national/global issues which 'influence and shape' how the university campus is 'encountered' (Hopkins, 2011:159). A local case study offers internal (local) and external (UKHE) validity. For instance, UK student and I.S. relationships are well-documented as problematic in UKHE and UK government often stereotypes I.S. under universalising narratives. I argue I.S. UoL experience/emotions are entangled with UK/UKHE structures. A local case study can understand the specificity of such structures, ideally situating the study to inform locationally-rich policy outwards. The UoL is considered below.

3.2.3 Rationale for UoL Case Study Selection

This section details UoL case study rationale. UoL is one of Britain's top HEIs with considerable local, national and international presence (Plate 3.1), cited as a world class global elite university (NTU, 2016) and a key destination for I.S.. UoL is subject to, and shapes, ISM processes. Four factors drove the UoL case study selection.

Firstly, the UoL business model is fully international, operating international careers, research and alumni programmes, a dedicated international office, international directors in colleges, international 'leaders' in departments and schools, and international data being used for the analysis/planning of UoL internationalisation policy. UoL follows an expanding internationally orientated I.S. recruitment strategy. UoL International Office (2014) stated for the five years to the case study start (2008-2013) UoL provided international study for +14,500 I.S. from 101 countries. Latest HESA figures (2009-2015) reveal total I.S. at UoL were 22,320 (10,785 Masters [48.32%], 2,320 Ph.D [10.39%] and 9,230 first degree [41.35%]) (Figure 3.2). I.S. fee and grant income receipts have risen in-line with increased numbers from £11,370,000 (2002/03) to £57,497,000 (2014/15) (Figure 3.3). Estimated 2016/17 I.S. income is +£70 million, reflecting strategic importance to institutional operation and sustainability (2015/16-2016/17 financial and I.S. numbers remain commercially sensitive).

Plate 3.1 Images of the Place of UK International Study

Source: author

Figure 3.2 UoL International Students 2009/10 - 2014/15

UoL International Students (Full Time, Non-Eu) 2009/10 -2014/15

Academic Year	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Ph.D	320	260	340	385	510	505
Masters	1585	1445	1480	1795	1635	2845
First Degree	1025	1245	1580	1695	1835	1850
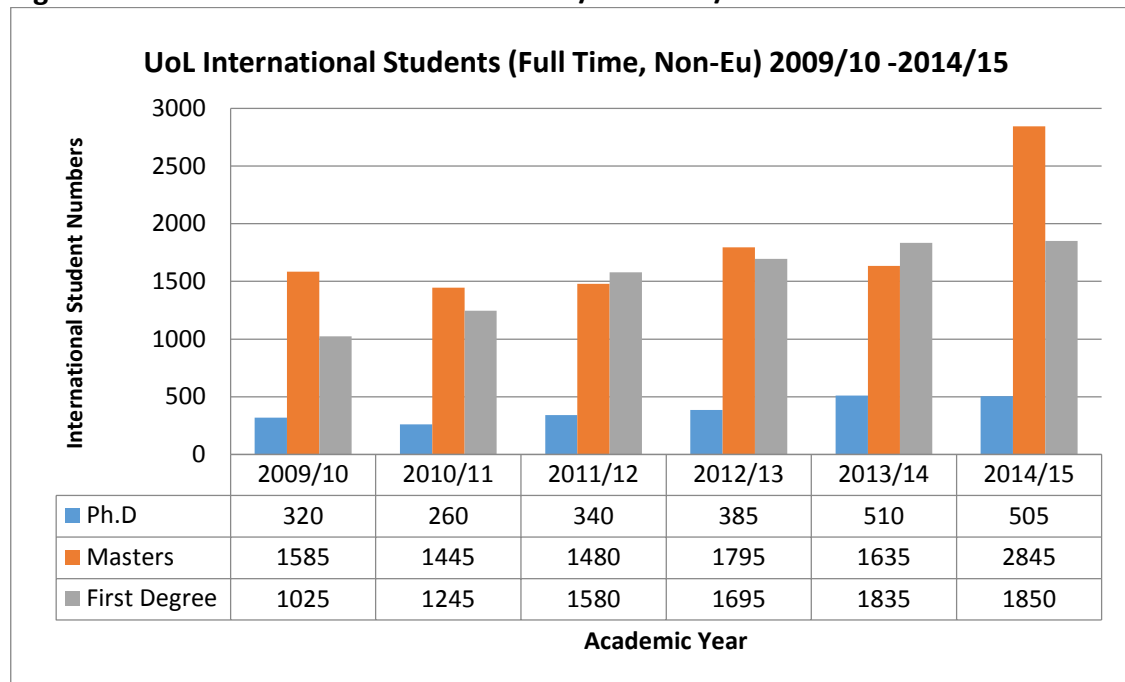
Source: HESA Student Record 2002/03 - 2014/15 compiled by first year and non-first year data (HESA recording changed 2007/08).

Figure 3.3 UoL Income Receipts Home/EU and International Students 2002-2015*

UoL Full-Time Tuition Fees Home/EU and International Students 2002-2015

■ From Home and European Union Students   ■ From Students Outside the European Union
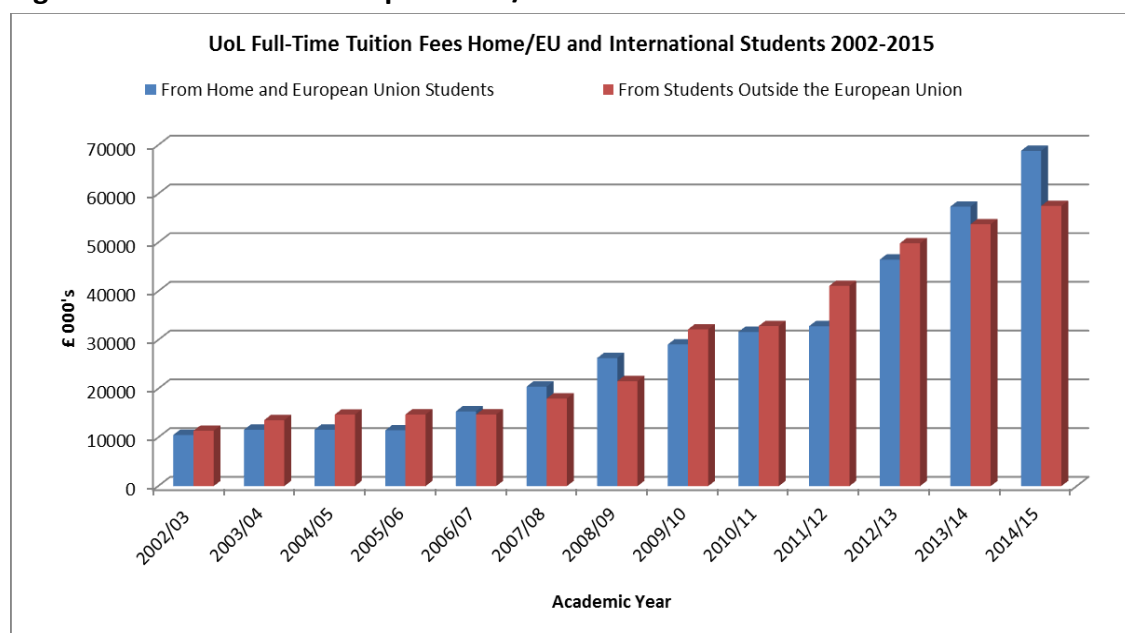
Source: UoL Financial Statements 2002/03-2014/15.   * UoL I.S. growth is slowing, mirroring wider UKHE concerns.

A key UoL business tenet involves international brand, reputation and prestigious, quality assured UK degrees promoted by world university rankings (WUR) and other digital means. The Times Higher Education (THE) positions UoL 41st (world) for HEIs with the highest percentage of I.S. (Bhardwa, 2017b). THE also positions UoL in the top 20 UKHEIs and in the top 1% of world universities (237th from +25,000 degree-granting

HEIs: UoL, 2016a,b). Performance Ranking of Scientific Papers for World Universities ranks UoL 254th in the world for research excellence (NTU, 2017); Best Global Universities ranks UoL 28th out of 30 UK 'global universities' (UoL, 2016c,e,f).[5]

During the academic year of the case study, 2013-14, UoL received 3,989 'overseas' I.S. (f/t undergraduate and postgraduate) from over 70 countries (UoL International Office, 2013); of this figure 2,145 [53.9%] were I.S. from 45 national domiciles (UoL, 2014). I.S. formed 29.3% of all full-time students at UoL (I.S. 15.4%; first degree 13.9% where 11.1% of I.S. were Masters students and 4.2% Ph.D students (UoL, 2016) (Table 3.1).[6]

Table 3.1 Distribution of Full-Time Students by Fee Type at UoL (2013/14)

	Undergraduate (Numbers)	Masters (PGT) (Numbers)	Ph.D (PGR) (Numbers)	Total Number	Percentage
Home/EU	8191	761	679	9631	70.7%
Overseas	1897	1515	577	3989	29.3%
Total:	**10,088**	**2276**	**1256**	**12,620**	

Source: UoL (2014).

The UoL international position is further evidenced by HESA (2015) where UoL was placed 23rd out of 163 UKHEI destinations (Table 3.2) according to total I.S. numbers (all study levels, non-EU). Figures also showed UoL to be approximately the 26th largest UKHE provider (HESA 2015).[7] The UKHEIs appearing in bold print in Table 3.2 formed the top 20 UKHEIs according to The Complete University Guide (2013-14: data collection period); UoL is placed tenth, validating UoLs significance within UKHE. Indeed, where UoL is regarded as a small to medium sized UKHEI, UoL attracts a high proportion of I.S. relative to this size, leading to the second rationale for selecting UoL as the case study.

Secondly, the large postgraduate population (UK/EU/I.S.) presented a postgraduate orientated UKHEI. In 2013-14 postgraduates represented 26% of the total full-time student population of UoL (3,532 of 13,620). Table 3.3 employs HESA (2015) figures (all study modes, which includes part-time and distance learning) revealing nearly 35% of UoL students were postgraduates, placing UoL ninth relative to the top 20 UKHE providers. Moreover, in 2014-15 total UoL postgraduate population rose to 47% (UoL, 2015) making UoL one of the largest providers of postgraduate education in UKHE.

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[5] UoL rankings have declined over recent years, raising questions about sustainable I.S recruitment.
[6] HESA/UoL figures vary over time, by I.S numbers starting and completing. Figures used are contemporary to the case study.
[7] Total postgraduate I.S attending 163 UKHEIs during the case study was 142005 (HESA, 2015).

Table 3.2 Top 50 UKHEI Destinations for Full-Time Non-EU P/G.I.S. (2013/14)

Rank	UKHEI	No. I.S.	Rank	UKHEI	No. I.S.
1	The University of Manchester	4260	26	**The University of York**	1640
2	**The University of Birmingham**	4250	27	**The University of Bristol**	1635
3	**University College London**	3840	28	The University of Liverpool	1595
4	The University of Sheffield	3540	29	**University of Durham**	1590
5	The University of Southampton	3360	30	**The University of East Anglia**	1565
6	**London School of Economics**	3330	31	The University of Greenwich	1475
7	**The University of Oxford**	3205	32	**The University of Exeter**	1410
8	**The University of Edinburgh**	2890	33	The University of Stirling	1375
9	The University of Glasgow	2880	34	The University of Reading	1365
10	Cardiff Metropolitan University	2875	35	University of the Arts, London	1360
11	**The University of Warwick**	2785	36	**Loughborough University**	1350
12	The City University	2765	37	The University of Sussex	1340
13	The University of Leeds	2740	38	The University of Westminster	1325
14	**The University of Cambridge**	2725	39	Aston University	1300
15	University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne	2720	40	The University of Hull	1250
16	Coventry University	2600	41	**The University of Surrey**	1200
17	**Imperial College London**	2425	42	Sheffield Hallam University	1195
18	University of Nottingham	2405	43	**The University of Bath**	1195
19	**King's College London**	2365	44	University of South Wales	1165
20	University of Bedfordshire	2350	45	The University of Essex	1155
21	The University of Sunderland	2345	46	**The University of Lancaster**	1150
22	Cardiff University	2295	47	Heriot-Watt University	1085
23	**The University of Leicester**	**2145**	48	University of Northumbria at Newcastle	1060
24	Brunel University London	1855	49	The University of Salford	1060
25	Queen Mary University of London	1695	50	Middlesex University	1030

Source: British Council SIEM Portal, 2015. Figures can vary by year and by institution.

Table 3.3 Percentage of PG Students (of Total Students) at Top 20 UKHEIs (2013/14)*

Rank by % of P/G	UKHEI	UK Rank Indep. Uni Guide 2015	Total P/G Population	Total UG Pop.n	Total HE Pop.n	P/G's as % of Total HE Students
1	London School of Econs	3	6115	4035	10145	60.3
2	University College London	7	13015	15415	28430	45.8
3	Imperial College London	4	7340	8885	16225	45.2
4	University of Warwick	8	10520	14725	25245	41.7
5	University of Birmingham	17	13150	19185	32335	40.7
6	King's College London	19	11235	16410	27645	40.6
7	University of Cambridge	1	7425	12155	19580	37.9
8	University of Oxford	2	9250	16655	25905	35.7
9	**University of Leicester**	**16**	**5845**	**10905**	**16750**	**34.9**
10	University of Edinburgh	18	8605	19015	27625	31.1
11	University of East Anglia	20	5055	12090	17140	29.5
12	University of Bath	9	4345	10810	15155	28.7
13	University of Surrey	13	4030	10035	14065	28.6
14	University of Lancaster	11	3670	9410	13080	28.0
15	University of Durham	5	4655	12540	17190	27.1
16	University of Bristol	15	5190	14980	20170	25.7
17	Loughborough University	14	3955	12005	15965	24.8
18	University of York	12	3985	12695	16680	23.9
19	University of Exeter	10	4470	15050	19520	22.9
20	University of St Andrews	6	2125	7610	9735	21.8

Source: compiled from HESA (2015).   * Note: figures include part-time/distant students.

Furthermore, analysis of full time postgraduates distribution (UK/EU vs. Non EU: 2013-14) relative to the top 20 UKHE providers found UoL possessed the seventh highest proportion of P/G.I.S. relative to UK and EU postgraduates (Table 3.4). At UoL, I.S. represented 59% of postgraduates (2,092 of 3,532 f/t postgraduates) (UoL, 2014). This high percentage of UoL P/G.I.S. enabled sample breadth and a rich participant base; an ideal situation to investigate the differentiated I.S. experiences.

Thirdly, ubiquitous technical infrastructure defines UoL as a digital university (Selwyn, 2015). ICT and 24/7 internet access mediate everyday learning, teaching, research, administrative operations and social life at UoL. Internet connection is enabled by campus-wide data outlets (minority 100mbps, majority 1gbps) and 'Eduroam' 24/7 wi-fi system (600mbps-1.3GBps): connectivity extends to halls of residence[8].

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[8] Campus wi-fi: newer access points (802.11ac) 1.3GBps, older access points (802.11n) 600mbps (speed dependent on distance/clients capabilities and numbers connected). Hall wi-fi: up to 100 mbps (depending on service paid for).

Table 3.4 Postgraduate International Students at UoL relative to the Top 20 UK Universities (2013/2014)

Rank: Percentage of I.S. Vs. Total Postgraduate Population by UKHEI			UK/World Ranking Systems 2013 - 2014				Mode of Study		Domicile			
Rank	I.S. (%)	UKHEI	UK: Independent University Guide	World: QS	World: Times Higher Education	Region of HE Provider	Full-Time	Part-Time	United Kingdom	Other European Union	Non-European Union *	Total PG Students
1	56.3	London School of Econs	3	68	32	London	5510	605	1155	1515	3445	6115
2	41.9	University of York	12	114	100	Yorkshire	3215	770	1990	325	1670	3985
3	41.7	Loughborough University	14	244	351- 400 (w)**	E. Mids	2420	1540	1970	340	1650	3955
4	39.8	University of Bath	9	187	276 - 300 (w)**	S. West	2150	2195	2150	465	1730	4345
5	38.8	University of Durham	5	90	80	N. East	3205	1450	2320	525	1805	4655
6	38.7	University of Oxford	2	6	2	S. East	7515	1735	4025	1645	3580	9250
7	**37.8**	**University of Leicester**	**16**	**202**	**161**	**E. Mids**	**3520**	**2325**	**3355**	**280**	**2210*****	**5845**
8	37.1	University of Cambridge	1	3	7	East	6485	935	3345	1325	2755	7425
9	36.8	University of Lancaster	11	156	137	N. West	2215	1450	2005	315	1350	3670
10	36.2	University of Warwick	8	64	141	W. Mids	5080	5440	5555	1160	3805	10520
11	35.3	University of St Andrews	6	83	117	Scotland	1730	395	855	520	750	2125
12	35.0	University of Edinburgh	18	17	39	Scotland	6550	2055	4300	1295	3010	8605
13	34.9	University of Birmingham	17	62	153	W. Mids	7845	5310	7685	880	4590	13150
14	34.1	University of Bristol	15	30	79	S. West	3885	1305	2955	470	1770	5190
15	33.6	University of Surrey	13	284	351 - 400 (w)**	S. East	2540	1490	2185	490	1355	4030
16	33.6	Imperial College London	4	5	10	London	5895	1445	3385	1490	2465	7340
17	33.4	University of Exeter	10	168	148	S. West	3345	1125	2670	305	1495	4470
18	31.7	University of East Anglia	20	229	174	East	3315	1740	3110	340	1605	5055
20	22.4	King's College London	19	19	38	London	6350	4885	7330	1385	2520	11235

Compiled from: HESA International Students in UKHE 2013-14; UK Independent University Guide 2013-14; World QS Rankings 2013-14; Times Higher Education Ranking 2013-14.

*Part-time I.S. figures included in HESA Non-EU I.S. total. ** (w) denotes rank withheld by THE. ***This figure reduced over the next academic year to 2045.

Finally, the UoL case study quality was enriched by my position as a UoL-based researcher. Local knowledge allowed gatekeeper access to I.S., administrative staff and reflexive fieldwork: this enabled more time with I.S. than time spent accessing them. For example, during Phase 1 (Figure 3.1) the Data Protection Act (1998) and UoL privacy protocols necessitated extensive gatekeeper consents to access I.S. email addresses to distribute BOS. Although conjectural, where accessing I.S. email addresses was an involved matter at UoL, access might have been harder at another UKHEI. Administrative time savings allowed more time developing BOS and 'qualitative time' with I.S., while enabling contextual understanding and depth to data analysis. My local status enabled a richer MMR operation. Importantly, 'qualitative time' allowed incisive individual case studies.

3.2.4 International Student Individual Case Studies

In following a converging quantitative to qualitative path, the importance of the minutiae of everyday digital practices became increasingly significant as the research progressed. Focus groups and interviews explored differentiated experiences and emotions: what international study felt like at UoL. Here, 18 case study exemplars from 15 contributors are used throughout the thesis to bring I.S. voices alive (three I.S. also returned social media logs as exemplars). Case study identities were concealed using appropriate national context pseudonyms (with a basic identifier, see glossary).

Individual cases studies act as a lens into I.S. experiences, emotions, subjectivities and identities. These can be a less-visible aspect of international study, a compelling angle where intimate I.S. views enlivened my research, for as Dowler et al. (2014:347) argue, individuals can become invisible, disconnected, passive victims of (inter)national processes. Individual case studies thus offer the 'quiet politics of belonging' (Askins, 2015:353) such as interpersonal networks, the geopolitics of local community and connection across difference (for example, prior place networks). Explorations of similarity and difference involved complex processes (Dunn, 2010) and intimate feelings such as (dis)connection, (non)belonging, marginalisation and happiness (Beech, 2014a) which can be revealed through individual case studies. Having justified the case study approach the chapter now considers the sampling rationale.

3.3 Sampling Rationale: Non-EU Postgraduate International Students

This section considers the sampling strategy which differed by BOS, focus groups and interviews. 'Sampling is the acquisition of information about a relatively small part of a larger group or population' to make 'inferential generalisations' (Rice, 2010:230). A non-probability based purposeful sampling strategy was used. Population characteristics set the sampling parameters, defined by my definition of the I.S. population, as described first below, before individual sampling routines are discussed.

3.3.1 Defining Non-EU Postgraduate International Students

Defining the sample frame is the first step in sampling (Groves et al. 2009). My study defined I.S. as full-time postgraduate taught and research students who have left their prior place (domicile nation or elsewhere) and moved to UoL for study who are from nations outside of the 28 European Union (EU) member states (see OECD, 2012:371). Four key justifications guided the sampling.

Firstly, non-EU I.S. are dealt with very differently by UKVI which categorises them as different students, with many different immigration statuses and visa regimes, compared to EU I.S. (see Madge et al. 2009a). Thus the decision to focus on non-EU I.S.. Furthermore, studies concerning EU I.S. are far more prevalent (see Riano and Piguet, 2016); this despite numbers of non-EU I.S. entering UKHE being far higher than EU I.S. (see 1.1.3/1.1.6): Waters (2015) notes, in 2013-14 more Chinese I.S. entered UKHE than EU I.S. from all other EU members. Given this importance to UKHE, it remains surprising that non-EU I.S. are so under-studied. Secondly, the research focuses upon full time I.S. because part-time and distance learning I.S. are subject to different social/digital spatialities. Thirdly, the research focuses upon P/G.I.S. (non-EU), and not undergraduates. This is because most I.S. are postgraduates (see 1.1.6): this was certainly the case at UoL. Fourthly, non-EU P/G.I.S. stay longer in UKHE (travel and time costs limit 'home' visits). P/G.I.S. might also relocate family and develop in-depth UoL social and academic relationships between each other and UoL staff. These parameters were deemed to influence experience/emotional and social/digital vectors differently to undergraduate I.S..

Other points guided sampling. I recognise that 'all' students are unique. I.S. also represent a highly variegated group characterised by large national/political, social, cultural, linguistic, economic and religious divergences between I.S. 'and' between I.S. and UK/EU students. I.S. are also categorised by UK government/UKHE management practices as 'different' by being considered 'international', 'overseas' or 'foreign' compared to UK/EU students. This polarisation matters: discursively constructed axes of difference might produce distinctive experience/emotional geographies and social/digital morphologies. 'Being different' is sustained by differentiated UoL/UKHE fee structures: I.S. pay more than UK/EU students for the same qualifications (Table 3.5). These various factors also provide justification for the focus on non-EU students. This leads to considering the BOS sampling procedures below.

Table 3.5 UoL Postgraduate Tuition Fees UK/EU Students versus I.S. (2015/16)

Mode of Study	UoL Tuition Fees 2015-2016 (f/t)		
	UK/EU Fees	I.S. Fees	Extra Cost (%)
Taught (Masters)	£5470 - £13500	£13500 - £21665	+147 to +60
Example: Computer Science	£6290	£19220	+206
Research (M.Phil; M.Res; Ph.D)	£3996 - £7150	£12455 - £26980	+211 to +277
Example: Geography Ph.D	£3996	£12455 - £14000	+211 to +250

Source: UoL (2015).

3.3.2 Bristol Online Survey Sampling Procedures

This section considers the Bristol Online Survey (BOS) sampling procedures. BOS was pre-designed by the University of Bristol. This design allowed my own programming of survey questions (see 3.4.1) involving I.S. perspectives prior to, while attending, and on exit of UoL (Appendix 2). BOS used maximal variation purposive sampling (Cresswell and Piano-Clark, 2007) being email distributed to all UoL I.S. (2,115-2,145 students)[9] twice: in November 2013 and November 2014. BOS was an in-depth online survey, designed to gain detailed insight into digital practices. The final BOS sample comprised 229 responses,[10] an 11% response rate. Although on first appearance this is a low response rate, Toepoel (2016:9) suggests 'non-response does not always have to cause problems for the outcome of the data'. AAAS (2009:53) suggests response rates of five

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[9] UoL database I.S numbers varied (subject to complex domicile issues and UKHE exit before study completion).
[10] Originally 235 responses, six responses were invalid: returned by d/l or p/t I.S (UoL database errors).

to ten percent for web-based surveys of over 30 questions are common: BOS' 11% response exceeds this expectation. Importantly, for capturing differentiated experiences, the response rate included 37 nationalities, an 82% response by all UoL nationalities (2013-14)[11]. Table 3.6 details the top ten responses by nationality, a distribution which reflects the overall UoL I.S. population (note: all Indonesian I.S. replied). The BOS I.S. sample attended 38 UoL Schools, Departments and Research Centres and captured 175 Masters (76.5%) and 54 Ph.D (23.5%) responses. Multiple ethnicities were declared, while I.S. ages varied by: aged 25 and under (54%); 26-30 (22%); 31-40 (19%); 41-50 (3%); 51-60 (1%) (Appendix 3).

Table 3.6 Top 10 BOS Replies by Nationality and % of UoL I.S. Population (2013/14)

Domicile	Number of BOS Responses	% of BOS Responses by Nationality	% of BOS Responses Compared to UoL National Population
China	85	37.1	7.6
Nigeria	15	6.5	21.4
Iraq	13	5.6	7.0
USA	13	5.6	28.8
Thailand	11	4.8	31.4
Colombia	9	3.9	45.0
India	9	3.9	8.5
Taiwan	9	3.9	15.0
Saudi Arabia	8	3.4	8.0
Indonesia	7	3.0	100.0

Regarding gender, during 2013-14, UoL Ph.D and Master's population was 1,265 females (780 Master's students were Chinese female students) and 835 males, a 60/40 gender split. The BOS gender sample by study level comprised: Masters females 125 (71%), Masters males 50 (28%) and Ph.D females 24 (44%) and Ph.D males 29 (54%); transgender one (0.5%). Overall BOS gender split was 65% female, 34.5% male and 0.5% transgender, which closely reflected the total population and fulfilled representative sample criteria. Table 3.7 lists national responses by gender and percentage of the total national populations at UoL (see Appendix 3 Tables 3.1-3.4).

Following contemporary web-based survey parlance (Longhurst, 2016b:149) BOS asked I.S. to apply for focus groups and/or interviews following completion of the survey. Focus group sampling procedure is detailed below.

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[11] 45 nationalities (2013-14). Non-responding nationals (UoL total): Bangladesh (5), Brazil (5), Iran (10), Japan (10), South Korea (5), Sierra Leone (5), Sri Lanka (5).

Table 3.7 BOS: Nationality & Gender Percentage of Total UoL IS Population (2013/14)

P/G.I.S. by Nation *	Total UoL P/G.I.S. Pop.n	Total UoL P/G.I.S. Pop.n (Male)	Total UoL P/G.I.S. Pop.n (Female)	BOS Response	BOS Response (Male)	BOS Response (Female)	BOS Response (T/G)	BOS Response by % of UoL Nat. Pop.	National Response by % of BOS
1.Azerbaijan	5	5	0	2	1	1	-	40	0.87
2.Barbados	5	0	5	2	-	2	-	40	0.87
3.Botswana	0	0	0	1	1	-	-	*	0.44
4.Brunei	20	5	15	3	1	2	-	15	1.31
5.Canada	15	10	10	2	-	2	-	13.3	0.87
6. China (PRC)	1130	315	810	87	14	73	-	7.61	37.99
7. Colombia	20	5	10	9	3	6	-	45	3.93
8. Ecuador	0	0	0	1	1	-	-	*	0.44
9. Egypt	5	5	0	1	-	1	-	20	0.44
10. Ghana	5	5	0	1	-	1	-	20	0.44
11.Hong Kong	10	0	5	1	-	1	-	10	0.44
12. India	105	80	30	9	6	3	-	8.57	3.93
13. Indonesia	5	5	5	7	2	5	-	100	3.06
14. Iraq	185	50	140	13	11	2	-	7.02	5.68
15. Jordan	15	5	5	2	2	-	-	13.33	0.87
16. Kazakhstan	10	5	5	3	1	2	-	30	1.31
17. Kuwait	5	5	0	1	1	-	-	20	0.44
18. Libya	25	10	10	2	1	1	-	8	0.87
19. Malaysia	15	5	15	3	1	2	-	20	1.31
20. Mexico	5	0	5	4	2	2	-	80	1.75
21.Nepal	0	0	0	1	-	1	-	*	0.44
22. Nigeria	70	45	25	15	12	3	-	21.42	6.55
23. Norway	0	0	0	1	1	-	-	*	0.44
24. Oman	20	5	10	1	-	1	-	5	0.44
25. Pakistan	30	20	10	3	1	2	-	10	1.31
26. Russia	5	5	0	1	-	1	-	20	0.44
27. Saudi Arabia	100	40	55	8	2	6	-	8	3.49
28. Singapore	5	0	0	1	1	-	-	20	0.44
29. South Africa	0	0	0	1	1	-	-	*	0.44
30. Switzerland	0	0	0	1	1	-	-	*	0.44
31. Taiwan	60	15	50	9	2	7	-	15	3.93
32. Thailand	35	10	30	11	3	8	-	31.42	4.8
33. Trin. & Tob.	0	0	0	1	-	1	-	*	0.44
34. Turkey	55	35	25	1	1	-	-	1.81	0.44
35. USA	45	10	30	13	2	10	1	28.88	5.68
36. Vietnam	30	10	15	5	3	2	-	16.66	2.18
37. Zambia	0	0	0	2	2	-	-	100	0.87
Total (no.)	1995	710	1320	229	78	151	1	229	229
% of Total Pop	100	35.59	66.17	11.48	34.06	65.94	0.44	100	100

Source: This research. * UoL employs enforced rounding for I.S. numbers. Numbers below 3 are rounded to zero, anything else is rounded to the nearest 5. UoL data discrepancies exist due to: differing intake times, out of date data, inconsistent coding practice. I.S. have different understandings of national origin. UoL codes I.S. by national domicile which determines fees.

3.3.3 Focus Group Sampling Procedures

This section describes the focus group (FG) sampling procedures for six focus groups conducted between February 2014 and July 2014. Focus groups investigated I.S. ISM experiences, emotions and digital practices (see 3.4.2). Focus groups were guided by BOS which generated extensive data, together with 26 potential focus group recruits, where drop-out had been anticipated, 22 BOS respondents finally participated in focus groups. Two I.S. (from Nigeria and Ghana) were also recruited. The UoL International Office also provided a contact to one Iraqi-Kurdish I.S., who helped recruit three co-nationals (Table 3.8). Only one recruit failed to attend (FG6). Overall, 27 I.S. contributed across 11 nationalities which involved 19 women (14 Masters; four Ph.D) and eight men (2 Masters; seven Ph.D) from 10 UoL study bases; a 70/30 gender split which reflected UoL I.S. population. The final response pattern determined that six focus groups of four to six participants should be employed as detailed below.

Table 3.8 Focus Group Particulars

Focus Group	Date	Duration (mins)	No. I.S.	Domicile	UoL School	Degree	Gender	Age
FG1	19.02.14	80	6	Trin & Tob	Forens Psych	M.Sc	F	28
				PRC	Med & Comm	M.Sc	F	23
				PRC	Med & Comm	M.Sc	F	24
				Colombia	Int Rels & Pols	M.Sc	F	26
				Iraq-Kurd	Education	M.Sc	M	36
				Mexico	Education	Ph.D	F	29
FG2	26.02.14	72	4	PRC	Management	M.Sc	F	24
				PRC	Med & Comm	M.Sc	F	24
				India	Comp Studies	M.Sc	M	27
				USA	Hist Art & Film	M.A	F	57
FG3	12.03.14	83	4	Iraqi-Kurd	Biology	Ph.D	M	33
				Iraqi-Kurd	Biology	Ph.D	M	30
				Iraqi-Kurd	Biology	Ph.D	M	31
				Iraqi-Kurd	Biology	Ph.D	M	32
FG4	20.03.14	96	4	Colombia	Mod Lang	M.Sc	F	45
				Ecuador	Phys Geogr	Ph.D	M	42
				Mexico	Phys Geogr	Ph.D	F	29
				Mexico	Education	Ph.D	F	30
FG5	02.04.14	91	6	PRC	Med & Comm	M.Sc	F	23
				PRC	Med & Comm	M.Sc	F	27
				PRC	Med & Comm	M.Sc	F	24
				PRC	Med & Comm	M.Sc	F	23
				PRC	Management	MBA	F	24
				PRC	Med & Comm	M.Sc	F	24
FG6	02.07.14	104	3	Ghana	Education	Ph.D	M	44
				Rwanda	Education	Ph.D	M	37
				Nigeria	Phys Geogr	Ph.D	F	36

FG1 and FG2 employed a fully random (purposive) sample; however, subsequent groups were more systematic involving sub-groups (McLafferty, 2016:137). The multi-cultural mixed nationalities of FG1 and FG2 presented the case that sub-groupings existed at UoL, where proximal relationships such as nationality, culture, religion and degree programme influenced sub-groupings. MMR permitted a reflexive approach to investigate I.S. sub-groupings. Thus, while the remaining focus groups involved random recruits, purposeful selections stratified the residual 12 BOS respondents to explore sub-units and sub-domains as embedded units (Swanborne, 2010:101). This aided operations as the remaining pool of recruits was six Chinese, four Central and South American and four West and Central Africa I.S.. FG3 formed on Iraqi-Kurds; FG4 on Central and South America I.S.; FG5 on six Chinese I.S. (fitting as Chinese I.S. are the largest international group at UoL). Finally, FG6 involved West and Central African I.S.. FG1-FG5 ran according to plan, however FG6 was cancelled and re-scheduled three times over seven weeks because of I.S. study commitments. FG6 went ahead with three participants on the fourth attempt and was very worth pursuing.

3.3.4 Interview Sampling Procedures

MMR involved 18 in-depth semi-structured interviews (see 3.4.3). I.S. interviewees comprised ten current and five recent alumni, undertaken September-October 2014 (Tables 3.9 and 3.10) across ten nationalities. Three UoL administrators were interviewed during July-September 2015 (Table 3.11). The sample was indicative and illustrative so involved a range of nationalities, study levels, genders and administrators. Five current I.S. were selected from focus groups; a further five resulted from the BOS call for interview participants. Five recent alumni were recruited through the UoL International Office. I.S. interviews centred on I.S. from the global South. The three UoL administrators represented three different UoL administrative divisions (and remain anonymised).

Table 3.9 I.S. Interviews: Current UoL Students

Interview Number	Date	Duration (mins)	Domicile	UoL School	Degree	Gender	Age
I.S. 1	17.09.14	68	PRC	Phys Geog	Ph.D	F	27
I.S. 2	17.09.14	99	Iraqi-Kurd	Biology	Ph.D	M	33
I.S. 3	17.09.14	60	PRC	Med & Comm	M.Sc	F	24
I.S. 4	17.09.14	75	Rwanda	Education	Ph.D	M	37
I.S. 5	22.09.14	60	Nigeria	Phys Geog	Ph.D	M	30
I.S. 6	22.09.14	68	Iraq-Kurd	Medicine	Ph.D	F	34
I.S. 7	22.09.14	49	Colombia	Mod. Lang	M.Sc	F	46
I.S. 8	26.09.14	57	Mexico	Education	Ph.D	F	30
I.S. 9	29.09.14	76	Colombia	Education	M.Sc	M	29
I.S. 10	02.10.14	73	Mexico	Phys Geog	Ph.D	F	29

Table 3.10 I.S. Interviews: Recent UoL Alumni

Interview Number	Date	Duration (mins)	Domicile	Ex-UoL School	Grad Year	Study Level	Gender	Age
A1	26.09.14	56	Mexico	Education	2014	Ph.D	F	30
A2	02.10.14	70	Colombia	Education	2012	M.Sc	F	27
A3	22.10.14	70	Taiwan	Criminology	2013	M.Sc	M	29
A4	08.10.14	59	Taiwan	Med & Comm	2014	M.Sc	F	28
A5	14.10.14	46	Japan	Mod Lang	2014	M.Sc	F	33

Table 3.11 UoL Administrator Interviews

Interview Number	Date	Duration (mins)	UoL Administrative Office	Gender
UoL 1	28.07.15	90	Withheld	Withheld
UoL 2	13.08.15	64	Withheld	Withheld
UoL 3	15.09.15	51	Withheld	Withheld

Current, alumni and administrator interviews required the development of separate interview questions; each UoL administrator required a separate question set. I.S. interview questions used BOS data while exploring focus group themes, where the face-to-face format allowed incisive exploration of themes framed through individual experience (see Appendix 5 and 6 for question schedule examples). The three primary methods of data collection are considered in greater detail below.

3.4 Methods of Data Collection

3.4.1 Online Questionnaire Survey

Phase 1 data collection used BOS. I had to gauge I.S. population-wide characteristics and digital practices before, during and on exit of UK international study. A well-designed and operated online survey gives insight into typical, normal or average behaviour (Bradshaw and Stratford, 2010). BOS was ideal to gain this data (see Madge

and O'Connor, ESRC, Paper 9). Online questionnaire surveys enable fast, cheap and an efficient use of research time and can yield rich data about daily activities (Madge, 2010; Kozinets, 2010). BOS data also informed focus group and interview protocols.

The 'before, during and exit' contexts required an extensive, in-depth survey package. Adequate time was needed to produce, pilot and refine BOS, this included pursuing non-respondents. I assessed free online surveys, but these lacked user interface flexibility, notably for question design. Thus, I used BOS, a well-regarded research tool, used by +300 organisations including 130 UKHEIs (BOS, 2014), as an accepted tool for complex HE enquiries.[12] BOS enabled flexible data collection by allowing diverse question types, together with qualitative text output boxes. I also have experience in designing, piloting, refining, launching and analysing BOS (Booth, 2012). After enquiries I was granted access to BOS via the UoL Academic Practice Unit.

As cited by Sue and Ritter (2012), BOS enabled some key advantages desirable in an online survey. BOS also provided high level encryption for respondent anonymity, a necessity under the Data Protection Act (1998) and UoL privacy protocols.[13] BOS enabled a user-friendly interface, permitted different question formats, was easy to access via an online user account, enabled in-package analysis, and data export to Microsoft Excel (or SPSS) for analysis and presentation. BOS performance data could also be reviewed (e.g. survey fatigue); useful for future survey designs. While using BOS, an awareness of the challenges presented by online surveys was needed.

Sue and Ritter (2012), Tri-Orm (2013) and Toepoel (2016) consider various challenges while using an online survey, notably in targeting the sample population, technological proficiency and in gaining a balanced response. My approach negated some of these challenges, as BOS was emailed directly to technologically adept I.S.. I also had to be aware of sample bias, survey overload and fatigue (Lefever et al. 2007; Toepoel, 2016:9). A carefully designed BOS was a critical research feature. UoL I.S. data (2008-13) was reviewed to aid BOS design. BOS took eight weeks to design, pilot and refine.

BOS questions were guided by my research questions and designed to achieve a wide and in-depth view of I.S. population demographics, attitudes and digital practices

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[12] BOS is used by: Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS); Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) run by the HEA; Athena Survey of Science Engineering and Technology (ASSET)
[13] Webropol was assessed, but did not offer sufficient encryption.

during the different stages of UK international study. I.S. diversity necessitated a user-friendly online interface to aid response rate. BOS used basic everyday language; some questions were explained using examples. Question wording was clear and concise, with awareness that question design effects the answers obtained (Madge, 2010; McLafferty, 2010). Fixed and open-ended questions were used. Fixed questions guided responses to simplify analysis; open-ended questions used text boxes. Ranking and rating questions, multiple-select and ordinal scale (Likert) were also used. BOS used 28 questions over five labelled sections (Appendix 2) with a 20 minute completion time.

BOS used a carefully worded covering email and explanation cover-page, detailing my study, anonymity, contact, informed consent, rights of withdrawal and the Data Protection Act (1988). BOS section one established profile data through nine demographic questions using variables of nationality, age, gender, ethnicity, disability, UoL School, type of degree programme, length and year of study. BOS sections two, three and four examined attitudes, behaviours and digital practices by stage of academic career: prior to UoL (seven questions); during study (seven questions) and exit (four questions). Question 28 was a 'sweeping-up' question requesting any further details from I.S.. Section five thanked respondents, called for focus group/interview participants, offered feedback options, entrance to a small prize draw, gave ethics and data protection statements. Piloting and refinement were carried out before launch.

BOS was tested via my supervisors and 10 Ph.D students, six were I.S.. Piloting resulted in refinements; some questions were made clearer, other issues involved response button spacing, stage-of-completion taskbar and colour formats. Where possible, refinements were actioned and re-piloting proved successful. BOS was first emailed to +2100 I.S. at UoL in late November 2013, with a follow-up email in January 2014. A second launch (aiming to capture later starters) occurred in November 2014. BOS was closed in January 2015 and yielded an 11% response across 37 nationalities and 38 UoL Schools. A reflexive approach to fieldwork was needed: gatekeeper dealings involved many different UoL senior administrators (Figure 3.4). Protocols were undertaken twice, once for each launch. BOS data were analysed and used through Chapters 4, 5 and 6. Focus groups were then used as a second key data collection strategy, to further develop and understand key themes emerging from BOS.

Figure 3.4 Reflexive Fieldwork: Critical Gatekeeper and Communication Strategies
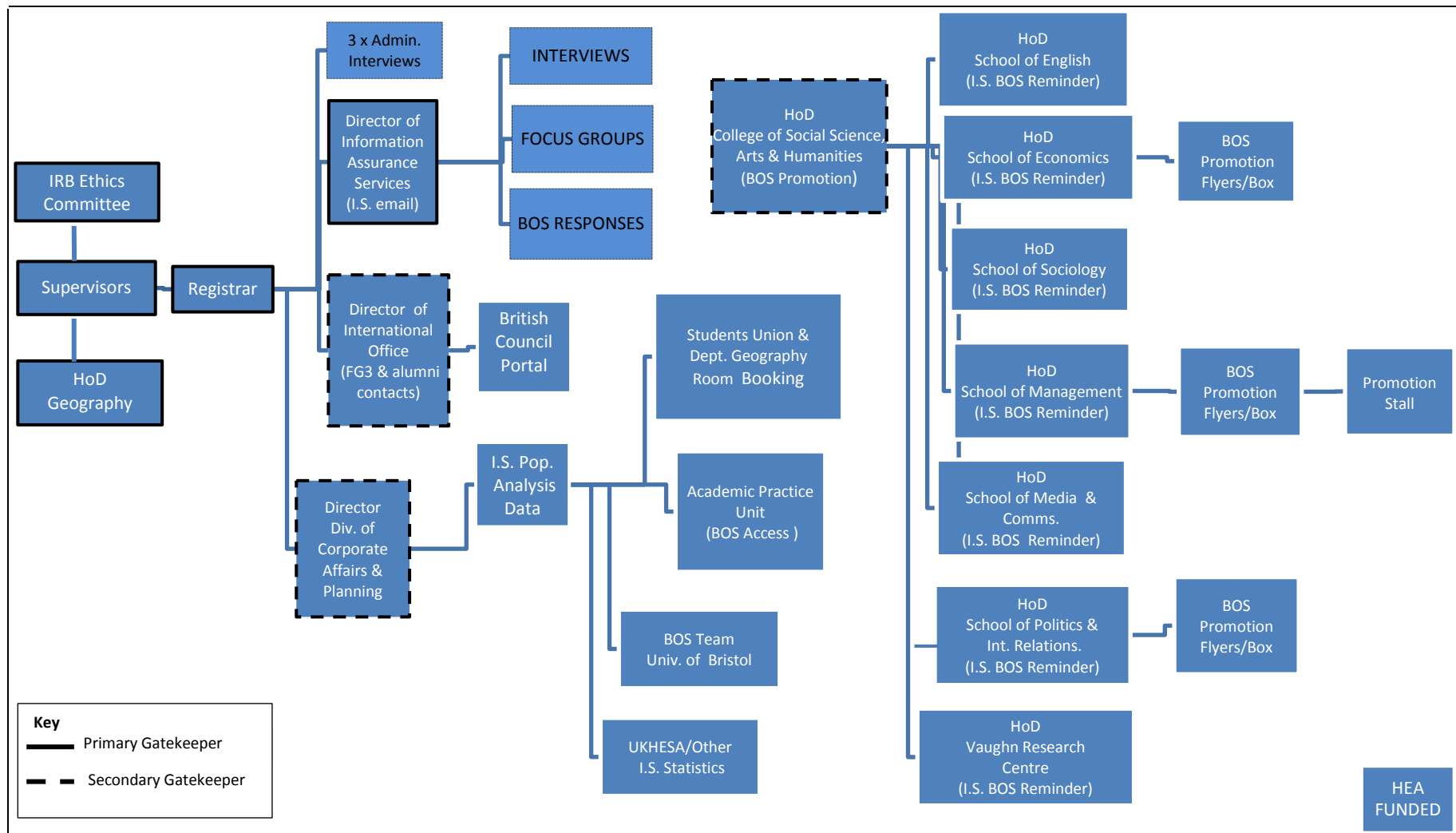
Source: author.

3.4.2 Focus Groups

Focus groups comprised Phase 2 of data collection, being crucial for the thesis, focus groups especially touched upon I.S. emotions. I sought 'factual, descriptive, thoughtful, emotional or affectual' data (Longhurst, 2016b:147) involving I.S. experiences, perceptions, beliefs and behaviours (Teye, 2012). Hopkins (2007a:528) submits focus groups aid access to 'tacit, uncodified and experiential knowledge'. I acted as the moderator, exploring in-depth nuances, minutiae and sensibilities allied with cohort-wide consensus and diversity of experiences (Bosco and Herman, 2010). Intensive focus groups aimed to include four to six I.S., being centred on a question schedule Phase 1 (BOS) data guided the focus group question schedule (Appendix 5). Focus groups also tested ideas exposed by BOS. The schedule followed a similar structure to the BOS questionnaire. I sometimes left the question schedule order, where 'critical and creative thinking' (Hopkins, 2007a) meant I opportunistically followed the students (Holton and Riley, 2013). Newly emergent themes were noted and integrated into future focus group schedules. I now consider protocols and running procedures.

Participants were emailed consent forms and participant information sheets in advance (Appendix 4) and on the eve of focus groups. I had to think ahead: rooms were important. I pre-inspected five rooms for focus groups which varied by availability in the Student Union Building and Department of Geography. Rooms needed to convivial: light, modern, warm and neutral, easy to find (signage was used), with a suitable table, comfortable seats, quiet outside, sized not too big, nor too small. I used a conference kit to digitally voice record, capturing eight hours and 46 minutes of data. Stand-alone recording meant I was very much engaged with I.S.. Field notes logged observations next to schedule questions during and directly after sessions (Watson and Till, 2010). To develop sufficient exploration, but not lose I.S. interest, focus groups ran to a guide of 45-90 minutes (Bosco and Herman, 2010).

Longhurst (2016b:147) discusses 'warming-up' participants. To welcome and relax I.S., non-alcoholic drinks and food was available before and during focus groups. Sessions began with an explanation of my research and participant withdrawal rights. Consent forms were signed. I then used two 'ice-breaking' activities. Firstly, I.S. were invited to bring an object, or sentiment, involving their I.S. identity (Plate 3.2). Sessions began

with and discussion of objects/sentiments. One I.S. brought a key ring, a present from a parent, who she greatly missed (it had held nine room keys at five different IHEIs).

Plate 3.2 Focus Group 'Ice-Breakers'

Source: author.

Other I.S. brought culturally identifiable objects such as: home-town macramé (China); Che Guevara mug (Ecuador); Colombian coffee (Bogota); chilli flakes (and a bright t-

shirt) signified 'cultural spiciness' in Mexico. Secondly, I.S. were invited to identify previously attended HEIs on a large world map (Plate 3.2). This activity revealed that some I.S. had attended many globally sited HEIs prior to UoL. The 'icebreakers' were successful, whilst also initiating interesting discussions between I.S.. Focus groups then proceeded. Moderating was a fulfilling and at times intense experience. I interactively directed and encouraged discussions, pursuing experiences, behaviours, perspectives, issues, problems, and attitudes (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis, 2011); this involved a different skill-set to individual interview skills, involving an intersubjective relationship with participants. Shaw (2015:1-3) suggests focus groups support contributors 'co-constructing their understandings of their situation'; within this situation I had to exercise constant positionality awareness, sensitivity to emotional topics and neutrality. Debates frequently triggered a synergistic chain response (Cameron, 2005) from focus group members in a way not possible during individual interviews; this data crucially informed the analysis chapters. Verbatim extracts and case studies attempted to capture the sometimes intense and passionate atmospheres of 'textured talk' (Wilkinson, 1998a). Focus groups accessed experiences and emotions over the running time. Some I.S. expressed they now understood they were not alone in their own experiences and emotions; many exchanged contact details. Five participants volunteered for further detailed interviews, as considered below.

3.4.3 Semi-Structured Interviews

One-to-one, in-depth, qualitative semi-structured interviews comprised Phase 3 of data collection, being also crucial for the thesis. Interview responses are a direct access to experience (Gubrium and Holstein, 2009). I explored 15 I.S. and three UoL administrator views, deemed sufficient given the robustness created by BOS and focus groups. The one-to-one approach, in a quiet, less vibrant atmosphere than focus groups, yielded richly detailed data which further enlivened the research. Interviewees were recruited via BOS, focus groups and emails to UoL managers. I used up-to-date interview methods, investigating participants' everyday experiences (de Vet, 2013; Hitchings, 2012; Dunn, 2010; Longhurst, 2016c), emotions, subjectivities and identities.

Current I.S. offered energizing, emotional voices of UK international study experience. I explored pre-UoL/entrance, attendance and preparatory UoL exit experiences and emotions. Alumni, who remain under-researched (Geddie, 2013), offered retrospective/longitudinal data; their voices added strength to the analysis. UoL administrators gave institutional views about internationalisation and I.S.. I wanted to compare I.S. and institutional voices. Joint views provided balance given my findings will inform policy. Awareness of interview (dis)advantages informed my approach.

Semi-structured interviews require advanced interview skills, employing balanced views (notably to sensitive issues). Operated correctly, interviews can yield richer data than closed question methods. My listening, hearing and empathetic stance created an intersubjective experience, being different for each interview (Bondi, 2003,2005; Longhurst et al. 2008). This enabled fitting interactive rejoinders with interviewees. Being present meant I could explain questions, while pursuing experiences, attitudes, opinions and behaviours as data emerged. Awareness of positionality and interview bias was needed. MMR enabled multi-point data collection, analysis and interpretation, and a closer understanding than if interviews had formed a single approach. Finally, interviews consume time: recruitment, administration, question preparation, transcription and data analysis must be factored into this technique.

Interview structures relied on question schedules. Questions funnelled from general to specific detail (Crang and Cook, 2007). Current, recent alumni I.S. and UoL administrators needed unique interview schedules; each UoL administrator required a different interview schedule (Appendix 5). Question development was guided by Cloke et al. (2004), defining 'big and mini topics', constantly cross-referenced with the research questions and drawing upon BOS and focus group data. Question-sets were piloted and refined via my supervisors. In the field, interview questions were reflexively adjusted during a sequential approach. Question-sets acted as the interview guide, using open-ended views, which could lead to unscheduled, evaluative, circular and comparative secondary questions (Dunne, 2010; Savin-Baden and Major, 2013) to reach a saturation point (Crang and Cook, 2007:14-15). Prompting questions were also used; keeping interviews on track was important during slower, generalised or disjointed conversation (de Vet, 2013). For I.S., initial questions involved backgrounds,

before exploring experience, emotions and digital practices. I was able to draw out specific instances of experiences (McDowell, 2010). UoL administrator questions involved internationalisation and I.S. welfare. Interview data were transcribed, analysed and used throughout the analysis chapters and policy prescriptions.

Regarding the running details, interviewees were emailed participant information sheets and consent forms prior to interview. Reminder emails were issued one week before, and on the eve of interview. I.S. Interviews were held in the Department of Geography; administrator interviews in UoL offices. I reflected upon the interview locations (Riley, 2010) taking care not to 'drift away from person-to-person encounter to being *in* and *of* the place itself' (Holton and Riley, 2014:61). All interviews were digitally voice recorded alongside written field notes. I sought to establish a rapport with I.S. and UoL administrators, listening 'and' hearing voices. I aimed to motivate interviewees to feel involved, and to give an honest reflection of their experiences.

During interviews, three current I.S. volunteered to complete social media logs of daily digital practices over seven days. The logs were highly prescriptive by design, being clearly instructed and easy to record details, the logs left little scope for I.S. interpretive errors (Schwanen et al. 2008). Another I.S. interviewee voluntarily supplied a Facebook access log (over 76 days). This helped me to picture UoL digital saturation. The logs were an opportunistic data source, capturing micro, quantifiable, daily, hourly, by minute digital practices, and emotions, as illustrative vignettes (Barter and Renold, 2000). Logs illustrated mundane data which might have been forgotten by focus group and interview informants (Hitchings, 2011; de Vet, 2012) and acted as a different way of seeing what might be lost through orthodox approaches. Logs were employed as illustrative examples only in my study, but do provide great interest for future research directions. This leads to considering data analysis and results below.

3.5 Data Analysis and Results

3.5.1 Bristol Online Survey Analysis

BOS quantitative data are presented throughout my three analysis chapters, informing descriptive statistics in text and tables, whilst histograms plot variables. A key data presentation tenet involved reader-friendly tables and histograms. I used a

classification process to interpret meanings/explain/understand BOS data. This system generated four data categories including demographic and behaviours/attitudes, before, during and for exiting UKHE. I discuss BOS data handling and analysis next.

I exported raw data to Microsoft Excel, where each answer category was transposed into 161 Excel worksheets (dataframes) for unit sampling. Data were triplicated and stored separately before processing; exploratory data analysis included data cleaning which was only performed where errors (centred on spellings) appeared certain. Basic to more complex cross-tabulation was undertaken. Basic analysis involved descriptive statistics built on percentages, means and single pivot tables; more complex analysis concerned intricate pivot table building (taking many hours of manual data entry). The resulting frequency distributions were analysed using histograms (which communicated information frequency of the occurrence of values within a data set grouped into equal sized classes). Many of the histograms involved transposing data into data tables to make data suitable for analysis. Excel was a powerful tool for displaying results, creating instant impression in the analysis chapters (Field, 2010). Key BOS themes informed the qualitative analysis approaches.

3.5.2 Focus Group and Interview Analysis

Regarding qualitative data, Silverman (2013:52) argues 'everything depends upon how you analyse your data'. Here, I seek to make clear the sometimes 'mysterious process of generating research' (Schiellerup, 2008:163). My study used constant comparison to develop themes. Focus groups involved finding similar and different themes; interviews concerned the individual exploration of these themes, although the process of analysis and interpretation was the same. Analysis used Dey (2003) and Cope's (2010) methods of description, classification and interconnecting of themes. I also applied a technique of brain-storming to produce mind-maps on paper to dissemble intricate data into constituent parts and further stimulate analysis (de Busser, 2014; Boschmann and Cubbon, 2014). This involved intensively and rigorously categorising data by sifting, sorting, linking, splitting and splicing (Kitchen and Tate, 2000; Cloke et al. 2004). Mind maps, acting as additional points of analysis, also aided my picturing of corroborative evidence that fitted an appropriate interpretation of research results.

Qualitative data were described/characterised via (variably) verbatim transcription. Variable I.S. language proficiency (and multiple accents) made transcription challenging. This had methodological implications (Krzywoszynska, 2015); great care and listening skills were needed. My transcription involved a balance of usability and accuracy (Bailey, 2008), producing about 98,000 words during 13 weeks of transcription, where I became immersed in the data (Appendix 6). Transcription variably involved 10-13 hours of listening, annotation and materialisation of data per hour of recorded data; a pc-linked foot pedal to stop, replay, and 're-replay' voice recordings was vital. The building and refining of coding structures then proceeded according to 'how, what, who, where, when and why' digital media are used relative to personal, societal, academic and professional perspectives (Figure 3.5).

Figure 3.5 Questions Used During Coding Development.

- What? What is this about? Which phenomenon is mentioned?
- Who? Who appears in the text? What actors are involved? What roles do they play?
- What are they doing?
- How? Which aspects of the phenomenon are mentioned, or not mentioned?
- When? What situation is described? Where did it happen? How long did it go on for?
- How much? How strong? Aspects of intensity.
- Why? What reasons are given?
- What for? What intensions/purposes are described here?
- By which? How were actions achieved? What strategies were used to achieve the goal?

Transcripts were initially annotated systematically applying 'open-coding' (Crang and Cook, 2007); immediate first-level coding completed as transcription progressed. Ideas and emergent points of interest were identified on screen (during typing) which involved colour coded annotation of text (Plate 3.3).

Plate 3.3 Colour Coding

Source: author.

Coding was also flexible; following transcription, manuscripts were printed, multiply re-read and 'thought about', allowing the data to 'speak' (Cope, 2010). Second and third level colour coding were applied using numerous coloured pens to corral particular ideas, themes or concepts (empirically grounded by the research questions) This process was not sequential but highly reiterative, many copies of transcripts were physically cut into pieces, all transcripts were accessed simultaneously to find patterns and categories (Cope, 2010:440), over six weeks of analysis involving constant comparison. 'Brain-storming' then developed ideas found during the analysis, this involved intimate data knowledge 'mind mapped' onto five large paper sheets (750mm x 590mm) to explore, examine, delete and link complex data paths (Plate 3.4).

Plate 3.4 Messy, Entangled Analysis: Brain-Storming and Multiple Mind Maps

Source: author.

Mind maps helped connect data to conceptual frameworks and scholarly work, cementing ideas around themes employed during the analysis chapters. These themes (Figure 3.6) remained flexible, subject to on-going analysis, exploration and change as the research progressed. I next consider ethics below.

Figure 3.6 Key Themes from BOS, Focus Groups and Interviews

Digital Legacies
- Uneven prior place: material /cultural topographies
- Political limitations
- Uneven education relationships
- Social and cultural limits
- Violent conflict
- Multiple motivations for ISM, often directed by digital WUR
- Informal I.S. digital networks (posing I.S. circumscribed agency)
- Formal digital networks (official channels/entrance barriers)
- Multiple channels and platforms (culturally dispersed media centres)
- Non-users question the role of digital media
- Digital inadequacy during international study processes
- Wariness of using digital media
- Complex spatialities through digital practices
- Prior place is a building block for UoL digital practices

The Digital Campus
- The digital campus 'levels' uneven prior place digital relationships
- In-depth empirical data charting digital practices between home and UoL
- Evidence of new digital practices , through international study, at UoL
- Concurrent 'home' and elsewhere digital practices (complex spatialities)
- The role of 'digital home' for emotional support, coping and security
- Multiple digital media are employed academically and socially
- How face-to-face contact relates to digital practices
- Differentiated digital practices (nationalities, gender, study level)
- Seeing when digital media are used (daily individual practices 'footprints')
- Dynamic and contingent digital practices (e.g. onward mobility)
- Prior place is 'contagious' (to current and future place)

Digitally-Mediated International Student Experience
- International study is emotionally/digital ly saturated
- UoL reiteratively shapes experience, emotions and digital practices
- Constant digital connection affects sense of place (and sensibilities)
- Translocalism through the social/digital nexus: (de)centred emotions
- Negating 'feeling different' and digital belonging (Facebook practices)
- Altered worldly/digital perspectives (social, national, intercultural and cosmopolitan identities)
- Variegated digital communities
- Digital intellectual subjectivities (across physical borders)
- Dysfunctional digital practices 'through' international study
- Onward mobility and digital networks: holistic understandings

Source: author.

3.6 Ethical Issues, Critical Reflexivity and Positionality

This section concerns ethics, including informed consent (3.6.1), critical reflexivity and potential I.S. vulnerability, confidentiality practices (3.6.2) and positionality (3.6.3). Ateljevic et al. (2005:9) note 'entanglements' influence and constrain research choices, textual strategies and the pursuit of reflexive knowledge where 'ideologies and legitimacies', 'research accountability', 'positionality' and 'intersectionality with the researched' matter. Ethics are shaped from biomedical research. Social researchers are viewed by Institutional Review Boards (IRB) as 'powerful, knowing agent[s] who assemble a scientific methodology that is always of potential harm to the researched' (Martin and Inwood, 2012:7). Ethics are contentious in contemporary social scientific research (Crow, 2013) as top-down ethical dictates can conflict with researcher moral perspectives. Indeed, 'cultural values implicit in current UK educational research ethical procedures have been shown to conflict with values in the local context' (Robinson-Pant and Singal, 2013:443). I view that ethics should be viewed as 'context specific assumptions that do not hold across all places and circumstances' (Ritterbusch, 2012:16). My research sought 'rigor as an ethical practice' (Onwuegbuzie and Corrigan, 2014:273). Ethics involved protecting study participants and protecting rights (Dowling, 2016), while permitting a 'favoured environment for continued conduct of scientific enquiry' (Hay, 2016:31). In my research the multi-cultural participants posed key ethical concerns, demanding critical reflexivity and appreciation of positionality.

3.6.1 Ethics

My research passed the UoL IRB for ethical research regulations. My morals also guided my research. Hay (2016:30) notes 'ethical research is carried out by thoughtful, informed and reflexive geographers who act honourably because it is the 'right' thing to do, not just because someone is making them do it.' Data collection involves a 'web of ethical issues and power relations' (Longhurst, 2016b:153). I had to reflect and be reflexive to power relationships which can affect individual and community rights and research outputs (Corbridge, 2009). I endeavoured continually to protect participants from harm employing a daily ethical reflection process; ethics were not a single IRB event, and ethics reflected social responsibility and research practices (Figure 3.7).

Figure 3.7 My Daily Ethical Reflections   (After Savin-Baden and Major, 2013:332)
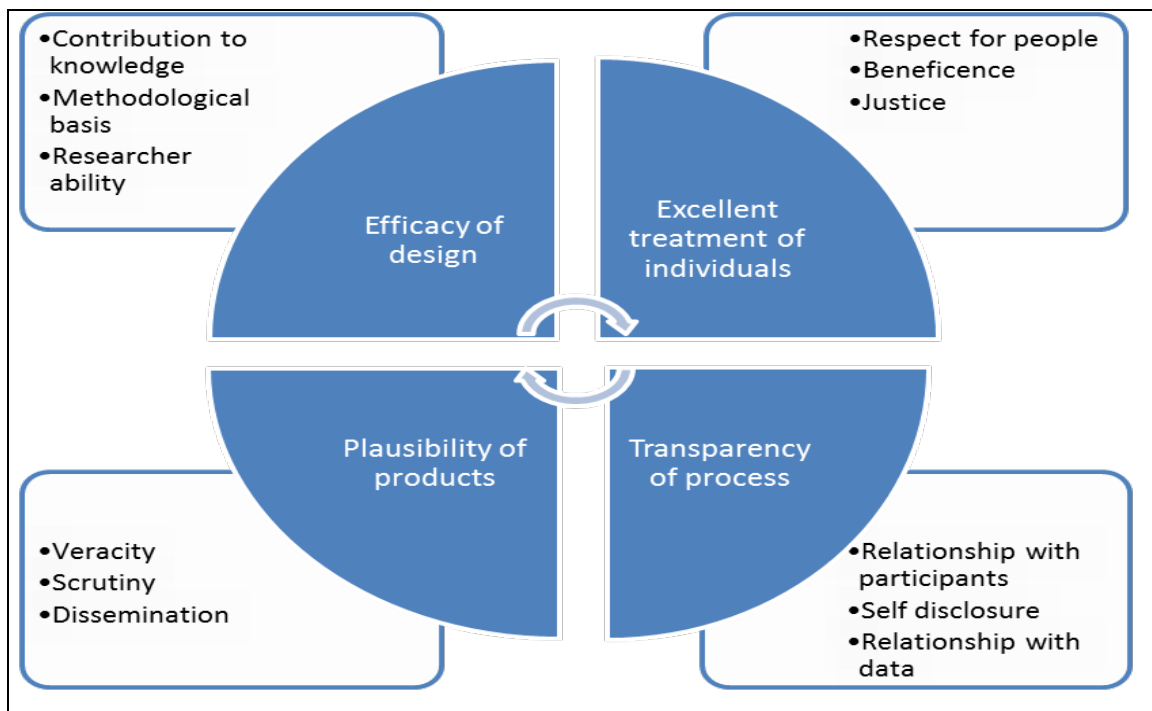
Source: Savin-Baden and Major (2013).

The ethical issues of gaining informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity were examined in detail from study outset (Miller and Bell, 2012) via IRB and supervisors. My research was framed by IRB policies. While I could not self-regulate overall ethical approach, I was fully responsible in the field; this involved some ethical dilemmas and negotiations (Cahill et al. 2007:307). IRB ethics sometimes conflicted with participant's wishes and my own appreciation of care and responsibility (Raghuram et al. 2009; Ellis, 2007; Lawson, 2007) (see below). Informed consent practices are considered next.

Potential participants were fully informed about my study. The three data collection methods each used participant information sheets and informed consent documentation (Appendix 4), stating research purpose, participants' rights, my responsibilities, contact details (myself and supervisor) and department details. BOS consent was completed online, while focus group and interview participants were emailed documents twice. Documents were discussed 'with care' (ensuring I.S. understood meanings) immediately prior to data collection. Participants were emailed three weeks in advance of transcription and analysis, reminding contributors about withdrawal rights: none withdrew. A duty of care and responsibility was assumed, which entailed full responsibility for my own actions. Potential I.S. vulnerability was also a major concern, as detailed below.

3.6.2 Critical Reflexivity and Potential Vulnerability

Hopkins (2007b) and Cahill et al. (2007) discuss the many dilemmas researchers face. My study presented a complex negotiation with potentially vulnerable participants (Sherry et al. 2010). Most I.S. were thousands of miles from home, of minority status, English was often not their primary language, and evidenced highly dissimilar lives. Diverse social dynamics existed (age, gender, nationality, ethnicity, religion) as did cultural, social, political, economic and academic contexts, emanating from disparate physical geographic backgrounds (urban/rural, landlocked nations and small islands). For most I.S., UoL was their first UK experience.[14] I.S. were subject to immigration/securitisation measures. 'Basic' matters, such as banking, accommodation, roads/distances (imperial systems) and cuisine could present different stress structures for I.S. compared to UK/EU students. Ethically reflective practice also involved negotiating with different ethical expectations of different I.S. groups (Howitt and Stevens, 2016; Johnson and Madge, 2016). I.S. ideas about ethics might vary greatly to my ideas. Academic contexts may also vary. For instance, previously attended IHEIs could have influenced divergent opinions about ethics.

It was clear that many I.S. who contributed qualitative data were independent-minded with strong work ethics. Many expressed a sense of duty to family, as either children, who recognised the financial undertakings of parent/s, or were a parent, studying to help family progression. International study was clearly a deeply personal matter and emotionally extended process which involved others.[15] I.S. were keen to articulate their feelings through focus groups and interviews:

> 'Your research is very important, touching on core issues, very important to international students. It was good to bring out some of my situations. There is no one to bring these concerns out to for us international students. There are many students I know, they say they are not coming back to Leicester to study; many many say that. Hopefully, something will come up from your research.'   [Ph.D;Nigeria:I][16].

While some I.S. appeared happily engaged in international study, others presented a palpable sense of frustration. One concern involved a perceived lack interest in them beyond monetary/asset value: I.S. felt powerless in presenting grievances. My research

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[14] One Ph.D student had previously attended UoL.
[15] Some non-studying spouses/partners and children also travelled to Leicester.
[16] See quotation annotation system (p.xx).

places I.S. centre stage, and I listened, empathised and discussed I.S. experiences. Several I.S. went beyond experiences to reveal vulnerabilities, 'opening-up' about anxiety, sadness, loneliness and depression.[17] Some of these male and female contributors gave deeply emotive accounts. While I.S. provided very rich data, I.S. vulnerability surfaced; loneliness was a key problem for some I.S.. This was a delicate research situation where IRB ethics conflicted with my own morals of care and responsibility. On one occasion, a neutrality dilemma materialised where recommending an interviewee seek pastoral help, as anxiety emotions appeared, would have compromised IRB ethics. This micro-community interaction revealed how 'participatory ethics' should also permit responsible caring researchers to address the 'emergent process of negotiating research ethics with participants based on their concerns' (Cahill et al. 2007:307). This leads to a consideration of the care exercised during I.S. willingness to discuss international study.

I.S. appeared highly motivated to discuss experiences. I applied the principles of confidentiality and anonymity throughout interactions. This was necessary for two key reasons. Firstly, I.S. reflected upon intimate concurrent international study experience involving departments, administrators, academics, sponsors 'and' others elsewhere. This last point provided the second mandate. I assumed an essential responsibility of care over distance and time, relative to risk/harm to I.S. and others elsewhere.

Some I.S. hailed from nations subject to what might be considered oppressive governments (a concern given that my research is subject to open access). Here, critical ethical reflexivity involved thinking outside of direct I.S./institutional contexts, where scales of anonymity were employed. This matter was emphasised by the following I.S. quote:

> 'Here, internet access and social media allows an overview of what is happening. Through information here you can update, exchange your ideas...vent your anger...compared to there. In [nation:withheld] I can't talk about certain issues. I can't say anything. I have to be careful with the political situation, they can harass you. They come, intervene, arrest you, but on here [sm] I can say what I want. I am far away and nobody can come and arrest me in the UK.'   [Withheld].

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[17] Loneliness at university is seldom explored, much more work is needed.

When asked about threat to family, this I.S. replied 'not many know my family'. Being at UoL opened discussion, and lowered I.S. anxieties and guardedness. My critical ethical reflexivity deemed risks unacceptable and I withheld identity; also the case for other I.S.. Elsewhere, other I.S. were identified only by gender, study level, nationality and data collection method. Such identifiers were key to represent differentiated I.S. voices. Finally, some I.S. asked for their input to be recognised using their names. This posed a dilemma. In this case, following IRB ethics, I.S. wishes were declined. Some I.S. expressed frustration with my decision. I now discuss reflexivity and positionality.

3.6.3 Positionality

The final ethical issue involved different power relationships between me and participants. Tarrant (2014:493) argues 'there is a considerable gap in geographical literatures concerned with encounters in the field' where 'critical reflection on experiences of negotiating multiple positionalities of gender, age, and generation are rarer still'. Such encounters involved my critical reflexivity of positionality to I.S.. Here empathy and identification are important. My research developed my own reflexive, introspective approach to positionality, with an awareness of not over indulging a focus upon myself (which might limit wider research motivations: Koybayashi, 2003; Hopkins, 2007b). An appreciation of one's own subjectivity, attempting to 'see from below' (Harraway, 1988:584), while seeing that I.S. construct situated knowledge, was at times intensive and emotive (Glass, 2014). I felt changed through the research process; separation from research was impossible, although this awareness strengthened the research. This section provides insight to positionality and I.S., where ideas about reflexivity and positionality are first outlined below.

Feminist scholarship (Harraway, 1988, 1991; Butler, 1990), which has strong roots in geography (Nast, 1994; England, 1994, 2006; Katz, 1994; Rose, 1997; Bondi, 2003) has been key in promoting reflexivity. Reflexivity is defined by England (1994:82) as 'self-critical, sympathetic introspection and the self-conscious analytical scrutiny of the self as a researcher'. Positionality involves social, cultural and subjective positions (and other psychological processes, for instance, academic identity; see Hopkins, 2009). Gregory et al. (2009:556) argue positionality can affect question framing, by rapport

with the researched (through data gathering techniques, interpretations of empirical evidence, data access) also by the institution's research dissemination practices and the likelihood that findings will be listened to and heard. BOS design, focus group moderation and interviewer/interviewee relationships were essential to the type of knowledge produced. This is a fundamental geo-epistemology, where people interactions are the primary concern (Correia, 2012). Reflexivity, positionality and power relationships were highly relevant in this research.

I.S. were clearly much more than 'just I.S.', bearing little resemblance to 'stereotypical representations' (Holloway et al. 2010:592): most I.S. frowned upon 'bar-culture'. I.S. often possessed strong academic/family ethics and led multi-layered, plural and digitally networked lives 'hidden' outside of classroom walls. Holton (2015:21) notes 'while anecdotal rhetoric suggests a 'typical student' exists within UK institutions' what resonated in my study was that I.S. were indeed 'inherently heterogenous' (ibid:21). I.S. came from diverse non-European domiciles, evidencing varied sensibilities to their relationships with international study. I needed to be attuned and introspective to power relationships which involved my own position relative to socio-cultural and academic contexts. This involved my continual questioning of my role as the researcher in study participants lives: in advance, during and after contact.

Rose (1997) discusses the difficulty, indeed impossibility, of fully acknowledging positionality in research practices. My own reflection upon my positionality involved appreciation of how my outward demeanour (notably masculinity, age, race and nationality) was perceived by highly differentiated I.S.. This involved my reflection upon issues such as being British, English (Hashim and Zhiliang, 2003), white, male (see Horton, 2001; Faria and Mollett, 2016), age (mid-forties), body (6' 3", well-built), language (well-spoken), dress (smart casual), manner (polite, welcoming, calm), whilst also seeing my institutional, researcher and Ph.D student identities. Another reflection questioned the different levels of English proficiency evidenced between I.S.. My positionality was received in different ways by different I.S.. Body language differences and variably (in)formal verbal interactions occurred over the duration of focus groups and interviews. At least five I.S. perceptions of my position were evident: the 'white western Englishman', the 'institutional figure', the 'academic', the 'unknown' and the

'less unknown' (student identity). These perceptions differed according to individual and group (inter)subjectivities, national, social, cultural and academic parameters, which inter-played with my own positionality relative to these 'insider-outsider' contexts. One I.S. presented an incisive insight to these power relationships:

> 'I decided to come, but most persons say they would be afraid to come. They're quite suspicious. Their voice will not be heard! In your study, perhaps you can represent the international student?'   [F,Ph.D,Iraq,I].

This was a revelationary moment. It appeared that my institutional identity was associated with fear and suspicion by some I.S.. This I.S. discussed attempts by friends to dissuade her from attending interview. I questioned what it really felt like to be passing through government structures and institutional channels. Did this student's friends fear that contact with me, which involved her discussion of some negative experiences, might result in institutional penalty? Other power relationships were also apparent, which were more positive for data collection.

During focus groups and interviews it was noted that some I.S. had a greater rapport with my student identity; some Ph.D students warmed to my researcher identity. Some older I.S. appeared more comfortable with my age (particularly older male interviewees). Other I.S., including younger students, liked my 'Britishness', some commented upon my 'particularly English' accent and 'good manners' (notably Chinese I.S.). This rapport generated rich data (leading to some focus group participants requesting an interview). Clearly, my research represented an opportunity for I.S. to be heard and multiple aspects of rapport eased the sharing of experiences and emotions; I.S. sought an empathetic listener, whilst discussing their experiences. This rapport yielded rich data, while informing my own sense of what international study experience really meant for individuals engaged in the system.

MMR was an 'emotional and embodied set of practices' where my emotions were 'inherent in the politics of research design and practice' (Elmhirst, 2012:274-275) and what 'I saw'. I briefly encountered many differentiated people from different cultures, in one place. I was privileged to witness a rare insight into the extent of emotional investment during international study. I might have become a small part of I.S. experience, and I.S. had certainly shaped my personal experience. I.S. had invested time and effort, some had 'crossed the line', divesting intimate feelings. Many I.S.

expressed the hope that my research might make a difference, not to their own experiences, but to future I.S. 'and' for the benefit of UoL and other students. Some I.S. felt key opportunities involving inter-cultural mixing, were being missed by UK students, where UoL might try harder to capture such opportunities.

3.7 Conclusion

Chapter 3 has described the importance of doing I.S. studies of geography differently. It has outlined the benefits of using MMR to collect data about international study experiences, emotions and digital practices in the UoL case study. Research preparation and acclimatisation in the field (October 2012 to August 2013) lead to choosing, piloting and refining MMR methods. Extensive fieldwork involved BOS data collection between November 2013 and January 2015. Intensive fieldwork involved focus groups (February 2014 to July 2014) and semi-structured interviews (September 2014 to September 2015) where supplementary methods added further layers of detail to enrich research approach and findings.

At times, MMR was challenging, but enjoyable. MMR proved an ideal flexible methodology to address the research questions, providing multi-point analysis, as each data collection technique dialectically supported other methods to produce validity and rigorous research which generated relevant and original data for the thesis. The multi-cultural research setting acted as a lens which filtered ethics, reflexivity, and proved the necessity of awareness of positionality. This shaped research outcomes and also my personal/student and researcher identities. The range of rich data gathered permitted a better understanding of multi-layered I.S. experiences and digital practices at UoL. Time and operational limits were implicit in MMR (also institution practices, funding limits and busy I.S. who have left UoL). For instance, follow-up focus groups were desired but unachievable. Future studies would benefit from an MMR approach which has provided multiple avenues of further research. Having described the methodology, the following first analysis chapter centres on the experience and voices of I.S. in their journey to UoL.

Chapter 4 How the Pre-UoL Student World Shapes Digital Practices

4.1 Introduction

The world is increasingly digitally interconnected. In this research the places that international students were coming from were important for understanding their digital practices at UoL. I term these places prior place. Pre-UoL I.S. lives cannot therefore be viewed in isolation from UoL, making this a matter worthy of further investigation. Indeed, the significance of 'prior place' has been omitted in much of the literature. This chapter concerns the digital legacy created by prior place and how such digital legacies might impact digital practices at the future place of international study.

Much of the previous work on international study and digital media has been focused 'in place', with little appreciation of how prior place affiliations may be important in influencing students' digital practices. There is scant appreciation of the everyday role of digital media prior to arrival at the new HE institution and the different forms of digital media that are used in different places, nor is there much work revealing the significance of digital media during UKHE entrance selection processes. Finally, it is important from the outset to take a measured and critical view of the role of digital media in I.S. lives. In addition to considering the diverse uses of digital media prior to attending UoL, the final sections of this chapter examine cases where digital media appear to matter less. The thrust of this chapter is to understand better how prior place may be important in shaping I.S.'(non)use of digital media before and during entry into UKHE, this acting as a building block for their digital worlds whilst at UoL.

Ideas about the pre-UoL I.S. world (i.e. I.S. lives prior to arriving at UoL) are aided by Brickell and Datta (2011:4) where I.S. 'multiple and hybrid histories, politics, and digital constructions, material geographies and connections to other scales and places' constitute I.S. lives. These are viewed as the legacies of prior place. This chapter uses such ideas to examine the legacies of digital practices and technical infrastructure which are important for understanding the experience of the digital world that the student takes to UoL. The pre-UoL world involves complex interactions (Brooks and Waters, 2010; Waters and Brooks, 2011) here implicated in digital world relationships. For example, the role of 'what' was left behind, and 'those who stayed behind' (Waters and Brooks, 2012:25) might relate in a dynamic process with future life plans (Brown et

al. 2012) as 'entangled circulations' and global complexities (Sheller and Urry, 2006) which are 'enacted, turbulent, entangled and hybrid' (Edwards, 2012:208). The role that digital media play in entangled circulations gives an original angle to ISM studies.

Human geographers are well placed to holistically explore these entangled circulations of ISM processes with digital worlds (Kinsley, 2014; Adams, 2016). To date this role of digital media within transnational I.S. experience and emotions remains relatively under-explored, although Collins (2009a,b; 2010b; 2012a) is a notable exception, evidencing how digital networks interplay in some I.S. experiences and sensibilities.

The remainder of the chapter is divided into four sections. It begins in Section 4.2 by examining five key factors that shape digital morphologies in prior place. Section 4.3 moves forward to consider how digital media were employed during entry into UKHE. Section 4.4 charts everyday digital practices, prior to and during relocation to UoL, evidencing the geographically varied digital media channels and platforms used by I.S.. Finally, Section 4.5 examines I.S. concerns and scepticism towards digital media.

4.2 The Importance of Prior Place and Digital Worlds

One key finding to emerge from my research was that prior place[18] shapes highly uneven digital practices, which then go on to influence digital practices in the new place of international study. Prior place creates variable digital opportunities, approaches and literacies. The student's 'home' (see 2.2.4) location, and other places, affect scales of digital (dis)advantage which are entangled with international study opportunities 'and' future digital practices. This digital legacy from other places could influence ISM and digital literacies at UoL, demonstrating how place is fundamentally important and relational to [digital] experience and mobility (Waters, 2015:680). The findings corroborate Phillips and Robinson (2015:410) place being 'not simply fixed and objective, but also as subjective and practised as created by and re-created by its users and their interaction'. Ideas of translocality, involving interconnections between past, present and future places (Brickell and Datta, 2011; Grainer and Sakdapolek, 2013) become entangled with digital practices during international study processes.

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[18] I.S did not always enter UKHE directly from their domicile nation, elsewhere mattered (e.g. IHEIs).

This appreciation of translocality and the significance of prior place in understanding current digital practices involved wider structural concerns, as well as individual experiences and emotions co-constituted by material and digital worlds. Digital capabilities were influenced by socio-economic status (Hutt, 2016) and the demographic digital divide (Dodge and Kitchin, 2002) which differed between places. Also, prior place involved many affiliations; for example, family identities shaped belonging (Waters, 2006b; Brickell 2012; Anderson 2012) which moulded future digital social morphologies. Five features emerged from the data, revealing complex interwoven factors implicated in international study futures as detailed below.

4.2.1 Material Geographies of Technological Capacity and Affordability

Firstly, my research determined sometimes large variations in technical infrastructure provision which shaped digital practices. The 'digital divide' (Dodge and Kictchen, 2002; Gaebel, 2014; Graham, 2014a) remained variably evident. The findings reflect the UN (2016) which estimated 60% of the world population still remained digitally unconnected, a statement also supported by the British Council (2016a). Matherly (2014) provides a snap-shot of this digital hiatus where some of the large variations to digital connection were evidenced in this research (Figure 4.1). As Breene (2016) suggests, technology adoption is a key indicator of economic development. The digital divide was thus entangled with international study opportunities and I.S. futures. Some I.S. were more digitally (dis)advantaged than others.

Ease of access to good quality technical infrastructure permitted daily digitally networked formal communication with the UoL. This networking yielded scholarship funding and UKHE entrance support for one student:

> 'Social media was important in choosing Leicester. I applied to five programmes in Europe, was accepted on all, but not all offered a scholarship, most were not as interested in helping me out. I received many emails from the International Office […] not knowing anyone here, we talked on email and Skype, that communication made a big difference.'
>
> [M,M.Sc,Colombia,I].

Good technical infrastructure enabled efficient informal networked information exchanges about international study processes. These circulated between students, where (inter)subjective appreciations of UKHE and UoL mattered.

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Figure 4.1 Every Device Connected to the Internet (after Matherly, 2014).
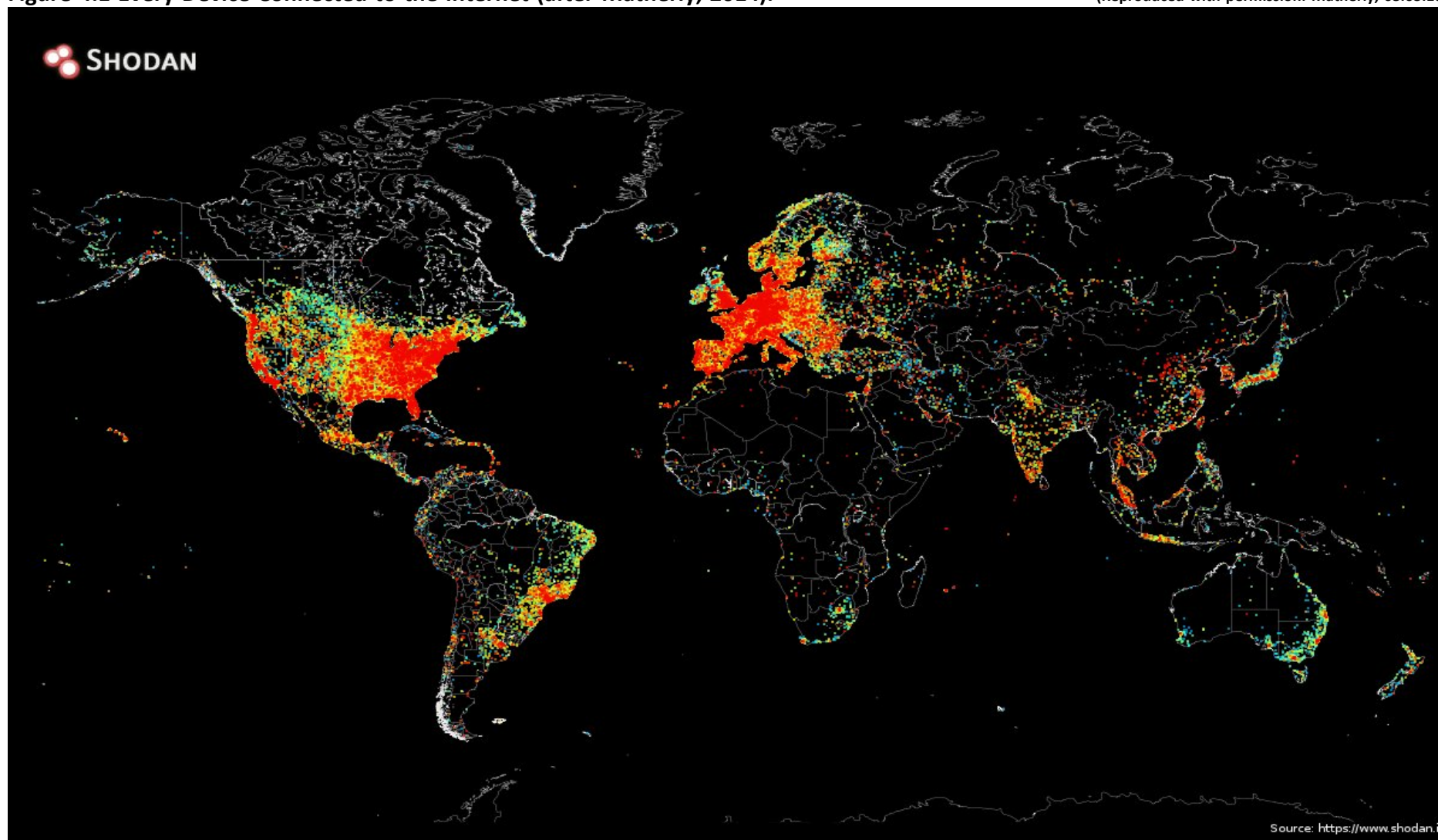
Many I.S. in my research employed informal student networks to gain information:

> 'I searched online. I used Weibo official account: 'International Student Life in the UK'…about the airport and practical matters. I used QQ to search chatroom people, for similar applicants to me; it's more about knowing about Leicester, information exchange on Weibo and QQ was really good.'
>
> [F,M.Sc,PRC,I].

> 'Social media definitely helped, to get an idea about the university and the city, so I could be prepared before I arrived in UK.'   [F,M.Sc,India,S].

However, it was also clear that poor technical infrastructural limited internet penetration and created digital disadvantage potentially implicated in limiting international study opportunities. Slow broadband speed remained problematic for some students, and restricted fixed and mobile access to digital media:

> 'The internet speed in Mexico was one megabyte…how slow!...now maybe two, it's ridiculous, quite limited. Mobile internet access is 14 per cent in Mexico, that's nothing; home internet connection is less than 50 per cent, it's a complete different world.'   [F,Ph.D,Mexico,I].

There remains a global hiatus in accessing smartphones (Luxton, 2016a,b). Usage is dictated by 3G availability and device costs (WEF, 2016:5). This uneven distribution of smartphones remained problematic for one student:

> 'In Iraq it's different, we don't have smartphone or apps, we're separated. I faced difficulties getting journal articles at university.'   [F,Ph.D,Iraq,I].

Uneven internet was evidenced intra-nationally. Another student from Iraq reported:

> 'Social media in my country is more important than here. People here rarely use social media, in our country it's just like a meal you have to eat every day.'   [F,M.Sc,Iraq,S].

This situation of variable digital connectivity was also voiced by students from Ghana, Nigeria and Rwanda, corroborating Poushter (2016). These African students described highly geographically differentiated internet availability between rural and urban areas (where remoteness and physical obstacles limited ground-laid broadband). Some HEIs were poorly connected; urban areas could also be subject to variable reliability and penetration, making fixed access points expensive:

> 'In Ghana, like most West African countries, internet connection is very problematic, very low sometimes, you get a few hours or a few minutes, it's expensive.'   [M,Ph.D,Ghana,FG6].

> 'We don't have wi-fi, and the internet is so expensive.'   [M,Ph.D,Nigeria,I].

For these African I.S., expensive, unreliable, fixed broadband infrastructure compelled usage of data streaming SIM cards in mobile phones, while this also remained a high cost option. Mobile phones were also unreliable for internet connection; a Nigerian I.S. discussed simultaneous subscription to five mobile ISPs to counter unreliability:

> 'We tried one provider, not functional, tried another, not so good, then another, we ended up having about five network providers on pay as you go. As researchers we had to do it; it was expensive.'   [F,Ph.D,Nigeria,FG6].

Kwizera (Case 4.1), a university lecturer from Rwanda, shows how technical infrastructure constrained internet access which evidenced highly uneven internet geographies (supporting Graham et al. 2014). Having no home internet and poor HEI connection, Kwizera travelled to internet cafés in Kigali (the capital city) which could also prove defective (Burrell, 2012:33). Kwizera reveals the difficulty some I.S. had in accessing basic home-based internet services, which in turn shaped international study information geographies (e.g. funding, course details and inspirational roles).

Case 4.1 Kwizera: Striving to Gain Internet Access   [M,Ph.D,Rwanda,I]

'My family don't have internet, or access to electricity. Some have access to everything, both internet and phone, but they don't know how to use it (successful in business), but they don't know how to use it. The internet went very bad in my institution, where I worked was the only place to access it. When that happened I moved to the capital city for the weekend. It was a 3 hour bus, sometimes this wasn't regular'.

Kwizera attempted internet access via mobile phoned-based subscription:

'It was only a monthly subscription for internet connectivity, costing RwFr 20,000,   about one fifth of my monthly salary, about £20. The phone I used was not an iphone, but it had internet capability, I bought it for a little bit below my monthly salary, RwFr 180,000 [GBP 154.00]. I also bought a modem costing RwFr 20,000, and I have to add a monthly top-up of RwFr 20,000. I was really disappointed the phone wouldn't load emails.

Internet connection remained problematic:

'Unfortunately, I gave up using both devices as main internet sources. After spending that much on internet that rarely loads emails. Instead, at the weekend, I'd take a three bus hour trip to the capital city, where there were many cyber cafés. Once the internet was bust in one café, I moved to another that helped me survive in my MA with the OU [Open University] for about 10 months before moving to the USA.'

Some students from Ghana and Nigeria reported wider internet access, revealing how different I.S. have different access to the internet even within nation. This depicts how prior place can act as a 'filter' to international study futures (this restriction could also shape future UoL links to 'home'). However, having access to the internet did not guarantee ubiquitous digital practices. Many African I.S. voiced how cost and reliability constraints focused digital practices explicitly to specific emails, rather than more

general information gathering or social activities. This restricted use infers limits to future opportunities of entrance into international study. For instance, limited general web-surfing can limit 'chancing' upon funding opportunities or might limit probabilities of travel for study to unusual places.

Although the situation described above suggested problems with internet cost and connectivity, particularly in certain African countries, the situation was also changing in other African countries. In Ghana 3.0G/3.5G had enabled recently improved access to platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp, which supports Poushter's work (2016):

> 'We now have many mobile phones. Chinese phones are very cheap, although not smart, that is still a problem. Before 2010 only a few people used emails; Facebook was not here. Now some secondary school children have laptops and tablets; competition between telecoms is bringing the price down. In Ghana there's MTN, Blu, Airtel and Vodafone. When it started, the SIM was £40, now it's free.'   [M,Ph.D,Ghana,FG6].

Student voices reveal how digital practices are relational to the technical infrastructure environment. Digital practices were 'situated in ecologies of place' (Hjorth and Pink, 2014:43) which can have fundamental implications for future international study opportunities relative to connecting into networks (Madge et al. 2009b; Collins, 2009a, 2010, 2012a,b), notably for funding opportunities and advanced information which can shape UKHE entrance decisions. Technical infrastructure is uneven and dynamically variegated and can act to propel or limit international study. Also, good quality network connections permit UKHEIs to interact with a broader potential I.S. audiences. This skewed access (Graham et al. 2014) raised questions of whether lower quality technical infrastructure might shape more local and regional ISM patterns in Africa and South East Asia (see OECD, 2016). The data evidence how internet penetration and quality can create uneven digital space and scales of international study opportunity. In addition to technical infrastructure dynamics, the national political environment was also found to shape digital practices.

4.2.2 Techno-Political Limits

A second important issue framing the use of certain types of digital media for some I.S. was the national political environment, notably internet censorship (Shirky, 2011). This can involve undemocratic nations, e.g. North Korea (Warf, 2015), nations in political

flux, e.g. Iran/Egypt (Aryan et al. 2013) and oppressive religious/political regimes e.g. Saudi Arabia's punitive measures against Raif Badawi (Simons, 2016). In my research, Chinese students raised several important issues which inflected upon socio-digital morphologies during international study processes (see 6.3.3 and 6.3.5).

China's digital media environment presented a complex social/digital nexus shaped by the 'Great Firewall' (Golden Shield/Green Dam Project). This digital wall restricts access to non-Chinese internet (Tai, 2010; Zhang, 2014) creating information black-outs (Hatton, 2016). This is well documented (Bamman et al. 2012; Sullivan, 2014). In my research the firewall shaped digital practices:

> 'Facebook or Twitter, in China we cannot use, we can only use email to communicate with you.'   [F,M.Sc,PRC,FG5].

> 'My country only allow us to use WeChat or QQ, others such as Facebook cannot be allowed.'   [M,M.Sc,PRC,S].

> 'Some friends are Chinese, they can't use Facebook freely. It limited my contact, I don't use Chinese social media.'   [M,M.Sc,Taiwan,A].

However, some tech-savvy Chinese students negotiated access to non-Chinese internet using VPNs. These I.S. could access non-Chinese social media from inside of China. This gave international study advantages (e.g. advanced access to UKHE-centred pedagogy, accessing UoL student networks and supervisors):

> 'There's lots of software to get around things, depends on yourself. People always think we can't use Facebook or Twitter, our generation use them all the time. We have ways to escape this firewall.'   [F1,M.Sc,PRC,FG5].

> 'If you want Facebook you'll find a way to go on.'   [F2,M.Sc,PRC,FG5].

Jun (Case 4.2) provides insight to how some Chinese people are crossing the Great Firewall via VPNs. Jun was motivated to gain advanced international study information via VPNs. Jun, privileged by a particular political position in China, was 'permitted' to cross the Chinese firewall using outlawed software (see Lynch, 2015). However, Jun, disaffected with the authoritarian regime, described how non-Chinese digital practices unsettled her subjective position to Chinese politics. It appeared the 'emotional contours of moving across boundaries' (Wang and Collins, 2015:5), here mediated digitally, had triggered a re-evaluation of self/national/political identity. This depicted how deterritorialised digital space can permit embodied renegotiation (Collins, 2010b;

Yin, 2015; Yang and Jiang, 2015). Jun points towards how neoliberalization is transforming some Chinese youth, who are increasingly not 'pure' but 'syncretic and hydridized products of interactions across space' (Huang, 2014:161): here embodied interactions appeared highly mediated through digital networks.

Case 4.2	**Jun: Crossing the Great Firewall**	**[F,M.Sc,PRC,I]**
Jun:	Other students wouldn't know how to do what I do…some would not want to. I can get around it, not a big problem for me, but it's slow, we have to go through a procedure to escape the Firewall. We download software, needs updating, have to change quickly, as it's always re-banded.	
Interviewer:	How does your government view this?	
Jun:	That's a tricky thing; nowadays in China they close their eyes… only to a small group of people though. I know how. We're allowed to use it to know more. We have to know more than so called ordinary people. For example, I got my Facebook before I came here. The authority in China is worried; things happened using Facebook like the Arabic Spring. Personally, I hate not having Facebook, I can't say too much though because I might upset my colleagues, they don't know any difference; they don't care because we have our own Facebook…YouKu.	
Interviewer:	Did coming to UoL alter how you feel politically?	
Jun:	Yes…yes everything about politics. Like Google had to leave China, I had a Gmail account, but Google now moved to Hong Kong, I hate that kind of thing.	
Interviewer:	Do many students think like that?	
Jun:	No, they don't know.	
Interviewer:	Will it feel strange going back?	
Jun:	Yes it will [withheld] said I can't really live in China because I don't like the rules. I'm not very proud being Chinese, there are so many things. Being here is more comfortable, I don't really enjoy being Chinese, there's now weird questions, I don't enjoy how it is, I enjoy being here.	

In China the competitive workplace is 'pushing' growing numbers of the Chinese middle classes to seek peer distinction via international study (Waters, 2006; 2015), although this can reflect a lack of success in entering domestic HEIs (Waters and Leung, 2014). China is characterised by distinctive regional populations. My research also revealed variegated digital practices (of some middle classes) showing 'formed and fractured' 'uneven state spatiality' (Lim, 2014:221). Most Chinese students were unable to cross the Firewall: for those who did cross, this raised questions of how 'outlawed' digital practices might be involved in wider socio-political change. Some Chinese interviewees were reluctant to discuss the Firewall, where patriotism and/or coercion and 'emotional geopolitics of fear' (Pain, 2009; Pain et al. 2010) appeared inculcated in digital media practices.

Chinese students reveal how national politics shape fluidity of international study information, illustrating how information freedom varies across the internet. Jun's digital privileges verify an uneven, fractured digital landscape, where experience digitally networked from other centres affected Jun's identity. This supports Goode's (2010) work on 'digital identity divide' and demonstrates how the uneven, sometimes barred digital terrain (re)produces changing subjectivites. Importantly, techno-political limits may also be shaping digital morphologies in the new study place which further supports translocality through the digital. In addition to national political/digital limits, digital practices were also influenced by uneven education relations.

4.2.3 Uneven (Inter)national (Higher) Education Relations

A third issue which shaped international study digital morphologies, for some students, involved uneven relations during education and access to digital technology. For most people, the holy trinity of education (early, secondary and HE) remains an impossible dream portraying the 'widening breach between the possible (or perhaps probable) and the imaginable' (Burrell, 2012:30). For some students, access to digital media and international study remains largely confined to the privileged elite (Waters 2006b, 2012b). Indeed, 'twenty countries are home to three-quarters of the 4.3 billion internet non-users worldwide' (WEF, 2016:7). This situation could severely limit awareness of the opportunities that digital technology offers (Hutt, 2016), influence international study chances and technical identities (Goode, 2010).

Some students voiced not having internet access in homes or schools, encountering digital media only once attending HE, revealing how domestic HEIs can shape digital practices and international study opportunities elsewhere:

> 'I was fortunate, I had a café at university that I could pay, and get internet access, because I was university staff.'   [F,Ph.D,Nigeria,FG6].

Here, internet access appeared privileged by institutional attendance and researcher status at the institution. Another student also described how wi-fi cost structures differed at home compared to Leicester, which also shaped digital practices:

> 'We have to buy internet time on campus in China.'   [F,M.Sc,PRC,FG5].

Some HEIs restricted digital practices on campus, aiming to focus students on study. (One I.S. voiced Facebook and Skype access as blocked in a Colombian and USA HEI).

These examples proved how HEIs can (variably) act as zones of digital (dis)advantage. This was evidenced by Kwizera (Case 4.3) who provides insight to the challenges encountered during education in Rwanda. Kwizera's voice was almost unheard. He was the only student to surmount great difficulties to enter HE, being the only Rwandan at UoL. Some people have viewed digital media as the 'great leveller', for Kwizera, digital media were irrelevant, in a world characterised by inequality. Kwizera reported that the Rwandan government has attempted to increase access to education, but access to HE remains difficult. His story illustrates the struggles and difficulties a student may have encountered prior to arriving at the UoL for international study.

Case 4.3 Kwizera: Overcoming (Inter)national Education Structures   [Ph.D,Rwanda,I]

Kwizera: 'In Rwanda they excluded. Only five per cent have access to education, three per cent from the public, and two per cent is private. The government has tried to make it fairer, we now have 25 institutions, but at my time there was only one. You normally needed to know someone very powerful to get a place. The government is trying, there are now national exams open to everyone.'

Interviewer: 'What was your educational background?'

Kwizera: 'One to six [age] no kindergarten. I entered primary education at seven years and completed at 14. Entry into secondary education…the exams were difficult, of a class of 45 only two were allowed into secondary education. When I completed secondary there were four going on. Secondary education was 15-21 years, the most difficult part was gaining entry in undergraduate education, it took me two years to prepare for the exam to enter undergraduate education, I joined [HE] when I was 25, then an undergraduate for four years. You have to teach for two years before teacher training. About 50 people entered teacher training, but the following year it was raised to 70% [pass rate], the government didn't have enough money for student loans. Resources are very limited, it's a big problem. There were then cut-off point changes, some teacher trainees, 'after all of that', never got through. I was very 'lucky' to get the OU [Open University] opportunity, there was one other, he did not complete. I'm now 'the only one to get through'.

Most national eduscapes are characterised by unevenness, and in contrast to Kwizera, some students voiced ease of access to digital technology and UKHE:

'It was extremely easy to enter, I wasn't really planning. I happened on it, contacted the programme director [email/Skype], applied for a scholarship, got it. All my life I've had things pretty easy.'   [F,Ph.D,Mexico,I].

'It was good to have two scholarships and the chance to study in the UK. Many students in Colombia don't have that chance.'   [F,M.Sc,Colombia,A].

The term 'world-wide-web' presents ideas of global digital connectivity for all I.S. in their attempt to access UKHE. However, arguably, since the internet was developed, global inequalities have increased and digital technology may have furthered the

(re)production of privilege (Butler and Hamnett 2011, Harris 2012) and digital elites (Hall and Appleyard, 2011a, Yeoh and Huang, 2011; Waters and Leung, 2012). As such, digital media may be cementing inequality through its furtherance of knowledge networks and through assumptions of universal connectivity. For example, UoL/UKHE entrance is framed via internet only application. As the cases in this chapter demonstrate, access to the internet shows great geographic and social variation, thus further (re)production of global inequalities (Madge et al. 2015:6).

Mobility for international study is not just forged through national educational policy. It is also influenced by foreign government strategies and recruitment policies of receiving institutions, although this can be an (inter)nationally entangled process:

> 'You know why we are here, because our Minister of Higher Education is lecturer at the University of Nottingham.'　　　　　　[M,Ph.D,Iraq,FG3].

Digital media have become implicated in geopolitical perspectives, such as how foreign governments are seeking to increase influence in Africa whilst generating income from education services. A Ghanaian student reported foreign governments provided digital channels to selected publics (corroborating work by Haugen 2013):

> 'The UK, and other places, have educational outfaces. The British Council has been organising education for us, supplied virtually all universities with pcs in libraries for students to access emails. There're other countries, China is driving hard, lots of Chinese language taught locally. People are moving to China, Eastern Europe and Russia for medicine, India for computer bases. The UK needs to sit up.'　　　　　　[M,Ph.D,Ghana,FG6].

Ghana gained independence from the UK in 1957, but high levels of British Council involvement in Ghanaian HE persist[19]. This reflects 'complex spatial relationships' between British academia and its 'postcolonial publics' (Madge et al. 2009a:34). The quote above reveals UK provision of international study was being placed under pressure from other HE providers in Ghana. This reflects wider challenges to UKHE (British Council, 2012; Barber et al. 2013) as global eduscapes change (Holloway and Jöns, 2012; King and Raghurnam, 2013) during on-going neo-liberal processes (Robertson, 2011, 2012). In this context, post-colonial educational connections, policies and entrepreneurs also help explain potential international study mobilities. Discussion now turns to social relations and cultural values.

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[19] The University of Ghana founded (1948) is still affiliated to the University of London (QS, 2016).

4.2.4 Social Relations and Techno-Cultural Limits

As a fourth point, in addition to global, regional and local variations in digital connectivity, social relationships and cultural acceptance were implicated in digital literacies, which, in turn influenced access opportunities to international study.

What goes on in international students' lives outside of classroom walls matters (Kraftl et al. 2007; Madge et al. 2009a). Family dynamics could influence international study futures. Some students described household power relationships (Salisbury et al. 2009; Stroud, 2010) where parents limited digital practices:

> 'In my home access wasn't feasible that much, but now I'm checking my Facebook every day!'   [F,M.Sc,PRC,FG5].

Another student had access to a pc, but not to digital media:

> 'Before I went to Leicester my mom didn't have Hotmail, Facebook, or anything like that.'   [F,M.Sc,Colombia,A].

Anderson (2012:327) argues 'little attention has been paid to students' lives beyond classroom contexts.' I found that child/parent dynamics (for students who lived with parents) can shape digital practices: some parents rejected the internet, others could not afford costs. However, for most I.S. prior place empowered digital connection. Additionally (future) ISM could change digital relationships, as parents adopted new digital behaviours in advance of children entering international study, as a means of maintaining social relationships between parent and student in the new study location.

Wider societal dynamics also interplayed with digital practices:

> 'I rarely used social media, and 'not professionally'. We learned how to use Facebook for sharing photographs, but it has a negative reputation, especially time wasting.'   [M,Ph.D,Rwanda].

> 'Some people think technology takes much of people's time, I think it is more the life. Perhaps after 20 or 40 years our next generation will totally accept it, but now people think good or bad of it.'   [F,M.Sc,PRC,FG5].

These views reveal how societal perspectives form 'soft' limits to digital practices. Burrell (2012:84) sheds light on matters, where the morality of the internet was widely questioned in Ghana (internet crime and church ideology shaped Ghanaian societal imaginations about the internet) which resulted in divergent opinions between the younger and older. This represents an alternative epistemology of digital media take-up and adaption, conferring a 'cultural topography of the internet' (ibid:185). Cultural

topography and digital practices have seldom been investigated (although see WEF, 2016), however my research gave insight to how digital practices may not be restricted by access infrastructure and speeds, but also sometimes dependent on cultural values.

The two examples, which above reflected digitally restrictive social paradigms, usefully contrasted to more positive social paradigms relative to peer usage (Park et al. 2009; Mehdizadeh, 2010):

> 'If everyone around you in the world is using social media, without knowing it, you adapt to it. In Colombia I learned to use media, and "social" means part of that. I was always very involved.'   [F,M.Sc,Colombia,FG1].

Digital practices also varied according to the physical proximity to significant others:

> 'I hardly used Facebook there, everyone was there.' [F,M.Sc,Trin&Tob,FG1].

Here, a small Caribbean island shaped proximal digital relationships and digital practices, a situation underlined by two other students, who retrospectively reviewed prior place, international study and socio-digital morphologies:

> 'I hardly used Facebook, everyone was there. Coming here that changed, Facebook is now my first way to contact people.'   [M,Ph.D,Ecuador,FG4].

> 'Now I'm back in Colombia I don't use Skype any more...I don't have my family in another place.'   [F,M.Sc,Colombia,A].

In sum, social relations and cultural values/topographies can shape prior place digital practices. Another perhaps surprising finding that emerged from the research is that violent conflict also shaped digital media entanglements with international study.

4.2.5 Violent Conflict

The fifth finding involved the harrowing role violent conflict played in digital media experiences; for some students this created extreme hardships in entering international study. Catastrophic loss of internet connection can result from physical destruction of humans and technical infrastructure via violence or state applied internet blackouts for security reasons (Salisbury et al. 2009; Stroud, 2010). Warfare can acutely damage education structures (Tran et al. 2014). I.S. exposure to violent conflict offered a stark reminder of the sometimes turbulent negotiations some students undergo in prior place, where digital media may have little or no meaning to some students in that place.

Anwar (Case 4.4) gave a brief but disturbing view of the war in Iraq, highlighting some of the difficulties surrounding assumptions about the ubiquity/importance of digital media in I.S. lives. Anwar's case gestures towards the importance of attempting more empathic relationships with I.S. during UKHE, where external influences and differentiations of experience form part of the UKHE experience (Kell and Vogl, 2008; Madge et al. 2009a,b; Zembylas, 2012). Indeed, as suggested by Robinson-Pant et al. (2010:557) notions about feeling 'common pain' might be a way of challenging 'negative stereotypes of 'the Other' and develop a more dynamic notion of identity'.

Case 4.4 Anwar: Living Under Threat [M,Ph.D,Iraqi-Kurd,I]
'In my country we have a slow internet and it is not available all of the time'. 'Kurdish people, we face a lot of difficulties in our life, we face wars, we face genocide, it's been very difficult. Now if we see anything it is ok, we don't feel very bad, because we saw this before. I'm 33; three times I left my home to go to the mountains to hide. It's very grim, very troubled, this is not humanity, it's very bad. They kill everyone, not just one.'
A reflective pause was followed by: 'One of my friends was killed in the war; a lot of people, maybe three, four, five, killed each week from my city, it is a small city. It's very upsetting at the moment.'
Anwar was pragmatic about prior access to digital media: 'I don't die for it; it's not the end of the world. Before, we didn't have social media. Not long ago, we didn't have electricity…1990 to 1995… or just 32 hours electricity. We lived and were o.k, it's just adaption.'

Out of the preceding discussion many factors contribute towards digital limitations and UKHE opportunities, notably where geopolitics can create and uphold existing pre-UoL world inequalities. Digital media *cannot* be viewed as the 'great leveller' in providing equality of access to international study. *Place acts as a filter* defining digital relationships which vary between different social and spatial groups. Information geographies are entwined with international study opportunities and possibilities linked to UKHE entrance. Graham et al. (2015:88) exemplify the importance of place:

> 'Information has always had geography. It is from somewhere; about somewhere; it evolves and is transformed somewhere; it is mediated by networks, infrastructures, and technologies: all of which exist in physical, material places' where the augmentation of information is 'part of the place itself'.

In sum, prior place is a co-constituitive foundation to socio-digital morphologies which can entangle and inflect upon international study future spatialities. I now move to consider digital practices during entry into UKHE.

4.3 The Use of Digital Media in Choosing to Come to University in the UK

4.3.1 Diverse Motivations for Entering UKHE

Previous work has examined how and why people pursue international study credentials for employability, education, class and social reproduction (Findlay et al, 2012; Waters and Brooks, 2011) where economic factors drive motivations (Wei, 2013; Zheng, 2013) to gain advantage at home (Waters, 2012b). I explored I.S. motivations for entering UKHE. Here, work into 'how' I.S. make ISM decisions is limited (Beech, 2014a). I was able explore student motivations and the role of digital media.

BOS revealed 3% of respondents considered social media played a key role in aiding their decisions to enter UKHE, 30% affirmed a significant role together with other factors, 40% declared social media played a minor role, while for 26%, social media played no part in UKHE entrance decisions. To gain insight to motivations, BOS employed a comprehensive question-set measuring 42 motivations for UKHE entrance from three perspectives: UKHE in general, UoL specific, personal. The mean Likert score was used to compile a table of the top 10 motivations for entering UKHE (Table 4.1) (Appendix 3, Table 3.5).

Table 4.1 Top 10 Motivations for Entering UKHE

Rank	Mean Likert Score	Type of Influence	Motivation For International Study
1	2.01	WUR/Rankings	Attend a world class university with high international university rankings
2	2.03	Career	Improve career prospects
3	2.05	WUR/Rankings	Attend a UK university with high UK university rankings (UK-based rankings)
4	2.10	Personal	Broaden worldly visions
5	2.11	Career/Costs (£)	UKHE degree completed quicker than elsewhere
6	2.12	UoL	Degree programme - best available by subject
7	2.18	Personal/Career	Develop English language skills
8	2.20	Personal/Career	Develop confidence
9	2.25	Personal/Career	Opportunity to learn and think in English
10	2.34	Personal/Career	Experience British culture and lifestyle

In reviewing some of the top 10 motivations, world university rankings (WUR) were clearly significant in directing ISM vectors. Career prospects, quick completion of the 'best' programme broadening worldly horizons, developing English language skills and furthering social skills and confidence were also important. However, BOS revealed individually highly varied motivations for entering UKHE, illustrating highly

differentiated students. There was a focus of motivations connected to employment in domestic and global contexts. Global employment reflected more cosmopolitan/global subjectivites: 29% were seeking employment outside of their home-nation (see 5.5.4).

Regarding international study motivations, four findings are discussed below, focusing upon WUR and international student digital practices during entrance into UKHE.

Firstly, WUR are important (e.g. Shanghai, Times Higher Education World, QS World). BOS returned 35% very important; 39% important; '3%' not important. UK-based rankings are also significant (e.g. Guardian, Independent)[20]: 36% very important; 35% important; '1%' not important. Rankings have proliferated in globalising HE and concern the reputational construction of the value of degrees. According to Jöns and Hoyler (2013) WUR play a significant role in the production of academic hegemony. WUR have also been criticised for problematic effects, notably their atheoretical modelling, western bias, negative effects on HEI diversity (the deficit model seeks to quantify inferiority: O'Connell, 2015). Additionally, Collins and Park (2016:115) argue HE ranking systems can create 'a mismatch between quality, reputation and ranking.'

The UoL assertively markets its position of being ranked in the top 1% of degree award universities in the world (237 from +25000 institutions, UoL/CWUR, 2016). The importance of rankings to UoL institutional policy reflects the ubiquity of mediatization of HEIs, which concerns 'media logics' in and commercialisation of 'open market HE' (Stack, 2016). As evidenced in Section 4.2, ability to access WUR is globally varied.

This finding is important, since according to Jöns and Hoyler (2013), rankings have been neglected in geographical study. This is surprising given rankings are 'the rage worldwide' (Altbach, 2015b:2). Many students voiced the importance of rankings as they sought to attend the 'best' ranked universities (Altbach, 2015):

> 'Comparing here with our universities, or elsewhere, you'll see a difference, the UK universities have a high rank, the rank depends on the facilities and techniques.'   [M,Ph.D,Iraq,FG3].

> 'Rankings, were a way to know more about UoL.'   [F,M.Sc,Colombia,FG4].

> 'Ranking is quite important; I made my decision first, then contacted people who study in Leicester.'   [F,M.Sc,PRC,FG5].

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[20] Domestic rankings (sending nation) were 12th in motivations (29% very important; 30% important; 9% not important).

WUR's were accessed online before making informal contact with existing UoL I.S. (4.3.2). Also, one government used rankings as criteria to apply scholarship funding:

> 'Our government offers scholarships, but only 100 per cent if the university is in the world top 100. UoL is about 150, that's why I got a half scholarship.'   [M,Ph.D,Ecuador,FG4].

National (UK-based) rankings were also important:

> 'Computer Science at Leicester was 13th in the UK, pretty good, once I had the rankings I checked course specifics and relevance to my industry, that's why I chose Leicester.'   [M,M.Sc,India,FG2].

Stack (2016:1) correctly observes 'rankings are not passive instruments, nor do they convey neutral messages'. Students voiced how rankings were a measure of academic credibility for entrance into UKHE and for onward mobilities. Student futures based on WUR values evidences how the 'UoL legacy' can become important in the next move for study/employment. The importance attributed to rankings in my research reveals how understandings about international study revolve around WUR 'elite lists' of the 'best universities' and critical 'enumeration' (Collins and Park, 2016:115). The high use of WUR during entrance decisions (as complex promotional assets) supports education spaces as the 'new landscapes of value', and UoL as a 'globalising HE space', centred on the global knowledge economy (Collins and Park, 2016). UoL shaped ISM vectors, where rankings as a key strategic tool reflected concepts of value and difference.

A second finding was that UKHE was perceived to improve career prospects and this acted as a motivation for international study. This factor linked to other considerations such as widening personal horizons, developing English language skills, confidence and digital skills (see British Council, 2015). The motivation to enter UKHE was not simply qualification-led, but also involved ideas about more globally orientated graduates (Sidhu and Dall'Alba, 2012; Clifford, 2014) seeking international employment (although motivations were also aligned to employer expectations which shaped ISM directions). Additionally, UKHE pedagogy was viewed as learning and thinking in a more worldly way. Learning about others was considered important (Rivzi, 2009):

> 'I wanted to study abroad and travel as much as I can. I was busy handing in essays but travelled 10 more countries while at UoL. I could have done better essays, but it was important to see the world.'   [M,M.Sc,Taiwan,A].

This example arguably denotes existential internationalism (Sanderson, 2004) or where international study experience is personal and not solely driven by credentialisation (Tian and Lowe, 2009).

Thirdly, notwithstanding BOS findings, where 'being in the City of Leicester' ranked 25th, for some Muslim I.S., this provided the key motivation. This demonstrated how the 'contingent assembly of the urban' played a key role in globalising HE by 'drawing together different sorts of trans-local connections and flows' (Collins, 2014:242). It also demonstrated the extent that UoL, as an elite university, is 'deeply embedded in and territorially bounded' by surrounding urban space (Sidhu et al. 2016:9):

> I got offer from Reading, I looked at Aberdeen and Edinburgh, I went to Reading, the social side was very difficult, also expensive, subject not right either. In Leicester it's different from another city because of its multicuture.'   [M2,Ph.D,Iraq,FG3].

Muslim students discussed 'Leicester networks' in the context of SNS:

> 'We're looking for Muslim society, Hallal food, mosques, and Leicester is cheap. We're from a very different culture; this makes a barrier between us generally. When anyone comes, they must know people here, if no it's a big obstacle. A Kurdish friend introduced me to a lot of Kurdish people in Leicester. At UoL I didn't know anyone.'   [M1,Ph.D,Iraq,FG3].

> 'A Muslim girl contacted me, I told her not to go to Glasgow, I told her to come here, 20 per cent of Leicester are Muslim, in Glasgow it's two per cent.'   [M3,Ph.D,Iraq,FG3].

The above social morphologies often involved SNS, centred on information exchange about UKHEIs. Non-student diasporic networks aided international student transitions into UKHE, supporting ideas about how 'comfortable community' context is important. Thus, for some students, the cultural landscape of the UK, and of Leicester in particular, itself partly an outcome of colonial pasts, was important in understanding ISM vectors (Collins 2010a, 2012c; Madge et al. 2009b).

Finally, students voiced diverse opinions about UKHE entrance and costs (despite this appearing some way down the list of considerations):

> 'How challenging it is to get a student visa! You need money for tuition and accommodation for one year in your account; they stopped the UK work visa [...]. I feel disadvantaged not being part of the Commonwealth/EU.

> Coming from South America we're outsiders, it feels different, we pay a lot and can't live here after.'   [M,M.Sc,Colombia,I-part gov't sponsored].

> 'Study is very expensive, so is living.'   [M,Ph.D,Iraq,FG3-fully gov't funded].

Versus:

> 'I felt good at UoL, living cost was cheap, tuition fee was not high and teaching was inspirational.'   [M,M.Sc,Taiwan,A-self-funded].

> 'Education cost here is fractional of a US Master's. An equivalent course at Boston University would be $120,000.'   [F,MA,USA,FG2,self-funded].

In sum, the examples reveal differentiated motivations for attending UKHE. Importantly, the internet allowed many (but not all) I.S. access to WUR. The extent of digital networks used for information gathering for international study futures varied individually: for some not important, for others, important, and to some, of key importance. For those who used digital networks during UKHE entrance, use fell into two types, viewed as informal and formal. I first discuss informal use below.

4.3.2 Informal Digital Networks while entering UKHE

Some student lives were digitally saturated prior to attending UoL. Many students applied informal digital practices while entering international study and making the transition to the new place of study (Leicester): 3% considered social media played a key role, 30% affirmed a significant role together with other factors. Informal channels evidence information seeking (Graham et al. 2015), often guided by career motivations, and often involved student-to-student networks, although as shown above, can also involve non-students networks. International student networks 'socially lubricated' (Leonardi and Meyer, 2015) entrance to international study. My research presented a rare insight into how international study framed the mobilisation of social networks (Beech, 2014a:333) through informal digital media.

BOS exposed five key informal channels: wikis-open collectives of information (24% very important; 32% important; 198 total users: 86%), SNS (personal) (19%; 21%; 191: 83%), blogs and microblogs (personal) (6%; 21%; 158: 69%), chat-rooms/forums (6%; 23%; 147: 64%), bulletin boards (non-UoL) (5%; 12%; 139: 61%).

Students voiced using informal channels for pre-registration information gathering about UKHE/UoL which involved potential *'and'* current UKHE/UoL I.S.. Informal

channels offered a cost-free alternative to telephone calls, permitting frequent and constant connection to others during UKHE entrance processes:

'It's a free method of communication on a mass scale.'   [F,MA,USA,S].

Informal research about UKHE/UoL could involve detailed explorations:

'I searched online; I didn't rely on social media to make decisions, but by myself it would have been difficult, no one around me has come here before; the enormity of change is forgotten now. I used it to speak to people studying here, information was 'very' important.' [F,M.Sc,PRC,FG5].

'The gratification of my [UoL] choice by Facebook friends made me even more excited and confident about coming to the course. It also adds a sort of virtual responsibility to meet the expectation.'   [M,MA,Jordan,S].

Social networks can be a key motivation to enter international study (Brookes and Waters, 2011). Digital networks can 'pave' the transition to international study and living in a new place (Collins, 2009a. 2010b, 2012b; Sin and Kim, 2013). Digital networking can also create digital space for building and maintaining social capital with others (Cheung et al. 2011:1337). At this early point in entering international study at Leicester, digital networks between students were important for some I.S., as revealed below. Friendship networks involved co-national students and could be important.

Chen (Case 4.5) reveals how Facebook mediated Taiwanese students' digital pre-UoL meetings with unknown pre and current UoL I.S.. Networks also facilitated face-to-face meetings after initial online dealings. For Chen, UKHE entrance was fully networked, this involved pre-study meetings, companionship/safety concerns (booking flights and UoL accommodation together), togetherness to mitigate emotional shock (Ye, 2005) and practical matters (a shipping container) (see Sung-Bum et al. 2013).   Digital networks formed during UKHE entrance process developed into both online and offline relationships following relocation, corroborating Madge et al. (2009c) and Collins (2009a). Chen's digital networks became physically active at UoL (e.g. 60 out of 80 Taiwanese nationals met for a pre-sessional dinner in 2013). Chen gives a rare insight into pre-study digital mobilisation connecting places which involved significant digital social networks. I.S. were part of 'complex communities already in motion' that 'thicken' (Beech, 2014a:334) as digital networks spread ISM information and support.

Case 4.5 Chen: Complex Informal Digital Practices   [M,M.Sc,Taiwan,A]

'FB groups are useful for current and future students. I was online to a friend studying at UoL when deciding about universities, also messaging friends, talking about universities with those still abroad. Digital media didn't influence my decision to study, but helped contact people who influenced my decision.'

'I was broadly searching information for UK study and found a website called HelloUK! There were prospective/former students posing information for finding companions on flights, and general things, it was useful but not as useful as it could be. I decided to create a FB group for the same group of people on the internet, as we could have immediate responses; then I did one for UoL and shared a link on HelloUK! Shortly after the start-up, the group gained popularity, and information went from one to another, and who was going to UoL too.'

'I established connections between Taiwanese students going to UoL; it's helpful to have special events together. Before we arrived at UoL, we arranged a meet-up in Taiwan by Facebook (we were living in different parts of Taiwan), it gave us more confidence by meeting future friends; we decided on a flight together to UK, so we had companies travelling to a foreign country not been to before, arranged accommodations together and the shipping container. I was elected President of Taiwanese Student Society well before coming to UoL, my role was like a manager. We worked this out as a group. […]. I believe FB groups improve confidence of future students who are deciding to study at UoL or helping them not feeling everything so alien.'

My research also evidenced that complex student lives and identities stretched far beyond that of studenthood (Findlay, 2012) involving embedded networked connections at local/global scales with (un)known others (potential, current, former UKHE/UoL students and non-student contacts): ISM networks involved a varied 'flux of actors' (King and Raghuram, 2013; Waters and Leung, 2013). Students voiced variable negotiations with their journeys into UKHE, aided via their digital networks. This raised questions about whether such 'tactics of adaption, resistance and resilience' might be inculcated in 'new subjectivites' (Sidhu et al. 2016:3) (see 6.3). International student networks allowed singular/collective voice and agency through developing new social (emotional) bonds as support for mutual benefit during entrance of UKHE:

> 'We had a group called 'Mexicans in the UK', very useful, but I never met those people. We talked about our sponsorship, general UK-life cultural things.'   [F,Ph.D,Mexico,I].

> 'I asked people who went through the process…finding a place to live, costs per month, cost for a haircut; I wanted to know what to budget.'
>   [M,M.Sc,Colombia,I].

However, digital media did not permit fully 'free' actions, as I.S. remained subject to political, digital and economic constraints (Madge et al. 2015:5). Rather, the internet has enabled degrees of agency not least because digital media operate within

structures and institutions of (inter)nationally located power (Kraftl, 2013:4). That said it is clear that digital practices allow students to make independent decisions and actions beyond official channels to form individual and/or collective support for future mobilities. This situation presents how students' experiences, emotions and digital networks allows us to re-evaluate mainstream ISM perspectives (centred upon I.S.).

Madge et al. (2015:7/8, using Adorno, 2009) remind us that all mobile intellectuals contribute to knowledge, and receiving institutions should not 'receive without giving'. In this respect, student digital voice and agency provides a framing for IHEIs to consider their position as recipients of I.S. where students, academics and institutions are 'all' reciprocal agents in the co-production and circulation of knowledge. I.S. digital practices can permit IHEIs to re-evaluate ideas about I.S. being 'received and educated', towards a more collectivised view of international study knowledge production. Here, the multiple contributions of I.S. to international study are actually recognized. However, international study entrance is not simply negotiated through informal networks; formal UoL networks play a key role, as described below.

4.3.3 Formal Digital Structures while entering UKHE

Formal digital structures concern UoL, UKVI and government agencies (e.g. UKCISA). BOS revealed three key formal digital channels that were used during entry: UoL Facebook (9% very important; 21% important; 170 total users: 74%), UoL bulletin board (12%; 21%: 157: 69%) and UoL blogs and microblogs (3%; 17%; 143: 62%). UoL Facebook acted as both a channel and a platform (Krogh, 2013) of formal information exchange (UoL Bulletin is opened via UoL Facebook). I.S. sponsoring nations could also partake in networks: Facebook thus being a formal channel for other formal bodies:

> 'Facebook keeps us in touch through our Ministry of Higher Education.'
>
> [M,M.Sc,Iraq,FG1].

UKVI was a key formal digital channel, as illustrated by Camilla (Case 4.6). Camilla voiced how UKVI digital networks enhanced her UKHE application process, making UKHE entrance a straight-forward experience (in contrast to some I.S. who experienced poorer domestic digital infrastructure). Indeed, the quickness of response to the loss of her visa appeared to soften her views about the 'application wall'. This reveals how the UKVI digital interface was initially perceived as a digital edifice in entry

processes. The case also illustrates how UoL can cross from formal centre, to more informal, acting as a digital network hub, putting I.S. in direct contact with each other.

Case 4.6	Camilla: Digitally Networked Entrance to UKHE [F,Ph.D,Mexico,I]
Interviewer:	How did your application to enter UKHE feel?
Camilla:	It felt great. Usually my country is not known for being very organised, practically speaking, so, the UK felt straight-forward…one website. Some struggle, but everything is there, it was really good. During this year, the Passport Office got behind; mine was good…on time. Once I lost my visa card, before a holiday…'oh my god I can't leave'… they helped me out…it was good. There is actually someone behind the wall of the application, no complaints whatsoever. Others don't understand everything, you 'need' to read things. I was in the Latin American Society, and we used to coach applicants about it being strict here, and to look well.
Interviewer:	Are you in touch with people attempting to apply now?
Camilla:	Yes, by emails. Basically [staff UoL International Office] gave my details to a Mexican girl who was moving here, she was looking for a flat, and it happens in the place where I live there were some empty flats. Social media started to become important when I moved here, and I started to call my home.

The UoL International Office often acted as a digital bridge (Collins, 2009a) to aid entrance to UKHE, as it circulated informal contacts between students:

‘I was emailed contacts of other Caribbean students at UoL, there were two from Barbados.’   [F,M.Sc,Trin&Tob,FG1].

Case 4.6 shows how emails were viewed as formal digital media. Many I.S. used emails for formal networking which included relocation enquiries, fees, degree programme and application interviews specific to department. Contact via telephone or letters was very limited. Email networks linked (potential) supervisors and a variety of UoL Offices (e.g. International, Accommodation and Finance offices) (see 4.2.1 first quotation).

Interestingly, prior to UoL entry, none of the interviewees had used UoL digital media (e.g. UoL Facebook or UoL Bulletins; which were not limited by non-UoL I.S. status). This supports Shaw (2013) who argues (UK students) view UKHEI media as ‘untrustworthy or irrelevant’. I.S. formal channels involved UoL application, UKVI protocols and emails:

‘I use Facebook, but in contacting UoL it's just emails.’   [M,M.Sc,India,FG2].

This position presents policy openings. UoL could use of digital media to connect ‘digital buddies’ during entrance (7.4). Another key issue that emerged was the varying experience prospective students had with formal digital networks. Some students

commented that they had limited experience of digital practices prior to the entrance process. For one I.S., selection of UoL accommodation initiated a UoL Facebook group:

> 'I searched 'UoL online', emailed for a prospectus, looked at pictures on UoL website […]. The first thing related to digital media was my housing placement, I joined [HoR] Facebook group.'   [F,M.Sc,Trin&Tob,FG1].

This reveals how formal entrance structures (a UoL Facebook group) can create new digital practices associated with international study. Other I.S. had a greater wealth of experience in using formal digital media channels. However, these practices dimmed into the background, even for these students, when the complexities of navigating formal visa applications come into play, for some I.S., as Case 4.7 demonstrates!

Case 4.7 Anwar: UKHE and Immigration Filters   [M,Ph.D,Iraq,I,Abridged]
'2012 I came as a first time visitor to study English language at UoL on a private language course. I got a visitor visa for six months. For two months I studied and got 5.5 in IAS and returned to my family in Iraq. Then I applied for the UoL course, and for the English language again, then I buy another visa to come here, but I didn't finish the English course (I had to return to my family). I applied for visa again, two times now, but again it was cancelled.'
'I made mistakes with visas, I applied four times. The first was declined on language, the second declined on language, the third was declined, the fourth I missed by one day for the English course, it was declined. Then I came here for the English course again. Then I went to Turkey to apply and I got that one. I get offer to study, have to get a three month visa, then you need a general visa, you have to go back to Iraq for that second visa (you can renew here).'
'Five times I applied. This adds stresses, in addition to visa stresses; visas cost each time, $415 in Iraq for each one. I had to pay five times, that's without other costs, I travelled to Turkey, and another city three times, living in motels and the way costs. I had to apply for another visa through Jordan and Oman to apply: it's very involved.

For Anwar, digital practices made no difference to easing UKVI protocols. For some students, notably those from the Middle East, UKHE visas appeared to be subject to increasingly restrictive practices (Ross, 2016) (see Hoogenboom, 2013 regarding The Ankara Agreement), owing to increased UKHE securitization. This portrays UKHE negatively (Brooks, 2015a), as borders increasingly encroach beyond conventional material places into the spaces of everyday life (Jenkins, 2013:1). Once formal channels (defined by UKVI/UKHE thresholds) had been crossed, other structural barriers existed for some I.S., notably for accommodation and banking practices (also for driving):

> 'We Googled accommodation, you must book online, but before we come here we cannot have an account in the banking system, we cannot pay. This is such a problem. It took two-three weeks to find accommodation. I stayed with friends here.'   [M,Ph.D,Iraq,FG3].

Anwar (Case 4.7) consistently cited problematic high costs, on-going intense forms of bureaucratic experiences and practical problems that challenged his entrance into UKHE (and during his study). Such experiences might have extended social, economic and psychological consequences (Robinson, 2011). Supporting Tannock (2013), Anwar's voice highlights the on-going inequalities created by Britain's current policies which can polarise access between wealthy and poor students, as noted below.

For some students, formal channel limits (i.e. the need for a UK-based bank account) necessitated the use of informal channels of digital media to find accommodation, but digital practices were not universal and a highly uneven experience for some I.S.:

> 'Language, settling, the different environment was very challenging, you don't know how to find a place to live…searching websites, telling it by 'the mile', how do we know this? Practicalities were hard, we didn't know anybody. A [Iraqi] professor gave us an email address of two Kurdish guys, one in Birmingham, one near there; he collected us from the airport, he waited a long while, we didn't know him face-to-face. He took us to his home, we stayed the night. He took us to UoL; we stayed another two days with another Kurdish family [unknown] they helped us find accommodation and everything.'   [F,Ph.D,Iraq,I].

Experience of difficulty and hardship during the application process raised questions of how this might have shape opinions of UoL, notably if students felt a lack of support and disregard surrounding basic international study necessities, such as a safe place to sleep. Such perceptions may well go on to influence the content of future networked information (e.g. via blogs or when prospective I.S. contact existing I.S.). Thus, for some I.S., formal digital networks played an important role in navigating entrance barriers during ISM processes; for some, formal channels led to the use of informal channels; while for others, digital media was unhelpful and irrelevant. It was clear both formal and informal digital media were varyingly used to negotiate UKHE entrance by different I.S.. My study hinted at the great variety of diverse digital channels, platforms and practices I.S. used prior to and during relocation to UoL, as considered next.

4.4 Charting Digital Media Practices Prior to and during Relocation to UoL

BOS identified the relative importance of 12 digital channels (defined by function: see glossary) and the social and academic digital sites used by I.S., as discussed below.

4.4.1 Pre-UoL Digital Media Channels

The digital channels most frequently cited as very important (Figures 4.2 and 4.3) were: wikis (very important 24%; total users 198:86%), SNS (personal) (19%; 191:83%), photo and video sharing (15%; 185:81%), UoL bulletin boards (12%; 157:69%) and UoL Facebook (9%; 170:74%). The less popular channels were Muds/Moos (127 did not use:55%), folksonomies (125:55%), mash-ups (119:52%), non-UoL bulletin boards (90:39%) and UoL micro/blogs (38%:86). Information gathering (via wikis) and social digital practices appear to dominate most student's 'home' life spaces, signifying how many students' home-lives are digitally networked. However, although I.S. consulted UoL channels during application, these appeared less important. Indeed, while I.S. confirmed that personal channels thrived, some I.S. were unaware of UoL channels:

> 'UoL social media was not important to me. I found the UoL website in the middle of my studies. I still don't follow the university's Facebook page.'
>
> [F,Ph.D,Mexico,A].

Where high use of personal channels may have been expected, the high use of wikis was a surprise. Wikis (e.g. Baidu Baike, Wikipedia) allow collaborative social and/or academic authoring digitally (Salaber, 2014) through diverse interactions (Roussinos and Jimoyiannis, 2013). BOS may have highlighted how wikis developed in importance during UKHE entrance negotiations (e.g. where wikis were used more to aid improvements to language and academic practices, see Edwards, 2012; Greenhow and Lewin, 2016); further research might explore the effects of pre-UoL wiki use.

Some digital channels were used very little. Folksonomies, mash-ups and multi-user dungeons are associated with more open and free internet use. Folksonomies enable cross-over applications e.g. Twitter hashtags, public tagging (e.g. Del.icio.us; Pinterest) and shared photographs (e.g. Flickr). BOS replies for the three channels equated to a mean non-use of 89%, or very low importance. Indeed, explanation of these channels was needed for most qualitative participants:

> 'There were a number of digital medias you asked about which I had no idea what they were or what they meant.' [F,MA,USA,S].

Figure 4.2 Frequency Distribution: Pre-UoL Use of Digital Media Channels
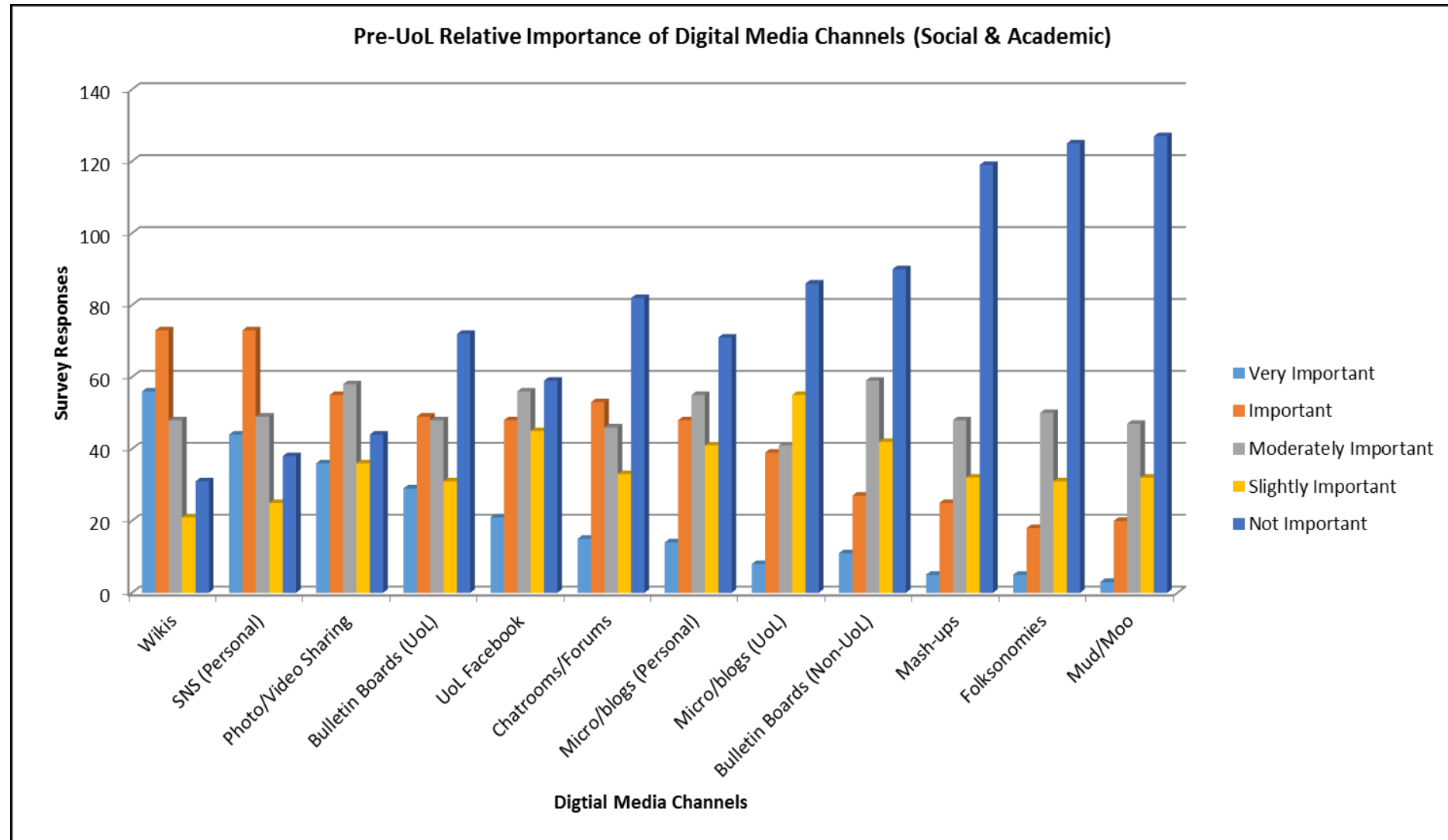
Figure 4.3 Pre-UoL Digital Media Channels by Total Users (Academic & Social)
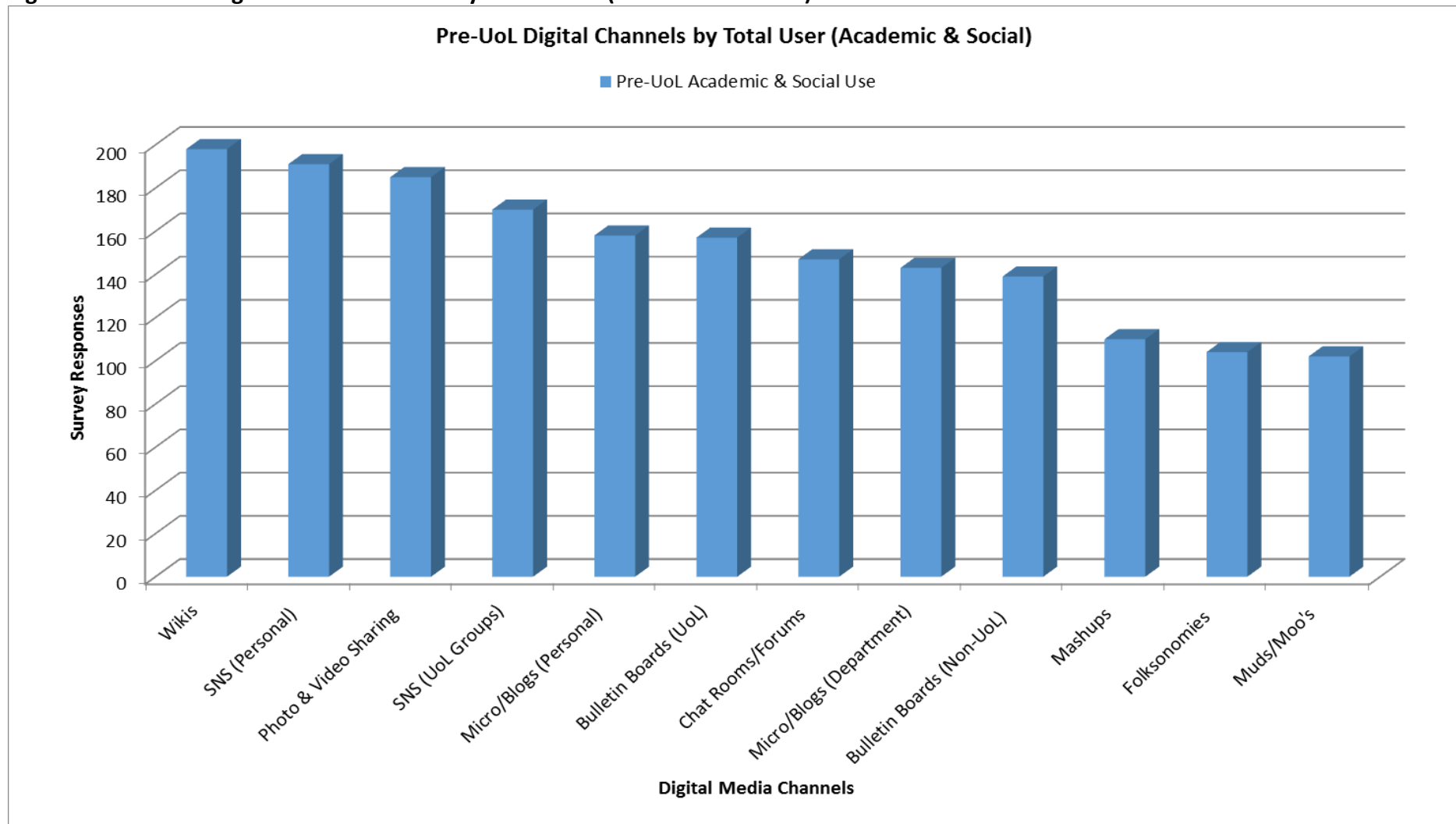
This blurring of boundaries might have created a fuzzy understanding of digital channels for students? While BOS reveals that the total I.S. sample used a multitude of different channels, individual I.S. appeared to use a relatively narrow band of digital channels. For most I.S., digital practices appeared embedded in daily life (Mirani, 2015) where personal channels played a larger role than official channels. The intensity of the use of wikis was of particular note, although the rapidity of technological changes (e.g. the rising use of Facebook, Twitter and Snapchat) since the study was conducted should also be noted. I now move to consider the platforms used, as discussed below.

4.4.2 Spatially Distributed Internet Platforms - A Challenge to Facebook

BOS asked I.S. to name the top five most used academic and social platforms before arriving at UoL. BOS results yielded 452 academic site responses (242 in the top ten) and 533 social sites (436 in the top ten). Here, 76% of respondents used academic platforms and 87% social platforms (Appendix 3, Table 3.6). BOS shows 203 responses in the top ten academic platforms were of US-origin, 34 were of Chinese-origin; 215 responses covered diverse platforms from other multiple centres. For the top ten social platforms, 254 responses in the top 10 were of US-origin, 168 Chinese-origin, 14 for Japan and with 96 responses returning other platforms (Table 4.2, 4.3 and Figure 4.4). Academic practices were more centred on USA-origin platforms, notably Google Groups, although wiki Baidu competed with Wikipedia, and Weibo with Twitter (with only eight users) and Facebook, in fourth place, indicated more limited academic use.

Table 4.2 Pre-UoL Ten Most used Academic Platforms

Academic Platform	Service Provided	BOS Responses	Geographic Centre
Google Groups	Discussion, forum, mailing lists	72	USA
Google Scholar	Scholarly literature search engine	31	USA
Wikipedia	Collaboratively built encyclopaedia	31	USA
Baidu (inc. Baike, Wenko)	Collaboratively built encyclopaedia	26	PRC
Facebook	SNS	23	USA
UoL Website	Study information portal	20	UK
LinkedIn	SNS professional orientation	12	USA
YouTube	Video sharing	11	USA
Sina Weibo (Weibo)	Microblog	8	PRC
Twitter	Microblog	8	USA
Yahoo! (Groups)	Discussion, forum, mailing lists	8	USA
Academia.edu	SNS for academics	7	USA
QQ (Groups)	Instant messaging	6	PRC

Figure 4.4 Diverse Pre-UoL Academic & Social Platforms
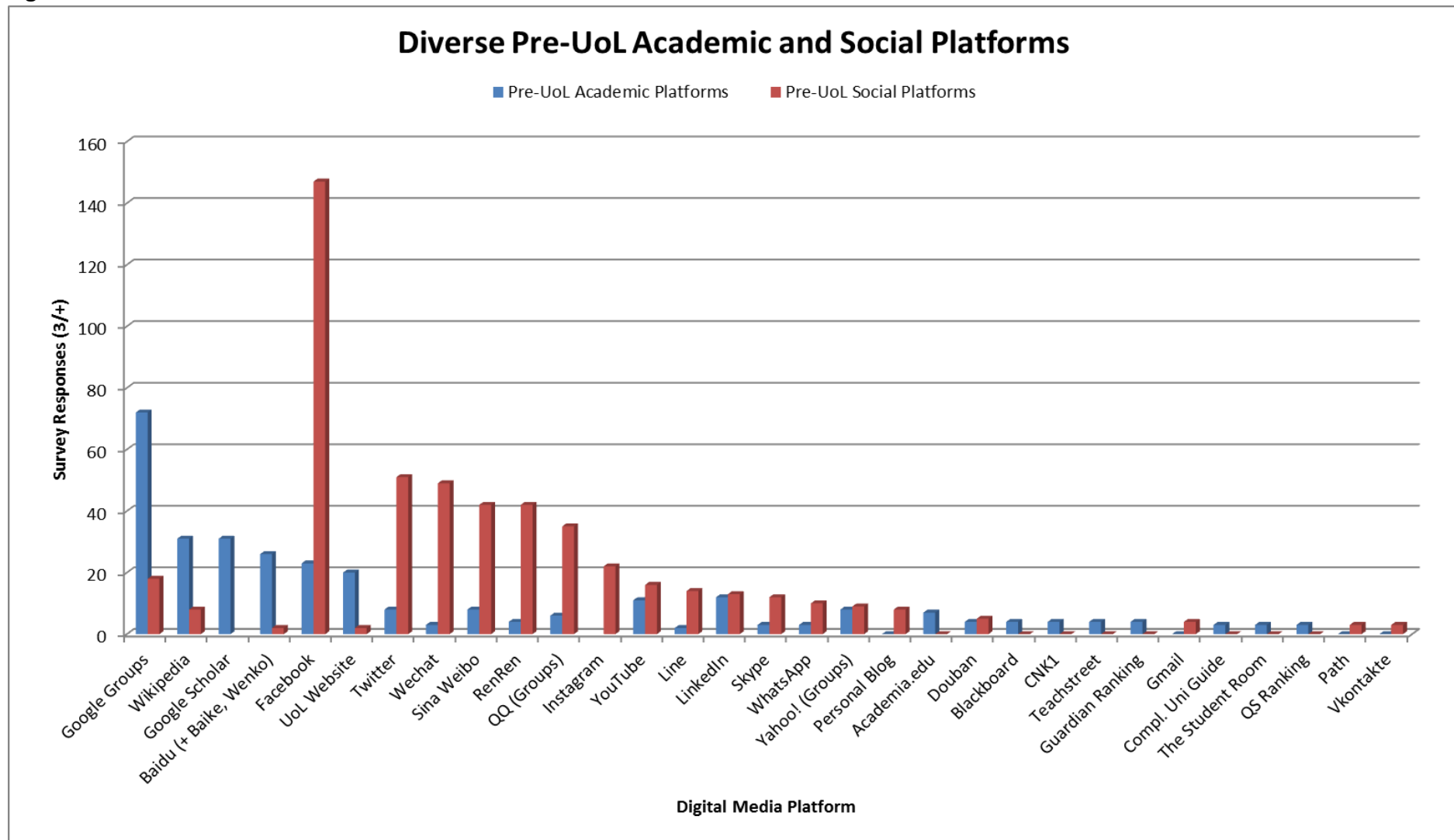
Table 4.3 Pre-UoL Ten most used Social Platforms

Academic Platform	Service Provided	BOS Responses	Geographic Centre
Facebook	SNS	147	USA
Twitter	Microblog	51	USA
Wechat (Weixin)	Microblog	49	PRC
RenRen	SNS, began as 'student only' platform	42	PRC
Sina Weibo (Weibo)	Microblog	42	PRC
Qzone/QQ (Tencent)	Microblog, SNS, games, music, shops	35	PRC
Instagram	Photo video sharing, SNS	22	USA
Google (Groups)	Discussion, forum, mailing lists	18	USA
YouTube	Video sharing	16	USA
Line	Instant messaging of texts, video, audio	14	Japan

However, for the social platforms, BOS delivered some interesting findings with regard to the presumed global dominance of Facebook. For instance, where Facebook, with 1.94 billion users (Facebook, 2017/Q1) is frequently cited as the dominant global platform, it was clear that many other spatially distributed digital platforms, other than Facebook, were also important. This matter is omitted from much of the literature. For instance, WeChat, RenRen, QQ and Line indicated network-centred audience bases (Elliot, 2014) acting as alternatives to Facebook. Also, the polymedia functionality of some Asian platforms (e.g. Line and QQ) appeared higher than platforms more centred on the UK. To give some more insight to these little known platforms (in the literature way), WeChat, is compared to 'smaller' Douban, and Line, are briefly outlined below.

Wechat is a Chinese mobile-based microblog/messaging service with over 1.1 billion accounts, 768 million daily and 889 million monthly users (2016:Q4), with over 100 million users outside of China: daily video and voice calls equate to 280 million minutes (540 years) (WeChat Life Report, 2015). Douban is a smaller Chinese SNS/internet forum, more intellectually centred, with 60 million users. Douban has been threatened with government closure, because of its pro-human rights stance in China. Line is the most popular mobile-based SNS in Japan, Thailand and Taiwan (akin to WeChat). Line started in 2011, set-up by Naver (South Korea) after the Japanese tsunami disrupted fixed communication channels. A key attribute is free video calling. Line has 218 million monthly active users and recently floated in New York and Tokyo (2016) for £1bn.

Some I.S. described how platform usage involved both social and academic purposes, evidencing 'cross-over usage':

'I use Weibo, as a factual site, it's not just personal.'   [F1,M.Sc,PRC,FG5].

Multiple non-Facebook platforms were also discussed by students:

> 'We use Line, you set a group, then chat to members; my family have a group. Line is not popular in Europe, only in Taiwan and Japan. It's really popular in Japan.'   [F,M.Sc,Taiwan,I].

> 'Lots of people, our friends, use Viber in our country.'   [M,Ph.D,Iraq,FG3].

> 'We usually use Viber and Tango, also Skype.'   [F,Ph.D,Iraq,I].

My research reveals the high use of many alternative platforms to Facebook (see Jin, 2015). The hegemony of (US-led/styled) Facebook was countered by many other networks of often culturally proximate platforms (Georgiou, 2012; Taneja and Wu, 2014). These were centred on an 'alternative geography', of different language, history, culture and politics (Collins, 2012b; Waters, 2014; Barnett and Park, 2014). This again exemplifies how the global digital environment is a space of uneven internet geographies (Graham et al. 2014), where place shapes digital practices culturally.

In the UK, many of these culturally proximate platforms can be largely invisible. For instance, seldom do hyperlinks on US-led platforms link elsewhere in the world, or to non-English language platforms (Wu and Taneja, 2015:3). Most of the alternative platforms in the study were major corporate concerns (e.g. South Korean 'Daum Kakao' was valued '$3billion' by Junga, 2014). However, mergers have involved cross-language and cross-cultural union, such as Japan's Ratuten which acquired Cyprus-based, Israeli owned, Viber, for $900m in February 2014 (Kim, 2014). Also, Daum Kakao purchased US-based 'Path' in 2015. Mergers involve digital hegemony; they can also unite language and culture, digitally. This raises questions about how international study might shape cross-cultural digital interactions for I.S. at UoL (see 6.3.4).

Overall, my research confirmed that while Facebook remained the most significant platform, many platforms from other centres were also important to students, supporting Saw et al.'s (2013:156) statement that 'it's not all about Facebook'. The internet has distinct spatial biases and uneven geographies (Graham and Zook, 2011, 2013; Graham, 2014b), often centred on different language and culture. In turning from this complex picture of multiple and diverse platforms, I now consider another highly interesting aspect in relation to pre-UoL digital practices, as students voiced growing concern and scepticism about these very digital practices.

4.5 When Digital Media Do Not Matter and User Concern and Scepticism about Digital Practices

Many accounts of digital practices assume high levels of even usage (Sin and Kim, 2013) which my thesis has made some moves towards dispelling. Digital geographies are uneven and individual preferences and background matter (Kim et al. 2014). For instance, one in five UK adults remain offline because of 'non-interest' (Blank, 2014): gender, class, age and parenthood can affect (non)usage of digital media (Boyd, 2014; Scradie, 2015). Assumptions about blanket usage 'ignore the digital, economic, political and technical conditions within which individual choices are made and within which individuals must inevitably act' (Marien and Prodnik, 2014:35). My study has already demonstrated digital practices are spatially demarcated according to technical infrastructure, political considerations and cultural topographies and revealed a swath of non-users, or those who questioned whether digital media 'mattered' at all.

4.5.1 Non-Users Question the Role of Digital Media

Some students were non-users, or they questioned the role of digital media before entering UKHE. BOS asked students to cite the top five academic and digital platforms used before entering UKHE. Responses indicated 24% of international students did not use digital media academically and that 14% did not use it socially:

> 'Before coming to UoL social media was not important at all; only when getting here.'   [F,Ph.D,Mexican,FG4].

> 'No connections online, with UoL or anywhere at all.'   [F,M.Sc,PRC,FG5].

> 'I'm not happy with social media; I'm not interested in using it!!!'
> [M,Ph.D,S.Arabia,S].

Individual preferences and study field mattered:

> 'I don't do social media, I'm your one demographic […]. All my contacts were through email. In my field of study it's not something you want to use, it's very conservative.'   [F,MA,USA,FG2-Arts].

BOS further revealed narrow use of just one or two platforms. Some students voiced vexation about digital saturation (Sherry, 2002), especially the over-proliferation of similar platforms. This was very noticeable where students had attended IHEIs in other

cultural centres. Platform proliferation can create information overload (Lee et al. 2016) and digital fatigue (Bright et al. 2015; Ramadan and Abosag, 2016):

> 'Yes, too many platforms, I can't handle them all […] I pick one up…dump another, sometimes I go back, but I can't manage all the social media, it's too much, I don't have time, it's a waste of time trying to manage all the accounts.'   [F,M.Sc,PRC,I].

Students offered varied reasons to why they did not use digital media or where use had become limited. Some I.S. did not want to use digital media; others had become saturated, and distanced themselves from it. As my research progressed it was becoming evident that 'web legacies' were influencing some student views, where prospective students could not trust digital media to solve real life problems.

4.5.2 Digital Media Use - Not a Guarantee for Solving Real-Life Problems

BOS found 75% of respondents viewed face-to face contact 'far more important than using social media' (16% disagreed; 8% preferred not to say). All interviewees confirmed face-to-face contact as more important than digital contact. Face-to-face relationships remained of key importance to I.S.; something particularly evident where personally directed control was necessary during transitions into UKHE. I.S. described how significant problems and judgements had to be dealt with tangibly, which involved trust and where digital media could not offer answers to personal decisions:

> 'This was a serious decision, I'd never use Facebook to make such a decision…only to view the official website, maybe hear advice from students at UoL, or in UK and know Leicester.'   [F,MSc,PRC,FG5].

> 'Social media was not at all important. I found information by myself. On Facebook you may not find the real thing through someone else. It's far better to research on your own.'   [M,M.Sc,Indian,FG2].

Students discussed how digital media were useful for general enquiries about UKHE/UoL, although too generalised and/or unreliable information was a concern:

> 'A lot of information for the group was not accurate, especially visas; that's always a topic people don't know… the time to get a British visa, it's different for every person… you can waste time. The comments made cannot be generalised like they were.'   [M,M.Sc,Colombia,I].

Here, the contingency and current validity of networked information was questioned. For example, there were issues with contemporary web-based data, drawing on out-

of-date historic web-based data. Innocent mistakes, mis-reporting, lack of attention to detail were found to muddy the digital network environment when students were making their transition into UKHE. Most I.S. did not believe inaccurate information actively malicious, although wariness of malicious intent and self-regulated routines pervaded some accounts. Face-to-face endorsement remained highly important:

> 'I heard about UoL at an undergraduate psychology seminar. A teacher went here, said this was a really nice university.'   [F,M.Sc,Trin&Tob,FG1].

Sometimes digital media were not practical across distance, notably for accommodation procurement in advance of arrival to UoL. In this instance digital network interactions were ineffective:

> 'There was a [UoL] Latin American Society Group. I sent a message about accommodation, they posted it, but no one really helped, most of the people were Mexican, not Colombian.'   [F,M.Sc,Colombia,A].

Network barriers also occur as 'class based systems exist among producers of online content' (Scradie, 2011:145). Using digital media did not guarantee equal treatment within networks, where language/cultural differences maintain uneven place-based and digital geographies. Some I.S. voiced withdrawal from digital practices because networks were adding to emotional pressures during existing UKHE relocation stress:

> 'Back then I was quite lost, I felt in a hurry, no time to get into cultural shock. I didn't have a house. Digital media was not used; it was difficult to make appointments between Mexico and here…two weeks in bed and breakfast…I didn't know anybody.'   [F,Ph.D,Mexico,I].

Other students needed to make in-person evaluations of accommodation and neighbourhoods, meeting potential house-mates before signing a contract: digital media were of little import in this situation to these students:

> 'The most difficult thing was finding a clean house in Leicester. Jesus Christ I went to 'over 25 places' [emphasis] looking for something clean, I wasn't looking for nice, just clean, to feel comfortable. Finally, I found somewhere, but I had to buy my own mattress and bed.'   [F,M.Sc,Colombia,FG1].

Web legacies involved self-regulation and judgements governed by individuals. Some students had a more general wariness and scepticism towards digital media.

4.5.3 Wariness and Scepticism about using Digital Media

The web legacies noted above have implications towards the framing of digital practices, notably around negative reputation and rumour (Burrell, 2012) and 'pervasiveness in the intimate spaces of everyday lives' (Leszczynski and Elwood, 2015:21). Students voiced wariness and scepticism towards using digital media. It was noted that women were particularly aware of 'digital vulnerabilities'. This situation permitted insight to how gendered differences might 'structure control of digital selves and grant access to digital others' (Leszczynski and Elwood, 2015:21):

> 'I treat digital media with caution. Like, someone contacts you, is it the person in the profile or a fat guy at a computer, you must have caution.[…].
> If it's private, don't post it!   [F1,Ph.D,Mexico,A].

> 'Nothing on the internet is private.'   [F2,Ph.D,Mexico,I].

> 'What goes online, stays online.'   [F,M.Sc,Colombia,I].

Although, worries about digital media were not solely confined to women:

> 'They made a mess, people thought it was her posting; that worries me.'
>   [M,M.Sc,Colombia,I].

Cautionary measures derived from first and second hand negative digital experiences which involved personal and networked emotional impacts. For example, hijacked accounts, malicious attacks and lack of control caused anxieties:

> 'I cancelled Twitter, it was hijacked, many times someone posted things as if it was me. I don't want Twitter […]. I don't like Google, I don't have control. Google Groups are so invasive…the pictures, they're supposed not to be there, they keep showing up in an email. I don't want it. I should be the owner, the author, with rights to delete. Also all my devices, I don't want Google updated, I can't stop it.'   [F,M.Sc,Colombia,I].

This student confirms how digital media technologies lessen control over personal information, privacy and are invasive to intimate spaces. Here, it is not the 'agency' of the individual, or 'design of the technology', but 'who gets to define, determine, and control the context of information flow' as 'seemingly mundane yet deeply personal daily practices come with new kinds of disruptions' (Leszczynski and Elwood, 2015:22). I.S. voices revealed digital practices traded on a compromise of sharing personal (often sensitive) information, a reduction in freedom and loss of anonymity: to government

and corporations (Leszczynski, 2012) to allow access to information (Bekkers and Edwards, 2103; Fuchs et al. 2013; Uldam, 2016):

> 'You have to stop thinking about private life, the only private life you have is face-to-face in the forest, assuming there's no camera in the forest.'
>
> [F,Ph.D,Mexico,A].

One I.S. regarded Facebook as an invasive corporate unit (Park and Gim, 2012):

> 'One of my friends once called Facebook…"Facebook is the succubus"… and that's what it is!' [F,MA,USA,FG2].

Indeed, 'banal social lives become digitally-mediated and can be subject to quantitative encapsulation through lexical analysis' (Crang, 2015:4). Individuals can disappear outside of their word usage. This I.S. detested Facebook digital relationships.

In a change of perspective, other students regarded digital media too overtly-upbeat (notably Facebook), evidencing ideas about the falseness of digital media:

> 'Lots of people on Facebook present life the best way possible, I wonder how true it is, achievements etc…I don't know how real it is, maybe it's a need to be acknowledged?' [M,M.Sc,Colombia,I].

> 'I know people who lied through social media; they make life more attractive than it is.' [F,Ph.D,Mexico,I].

Some students criticised the Facebook 'like' button (Gerlitz and Helmond, 2013; Scissors et al. 2016) noting the absence of a 'dislike button' ('reaction buttons' have since been added). False representations of life posted by others were subscribed to by one interviewee, who needed this 'simulation' (Baudrillard, 1994):

> 'No one wants to feel sad; I don't want all the horrible information. Sometimes I want to see all the bright sides. Facebook is an upbeat happy website. Say I have an argument with supervisor…no one will care; but say you're in Edinburgh and say it's nice they agree with you.' [F,Ph.D,PRC,I].

However, the next extract offered insight to the emotional dissonance (Wang and Collins, 2015) that can be promulgated through digital practices:

> 'Maybe digital media makes you much more lonely than ever before, you just share bright things, happenings. I don't think I've ever come across too much sadness online, everybody seems to live in heaven.' [F,Ph.D,PRC,I].

This raised questions of whether I.S. were 'performing being a student' in the 'digital arena' of 'ambiguities, complexities and contradictions' (Madge and O'Connor, 2005:91) inculcated within daily UoL life. For instance, some students discussed digital

friends not being friends, involving political purposes or politeness, raising questions of peer pressures (Park et al. 2009):

> 'I added people as Facebook friends sometimes for political reason, or just being nice.'   [M,M.Sc,Taiwan,A].

This situation revealed shallower, fleeting and ephemeral online relationships (Tang, 2010), described by another student:

> 'That's the definition of Facebook friends [shallow] perfectly sums it up. If you're real friends, you'll email or call directly.'   [M,M.Sc,India,FG2].

In a final point, during relocation, one student criticised co-nationals, too quick to seek answers and wasting time on Facebook:

> Questions on Facebook can be distractive […]; they don't bother to search online. I don't like babysitting; they are capable of finding out themselves.'
>   [M,M.Sc,Taiwan,A].

Here, 'dumbing-down' individual agency relative to the immediacy of digital interactions caused concern. Information seekers sought direction in the international study journey; however this situation raised questions about individuals not thinking 'through themselves', raising questions about knowledge acquisition itself (Siemens, 2014; Zhou, 2015). This final point ends the chapter with a closing summary below.

4.6 Summary of Key Findings

Chapter 4 has given insight international students' digital practices before and during entry into UKHE. Prior place has been found to involve complex spatialities where material geographies shape uneven assemblages of people and digital practices. Indeed, prior place is a co-constituitive foundation to socio-digital morphologies which can entangle and inflect upon international study future spatialities. Place acts as a filter defining digital relationships which vary between different social and spatial groups. These spatialities complicity shape ability to access UKHE, a matter omitted in much of the literature. Figure 4.5 summarises the key ways in which prior place is entangled with matters. We see how international study entails crossing a 'jagged landscape' (Waters, 2012:125) riven by uneven HE opportunities. Prior place can circumscribe access to digital resources and is linked to international study futures. Prior place acts as an intermediating facilitator in social/digital morphologies which recursively limit or create international study opportunities. Many factors can

influence this uneven relationship. Technical infrastructure, techno-political limits, educational structures, social relations and cultural values and violent conflict present prior place legacies which influence access and ability to digital connectivity which in turn can influence the access and ability to enter UKHE. Geopolitics can create and uphold existing pre-UoL world inequalities. For most people, disadvantage is an enduring force barring access to HE. Digital media have not necessarily improved access nor levelled entry into UKHE, precisely because place matters in understanding vectors of digital media use for international study. Digital media *cannot* be viewed as the 'great leveller' in providing equality of access to international study.

Figure 4.5 The Importance of Prior Place for Understanding Digital Practices

No doubt the internet has extended UKHEIs hinterlands, and digital media were part of many students' lives (although not for all I.S.). However, ideas about pervasive digital media can be misleading. Many factors can shape the digital divide. As such, prior place filters scales of freedoms and I.S. might also exercise (non)-use choices. For I.S. entering UKHE, digitally uneven prior place can present a variable digital divide shaping

futures by information-based advantages. This type of digital user empowerment (Madge and O'Connor, 2006:199) represents (circumscribed) voice and agency within I.S. selection processes. Thus, information geographies are entwined with international study opportunities and possibilities linked to UKHE entrance. Graham et al. (2015:88) capture the importance of place relative to information:

> 'Information has always had geography. It is from somewhere; about somewhere; it evolves and is transformed somewhere; it is mediated by networks, infrastructures, and technologies: all of which exist in physical, material places' where the augmentation of information is 'part of the place itself'.

Literature has tended to frame international study as the prerogative of the privileged elites. However, I found great contrasts in digital privileges. Most I.S. were 'ordinary people' (Collins, 2006, 2009; Ho, 2011) engaged in UK international study following years of financial preparation which involved other actors (family, friends, employers, sponsors) who continued support during international study. Thus, work presenting I.S. as elitist educational subjects (implying full and free access to technologies) can be ill-founded. I found UKHE entrance is unequal between entrants (conspicuously for some students emanating from the Middle East). Being poor, 'middling', or residing in politically unstable areas presented UKHE entrance difficulties.[21] 'Digital privileges' (information and funding opportunities) benefitted some I.S.; for others, prior place denied digital privileges (limiting information and producing 'harder' UKHE entrance). This hints at how the digital world can mediate entry into UK international study, both creating and building upon potential unevenness amongst I.S..

For I.S. who had access to good quality internet, digital practices (variably) mediated entrance into UKHE. Digital networks during transitions into UKHE permit a view of I.S. agency circumscribed by formal entrance channels. This limited agency could initiate new social (networked) relationships during UKHE entrance. These networks could also provide a future social base once at UoL. For many students, digital practices acted as social and academic interface which lubricated ISM via information and emotional support needs. However, I also found the web is not worldwide, nor the great leveller. The digital divide is real and shapes UKHE entrance opportunities: this entrance can

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[21] Many I.S confirmed financial limits shaped UoL experience (i.e. prior place continues to affect later experiences).

also be a highly variable experience. Digital worlds are not ubiquitous, there are non-users and digital limitations. The digital world cannot always solve real life problems, where there is wariness and scepticism to issues such as personal safety, information quality, government and commercial digital practices.

In this variable situation, differentiated I.S. voices have brought to 'life' the everyday use of digital media in entry to UK international study while also demonstrating diverse prior place digital practices. This differentiation is further evidenced via varied UKHE entrance motivations. These selections often involved emotive personal parameters as well as economic perspectives, evidencing more international, cosmopolitan and socially progressive views. My research so far has clarified the extent that I.S. are (variably) caring, thinking, emotionally networked people with 'whole lives' of many layers of experience and social organisation outside of the classroom. I.S. are implicitly linked to their prior place, something often omitted in literature.

In taking a step back, translocal ideas begin to surface. Translocality, ISM and digital worlds appear interconnected, indeed 'as one', in relation to networked past, current and future place (Brickell and Datta, 2011). Prior place is viewed as multiple layers of coalesced experiences of place (Grainer and Sakdapolek, 2013), linked through digital experiences to next place. Prior place, as pre-material UKHE also shapes I.S. future life spaces. Spatialities appear to coalesce through mobility for international study and digital practices, where the conditions which mediate the inception of mobility in prior place cannot be viewed in separation to undertaking international study: international study is recursively inflected/created through social/digital morphologies. Prior place is the foundation for both established digital practices and one point of social organisation involved in future digital practices, which are fundamentally connected. We begin to see how digital legacies spatially transform next place experiences and digital practices. In essence, place might be viewed as 'digitally contagious'. These ideas are a foundation for deeper investigations into I.S. digital worlds once they have entered UKHE. In following the international journey, I now move to explore 'everyday' digital media practices once students have relocated to Leicester (Chapter 5).

Chapter 5 Charting Everyday Digital Practices at the University of Leicester

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 charts the next part of the student journey as international study 'touches ground' following relocation to Leicester. This is a time of new experiences and encounters with a different study place. I map I.S. experience and everyday social and academic digital practices during this period. To disentangle the role of digital media during international study, I combine analysis of BOS data with thick description using I.S. voices. This empirical detail is vital given the very limited understandings about international study experience and the digital morphologies (see glossary) complicit within daily international study: rich (mundane) detail lets us see into I.S. 'everyday lifeworlds' (Holton and Riley (2013:69). The depth of empirical detail reveals how international study is digitally saturated: the digital is the 'everyday furniture of universities' (Selwyn, 2014:7). I explore inter-personal academic and social relationships and how experiences of prior place as 'home', UoL and onward mobility shape, and are shaped by, digital practices.

In this chapter I examine the mediating role of the Leicester digital campus (5.2), investigating the digital channels and platforms active during study at UoL (5.3). I then explore diverse digital groups, with a focus on nationality, gender and study level (5.4). Finally, I discuss digital media usage, changing practices and onward mobility (5.5).

5.2 Attending the University of Leicester Digital Campus

5.2.1 New Encounters and Digital Media

This section explores digital practices in Leicester and shows how new study place shapes social, academic and digital morphologies. BOS revealed over 98% of respondents used digital media once at UoL. From this finding, 43% confirmed digital practices increased, 42% specified no change in use, 13% used digital media less (evidencing variable 'thickness' of use), only 1% declared non-use (figures are rounded to nearest whole number). Some I.S. digital experiences changed, while others remained the same. The place that students were coming from mattered in shaping digital practices. One finding involved variegated practices by nationality (Figure 5.1).

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Figure 5.1 How UK International Study Influences Digital Practices by Nationality
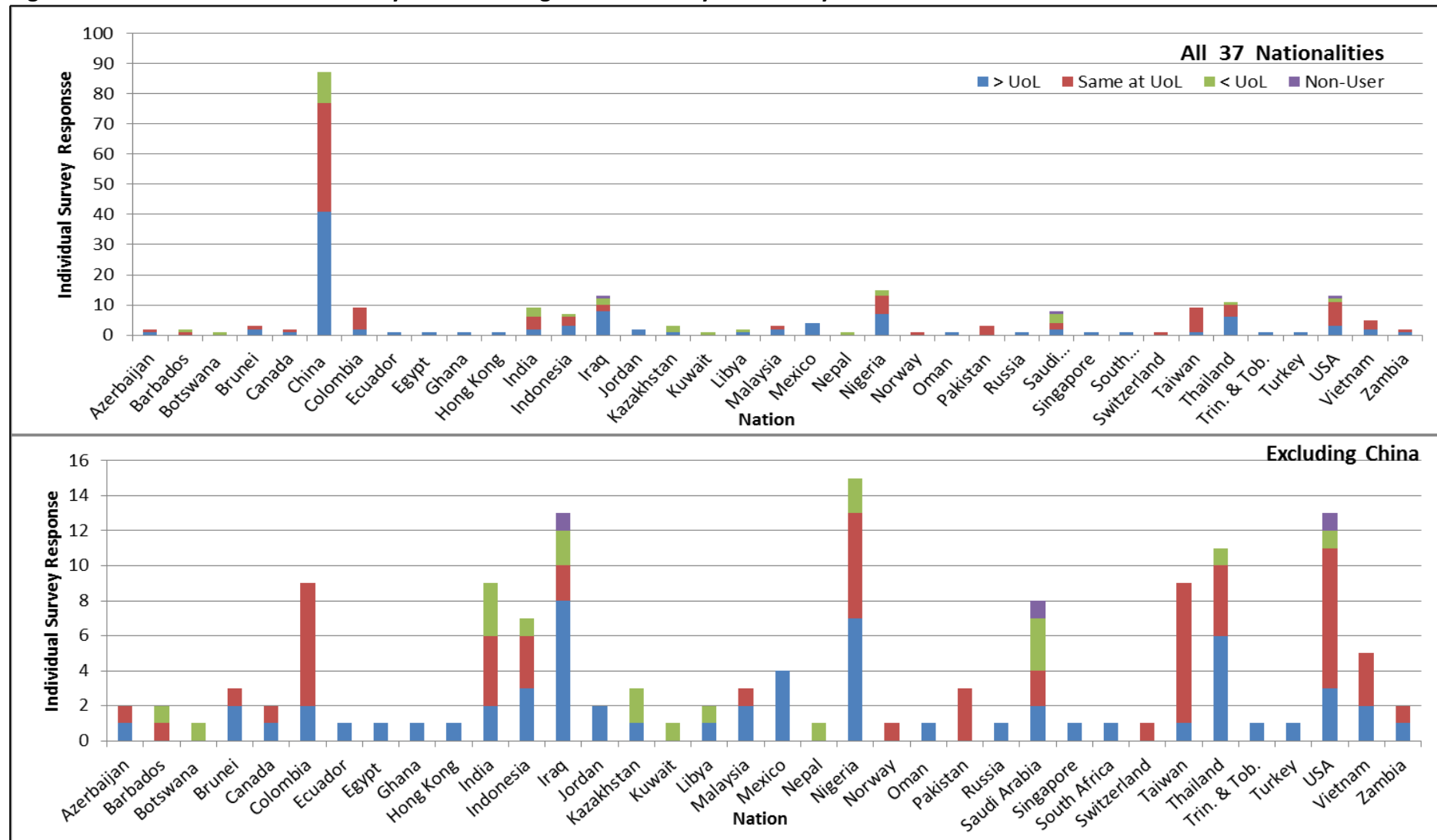
Some national groups appeared highly digitally networked in their home location (I.S. from Taiwan, Colombia, USA, Pakistan and India). Other nationalities appeared to increase their digital practices at UoL (Mexicans, Iraqis, and Thais). This was noticeably the case for some national groups, for whom digital practices multiplied (Egypt, Ghana, Jordan, Oman). It was clear that international study experiences at UoL influenced digital practices (Collins 2009a,b, 2010b, 2012b) evidencing how place/changed lives and digital practices are recursively linked. Many I.S. felt that engaging with digital practices, once at UoL, was inevitable, as discussed in six points below.

Firstly, the British political regime was associated with creating *digital freedoms*:

> 'There're five parties in Kurdistan, each with social media, this creates problems, some don't have open minds. It's different from the UK; there everything is controlled by government.' [M,Ph.D,Iraq,I].

> 'We don't have Facebook or Twitter. I definitely use it more on campus. Facebook plays a very important role.' [F,M.Sc,PRC,FG5].

> 'UoL gives me a sense of freedom. At my university in Colombia, they would block students' access to Facebook or Skype. The same happened in a university in the US.' [M,M.Sc,Colombia,I].

Secondly, the *UoL learning space* underlined digital technology (Wentworth and Middleton, 2014). Network connection was vital and involved applications (apps) such as Microsoft Outlook, Blackboard and PROSE. More elaborate digital apps were used according to study field. This ubiquity was encouraged through 'free', UoL-wide wi-fi.

> 'Wi-fi is everywhere, it makes you use the internet.' [M1,Ph.D,Iraq,FG3].

> 'Here, it's [wi-fi] open all the time, not like in our country. We have a slow internet and not available all the time.' [M2,Ph.D,Iraq,FG3].

> 'Costs less, got wi-fi every places :-).' [F,MA,PRC,S].

However, this shift to a fully digitised learning space created challenges for some students, evidencing digital identity divides (Goode, 2010):

> 'They don't realise you're new to everything, the technical study, the IT. They don't try to help you learn [*these*] things here.' [M,M.Sc,Iraq,FG1].

> 'My first year here was very difficult…knowing the systems. I never had training outside Nigeria, my research area was new, the tools, software, I never had Linux. Coming here, you must be technologically wise to survive.'
> [M,Ph.D,Nigeria,I].

Experiences of technological differences were clearly not the only issue faced by students; pedagogic and linguistic changes interacted with an altered digital environment and formed tensions during international study:

> 'I faced many unexpected difficulties. I didn't expect it to be so hard in the first year; many different systems, also the relationship between the student and supervisor, sometimes good, sometimes not.'
>
> [M1,Ph.D,Iraq,FG3].

> 'Many new techniques here mean a lot of learning in the first year when it is also stressful.' [M2,Ph.D,Iraq,FG3].

> 'I'm finding my Ph.D stressful […] we are international students, and English is hard.' [F,Ph.D,Iraq,I].

> 'Academically I was surprised and shocked, this place is really harsh.'
>
> [F,M.Sc,PRC,I].

> 'In the beginning everything was difficult. I didn't understand the lectures, doing essays was very difficult.' [F,M.Sc,Colombia,A].

> 'Because of different cultural background, so many things I don't understand thoroughly.' [F,M.Sc,PRC,S].

Thirdly, many students were impressed by *UoL digital library*, where everyday online remote access to British, European and USA catalogues, databases and journals positioned the library as a key study resource:

> 'I assumed it would be very different, the facilities, especially the library. The electronic things are very important. I [previously] faced difficulties in getting articles.' [F,Ph.D,Iraq,I].

> 'Chinese libraries are not very good, the UoL library is nice, I've been surprised by the systems too, we don't have Blackboard and internet too. It's very impressive. [F1,M.Sc,PRC,FG2].

> 'The digital library is fantastic, really fantastic.' [F2,M.Sc,PRC,FG2].

Saw et al. (2013) remind us that university libraries play a vital role helping students adjust to a new learning environment and build awareness of varied knowledge bases, since they can act as a collaborative resource and technological hub of interaction. The UoL library was both a physical space of interaction and a virtual place hosting digital media, networking together knowledges, students and staff.

Fourthly, as noted above, study mobility can *change the technologies encountered* and produce new academic digital practices and behaviours. Smartphones took on

particular importance for many students. Smartphones 'crystallise informational layers of places in a moveable container' and 'impact representations of places' (Graham et al. 2015:89) as entangled mediators of study mobility experiences. One I.S. voiced how a smartphone was viewed a luxury item at home but was regarded essential at UoL:

> 'I bought my phone before I came here, but it's not a smartphone for here […]. So, I bought this new one, it's a smartphone; with the apps I can also do a video call with my parents.'   [F,M.Sc,PRC,I].

Study mobility thus resulted in major changes to digital behaviour.

Fifthly, another I.S. voiced *new social media literacy* involving re-structured academic networks:

> 'At the beginning, I was not very fluent in using social media, no literacy. Being at UoL altered my approach. My supervisors pushed it, I really notice it now.'   [M,Ph.D,Rwanda,I].

Finally, *new platform take-up often thrived at Leicester*, adding to existing practices, evidencing the importance of place for understanding everyday digital media routines:

> 'Prior to arrival I used Facebook and followed on Twitter for my study. Over time here it's now Google+ and Viber, WhatsUp?   [M,Ph.D,Nigeria,I].

> 'I started using Skype in Leicester, talked to my mum every day.'
>   [F,M.Sc,Colombia,A].

> 'I use digital media more now I live in the UK, because I don't have face-to-face contact on a daily basis with people as I did before coming here, so it's not necessarily intentional.'   [F,M.Sc,Canada,S].

The examples reveal new digital literacies arose via 'particular comings-together of people, technologies, and space' (Leszczynski, 2014:1). International study thus created new digital practices plus new skills, mastering new technologies and evolving social and academic routines. Cyclical exchanges are seen (Madge et al. 2009c). I.S. brought legacies of place-based digital practices from 'home' to UoL; UoL encouraged new practices (by promoting Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn) and required new devices (e.g. smartphones). UoL digital library transformed some I.S. digital practices. New practices could be 'passed on' to others elsewhere (Collins, 2009a; 2012b).

In sum, the UoL is digitally saturated and (variably) shaped I.S. digital practices. As I explored the digital campus, students voiced the importance of digital media for creating social networks in the new place of study, as considered below.

5.2.2 Making Connections in Leicester

This section examines I.S. experience and connections in the new study place: Leicester. Prior work has discussed I.S. feeling powerless during international study. For example, Schweisfurth and Gu (2009:466) described the 'bubble' of living, studying and socialising, as isolating for some I.S.. Leicester digital networks made UoL less of a bubble, mediating differentiated I.S. experiences. Five points validate this argument.

Firstly, all interviewees voiced how they entered UKHE with a positive approach:

> 'You have to go with an open-mind to every country.'   [F,Ph.D,Mexico,I].

> 'I decided to adopt the UK culture, if not maybe you'll be homesick, sad, or get a psychological disease.'   [M,Ph.D,Iraq,I].

> 'You have to accept, not judge what you don't like.'   [F,M.Sc,PRC,FG2].

This open-mindedness was implicit in initial I.S friendship-making activities, through settling-in and over the period of study. I.S. conveyed a sense that UoL created 'throwntogetherness' (Massey, 2005:151) generated through new digital connections:

> 'SM is for academic and social use: it keeps us together.'   [F,M.Sc,PRC,S].

> 'Social media helped keeping in touch with home, became crucial to maintain relationships and get involved in Leicester.'   [F,Ph.D,Mexico,FG1].

Secondly, my analysis evidenced the reiterative nature of place upon digital practices. Leicester shaped I.S. experiences, which then spilled back to shape I.S. connections. Arrival at UoL initiated a flux of friendship-making activities on/offline (Madge et al. 2009c; Beech, 2014a). Most students viewed this initial networking vital, viewing networking a necessary (pre)-counter to possible loneliness. New UoL connections involved face-to-face vetting (5.3.4), and then often moved online, where profile vetting further filtered and shaped UoL connections. Upholding Collins (2009a), some connections stayed online only, while other social connections were entangled in daily I.S. on/offline - inside/outside classroom lives. This process involves pre-registration co-national groups, Leicester-based ethnic communities and new networks (4.3.2).

Thirdly, UoL networks were complex and uneven. Inside/outside classroom cultural topographies shaped variable digital morphologies between different I.S. (6.4.1):

> 'In the beginning it was hard, I was the only full-time student on my programme, making friends was really complicated, when I've also had a hard time relating to British people.'   [F,M.Sc,Colombia,FG1].

'On my course most are Chinese, incredibly young, like an island sometimes. […]. I approached English students, which are not many, to make friends, but they remained very independent.' [M.Sc,Colombia,FG3].

'Social media was needed to organise events for students from my own country, less needed for other international students.'   [M,M.Sc,Taiwan,S].

Within daily I.S. life, instant messaging was vital for social and academic organisation:

When my classmates were holding parties or events, they also used Facebook to arrange it. Facebook helped my social life in Leicester.'

[M,M.Sc,Taiwan,A].

'Social media plays a good role…broadcasting information…upcoming tests, assignments or a vacated room.'   [M,M.Sc,India,S].

'Facebook, it's always social stuff…oh…we do have Facebook Groups, especially for projects together.'   [F,M.Sc,PRC,I].

Thus, complex I.S. digital networks shaped daily life inside and outside the classroom.

Finally, students confirmed that digital media offered emotional support. Without digital media negative experiences would have been more extensive: UoL digital connections unsettle ideas of I.S. powerlessness. Rather, I.S. digital networks challenge 'traditional' acculturation theory, notably bi-dimensional models of intercultural adaption. Madge et al. (2015:683) note students are active agents during multiple and hybrid interactions *through* international study. Everyday Leicester digital connections allow students some agency during acculturation processes, reducing feelings of powerlessness. Such connections were highly important. Saha and Karpinski (2016) warn 'loneliness, homesickness, depression, stress, anxiety, alienation, isolation, and the loss of identity status, status and self-value and other psychological problems may occur' (ibid:58) during international study. My analysis shows I.S. digital networks render two-dimensional and linear acculturation models too fixed. My multi-dimensional trans/local relational stance sees the daily importance of other I.S. (Rienties and Jindal-Snape, 2016) (and actors elsewhere). I.S. lives are multi-networked, involving subjectivites, identities, social, academic, and prior place issues.

In sum, daily UoL digital networks variably shaped individual I.S. experience. Crucially, place appears recursively reflected in I.S. digital practices. During the exploration of Leicester connections it became clear that everyday 'home-links' were also highly important at Leicester, as considered below.

5.2.3 Digital Links with Home: Parents, Family and Friends.

This section explores digital links with 'home' through six findings. Previous studies have often focused on the physical isolation of I.S. (Sawir et al. 2008) in one place (Jindal-Snape, 2016), however, ideas about 'digital home' challenge current parlance.

Firstly, an overwhelming majority of I.S. surveyed (86%) agreed digital networks were important for maintaining online friendships at home: 72% viewed primary friendships were home-based; 63% considered that digital media strengthened feelings about home. Significantly, 79% viewed digital networks emotionally supportive during international study (Dimenescu, 2008). Digital networks often suppressed feelings of isolation from home. Knowing digital connection with home was available (if not used) offered security at UoL. This appeared more evident with female I.S. (see 5.4.2), where synchronous connection and instant messaging generated immediate feelings of safety through technical objects (Ash, 2013:20) and media locally:

> 'You use it a lot, depend and rely on social media; like in the Facebook chatting room, you see the light is green, you feel safe.'   [F,M.Sc,Taiwan,I].

Other I.S. voiced how study mobility had (re)produced new digital practices at home:

> Before Leicester my mom didn't have Hotmail or Facebook, before I left I opened accounts on Skype and Facebook, I had to teach her how to use it.'
> [F,M.Sc,Colombia,A].

> 'Social media became important when I moved here. I started calling home, this got my mum involved with social media...she didn't know how to use a computer. Before I left I got her a netbook, she now uses Skype, logs on, uploads, downloads...all sorts of things.'   [F,Ph.D,Mexico,I].

'Home' networks could be crucial if problems occurred. One I.S. had issues with fees/accommodation 'and' her internet link, where study retention was questioned:

> 'The first week in Leicester I didn't have internet connection or UoL accommodation. I stayed in a hotel with internet...my computer had a problem...the hotel didn't understand Spanish... A whole week without internet! I couldn't talk to mom, she was very worried, I needed to tell her about the fee problems. I wanted to talk to friends, they were worried. It was very difficult. That's why I wanted to come back to Colombia. I was alone, no job, no money...very difficult.'   [F,M.Sc,Colombia,A].

Secondly, 'home' can mean many things (Anderson, 2012) and digital 'home-links' helped to level the playing field for some student groups at UoL (Leszcynski, 2014:13).

For one group of Kurdish-Iraqi students digital home-links involved Kurdistan *and* Leicester-based Kurdish-Islamic community (see Case 6.4):

> 'We have a Facebook group, if we have a meeting we sort it on the website, there are over a hundred in the group.'   [F,Ph.D,Iraq,I].

Digital links with 'home' were an important 'grounding' for UoL life: they produced a sense of order, continuity and safety while aiding well-being and generally a more stable UoL experience for some students, although this was not a universal experience.

Thirdly, some I.S. voiced how home could be an unsafe place, where the place of belonging is not always a place of security, and so digital mediations with home may not have always resulted in positive support for all I.S.. Unsafe home involved accounts of danger (death/injury/capture during violent conflict: Case 4.4); fear (authoritarian political regimes: Case 4.2); insecurity and chaos (violent crime, instability and corruption); inequality (e.g. education and finance: Case 4.3) and an inferior environment (pollution; overcrowding; poor technical infrastructure). Thus digital home-links via news and entertainment media evoked complex reactions by these I.S.:

> 'I use Twitter for home news, but it makes me sad, 'cos of the current political situation. I'm overseas, so can compare the political world here and in Mexico; I see how fucked-up we are there.'   [F,Ph.D,Mexico,FG4].

> 'I'm sad, but had to accept my city [Bogota] is so chaotic, I don't think much of anything there. It was scary for me, facing the fears of going back.'
>   [F.M.Sc,Colombia,I].

> 'Peking suffers horrible air pollution, it's why I travelled.'   [F,Ph.D,PRC,I].

Fourthly, digital home-links were important for transitions where local social context (Brooks and Waters, 2010:153) shaped homeward-biased digital morphologies. Some students voiced painful transitional experiences while at UoL, notably students from more collectivist cultures (Chang, 2013) (e.g. I.S. from China, Colombia, Ghana, Iraq, Nigeria and Taiwan). Many interviewees submitted that digital media played a vital supporting bridge (Collins, 2009a) which 'mediated educational mobilities' (Collins, 2012:249) as students settled-in at UoL. Sometimes I.S. experience gaps were wide and transitions were not guaranteed. While home-links acted as a supportive bridge, home-links could act as a restrictive barrier to forging new UoL relationships. These findings corroborated Collins' (2009a:839) 'Janus-like effect', as considered next.

Fifthly, most I.S. were physically separated from loved ones at home. Some voiced stark emotions of 'missing' and 'sacrifice' in relation to family members at home. These family relationships were often digitally augmented across large distances. This digital support acted as an emotional survival kit (Kim, 2010:1). This was evidenced by Aghedo (Case 5.1) who experienced homesickness, academic difficulties, loneliness and isolation, which resulted in feelings of being forced to live in an unwanted place. International study produced negative impacts on Aghedo and his family elsewhere.

Case 5.1 Aghedo: 'Without Social Media I Would Go Home'   **[M,Ph.D,Nigeria,I]**

'I have married, never been away from my family. When I first came to Leicester, I was very busy, but after a period of settling I had problems, it was difficult to survive without my family. So, on a daily basis I was online with my wife…Twitter, Facebook, WhatsAp, Skype…I spent a lot of time on it. In the case of WhatsAp, we are always together; my phone has constant internet connection. Before coming I didn't care much about social media, but in coming to Leicester it became most important for me and my family in Nigeria; we're in touch 24 hours.'

'Without social media I would not be here. I would go back home. This is the honest answer. I would leave this city and go back. The programme, it's difficult for me, at times I force myself; it's very difficult. […] I forced myself. The only reason I have managed these problems is because of social media, without social media it would be difficult to survive in this country'

'Just five minutes alone with my wife, just to be in contact, I need that, to find out what they are doing. Where I work in Nigeria, where my family reside, is not my home town, they don't have family, there's only me; I have to interact with friends to do this and that for my family.'

'It was a big decision to come to UoL: I miss my family. Here is very stressful, the lab is testing, you just want to go home and sleep. I just come to school, study, then go back home, eat, lay down on my bed, I will need to talk to my wife, but I will be tired. I think, 'oh my god' that is how I will live; I don't go anywhere, do much of the social interaction, I don't smoke, I don't drink, I don't do anything, just stay at home, it's kind of a very 'hardened' situation.'

UoL experiences compelled that Aghedo be in constant digital connection with home (Thomas et al. 2016), being 'always together' with his wife. Aghedo raised concerns about the 'mechanistic and passionless process' of drifting through HE (Selwyn, 2014:3) indicative of the dysfunctions involved in mobility (Waters, 2015b:1). Aghedo depicted the 'increasing passive-ication of interactivity' (Andrejevic and Burdon, 2015:19): being 'unplugged' (Thomas and Whittaker, 2016) would have resulted in his return home. Pervasive digital practices acted as a critical supportive bridge for his study retention (Wohn and LaRose, 2014). However, home networks, as Aghedo's only social focus, raised concerns about digital limits which reduced his UoL face-to-face experiences. Aghedo revealed the importance of synchronous connection to 'invisible partners' at home during international study, although the extent of his loneliness raises policy concerns. Importantly, we begin to see how ISM is shot-through with

emotions, which can result in emotional chaos resulting from corporeal separation between loved ones left behind. These loved ones are often invisible in ISM literature (Anderson, 2012; Brooks 2015b:197). Digital networks mediated emotional dissonance and enabled 'feeling close' to loved ones which could be vital for I.S. study retention.

Finally, some I.S. travelled with partners/family, bringing one dimension of 'home' to Leicester, thus avoiding corporeal separation. In my study eight Ph.D I.S. were married; six had children, two stated without travelling partners they would not be in UKHE:

> 'I wouldn't be here without my husband. I picked a course to bring him. It's been really hard to settle in this country. I was afraid of everything, looking around, how may they think of us, are we good, bad even?'   [F,Ph.D,Iraq,I].

> 'I discussed with my wife about a Ph.D. We studied together in the Netherlands, but she didn't want to study again, but fully supported my decision and I checked universities around the world...the USA, here, the Netherlands, Australia, I applied to various, but the decision to come to the UK was very practical, my wife was allowed to work here [...] it was an economic decision together.'   [M,Ph.D,Ecuador,FG4].

This "togetherness" via the proximity of significant others shaped I.S. emotions, their international study experience and digital socialities. For other I.S., home-links kept more perfunctory transnational relationships, and although important, were not vital:

> 'I post on Facebook more often now I'm overseas, so family and friends get a glimpse into UK life, also so my family knows I'm alive.'   [F,MA,USA,S].

> 'It's just for talking back and forth, keeping that connection with home.'
>   [F,M.Sc,Trin&Tob].

However, 'digital home' appeared as a space of ontological security for many I.S., although cannot be viewed as panacea for all negative experiences: place remains pivotal to I.S. experience, as evidenced via one I.S.:

> 'Living in this small city has affected me a lot, it's really hard, it drives me to a kind of sadness or depression sometimes.'   [F,M.Sc,Colombia,I].

Different I.S. had various different relationships with 'home' which decided the purpose and meaning of digital practices. This relationship was recursively shaped by UoL experiences and emotions which involved others elsewhere (Leszczynski and Elwood, 2015). This captures how everyday international study is a fully relational space created and sustained via emotional relationships and mobility for study. Findings now turn to consider what digital media are used at UoL.

5.3 Digital Morphologies at the University of Leicester.

Once at UoL it was important to gain a detailed empirical understanding of everyday digital media practices of students to see how international study might be implicated in changing digital morphologies. BOS therefore compared academic and social channels used before and after relocation at Leicester. Students were asked to specify up to five favoured academic and social platforms (websites) in prior place and at UoL. I first discuss digital media used for academic purposes.

5.3.1 Digital Media Channels and Platforms used for Academic Purposes

Regarding digital channels (Figure 5.2) wikis (commonly used for information retrieval), proved the most used academic channel before coming to UoL (196 users; 86% of respondents; [pre-UoL users 198: change -1%]); however, wiki importance appeared reduced on arrival at Leicester (Figure 5.3) (see detail below). Following wikis, the next most used academic channels were SNS personal (172; 75%; [191: -10%], SNS UoL (165; 72%; [170: -3%] and photo and video sharing (164; 71% [185: -11%]. The closeness of results suggested a combined approach to channel usage. The UoL bulletin board (155; 67%; [157: -1%] was the fifth most important channel. The top five academic channels used at UoL were ordered the same as used in prior place, although usage narrowed across all channels at UoL (mean usage -5%).

Regarding the least used academic channels, muds/moos (54 users; 24% of respondents; [pre-UoL users 102: change -47%]), mash-ups (62; 27%; [110: -44%]) and folksonomies (64; 28%; [104: -38%]), revealed high non-use and relocation to Leicester had resulted in even lower use of these channels than at home. The two remaining channels, 'non-UoL bulletin boards' (101; 44% [139: -27%]) and chatrooms/forums (104; 45% [147: -29%) offered mid-range results, indicating nearly half of respondents networked with non-UoL academic groups This evidenced 'digitally de-centred' study practices (Collins, 2010,b). The least used channels were used considerably less at UoL (mean usage -37%). I now consider the platforms used at UoL. There was a diverse variation of academic platforms used by students and a significant uptake of new platforms on arrival at UoL, particularly Facebook, Twitter, Blackboard and LinkedIn. BOS found a concentrated use of six SNS platforms evidencing a narrowing of other academic platforms with arrival at Leicester (Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.2 Pre-UoL (Joint Academic/Social) versus UoL Academic & Social Digital Practices
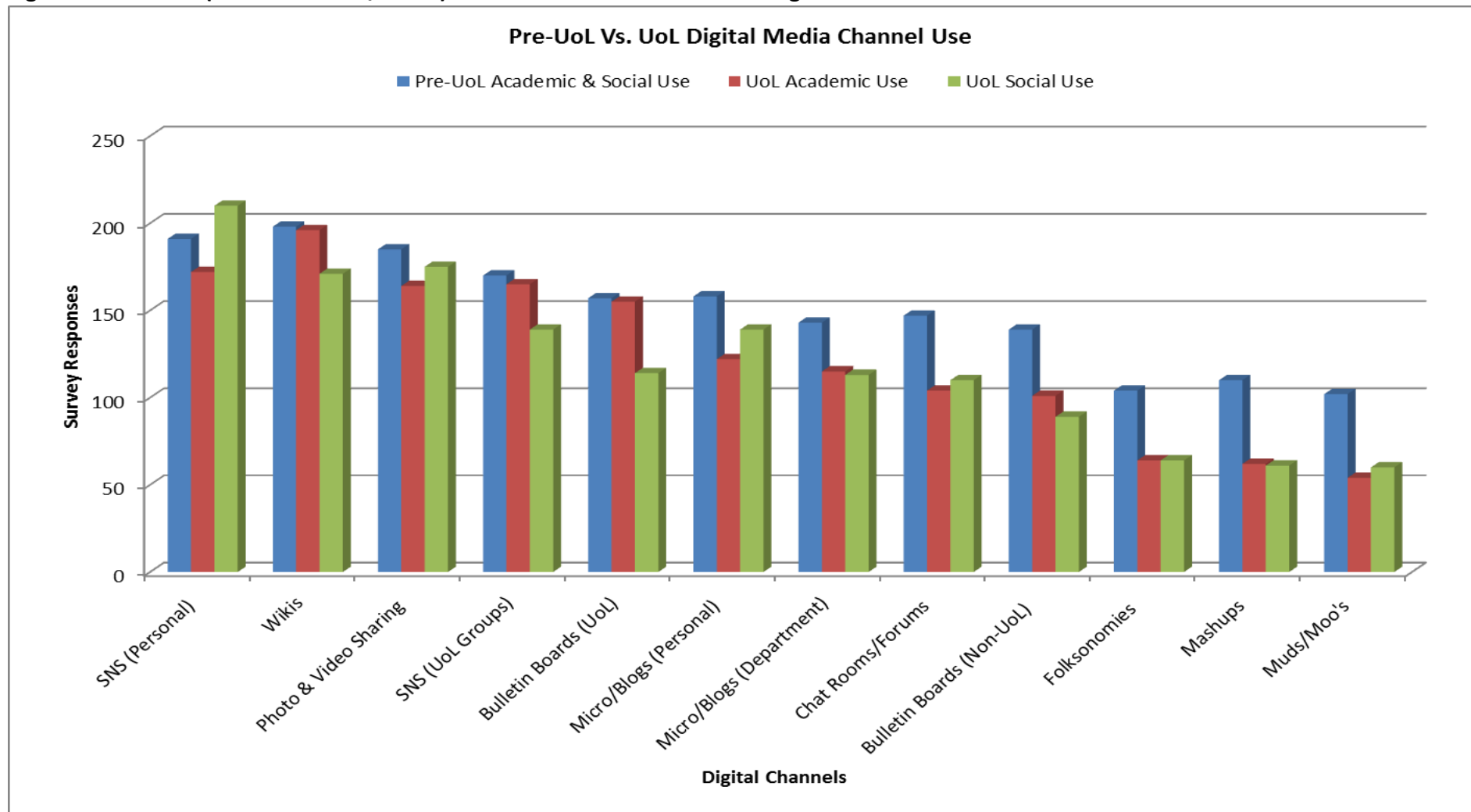
Figure 5.3 Pre-UoL Academic Platforms versus UoL Academic Platforms
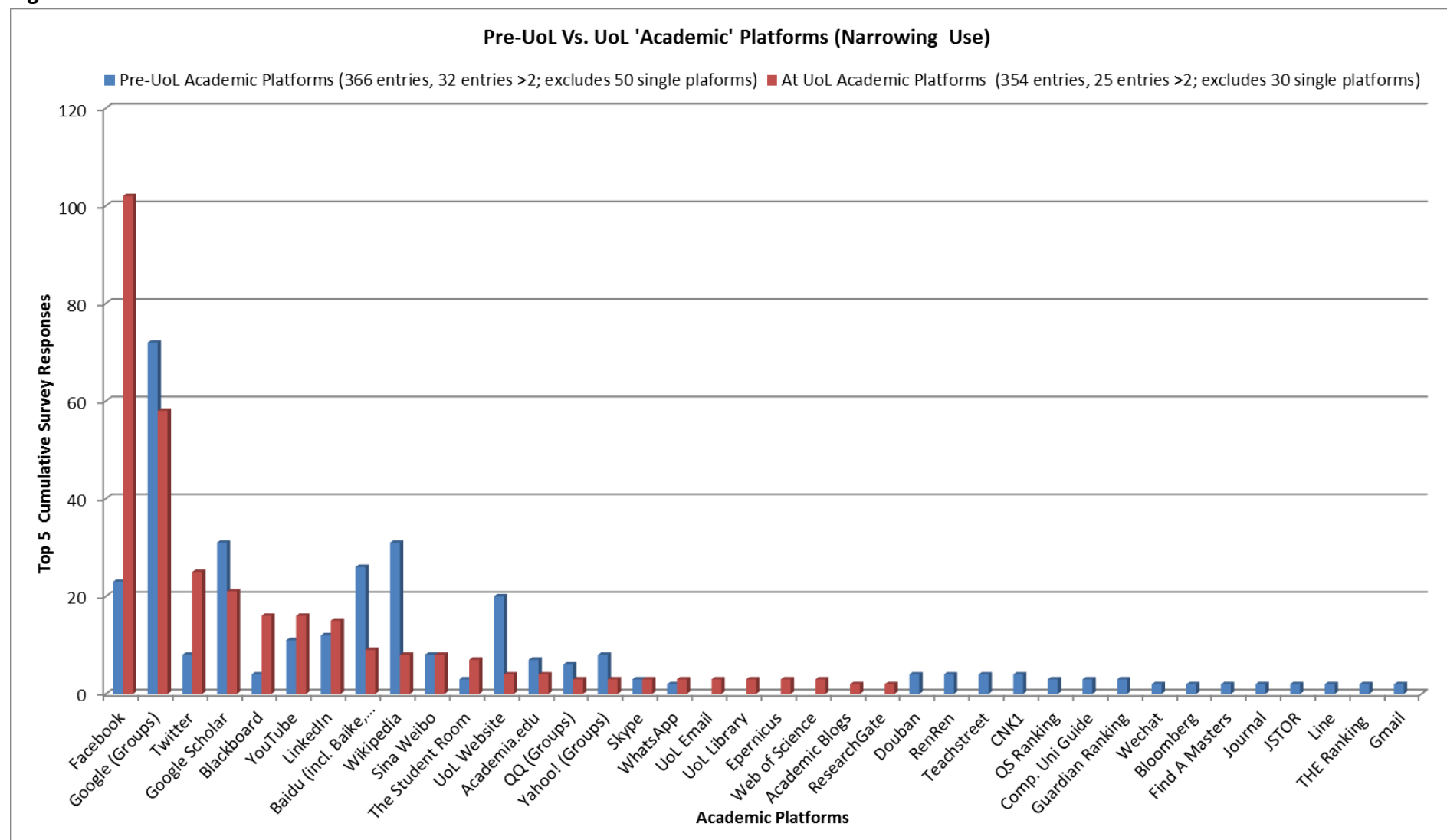
A key finding was that Facebook was the primary academic platform at UoL (BOS: 23 replies pre-UoL to 102 at UoL; change +343%); Google Groups (72 to 58; -19%) ranked second, where higher pre-UoL use inferred Facebook as less predominant in prior place; Twitter, third (8 to 25; +212%) was a key platform adopted at UoL, a significant finding; Blackboard, fourth (4 to 16; +300%) was an anticipated result given Blackboard was a key UoL institutional platform; YouTube, fifth (11 to 16; +45%) represented a moderate increase; some I.S. discussed comparison trials of freely available platforms (Chinese I.S. trialled YouTube versus You-Ku); finally, LinkedIn, sixth (12 to 15; +25%), a careers platform, received more interest in the UK; LinkedIn was a key UoL exit platform (see 5.5.4). International study also produced new digital practices.

At UoL I.S. started using new sites such as the Student Room (a UK community and 'social learning' SNS), Academia.edu (USA academic SNS), ResearchGate, Epernicus Web of Science and academic blogs (Ebrahimn, 2016). Other platforms were used far less, notably academic wikis (Wikipedia, -74%; Baidu Baike -65%). Adjustment to UKHE pedagogy may explain changes. BOS showed some platforms were no longer used (or used much less). WUR, UKHE guide sites 'and' UoL website were much less used. Such platforms appeared useful during UKHE entrance but not during attendance at UKHE. The following students evidence how international study reshapes digital practices:

> 'We don't have Twitter; I now use it here a lot.'   [F,M.Sc,PRC,I].

> 'I got my Twitter, my Blog and LinkedIn here, pretty much all my digital media, except Facebook. I learned how to use them here. I'm now connected to academics, teachers and students.'   [F,Ph.D,Mexico,I].

> 'Before coming here, Facebook was often for games, but now our Masters class has a Facebook Group, we use that a lot. Academically it is crucial.'
>   [F,M.Sc,Trin&Tobago,FG1].

International study also generated new routines on platforms already used; social platforms could increasingly be employed for academic purposes:

> 'Social media makes information easier and faster, it has improved academic use rather than just for non-academic use.'   [F,Ph.D,Nigeria,S].

International study could transform appreciations of pre-existing practices:

> 'The Careers Department helped me create links via LinkedIn, the university pushed that. On Facebook, I now feel a lot more exposed posting, on Twitter it's like being more yourself.'   [M,M.Sc,India,FG2].

5.3.2 Digital Media Channels and Platforms used for Social Purposes

This section explores daily social digital practices. BOS revealed 60% agreed 'using social media at UoL was mainly linked to social matters' (29% disagreed, 10% preferred not to say). Importance of social channels did not appreciably change from prior place to UoL (Figure 5.2 above). The top five social channels are considered below.

The primary social channel was 'SNS (personal)' (210 users; 91% of respondents; [pre-UoL users 191: change +10%]). This was the only expanding channel in BOS results and this underlined the extent that social digital practices were *'the'* social glue (Madge et al. 2009c:141) of international study at UoL:

> 'I use social media just for social life; Facebook is the most important digital media for me.'   [F,M.Sc,Taiwan,I].

> 'I don't use social media academically just yet; I prefer to keep the two worlds separate.'   [F,MA,USA,S].

In second place, 'photo and video sharing' (175; 76% [185: -5%]) remained important. Many I.S. valued sharing images as explicit representations of their international study experience; imagery helped surmount cultural and language barriers (see 6.5.2) between I.S whilst circulating and establishing views about UoL to others (see 6.3.5):

> 'Some Facebook friends knew I was studying abroad, saw my pictures in the UK and contacted me for information and suggestions. There are at least five who expressed intentions.'   [M,M.Sc,Taiwan,A].

> 'I will use Instagram to upload pictures of my graduation.' [F,MSc,PRC,FG5].

Positioned third, social wikis (171; 74% [198: -14%]) involve I.S. collaborative sharing and updating social knowledge, experiences and information (e.g. The Student Room [also a forum]; Baidu Baike;). Wikis aided information exchange between pre-UoL, current, exiting and post-UoL I.S. (Case 4.5). Platforms in this channel can be highly entwined, being used socially and academically, creating 'fuzziness' surrounding usage.

In fourth place 'micro/blogs (personal)' (139; 61%; [158: -12%]) remained popular (e.g. Twitter; Weibo). Usage is complex as blogging involves micro (up to 140 characters) and macro prosumption. Microblogs were often used for delivering short focused personal opinions around international study experiences and interests:

> 'Networking with LinkedIn, stay in contact on Facebook, and giving opinions on Twitter.'   [M,M.Sc,Colombia,S].

Blogs (e.g. HelloUK!, Hi5) are publisher defined. I.S. voiced how blogs often reflected experiences (6.3.5), imbued with ideas and images of their new study place. I view blogs as a means of encoding spatial experience (Kitchen and Dodge, 2011:16). Blogs could be widely consumed. As such, I.S. bloggers act as 'reporters' of international study experience. Thus I.S. blogs have UoL recruitment and policy implications (7.3):

> 'We get all the information just from social media. People share their own photos and their own feelings, sometimes they write a long piece of work, sometimes 500 words or so, about their feelings on Leicester. People get a clear idea and you can compare places. If say 90% say Leicester is very nice, you say, ok, you'll want to go there, if they say it's a very messy place, you'll stay away.'   [F,Ph.D,PRC,I].

> 'I could post victim-needed information on Facebook, or ask some of my friends, who told me stories of robberies in Leicester.'   [M,M.Sc,Taiwan,A].

Finally, SNS (UoL) (139; 61%; [170: -18%]) e.g. Facebook, Google and WhatsApp groups were prominent. Such groups were used more pre-sessionally than SNS (personal). SNS (UoL) was used to contact other I.S. (pre-UoL and attending) and UoL departments. I noted usage often involved course or department and formed the basis for social groups (evidencing how academic/social cross-over practices could develop). Incidentally, the least used social channels ranked identically to academic channels: muds/moos (60 users; 26%; [102: -41%]), mash-ups (61; 27%; [110: -45%]), folksonomies (64; 28%; [104: -38%]); ISM had increased non-use of these channels. Non-UoL bulletin boards (89; 39%; [139: -36%]) and chatrooms/forums (110; 48%; [147: -25%]) were mid-range results (inferring de-centred networks).

The expanding SNS (personal) channel and reduced use of the other most used social channels reveals a narrowing of practices at UoL in relation to social platforms (Figure 5.4). Many pre-UoL platforms remained in use at UoL, although practices could be static, expand or contract. New platforms were also adopted (e.g. Pinterest, FlickR). Narrowing practices involved UoL Facebook gaining in importance ('home' responses 147 to UoL 160: +9%), this appeared to impact Google Groups (18 to 13: -28%) and other platforms. Many I.S. confirmed they viewed Facebook as *'the'* I.S. social platform (see 5.3.5). All, except one, interviewees used Facebook at UoL. This may have policy implications for how the UoL connects with I.S.. Facebook was 112 responses ahead of the second most used social platform, Twitter.

Figure 5.4 Pre-UoL Social Platforms versus UoL Social Platforms
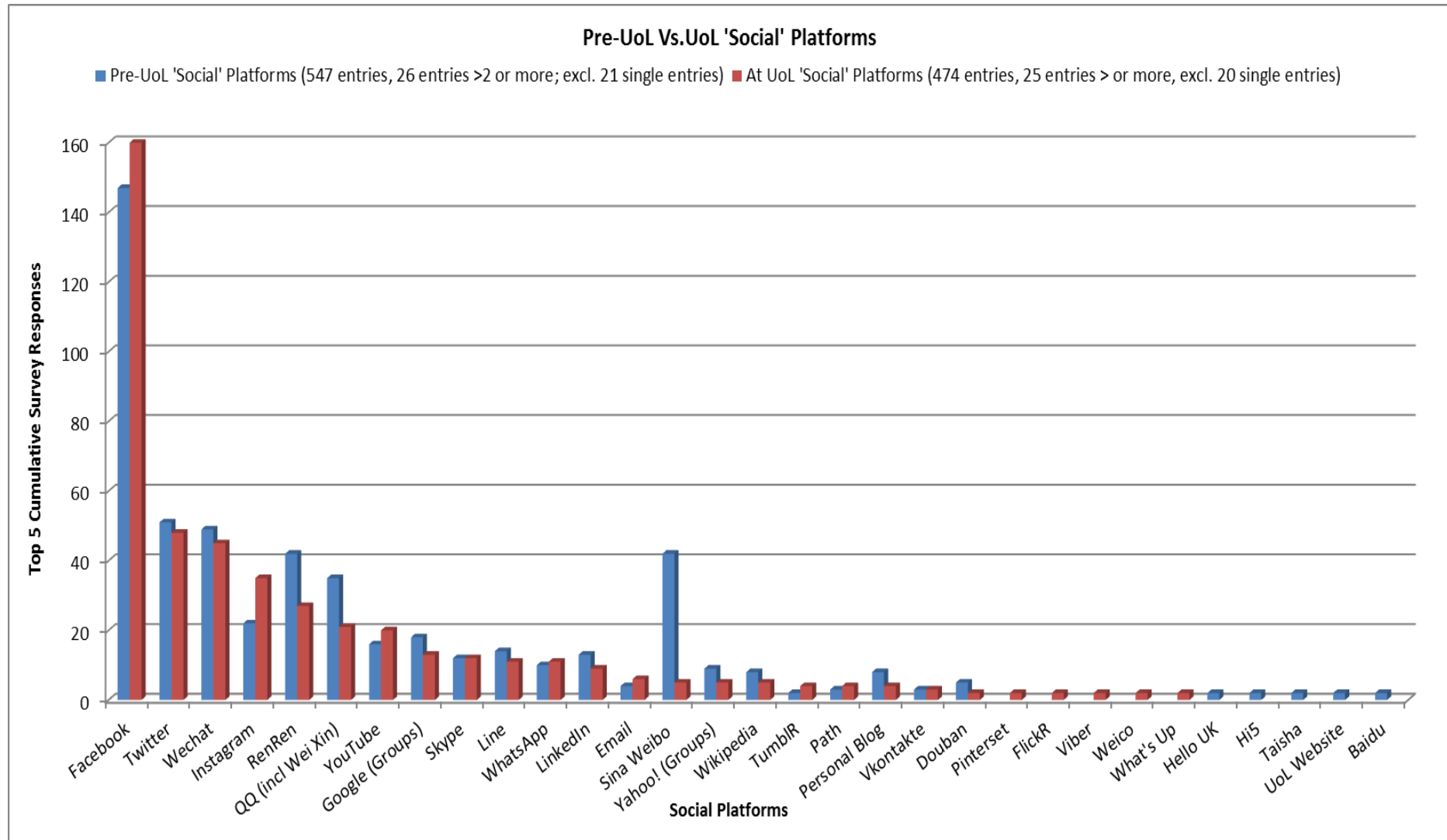
Regarding Twitter (51 to 48: -6%) this was placed second and almost static in social use. Higher Facebook use may have accounted for the slight decline in use, but Twitter was clearly important. Some national groups, notably Chinese students, adopted Twitter as first time users on arriving at UoL.

> 'Chinese people are using Chinese WeChat or Weibo, local media in China. Here it's Facebook and Twitter, for sending messages, showing pictures and sharing ideas.'   [F,Ph.D,PRC,I].

Chinese platforms remained in relatively high, but declining use, centred on third placed WeChat (49 to 45: -8%), fifth placed RenRen (42 to 27: -36%) and sixth placed QQ (35 to 21: -40%). Fourth placed Instagram (22 to 35: +59%) usage increased, and seventh placed YouTube (16 to 20: +25%) confirmed the importance of image sharing. One intriguing result was the sharp decline in Sina Weibo (microblog: 42 to 5: -88%) from sixth place to joint fourteenth (with Yahoo Groups and Wikipedia). Alexa (2016) ranks Sina Weibo 19th (world) and 4th (PRC) and was replaced by Twitter, WeChat and Facebook at UoL (see 4.2.2 and 5.4.2). Analysis reveals how UoL acted to homogenise certain key digital practices, notably Facebook usage. Digital practices were entangled via different socio-political-cultural centres. For instance, the Chinese firewall shaped Chinese students' UoL practices. Alumni illustrate matters: where students did not use Facebook prior to international study, leavers confirmed they would use Facebook to contact other alumni in their future careers:

> 'I'm in touch through Facebook with classmates, housemates and people met at parties.'   [F,M.Sc,Colombia,A].

> 'Facebook helps me keep contact with friends around the world. I now use Facebook to get involved in different social groups in Taiwan too.'
>   [Male,M.Sc,Taiwan,A].

> 'I will keep using Facebook in China by VPN.'   [F,MA,PRC,S].

My study reveals a flux of narrowing and expanding digital practices. Prior, current and future place shape complex social/digital practices as students develop new international study-related digital regimes. This flux reflects international study spatial complexities (re)produced via the social/digital nexus. While seeing such matters, it became apparent that academic and social use was rarely singular, as detailed below.

5.3.3 Entwined Academic and Social Use

As my research advanced it became clearer that social and academic digital practices were not always discrete, but were commonly entwined. I.S. voiced complex scenarios. For example, I.S. research interests could involve questions posted on social platforms:

> 'There're situations, you're trying to get something from your work, maybe data analysis. I now log onto my social sites and see what happens, it's routinely part of my life.'   [M,Ph.D,Nigeria,I].

Academic digital practices were also socially significant for some students:

> 'Some people, we have the same interests and we talk, and yes, because of academic talk, we become friends.'   [F,M.Sc,PRC,FG2].

> 'It's social, especially talking to a classmate about work.'   [F,M.Sc,PRC].

> 'You meet people over and over academically, in those terms you expand socially.'   [M,M.Sc,India,FG2].

> 'Browsing classmates' Facebook pages sometimes I was interested to know them, especially if they had a cool lifestyle […]. I became good friends with some classmates and shared private life.'   [M,M.Sc,Taiwan,A].

Another student discussed social use becoming academic:

> 'I used GrindR, I met a researcher and shared ideas, so it went from social to academic, but from academic to social, no.'   [M,M.Sc,Colombia,I].

My study evidenced entwined academic/social digital media practices, reflecting how digital worlds involved blurred socio-academic relationships. The examples evidence 'articulations of society, technology, and space that are being wrought through the multiple ways in which spatial media are seamlessly adopted, incorporated, interfaced and interacted within everyday spaces and practices' (Leszczynski, 2015:736). Given this blurring, the way that friendships develop is investigated below.

5.3.4 Digital Friendships: Does Face-to-Face Contact Still Matter?

This section considers social digital practices and the way friendships develop at UoL (see 4.5). Friendships are important for emotional well-being during international study (Brown, 2009a,b,c; Gareis et al. 2011) and as a complex issue required a detailed investigation. I explored the relative importance of online encounters leading to online only friendships compared to face-to-face meetings and friendships. The role of gender was found to be particularly significant. The survey findings appear below.

BOS returned replies from women (65%), men (35%) and one transgender (t/g). Here, 76% agreed face-to-face contact is far more important than digital connection (28% men; 47% women; t/g 0.5%)[22], while 58% disagreed face-to-face contact is now secondary compared to digital practices (men 20%; women 37%; t/g 0.5%). Also, 62% agreed that more face-to-face friendships increased digital practices (men 20%; women 42%)[23]. However, 70% disagreed that increased UoL face-to-face friendships reduced digital practices. Although this was a fuzzy picture, as 51% agreed higher UoL digital usage developed face-to-face friendships (men 14%; women 37%)[24].

These findings reveal complex interrelationships between digital practices and other social practices. The data reveal a trend where women preferred face-to-face contact first, before taking friendships online, where woman were less likely to initiate friendships online before face-to-face interaction. Women expressed how safety concerns shaped their daily physical and digital friendships. None of the men in the study discussed safety (see 5.4.2). Women were more safety-minded:

> 'My cousin works in UK; family offers more safety, feel better, not feel lonely, it's important. Much safer than the USA.'   [F,M.Sc,PRC,FG5].

Safety concerns shaped many women's digital friendship practices which centred on mistrust and vulnerability. 'Personal vetting' was necessary for most women before moving a friendship online:

> 'I don't have anyone on Facebook I haven't physically met. For me nothing else works; even one physical contact is not enough.'   [F,Ph.D,Mexico,I].

> 'I didn't meet any friends through social media. The friends I had were Colombian, we met at meetings.'   [F,M.Sc,Colombia,A].

> 'I never meet online first, I like the face-to-face format.' [F1,M.Sc,PRC,FG5].

> 'I meet friends first, then use online contact.'   [F2,M.Sc,PRC,FG5].

> 'It's always face-to-face, then social media.'   [F,M.Sc,PRC,I].

One woman described online sexual harassment which shaped future digital practices:

> There was a problem at UoL; a guy wanted something different to Spanish classes. I closed communication, I'm very careful now; it's very dangerous for others to get your user name.'   [F,M.Sc,Colombia,A].

---

[22] 16% disagreed (5% men; 11% women). Pns 8%.
[23] 28% disagreed (11% men; 17% women. Pns 9%.
[24] 34.5% disagreed (14% men; 20% women; t/g 0.5%). Pns 14%.

Operational variances existed for different digital media. For example, micro/blogs can create instant broadcasts to unregulated unknown audiences. This was a great concern for one woman (several women referred to the Internet and 'creeps'):

> 'There's also the scary creepy internet. […]. For example, I'll have people Tweeting email addresses, or "I'm in this restaurant" >no<…>no< no… don't do it! Post on leaving, not while you're there. It's very important; it's the downside of social media'   [F,Ph.D,Mexico,A,(concerns emphasised)].

To support what appear to be different social tactics to digital friendship practices, one man voiced how Twitter usage enabled online friendships without face-to-face vetting:

> 'I follow and Tweet, I use Twitter more than Facebook, not academically yet, but socially. It's different from Facebook, you make links with people you don't know.'   [M,M.Sc,India,FG2].

Another male expressed that he initiated online amities without face-to-face meetings:

> 'Some Taiwanese students, I only knew on Facebook, I didn't see them in person at all.'   [M,M.Sc,Taiwan,A].

Leszczynski and Elwood (2015:24) argue gender 'matters' relative to digital practices. These situations alluded to different digital approaches according to gender, where face-to-face contact remained very important for most women, and less so for men, before moving contact online. During discussions about friendships many students described how Facebook was 'for' international students and this is discussed below.

5.3.5 Facebook. '*The*' Platform for International Students at University

> 'Almost everyone in UoL uses Facebook.'   [F,MA,Indonesia,S].

This section discusses Facebook use at UoL. Facebook was developed as a university-based platform by students for students: regarded as 'the' digital network to use at university (Lampe et al. 2008; Junco, 2012a,b). At UoL, Facebook was considered '*the*' I.S. digital network, used academically by 44% of those surveyed and socially by 72%. Students voiced how international study experiences caused them to gravitate together physically and digitally, seeking benefits related to information, support and social cohesion needs. Being also promoted by UoL, Facebook was a key daily digital practice in my research. UoL Facebook networks cemented daily international study (Madge et al. 2009c; Forbush and Foucault-Welles, 2016):

'We have a Facebook page, all people from the School of Education, students and faculty, share information. I've was put in contact with other students.'   [M,M.Sc,Colombia,I].

'My department has a Facebook social group.'   [F,M.Sc,Japan,I].

'I used Facebook just socially before, now it's also academic. We have Facebook groups, especially for projects together.'   [F,M.Sc,PRC,I].

The UoL International Office and Accommodation Office also shaped Facebook groups:

'Because I'm Colombian, I was suggested to join a Facebook Group, of all Colombians here.'   [M,M.Sc,Colombia,I].

'I got my housing placement, that's when I joined [HoR] group on Facebook. Once here, we were sent an email with other students from the Caribbean.'   [F,M.Sc,Trin&Tob].

I.S. articulated highly varied Facebook-friendships, as social, academic and digital friends held wide meanings to diverse I.S.. Friendships involved a varied composition of actors, ranging from new acquaintances to hyperpersonal friendship. Many friendships centred on co-nationals or regional proximity (e.g. Caribbean, Latin America, West Africa), but could also include friendships over a wide-range of places. Facebook networks also aligned on religion: Kurdish Muslim I.S. joined with UK Kurdish networks, upholding how 'narratives of modernity fail to suppress the disruptive and unpredictable salience of the spiritual' (Dwyer, 2016:758) (see Case 6.4).

All, except one, focus group and interview participant used Facebook as the primary I.S. network. Facebook friendships proliferated as part of student daily Leicester life:

'I use Facebook more than WeChat. WeChat is only for Chinese students; Facebook is for foreign friends, yes foreign friends.'   [F,M.Sc,PRC,I].

'I met my ex-boyfriend via Facebook, we belonged to a group. That's what digital media can do; join people with similar ideas and feelings, to be friends or more.'   [F,Ph.D,Mexico,I].

Facebook acted as a common denominator between students where relational identities based on collective difference appeared to also involve digital belonging (Marlowe et al. 2016) (see 6.2.5). Some intercultural relationships were digital only, but nevertheless important (i.e. not shallow), a finding divergent from Kim (2009:166) and Turkle's (2009) 'weak ties' only conclusions.

One student regarded Facebook as temporary cultural 'middle-ground':

> 'Every time I see new people we exchange details. Facebook is the way to connect with friends from other parts of the world, kind of the middle-ground. I became friends with so many people, all on Facebook, between 50 and 100, we normally don't talk to each other, a few become face-to-face friends, we are just friends on Facebook, they are not shallow friends, more temporary.'   [F,M.Sc,Japan,I].

This example depicted how Facebook could act as an intercultural bridge (Putnam, 2001) between students. Importantly, Facebook intercultural friendships produced new culturally de-centred digital practices (see 6.3.4):

> 'Before I came here I didn't use WhatsAp, after I came here, because of the friends around me, almost all from Hong Kong or Malaysia, I started to use WhatsApp.'   [F,M.Sc,PRC,I].

However, digital practices were not fixed and could change over time. For instance, Facebook was initially used at UoL, but digital practices often migrated to other platforms, deemed more personal and less I.S. orientated as the academic journey progressed. Similarly other 'more personal' platforms were used to cement pre-existing friendships:

> 'To interact with new people it's Facebook. For friends, WeChat, or QQ.'
>   [F1,M.Sc,PRC,FG5].

> 'To interact with new people, I use Facebook.'   [F,M.Sc,Colombia,FG1].

> 'For close friends I use WhatsApp, Line, Viber. I never use Facebook to talk to them.'   [F2,M.Sc,PRC,FG5].

In sum, Facebook was '*the*' predominant platform for I.S. at UoL. Alumni also confirmed post-UoL Facebook usage. Facebook was widely used by other students (e.g. UK/EU). However, not everyone used Facebook. Nationality was a key variable in explaining the variations in digital media usage for different I.S. as discussed below.

5.4 Differentiating Digital International Students

This section explores how diverse students use digital media differently. It details differences by nationality, gender and study field, the three features of social difference that were identified as most significant. This is important because it supports the claim for the need to view I.S. as varied, particularly with respect to digital media.

5.4.1 Diverse Nationalities

BOS involved 37 nationalities. The top 10 users of digital media were from China, Nigeria, Iraq, USA, Thailand, Colombia, India, Taiwan, Saudi Arabia and Indonesia, accounting for 79% of BOS responses. National responses were collated according to frequencies of use for combined, academic, social digital practices by nationality. For clarity results include and exclude China (Figures 5.5-5.7) where frequency of access is proportional to responses. The findings reveal multiple differences by nationality and by social or academic use, evidencing highly variegated daily practices.

Some key national trends appeared. Nigerian students made greater use of shorter duration social practices (several visits a week or less than one hour a day). In contrast I.S. from Indonesia and Thailand were online socially longer and more often (between over 3-5 hours a day and over 12 hours per day). These variances were partly owing to some I.S. legacies of use from prior place also continuing at UoL. Below, I outline digital practices of I.S. from China, elsewhere in the Far East, Middle East and Latin America.

Chinese students made high use of Chinese digital media. This revolved around the need to contact home (see 4.4.2 and 5.3.2) where geopolitics shaped UoL practices:

> 'It's difficult, if we can be friends, we have no way to communicate when back to China, if you use Facebook or Twitter, in China we cannot use it.'
>
> [F1,M.Sc,PRC,FG5].

> 'Chinese people, we're using Chinese WeChat or Weibo, any digital media used in China.'   [F2,M.Sc,PRC,FG5].

This view was not conclusive and clouded by mixed messages from other Chinese I.S.:

> 'We use Facebook and Twitter here, when we go back to China we cannot. However, if you want to go on Facebook and Twitter, you'll find a way to get on [laughter] there's always a way to do it.'   [F3,M.Sc,PRC,FG5].

Some Chinese I.S. advocated the increasing importance of Chinese digital media:

> 'Nowadays lots of foreign students use Chinese social media, like WeChat.'
>
> [F4,MSc,PRC,FG5].

Another Chinese student doubted the situation, arguing wider use of Chinese digital media by other nationals reflected academic necessity:

> 'They're not willing to use it, it's only because they have too many Chinese classmates, and have to use Chinese digital media.'   [F5,M.Sc,PRC,FG5].

Figure 5.5 Joint Frequencies of Academic & Social Digital Practices by Nationality
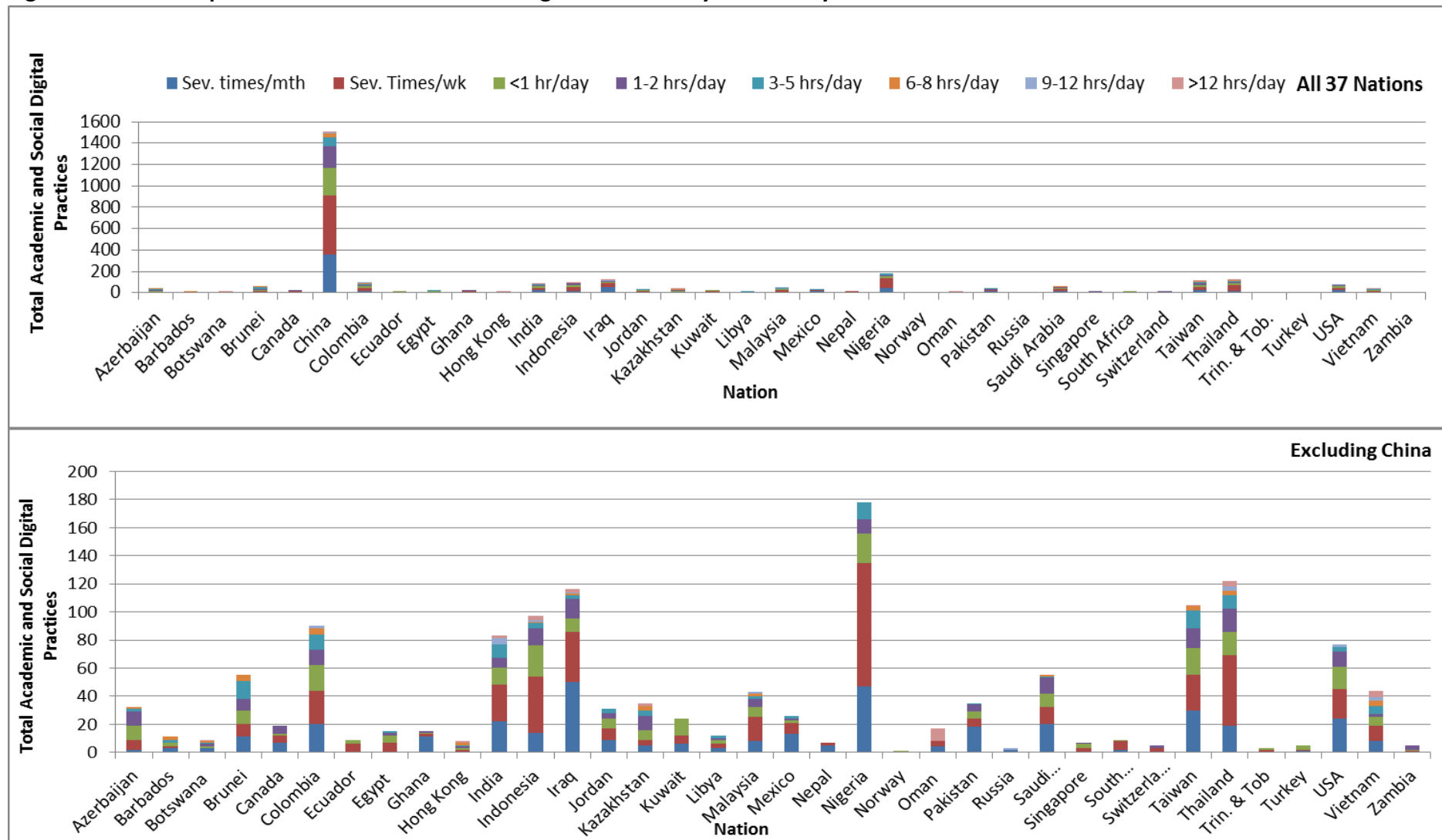
Figure 5.6 Frequency of Academic Digital Practices by Nationality
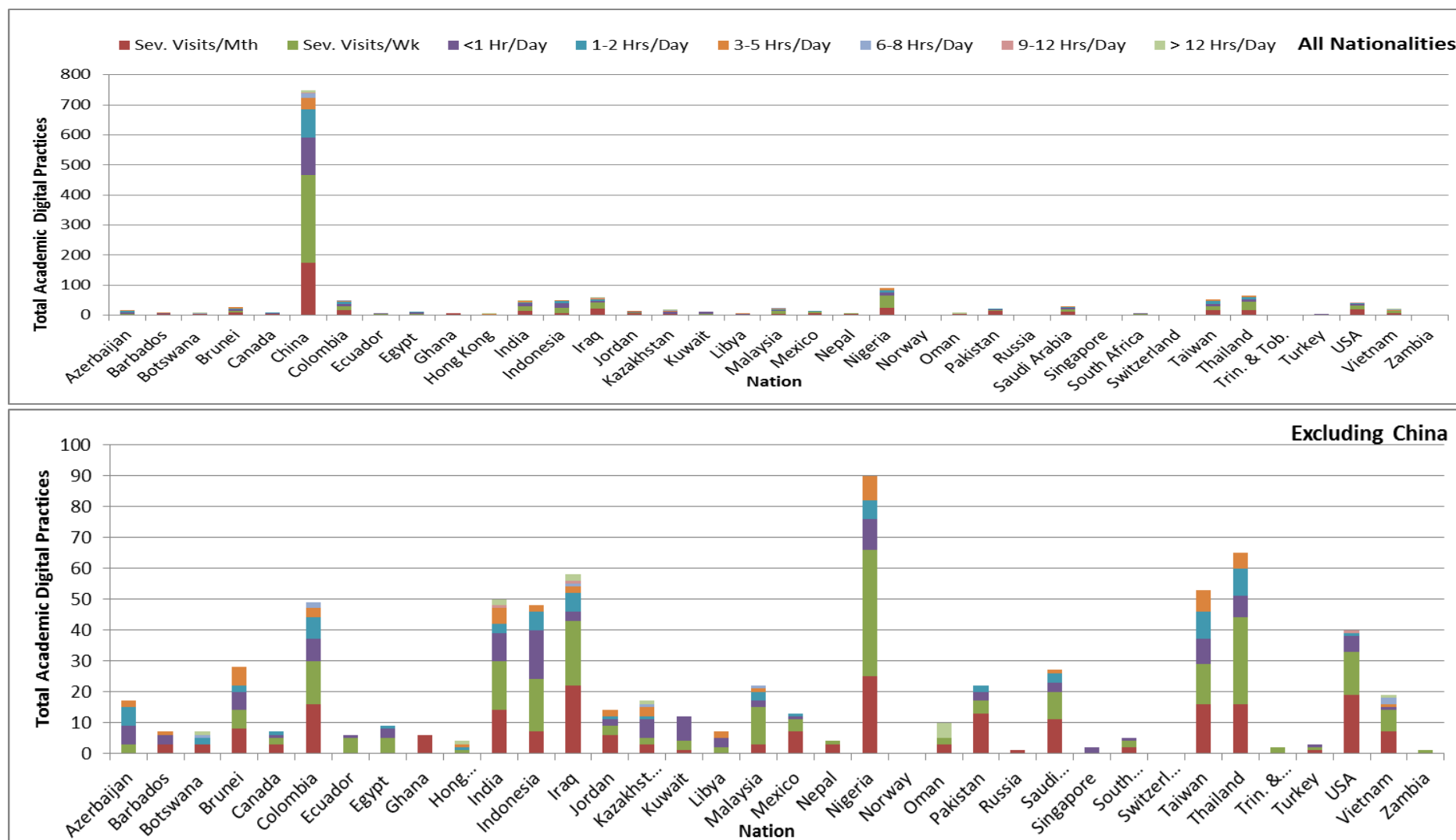
Figure 5.7 Frequency of Social Digital Practice by Nationality
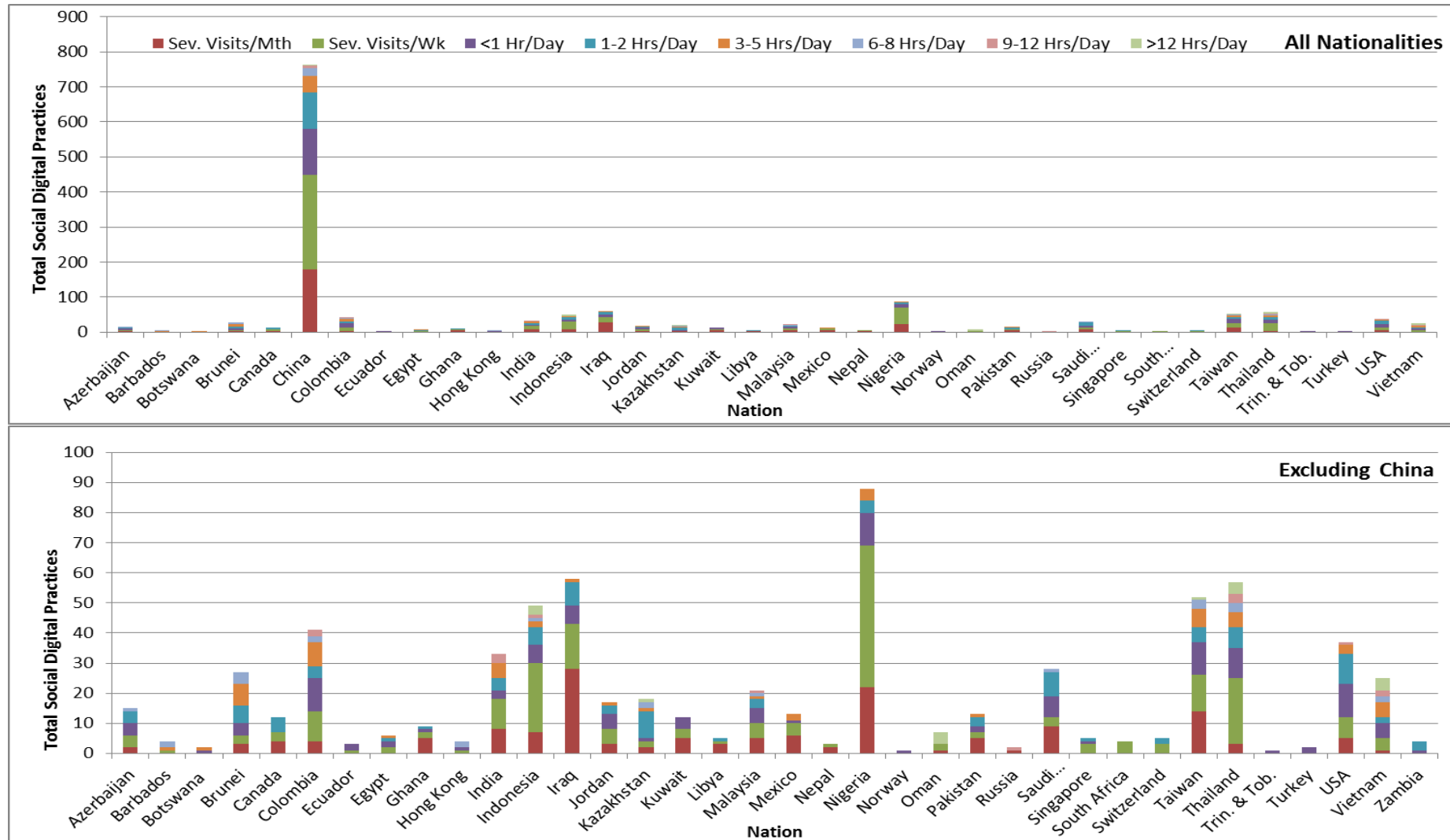
While the attitude to Chinese digital media varied, it will be interesting to see in the future if international study further results in the narrowing of digital media. For instance, will Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn thrive elsewhere? Or are we starting to see challenges to Facebook hegemony (and other US-led media) around a more widely distributed use of digital media (Chui et al. 2012)? I now consider other nationalities.

Taiwanese and Japanese students commonly employed 'Line' (see 5.3.2):

> 'For family, I use Line. Line is not popular in Europe, only popular in Taiwan and Japan it's really popular there.'   [F,M.Sc,Taiwan,I].

> 'Seldom use Facebook, more often use Line to talk to friends domestically or internationally.'   [M,M.Sc,Taiwan,S].

> 'In Japan, it's Line, it's popular, everybody uses it [...] New people ask me here do I have a Line account [...] Line is more important than Facebook. I still use Line.'   [F,M.Sc,Japan,I].

Middle Eastern students used Viber, while Latin Americans commonly used WhatsApp. Home affiliations influenced the platform used at UoL. Facebook was more commonly used by I.S. at UoL, but Facebook was viewed too impersonal for the intimacies of contacting family, and instead prior place-based platforms were used to contact home:

> 'We all use Viber. A lot of people, all our friends use Viber in our country.'
>   [M,Ph.D,Iraq,I].

> 'I don't want to talk to my sisters on Facebook, I use WhatsApp, to talk to them, or I call them.'   [F,M.Sc,Colombia,FG1].

> 'We usually use Viber, Tango or Skype to contact family. For my friends it is different, I still use Facebook.'   [F,Ph.D,Iraq,I].

In sum, Far Eastern (distinguished from China), Middle Eastern and Latin American I.S. frequently used 'home-centred' digital media where ethnicity, language, cultural ties and prior affiliations (as 'belonging') shaped daily nationalistic digital routines in their new place of study. Other social differences also mattered and I discuss gender below.

5.4.2 Gender Disparities

Previous findings revealed gender to be implicated in digital friendship practices (5.3.4) and gender differences are now further examined. BOS showed 29% of women and 13% of men used digital media more once arriving at UoL, 28% of women said use was the same; men 13%, while both 6% of women and men said use was reduced (one

women and two men were non-users).[25] To explore matters an in-depth combined social and academic cross-tabulation by frequency of gender use was performed. While men and women both gained international study support via daily use of digital media, the cross tabulation showed that women used digital media more than men in most frequency categories of social and academic use (Figures 5.8, 5.9 and Table 5.1).

Figure 5.8 Frequency of Total Digital Media Use by Gender
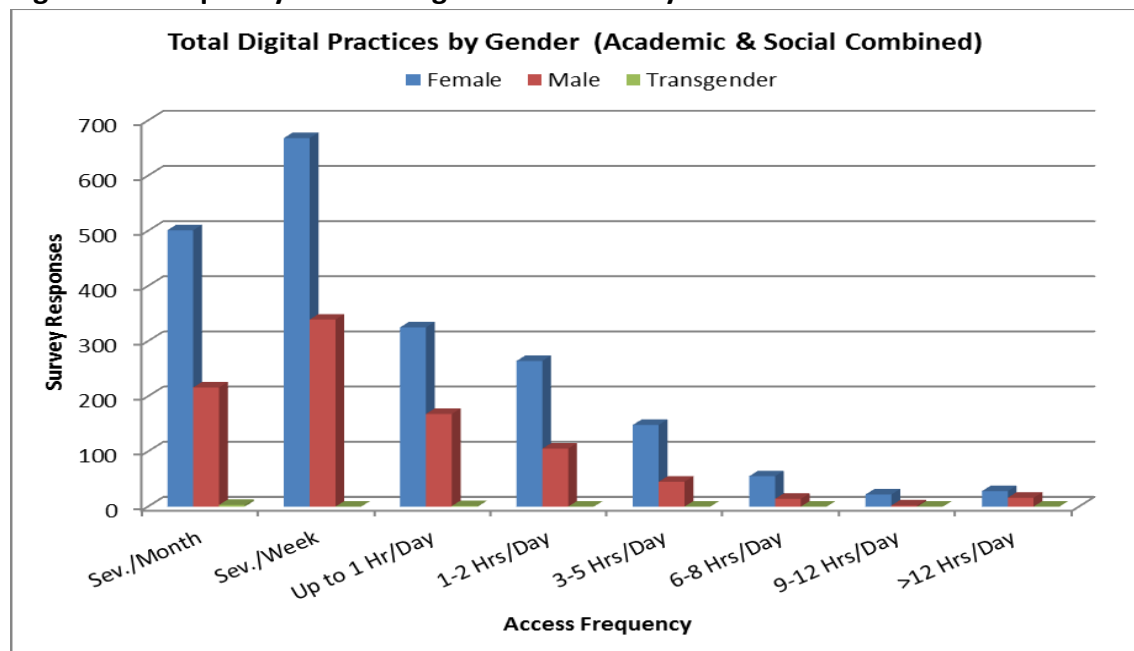
However, gender can influence digital practices (Rao et al. 2010). Women more frequently discussed how digital media relieved loneliness and provided comfort relative to anxiety (Remes, 2016) vulnerability, safety and feelings of isolation:

'I felt lonely here, quite lonely here, yes.' [hushed, subdued]. 'Yes, it's comforting; it's company to know it's there.'   [F,M.Sc,Colombia,FG4].

'I think without social media, I would have been really lonely, like from the Mexican-side, and the UoL-side.'   [F1,Ph.D,Mexico,I].

'Loneliness, yes; a lot of people coming usually think the safest thing would be to form a group.'   [F2,Ph.D,Mexico,I].

One student revealed everyday instant messaging yielded tangible safety benefits:

'She came here and ended up being in a house with two strange men and didn't feel safe; she just posted: 'I am here, I don't know what to do, they are asking me for a lot of money.' Within half an hour 15 Colombians arrived at her house… like ok, let's go, pack your stuff, we're leaving. So social media works, for us it's really important.'   [F,M.Sc,Colombia,FG4].

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[25] BOS used optional multiple-answer questions precluding 100% figures.

Figure 5.9 Frequency of Social & Academic Digital Practices by Gender (Cumulative)

Academic and Social Use of Digital Media by Gender

Frequency of Use	2 A few times a month	3 A few times a week	4 Up to 1 hour a day	5 1-2 hours a day	6 3-5 hours a day	7 6-8 hours a day	8 9-12 hours a day	9 Over 12 hours a day
Female (Academic)	277	353	150	122	73	14	6	14
Female (Social)	224	315	175	142	75	41	16	14
Male (Academic)	114	180	92	43	19	8	1	6
Male (Social)	102	159	76	62	26	6	1	10
Transgender (Academic)	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Transgender (Social)	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

Men generally articulated fewer emotional benefits:

> 'I don't die; it's not the end of the world, before we didn't have digital media. I can manage my life, using it or not.'   [M,Ph.D,Iraq,I].

> 'When in a good mood I like to do meaningful things, so I don't use Facebook to waste time.'   [M,M.Sc,Taiwan,A].

Regarding social digital practices (Figure 5.9), women more often engaged in daily digital lifestyle habits than men, particularly Chinese women (Martin and Lewis, 2016).

Women voiced how digital media informed UK shopping (e.g. purchasing decisions endorsed by other women online). Western culture particularly interested women:

> 'I don't Tweet, I use it to follow actors, like… Benedict Cumberbatch.'
>   [F,Ph.D,PRC,I].

> 'I use Twitter, Facebook, Instagram to follow stars, Western countries celebrities.'   [F,M.Sc,PRC,FG2].

> 'I experienced a famous person in China [author]. Actually if I hadn't digital media I think I haven't had a chance to know her.'   [F1,M.Sc,PRC,FG5].

The frequency of use for academic purposes (Figure 5.12) also confirmed women were online more often than men. This poses interest where the effects on academic performance still remain unclear (Wentworth and Middleton, 2014). Women appeared more open to discuss vulnerability, loneliness and safety issues surrounding daily digital practices for comfort, mentioning psychological and social processes more than men (Schwartz et al. 2013). Following celebrity/lifestyle culture also offered ephemeral support (Hermes and Kooijman, 2015). Women also appeared to be online more for academic reasons, presenting a future research theme around gender, digital media and HE outcomes/futures. These factors may account for women being online socially more frequently than men. This supports Leszczynski and Elwood (2015:24) who, in discussing digital technologies, assert 'gender is substantive - materially (re)produced within and through the design, adoption, and deployment of these technologies as well as the ways in which gendered social relations structure material practices with spatial media.' However, men may be less forthcoming in discussing painful emotions. Men can be just as vulnerable during international study (Cases 5.1, 6.4, 6.5), something often omitted in literature which might present policy implications. I now consider study level and digital media.

5.4.3 Masters and Ph.D International Students

Different academic digital routines were ostensible among highly variegated Master's and Ph.D I.S.. BOS and I.S. voices give insight into these variable behaviours. The study field split was 68% on a one year course (Masters) and 32% over two years (M.Phil and Ph.D), of this response 68% responded their study was to take one year, 18% were in their first year, 5% second year, 8% third year and 2% fourth year. BOS shows 34% of Masters I.S. expanded their digital practices once at UoL, 32% sustained static use, 10% reduced use, with one none-user. For Ph.D I.S., 9% expanded digital practices, 10% remained static, 3% reduced use; less than 1% were non-users (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Digital Practices by UoL Degree Programme

Masters by Programme	Female (%)	PIS (n)	Male (%)	PIS (n)	Trans/G (%)	PIS (n)	Total (%)	PIS Total
Digital Media > UoL	**24.02%**	**55**	**10.04%**	**23**	**0.00%**		**34.06%**	**78**
MA	11.79%	27	1.31%	3	0.00%		13.10%	30
MBA	0.44%	1	0.00%		0.00%		0.44%	1
MSc	11.35%	26	8.73%	20	0.00%		20.09%	46
Postgraduate Diploma	0.44%	1	0.00%		0.00%		0.44%	1
Digital Media Static UoL	**24.89%**	**57**	**7.42%**	**17**	**0.00%**		**32.31%**	**74**
MA	11.79%	27	1.31%	3	0.00%		13.10%	30
MBA	0.44%	1	0.00%		0.00%		0.44%	1
MSc	11.79%	27	6.11%	14	0.00%		17.90%	41
Postgraduate Diploma	0.87%	2	0.00%		0.00%		0.87%	2
Digital Media < UoL	**5.24%**	**12**	**4.37%**	**10**	**0.00%**		**9.61%**	**22**
LLM	0.44%	1	0.00%		0.00%		0.44%	1
MA	1.31%	3	0.87%	2	0.00%		2.18%	5
MPhil	0.44%	1	0.00%		0.00%		0.44%	1
MSc	3.06%	7	3.49%	8	0.00%		6.55%	15
Non-Users	**0.44%**	**1**			**0.00%**		**1.31%**	**1**
MA	0.44%	1	0.00%		0.00%		0.44%	1
Total Masters	**54.59%**	**125**	**21.83%**	**50**	**0.00%**		**77.29%**	**175**
Ph.D Degree								
Digital Media >UoL	5.24%	12	3.93%	9	0.00%		9.17%	21
Digital Media Static UoL	3.93%	9	5.68%	13	0.44%	1	10.04%	23
Digital Media <UoL	1.31%	3	2.18%	5	0.00%		3.49%	8
Non-Users	0.00%		0.87%	2	0.00%		0.87%	2
Total Ph.D	**10.48%**	**24**	**12.66%**	**29**	**0.44%**	**1**	**23.58%**	**54**

BOS showed 174 Masters I.S. were on taught programmes, with one M.Phil. This student group often formed digital groups focused on UoL (e.g. course-centred group work); I.S. also formed informal collaborative networks (e.g. Facebook, Google, WhatsUp, Twitter, WeChat; see 5.3.1). Ph.D I.S. used similar platforms, although many also engaged in (inter)national digital collaborative research networks (e.g. LinkedIn, Twitter, Academia.com, ResearchGate, Facebook for Researchers, Vitae; see 5.3.1). Informal digital groups show how both student groups negotiated with international study by exercising independent agency outside of UoL pedagogic channels.

Such digital practices could be highly dynamic, shaped by varied study fields, changing technology and developing intellectual subjectivities:

'All programmes are different, with different demands.' [F,Ph.D,Mexico,A].

'Technology changes, you have to change with it.' [F,M.Sc,Colombia,FG1].

'I learned lots of things from my teachers. It changed my expectations for the future.' [F,M.Sc,Colombia,A].

'If your work's in a social area, you're more likely to use Twitter. My friend who studied international relationships does lots of social media and has a blog because of what he does.' [F,Ph.D,Mexico,I].

Different approaches could be applied to using the same platform by the two I.S. academic groups. Most Masters I.S. described using LinkedIn in relation to employer searches (although some used LinkedIn academically if moving onto a higher degree):

'I used LinkedIn, it's a good website for jobs.' [F,M.Sc,Taiwan,I].

'I use LinkedIn, but it's not in my mind as a digital media thing. LinkedIn for me is just for job searches.' [F,M.Sc,Colombia,I].

'I relisted on LinkedIn, it's useful for finding a job.' [F,M.Sc,Japan,I].

Conversely, more Ph.D I.S. used LinkedIn as a collaborative research platform:

'I hardly used LinkedIn, but coming here found many discussions about my topic. I'm trying to use less Facebook and more LinkedIn. LinkedIn gives me confidence in my study here.' [M,Ph.D,Ecuador,FG4].

'LinkedIn is very useful, there're specific groups, lots of researchers, lots of new topics. LinkedIn adds confidence to what I do.' [F,Ph.D,Mexico,I].

Ph.D study dynamics can change over time where students spent less time attending courses, seminars and workshops and more time writing-up and diffusing research (Goodwin et al. 2012:4). The role of digital media was also often correspondingly dynamic, with more Ph.D I.S. turning to micro/blogs, notably Twitter (5.5.4) for information, publicising and disseminating research as their studies progressed.

LinkedIn and Twitter practices evidenced how networks connect UoL with many other IHEIs. This mediating role between research centres can create international academic (knowledge) mobility, as well as acting as an academic gatekeeper. Ph.D I.S. described venturing between digitally networked research communities, offering or gaining collaborative support, to and from researchers outside of UoL. These were often in the STEM subjects associated with technical support. This exemplified the UoL as a 'hub'

mediating digital experiences, and the role digital networking can play in the formation of new academic circulations (Jöns 2010, 2015; Raghuram, 2013; Madge et al. 2015).

In sum, the multiple influences on digital practices that emerged through my research have helped to build a more differentiated view of I.S. I have revealed a dynamic diversity of digital routines, based on user and degree-based variables, often involving many local and dispersed actors. This evidences the importance of differentiating between students, as digital socialities have been shown to vary according to nationality, gender and study level. Much of the work on I.S. and digital media to date has not given such a differentiated view (Findlay, 2012; Madge et al. 2015). A more complex picture is thus emerging of the everyday use of digital media in I.S. lives. To complete this picture the chapter finally turns to consider when digital media are used.

5.5 The Temporalities of Digital Media

Previous sections have verified individual, diverse, dynamic digital practices. It now remains to explore digital media temporalities. I examine usage frequencies of the top five academic and social digital channels at UoL (5.5.1). To gain finer detail, three social media logs are used to illustrate I.S. diverse daily digital practices (5.5.2). I then discuss changes in digital practices over international study and onward mobility (5.5.3). This section further demonstrates highly differentiated I.S./digital practices evidencing that international study is digitally saturated.

5.5.1 Frequency of Digital Media Use

Analysis of the top five most used academic and social channels reveals individually highly varied frequencies of digital media usage (Figures 5.10 and 5.11). Broadly, academic use involved more access for shorter durations, evidencing fleeting and fixed patterns (e.g. quick questions or scheduled collaborations). More users went online for less time for academic purposes but this still involved several visits per week and up to one hour and 1-2 hrs/day for academic wikis, SNS groups and Blackboard. Digital media were used more frequently for social purposes for longer time periods, by more users compared to academic use (Figure 5.12). Social wikis received the greatest use over several visits per week, where SNS (UoL groups) was second, SNS (personal) third and micro/blogs fourth, although frequency of use was strong between several times

Figure 5.10 Frequency of Individual use of the Top Five Academic Channels

Top 5 Academic Channels

	Not used	Several visits/mth	Several visits/wk	> 1 hr/day	1-2 hrs/day	3-5 hrs/day	6-8 hrs/day	9-12 hrs/day	Over 12 hrs/day
1. Wikis	33	44	82	28	26	9	6	0	1
2. SNS (Personal)	57	29	54	31	30	19	5	1	3
3. SNS (UoL Groups)	64	37	60	29	21	12	0	2	4
4.Photo & Video Sharing	65	32	54	28	25	18	5	0	2
5. UoL Bulletin Boards	74	44	51	32	17	7	1	1	2

Frequency of Use (Individual Students)

(Y-axis: **Number of Users/Non-Users**)
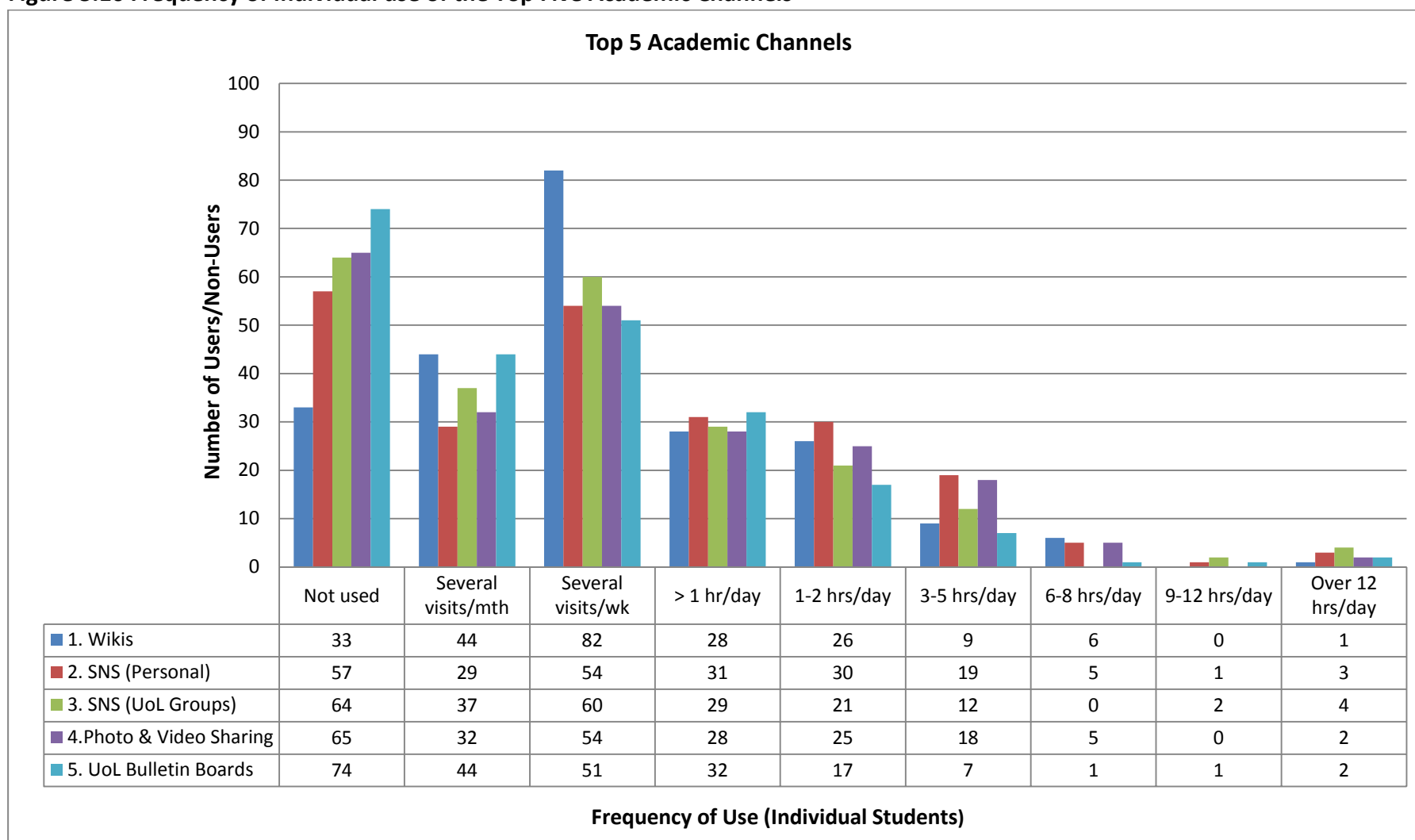
Figure 5.11 Frequency of Individual use of the Top Five Social Channels

Top 5 Social Digital Channels

	Not Used	Several visits/mth	Several visits/wk	> 1 hr/day	1-2 hrs/day	3-5 hrs/day	6-8 hrs/day	9-12 hrs/day	Over 12 hrs/day
1.SNS (Personal)	19	17	51	35	42	35	13	9	8
2. Photo & Video Sharing	54	26	40	35	38	19	12	0	5
3. Wikis	58	42	63	31	22	5	5	1	2
4. SNS (UoL Groups)	90	29	57	23	15	11	0	1	3
5. Micro/blogs (Personal)	90	24	42	18	33	13	7	1	1

Frequency of Use (Individual Students)

Y-axis: Number of Users/Non-Users

a week to 1-2 hrs/day. However, of note, SNS (personal), together with photo and video sharing and micro/blogs, were used a lot more during the longer access time bands (i.e. 3-5hrs/day and over 6 hr/day).

Figure 5.12 Academic and Social Access Frequencies by Mean Usage
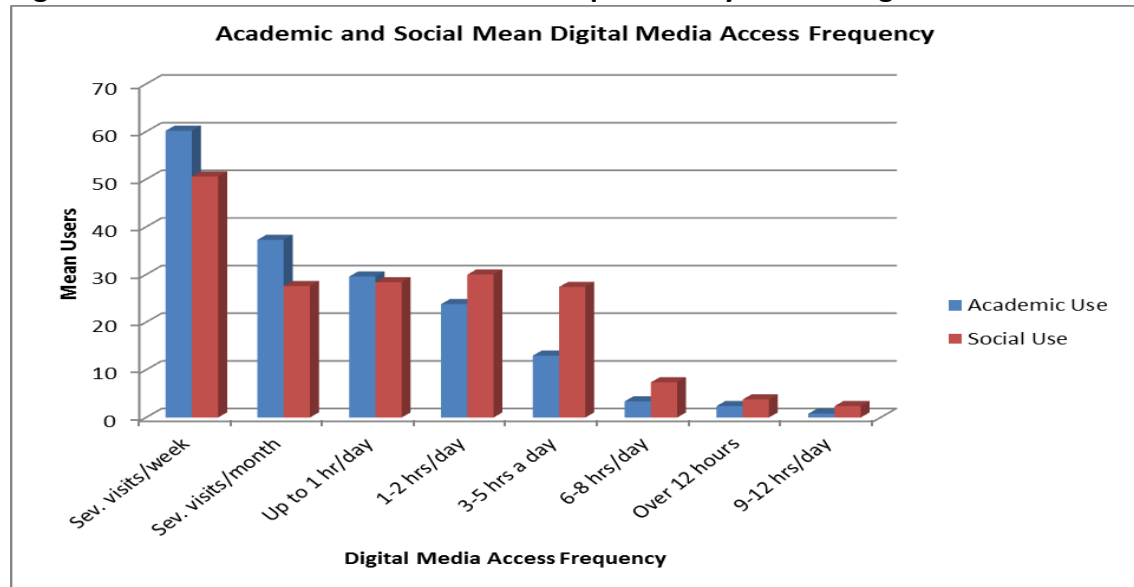
BOS reveals diverse individually differentiated frequencies of academic and social digital usage, from non-use to +12 hrs/day. This suggests how variegated students individually negotiate with international study via daily digital practices. This again supports how digital media are seamlessly incorporated in everyday spaces/practices (Leszczynski, 2015:736). The many frequencies of use verify international study is digitally saturated. To gain a more detailed daily representation of the role of digital media during international study, social media logs were employed, as detailed below.

5.5.2 Individual Daily Use of Social Media

Social media usage logs were compiled by three students over seven days (Appendix 7). The logs are exemplars, illustrating micro, mundane everyday digital practices, recording time, place, purpose and emotions (see 6.2.2) during digital routines. Zhilan (PRC), for example made 30 visits over the week, 70% were social. These were conducted mainly from her UoL hall room, making fewer but longer visits than the other students. Ting (PRC) was a high frequency shorter duration user, making 87 visits, 91% being social. Adem (Iraq) made 19 visits, 10 were social. The logs of Zhilan, Ting and Adem are discussed in detail below (Table 5.2; Figures 5.13 and 5.14).

Table 5.2 Summary of Seven Day Social Media Usage Logs

I.S. Name	Basic User Profile	Log Dates	Total Time Hr/Min (Mins) Social/Acad.	Online Visits Academic/ Social (%) From (Place)	Platform (No. visits)	Emotions Described (see 6.2.2)
Zhilan	Female, (26), M.Sc, PRC. (Parental home)	17-23 July 2014	Total: 18hrs 39 m (1119 mins) Academic: 1hr 6m (66mins) Social: 17hrs 33m (1053ms)	30 Visits 9: Academic (30%) 21: Social (70%) 28: Hall room 2: Returning to UoL hall	QQ (16) WeChat (6) UoL email (7) Facebook (1)	Joking Job pressures Exam stresses Partying Happiness Concern Unfairness Sorrow Excitement
Ting	Female, (24), M.Sc, PRC. (Parental home)	31 July-06 Aug 2014	Total: 6hrs 33 m (393 mins) Academic: Ohrs 12 mins Social: 6hrs 21 mins (381 mins)	87 Visits 6 : Academic (7%) 81: Social (93%) 81: Hall room 2: Library Café 2: Library 2: Restaurant	Facebook (37) Facebook Group (3) WeChat (18) WeChat Group (1) WeChat Vid-talk (1) Google email (22) Skype (3) UoL email (2)	Shock (over an explosion) Worry Fretful Happiness
Adem	Male, (33), Ph.D, Iraq. (Married, children, home owner)	18-24 Sept 2014	Total: 6hrs 14 m (374 mins) Academic: Ohrs 14 mins (14 mins) Social: 6hrs 0min (360 mins)	19 visits 9: Academic (47%) 10: Social (53%) 10: Non-hall room 9: Department	Facebook (7) Skype (4) UoL email (4) Viber (2) Whats Up? (1) Yahoo Email (1)	Excitement Happiness Sociality Empathy Love Worry

Zhilan was online three times longer than Ting and Adem, often to family/friends in Asia, Europe and Australia. In total she was online for 18hrs 39m, making 30 visits; 17hrs 33mins were for social purposes. Routines centred on evenings from her bedroom. Zhilan logged 30 entries describing emotions (see 6.2.2) where interactions centred on 'home' networks. Most online dealings lasted 1-2 hours but Thursday's log revealed one visit of 3hrs 56m to a friend in Australia. Zhilan made 11 home visits, making continual use of Chinese digital media (QQ, WeChat) to friends and family in PRC and UoL friends. Academic use was through UoL emails only (seven visits).

Ting was online three times more than Zhilan and five times more frequently than Adem, with shorter visits (14x1min, 28x2min; 17x3min). Ting made 87 visits over the week over 6hrs 33m, and contacted friends and family in China and Italy. Ting's log centred on UoL social practices, saying 'if I didn't have information it would make me

more nervous, social media lets me know more'. Ting made 81 visits to friends (6hrs 21mins) using Facebook and Chinese digital media, making only six academic visits over the week (12m of academic practice). Ting used email (three times) and Skype (30m on Friday) contacting an employer in Rotterdam. For each visit Ting logged the purpose, usage was clearly centred on UoL social life; emotions were also recorded, such as worry and happiness (see 6.2.2). Ting's usage evidenced digitally saturated life, illustrated by her quote: 'I think it's deeper and deeper, I don't think I could go through this procedure without digital media.' This leads to the third student log.

Figure 5.13 Daily Digital Practices (Total Minutes Online by Student)

Zhilan, Ting & Adem Daily Total Digital Practices

	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Zhilan	433	265	130	42	88	81	80
Ting	105	53	45	27	26	49	88
Adem	50	95	27	63	4	60	75

Daily Digital Practices by Student

Figure 5.14 Social and Academic Daily Digital Practices by Student

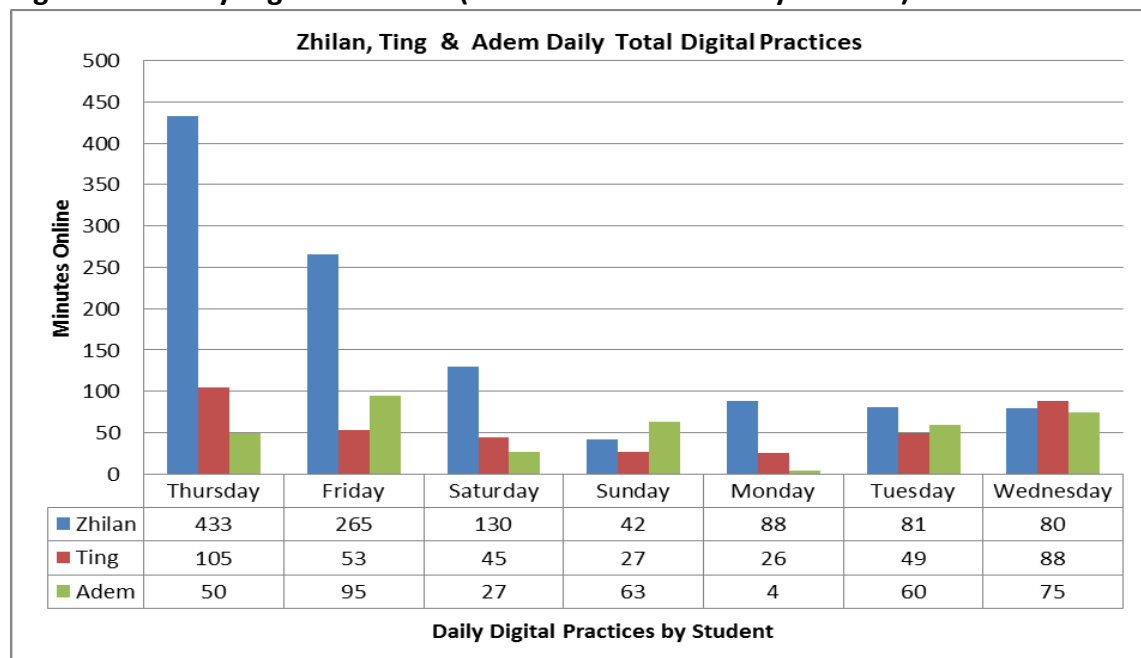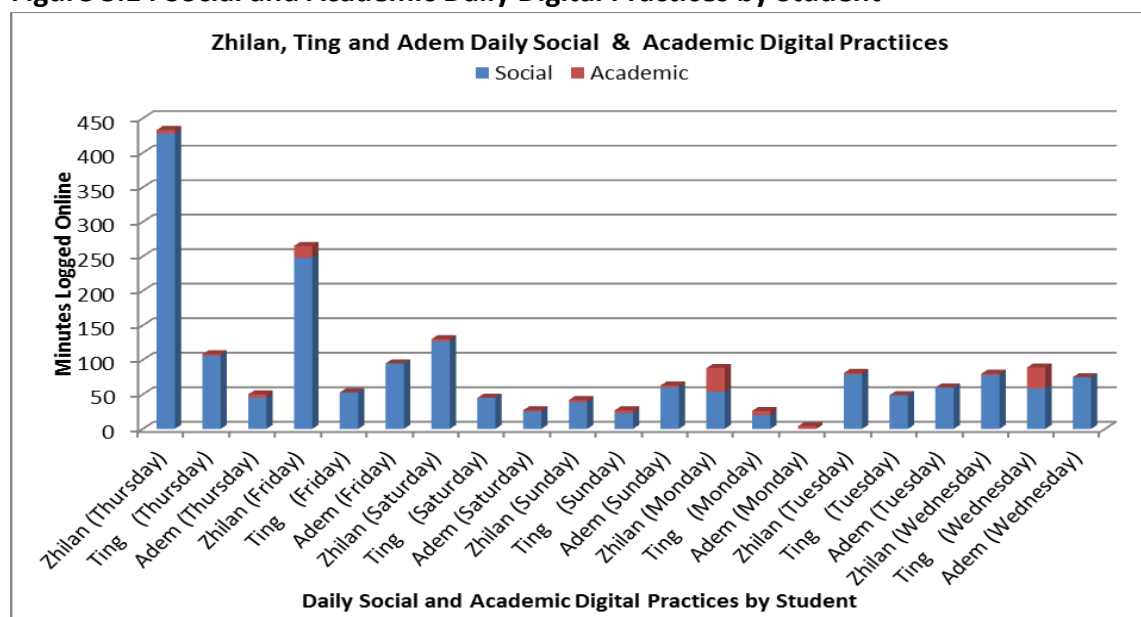Zhilan, Ting and Adem Daily Social & Academic Digital Practiices

Daily Social and Academic Digital Practices by Student

176

Adem logged 6hrs 14mins, with only 14 academic minutes (using emails and Facebook twice academically). Adem said 'academically, there is no benefit in using social media; socially I get many benefits from social media'. This social use was highly home-centred on his family, where synchronous audio-visual contact was important, Adem used Skype contacting family on Thursday (45mins), Friday (90mins), Tuesday (60mins) and Wednesday (50mins); Skype total time was 3hrs 55m, using Viber on Saturday (5mins) and Sunday (45mins). Skype and Viber were key family platforms; Skype involved many emotions, Adem's log recording the excitement of contacting family/friends, saying 'it is very difficult being away from my family, social media is very important'. Using Facebook, friends were also contacted on six of the seven days; all (except one in New Zealand) were located in Kurdistan. Adem discussed religious, cultural and linguistic barriers at UoL, producing social networks focused on 'home'.

The logs give illustrative footprints of typical daily digital routines which supported international study. The logs uphold earlier findings and reveal how daily international study was for the three I.S. a fully digitised (circulated and networked) experience: cheap technology acted as a 'digital bridge' (Collins, 2009a; 2010a, 2012b). This enabled the maintenance of an 'emotional intensity associated with geographically closer relationships' (Beech, 2014a:335) as I.S. accessed physically distant social capital (Steinfield et al. 2008). I suggest the logs reflect transnational consciousness (Waters and Brooks, 2012:21) via the social/digital nexus. My research also revealed that digital practices were not fixed, but changed over time, as discussed below.

5.5.3 Dynamism of Digital Media Use

Digital practices were not fixed. Student daily routines were dynamic and contingent involving local and dispersed networks (i.e. Leicester and 'home'). Traversal of UKHE also influenced student identities (6.3) which altered their digital practices:

> 'Digital media have a potency to spread information rapidly. I used to use it only to socialise, yet I consider a potency to both advertise my skills and inform public about important result of my research.'   [F,Ph.D,Indonesia,S].

> 'Facebook was exclusive for personal things, but I used Facebook to let people know I'm now a translator, I'm working to change myself, it's a tool for the job really.'   [F,M.Sc,Colombia,I].

'My blog was social before, now it's more academic.'   [F,M.Sc,PRC,I].

Cross-overs between academic and social use could be extensive. Margarita (Case 5.2) voiced post-UoL personal transitions which developed her digital practices, resulting in newly accomplished professional status articulated through academic digital media.

Case 5.2 Margarita: 'Digitally Empowered'   **[F,Ph.D,Mexico,A]**

'Before UoL I used Facebook a little socially, once here I used Twitter for academic stuff. I created accounts: I load Slideshow once a week and post it on LinkedIn, mostly for professional communications and open educational resources. [...] Also Silent Card, and an active YouTube account, which I didn't in the past [...] everything gets linked. It started just after I left UoL. Briefly put, I gave it a very professional turn.'

'I'm much more active with social media, I now share it working as a lecturer, I ask my students to use social media, now I know the power of it, and professional relevance. We sometimes don't notice the professional benefits; I let my students know now from the beginning. [...]. Although I'm back in Leicester, I'm still working in Mexico, I'm teaching students online, so it's essential. Thanks to Twitter if they have a quick question I can reply really fast'.

'My virtual identity is now the same; I use the same profile picture in different media, so people can recognise me. In the past on different sites I was Little Princess, or Amanda, or Rebel…you wouldn't know it was me. When I realised the power of digital media and professional benefits, I decided to use my surname, same picture, people could know it's me.'

'I tried to keep Facebook separate but maybe I'm changing? I'd never accept someone who's not a direct friend [...]. I think I'm changing, this academic, he found me on Facebook, and I immediately accepted him, just from one meeting, we are not friends.

'When I load a presentation I get unexpected replies from people, that's good! [...]. My career would be so much less without digital media. I've been contacted by so many people I don't know, had job interviews via LinkedIn, got collaboration requests when people saw my blogs or my Tweets, and wanted to get to know me better. So yes, I feel much more powerful.'

Over Margarita's period of international study, Facebook practices changed from minor anonymous social use, to disclosure of identity signalling professional academic status. Margarita gives insight to indivisible digital/physical worlds and 'connectedness of knowledge, identity and development' (Maclachlan and Osborne, 2009:576) as 'mutually constitutive' (Downing, 2013:55). Successful digital interactions empowered her professional status and transformed Margarita's approach to others digitally and physically. This demonstrates the 'inextricability of virtuality and materiality' (Leszczynski, 2015:3) as everyday material reality is produced by 'multiple conjunctions of code, content, social relations, technologies, and space/place.' (ibid:4). Insights into I.S. mobility strategies across transnational space are rare (Riano and Piguet, 2016:7)

and Margarita's digital practices present a view of such strategies. Margarita might also be viewed as a continuously mobile, multiply positioned, academically developing agent implicated in knowledge production and circulations (Findlay, 2010; Madge et al. 2015) where the effects of international study persist long after the time in UKHE.

Margarita's case starts to reveal how international study can transform both identities and digital routines producing variegated digital practices, notably in the professional context and she provided a rare insight into transnational education space post-UoL. This key point is further explored by examining digital practices used for leaving UoL.

5.5.4 Professional Contacts and Tactical Career Use of Digital Media

Research on factors that shape I.S. futures during international study is limited (Geddie, 2013; Mosneaga and Winther 2013; Thieme, 2014). My study explores this field. Ideas involve developing academic/professional identities where complex processes 'are hybrid, channelled and networked' and 'formed in a diversity of self-directed ways that are socially situated in transnational spaces' (Rizvi, 2010:167). For many I.S., as they crossed UKHE, digital practices also developed onward mobility. BOS explored I.S. plans over 15 categories, revealing many planned futures (Figure 5.15).

The top five projected future careers were professional employment at 'home' (48%), academic career at 'home' (43%), world-based professional jobs (29%), self-employment (25%) and professional UK-based work (23%). BOS also examined career tactics (allowing selection of more than one category). The most important tactics were academic publication in journals (75%), personal contacts (71%) and referrals (69%). Digital networking was also important; networks included 'friends' (59%-4th), 'academic contacts' (59%-5th) and 'employers' (57%-8th). The results show the importance of combining digital tactics with other career strategies (Figure 5.16). All interviewees intended to, or were already using digital media for onward mobility.

BOS achieved 367 responses relating to the top five exit platforms for career development. These were: LinkedIn (24% of total response), Facebook (22%), WeChat (6%), Twitter (5%), Sina Weibo (5%) and HR.com (4%) The high usage of LinkedIn is significant, particularly since BOS indicated only 12 responses for LinkedIn use prior to coming to Leicester. LinkedIn dominates the professional digital networking sector
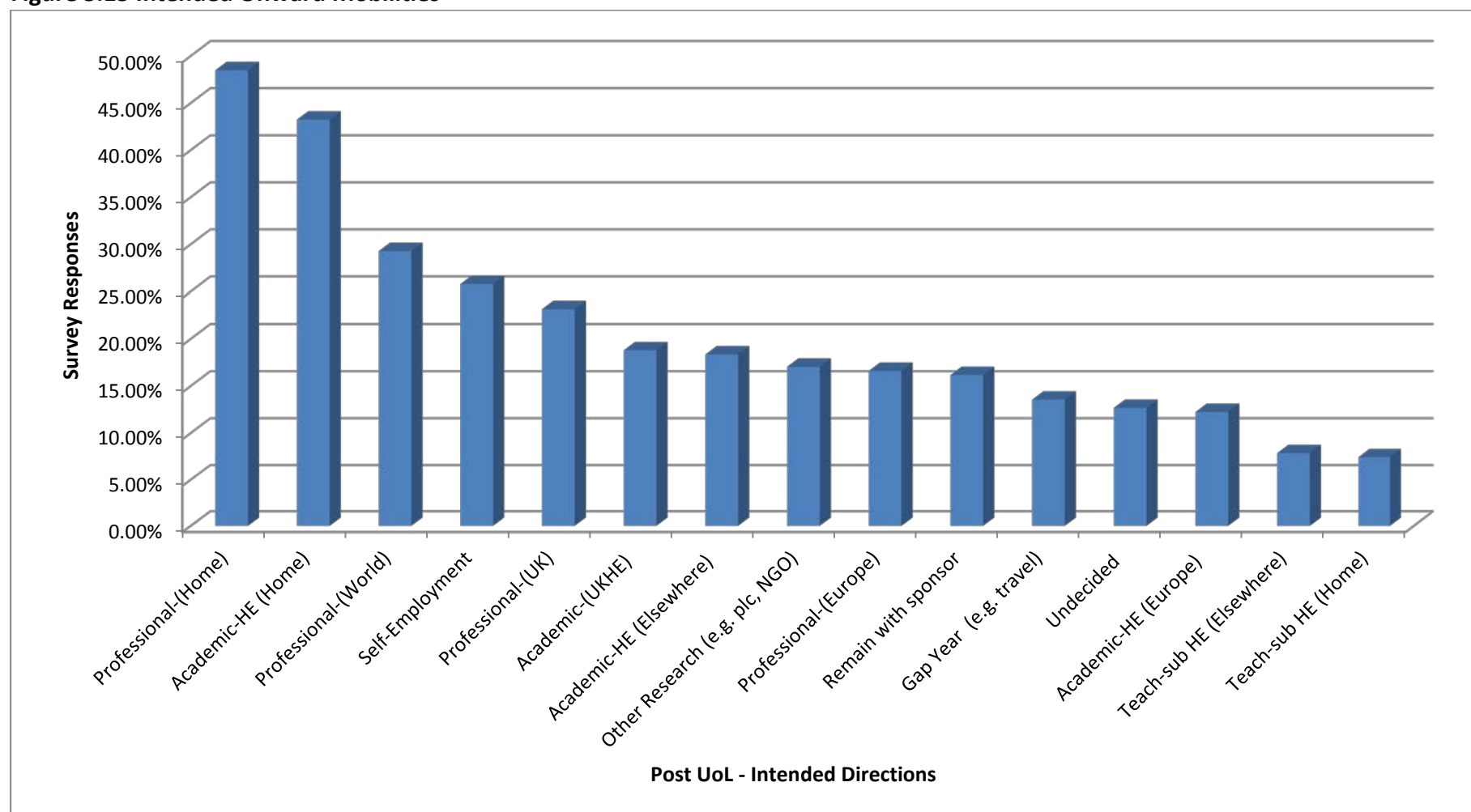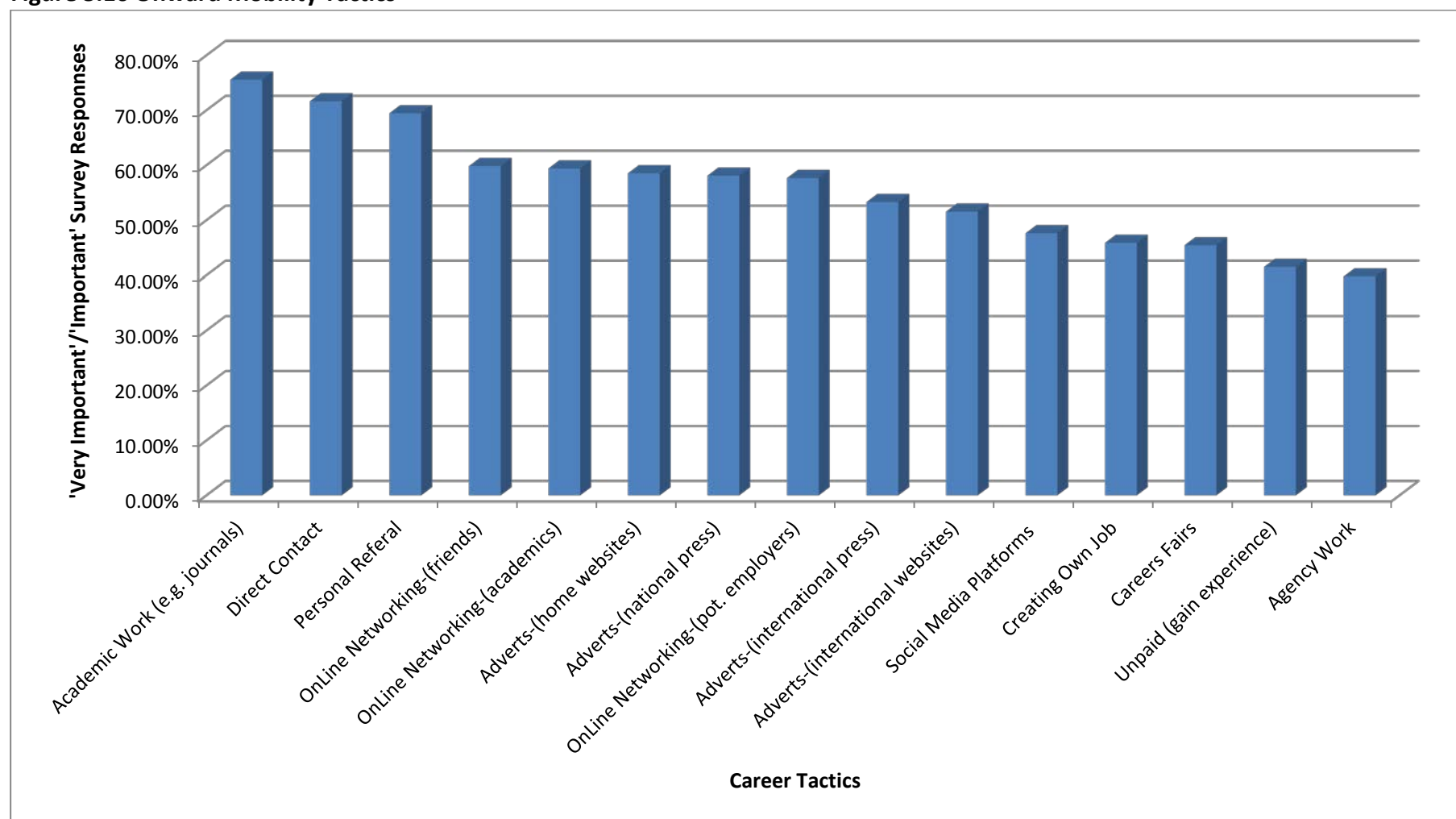
Figure 5.15 Intended Onward Mobilities

Figure 5.16 Onward Mobility Tactics

with 'over 467 million members in 200 countries and territories around the globe' (LinkedIn, 2017). Facebook, although important, was clearly in second place in relation to onward mobility (Figure 5.17).

Some I.S. revealed complex future plans and intricate use of multiple digital media. I.S. voiced tactical digital practices which could involve academic, social and professional cross-over usage. Some I.S. reflected upon uncertain and opportunistic futures:

> 'LinkedIn could help find a good job offer, Facebook to keep in contact with a few very good friends, and Twitter could give me pluses when it comes to be found by a talent hunter.'   [M,M.Sc,Colombia,S].

> 'Keep in touch, mainly with people from outside my country, they could help with different work prospects.'   [M,M.Sc,India,S].

> 'Social media is a tool I use to keep in touch and communicate socially and professionally. I've made both friends and contacts at UoL.' [T,Ph.D,USA,S].

I.S. described social media as less formal and quicker than other forms of digital communication, notably emails, which were viewed too formal, slow or ineffective for career related choices. Social media were regarded better able to disseminate future intensions and research to friends, wider publics, researchers and companies:

> 'People use social media to present academic work. Some of my colleagues have new publications, and put a link on Facebook, that's a nice way, much better than a formal email, not showing-off.'   [F,Ph.D,PRC].

Academic progression also caused tactical use of digital media, notably Twitter (Junco et al. 2011). Twitter was used to contact academics, to build research networks and profiles, whilst also fulfilling self-promotion. Twitter practices enabled fluid, less formal networking which also reduced frictions across intra and inter-disciplinary fields. UoL Twitter adoptees appeared surprised by the ease of connection Twitter afforded them to senior academics (Li and Greenhow, 2015; Veletsianos and Kimmons, 2016):

> 'I attended a conference about open access, but access was closed! I Tweeted 'this is ironic', the organisers saw it and invited me for lunch!' Twitter really works.'   [F,Ph.D,Mexico,I].

> 'I now use Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn. I'm connected to many different people, and to professors writing so much stuff.'   [M,Ph.D,Rwanda,I].

These examples reveal international study is also a space of employment pressure. Students evidenced feeling this pressure during onward mobility digital tactics.

Figure 5.17 Digital Media Employed during Onward Mobility
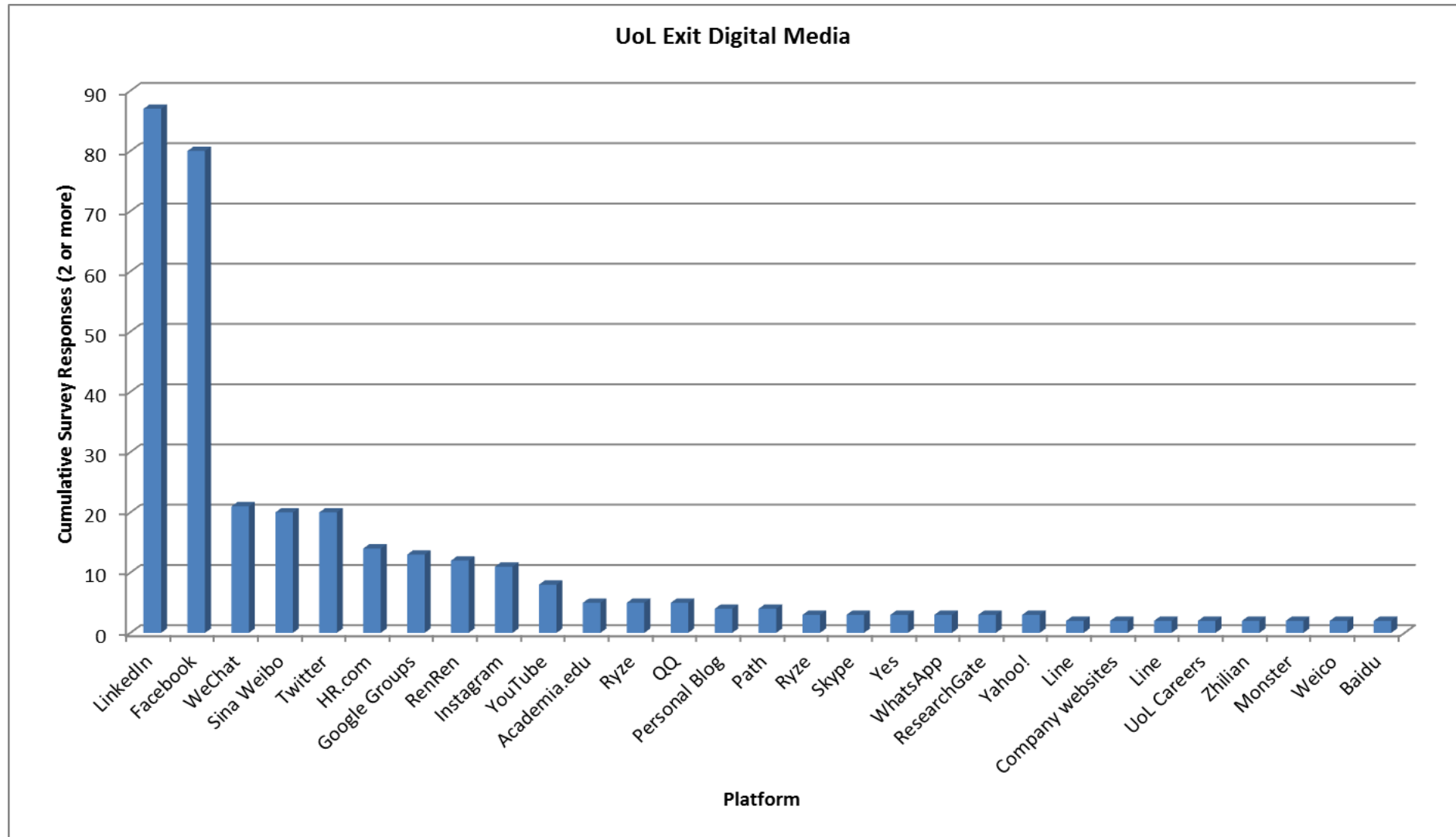
Pressures included shrinking labour markets and competition between I.S. (O'Connor and Bodicoat, 2016; Goodwin and O'Connor, 2012). Pressures also involved financial relationships relative to the investments of invisible others. Employment pressures shaped digital practices (Fechter and Walsh, 2010; Hall, 2011). Distinguishing oneself from others (Brooks et al. 2012) digitally was important. Supporting (Rizvi, 2010:167), digital media allowed I.S. to imagine a 'wider set of professional trajectories'. In the employment flux, digital networks were key within future aspirations of many I.S., who tried to apply positional leverage in response to companies well-evolved digital recruitment strategies which increasingly procure graduates from global employment markets (Bhattacharyya, 2013). I close this chapter with a summary below.

5.6 Summary of Key Findings

Crucially, this chapter has extensively charted the differentiated personal/group social, academic and professional roles of daily digital practices at UoL. This has added to existing knowledge about UK international study. Arriving at UoL digital campus can greatly change I.S. digital practices. UoL acted as an 'even' digital space, contrasting to the digital inequalities elsewhere. I.S. have been widely implicated in expansive digital practices through digital networks involving complex interactions, literacies, and circulations between I.S. and actors locally and elsewhere (Hjorth and Pink, 2014).

Uncovering the everyday lives of I.S. reveals international study remains in a state of transformation (Waters, 2012) and is saturated with digital networks. Charting digital practices has allowed a glimpse into I.S. lives within the developing international eduscape. I.S. lives are complex and deeply variegated, and developed via personal/group networks. The daily performance of international study during the organisation of complex digitally ordered lives and futures reach far beyond classroom walls (Kraftl et al. 2007; Horton et al. 2008; Madge et al. 2009a,b, 2015). Digital links to home points towards complex co-existing worlds were part of I.S. experience, often concurrently operating with UoL networks (Madge et al. 2009c). 'Digital home', involves (de)centred social morphologies as digital belonging (Marlowe et al. 2016). International study might be viewed as 'thickened' (Beech, 2014a) through digital networks (as simultaneously local/transnational) comprised of the multi-facets of I.S.

lives inside and outside of Leicester. This also supports the view of how students are digital agents through international study (Madge et al. 2015).

Place remains very important and digital practices actively reflect the specificities of place. This is not a one way event, but rather it is a recursive experience of place and digital practices. I found that while academic channels used at UoL were similar to those used at home, international study majorly influenced new academic platform take-up, notably Facebook, while Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube usage also thrived at UoL. The standing of some platforms used in prior place, such as Baidu, WeChat, QQ appeared to be shaped by geopolitics. The academic platforms used at UoL narrowed to a core group of digital media (re-aligned by UoL). Thus, international study space is a socio-spatially-digitally recursive event of reiterative relationships involving UoL experiences and digital media which bring the HE space into being. As such, international study promulgated digital practises and was mediated by such routines (i.e. I.S. experiences exist via digital networks creating the education space). Thus, UoL space is digitally saturated, but this goes well beyond omnipresent wi-fi provision. Framed via local/dispersed networks, which permeate I.S. Leicester experiences, UoL space concurrently involves life elsewhere. Complex translocal spatialities link prior/current/next place/space synchronously via digital networks. My geographic stance has uncovered some key policy issues (e.g. the role of pre-UoL/current/alumni I.S. networks should not be under-estimated during international study, see 7.3).

UK international study is starting to emerge as a digitally networked, translocal space (not fixed or binary: being multiple and holistic). Digital practices do indeed appear to 'the' social glue of international study (Madge et al. 2009c; Madge et al. 2015; Collins, 2009a). UoL experiences cannot be viewed as singular, being multiply-located via digital networks. Such networks implicate invisible actors positioned elsewhere, within I.S. lives (Waters, 2006, Anderson, 2012). For many I.S., digital practices became more entangled as experiences evolved over the international study journey. After settling-in, and as command of English language and better understanding of pedagogic demands developed, a wide range of platforms was often used, commonly social channels were increasingly employed for academic purposes, especially for research networking and career aspirations. These points are summarised in Figure 5.18.

Figure 5.18 Digitally Networked UK International Study
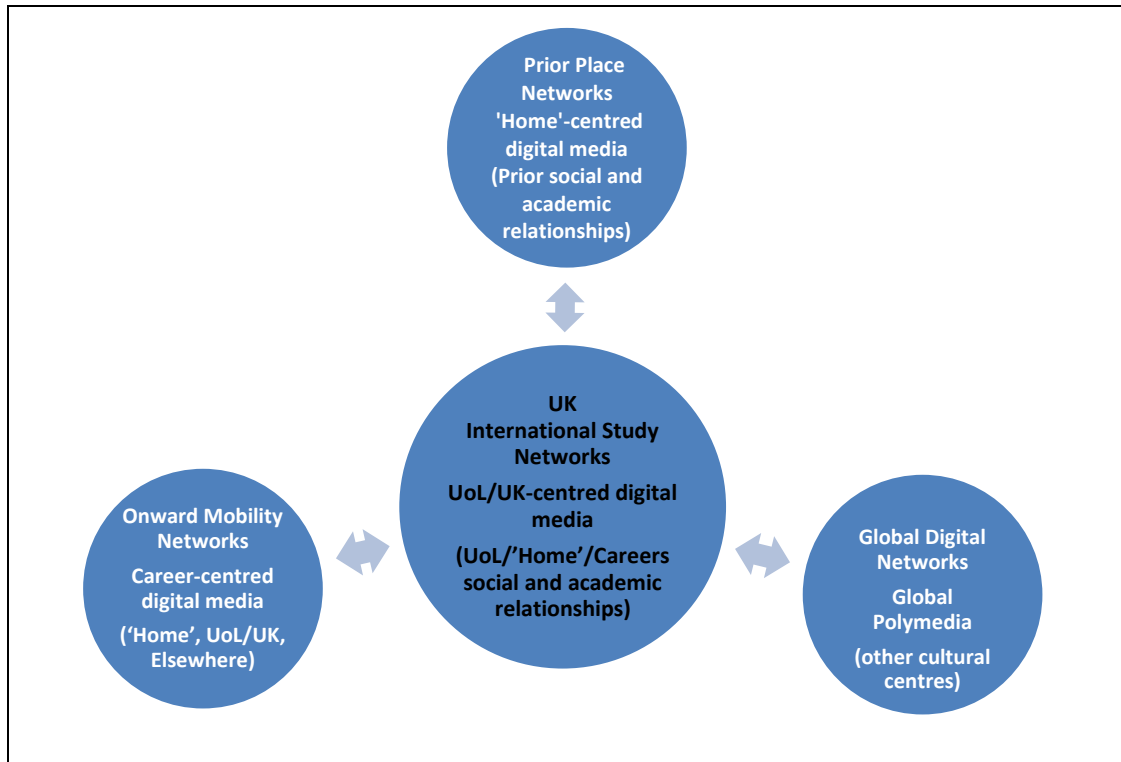
Digital networks were not just important during settling-in processes (Ye, 2005, 2006) but were also significant during the full study period, being implicated in study retention and success (Duanma et al. 2009; Lepp et al. 2014) and onward mobility. I.S made high use of LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter (and blogs), in an integrated approach to onward mobility. Digital networks played a key role during their future transitions and aspirations which involved career research, job seeking opportunities and self-promotion. As many I.S. became digitally immersed at UoL, digital tactics formed a natural future career strategy. Engaging with digitally networked futures had become part of the pressured lifeworld of international study. This networking, in terms of longer HE outcomes, presents a key future study area.

In closing, I.S. voices of experience, and a fine-grained empirical analysis, have shown that I.S. digital practices involved variable emotions. I.S. were highly differentiated and emotionally invested during complex networked social and academic situations. Digital practices (notably constant connection) arbitrated emotional gains and deficits: the happiness and shocks created by international study were negotiated via digital networks being a supportive bridge (Kim et al. 2009; Collins, 2009a). These emotional expressions of international study experience are more fully investigated in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6 The Experiences, Emotions and Identities of Digitally Networked International Students at UoL

6.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 revealed a ubiquity of highly differentiated digital practices at UoL. All I.S. used digital media: most being rarely un-networked locally or internationally, proving UoL was a digitally saturated HE space. Chapter 6 views international study to exist via this social/digital nexus which is comprised of I.S. experiences, emotions and digital media. Hjorth and Pink (2014) argue that mobile media enable people to establish co-presences that are simultaneously social, mobile and located, occupying a physical space while socially engaging with others outside that space, often in the digital realm. This chapter permits a re-evaluation of ISM via the international study social/digital nexus. Furthermore, this supports the importance of the geographical analysis.

To investigate the role of digital media within I.S. everyday lives, this chapter focuses upon I.S voices of experiences and their emotions. I examine how digital practices make I.S. feel about themselves, their identity and their position in the world as their UK international study journey progresses. Emotions range between happiness and sadness during social and learning experiences and knowledge production, which comprise I.S. life spaces. The embodied/digital interface (Rose, 2016a) involves the interplay of micro (personal identity, subjectivities and self-discovery), collective (group identity) and global (intercultural and cosmopolitan identity). Concepts concern a complex matrix of social, academic, digital and place/space issues (perceived by I.S.). Matters recursively reflect how Leicester is encountered, negotiated and performed.

In Section 6.2 I examine the new place of international study and the relationship between digital media and diverse I.S. emotions. Then 6.3 explores how the digital world is encountered and how Leicester promulgates world views, including 'digital' subjectivites and identities, and national, intercultural and cosmopolitan positions. Findings progress as 6.4 discusses different digital social and research communities at UoL. Intellectual subjectivities and I.S. agency are explored through digital pedagogy and language skills in 6.5. Linking back to digital concerns/scepticism (Chapter 4), UK international study digital dysfunctionality is examined in 6.6. Finally, 6.7 addresses how international study digital networks exist after exiting UKHE.

6.2 International Study, Emotions and Digital Media

Firstly, I consider how emotions matter during international study (Conradson and McKay, 2007, Waters, 2017). Place is indivisibly connected to emotions (Holton, 2015) and international study experiences were permeated with different emotions:

> 'I can only imagine it [UKHE] by my past learning experience. I didn't know the way to education in western countries.'   [M,M.Sc,Taiwan,A].

> 'It was exciting, I like experiencing new places; but it was daunting, the realisation that I was so far from my family.'   [F,M.Sc,Trin&Tobago,FG1].

As my research progressed it emerged that international study was a deeply emotional process, shot-through with a flux of entangled feelings, such as excitement, adventure, trepidation, loneliness, homesickness and anxiety. Such feelings shaped digital practices, but also digital practices shaped feelings, as previous chapters have shown.

6.2.1 Place and International Study Emotional Atmosphere

Some research has been inclined to stress the positive end outcomes of international study. I found that the time within international study could be a space of 'pitfalls' as well as 'promises' (Waters, 2017). I noted negative experiences were voiced when I.S. expectations and reality were mismatched. An example of such unhappiness follows.

Moh (Case 6.1) describes high UoL expectations. However, international study proved to be an unhappy experience for him. Awareness of limited cultural diversity, problems with banking, accommodation, securitisation and safety issues shaped his feelings about Leicester as an 'uncomfortable' place. This included feelings of exclusion, marginalisation, discrimination, vulnerability and insignificance to the point of feeling 'locked-up'. Thankfully, such pitfalls were offset by high quality UoL educators. In living his digitally-mediated life, Moh poses questions of 'being mis-sold the dream' (Zhou et al. 2008) and how such mismatch occurs. For other students, UoL was a happier place.

Giorgio (Case 6.2) discusses low expectations (premised on a one year Master's course being inferior compared to a two year USA degree). Giorgio's academic and social experience surpassed his prior expectations and shaped his happiness at UoL. This happiness involved segmented networks. Family networks involved Facebook, while local digital social networks involved the GrindR dating app. International study enabled more sexual freedoms which in turn created emotional attachments at UoL.

Case 6.1 Moh: Feeling Locked-Up in Leicester	[M,MA,Jordan,S]

'Leicester doesn't give the British experience per se, I feel more in Dubai culturally than in the UK and I ran away from the Asian experience to a more international one. So I'm disappointed, especially that I've done my first MA in Kingston and it was much more diverse with a western European concentration, something I thought was to be expected and I'm looking for as "a change". Cultural activities are poorly promoted and far in between. The city sleeps early. Transportation is inadequate; you know I can't find a bus route from my home to a gym while the uni gym is way overcrowded and under-equipped.'

'Let's talk policy: upon arrival you can't open a bank account without a registered address, and you can't rent a flat without a bank account. I roamed in circles until Santander, which wasn't my first choice, accepted to open a bank account for me with a letter from uni. Now, for the 10 days I was roaming between uni, real estate agents and banks, I ran out of money and had to use western union for wiring putting significant costs to my limited budget. On the other hand, the police registration process is stone-aged; all of it can be done by a website, wasted 5 hours to take an appointment then another 3 to actually just submit the papers which I could've scanned remotely. The cherry on top is that the registration paper only came in last week, so from September until now for processing and without any legal advice whether I am breaking the law walking around with no reg. while at the visa it states I should have it by one week.'

'Crime and police laziness: a guy was beaten down in my street, I copied the plate number of those who hit him, called 4 times and police didn't show up. My bicycle was stolen, took the cops 10 days to actually come to the scene; and I thought I was coming to a first world country. Finally, this is supposed to be a student city, with restaurants and shops opening late. The mall closes early, the pubs, the restaurants, the cafes, even delivery; the library leaves you outside stranded no food vending machines, no communal area, not even an umbrella to smoke a cigarette under. Truthfully, if my course and professors weren't what they are, I would have not stayed here a single extra minute. Oh, and let's not forget the disaster of a situation the UK is for an international driver. Hear this, you can't apply for a learners' driver's license until you've been here for 6 months. Now with an international license your insurance is literally, I kid you not, higher than the price of the vehicle. So you go back to being locked up here.'

Case 6.2 Giorgio: Digitally-Mediated Happiness	[M,M.Sc,Colombia,I]

'I've heard other Colombians comment their programme was not good. I don't think I can say that, my programme was good, was really good…was excellent. I feel that it was worth every single penny. […]. I was expecting less, and it was way too much. It was very vigorous, and I am very grateful to that.'

'The UoL has produced another type of social media use here, helpful for me to meet local people, it's not necessary to do with type of communication with family, I just see family as one part of my relationships, with home, rather than the social aspect of my life here.[..]. I need this support, without social media it would be complicated.'

'Digital media is very important and relevant to what I do, what I like to do and how I interact with others. GrindR allows you to talk to people around you, who you've not met. I've communicated with a lot of people here, made many friends; it's made a really big difference. It's going to be hurtful to leave Leicester and the UK, I've so many friends…then I have to start all over again!'

Happy at UoL, Giorgio worried about the unhappiness associated with leaving Leicester. UKVI exit protocols restricted his ability to continue at UoL, although less stringent competitor jurisdictions inspired motivations to 'start again' (with a

successful Ph.D placement in Canada: see Geddie, 2013). Giorgio shows how place/networks direct unique emotional vectors which interplay with experiences and shape meanings through digital media, notably belonging (Marlowe et al. 2016).

The cases reveal the importance of place-centred emotions during international study. Throughout this thesis, place is key to the international study emotional atmosphere (Collins, 2009a). However, where place and heterogenous emotions involve the '(re)construction of place or locality' (Waters and Brooks, 2012:21), digital media were also reciprocally complicit in co-constructing I.S. experiences. Emotions permeated digital practices and could shape UoL experiences, as considered below.

6.2.2 Emotions Interwoven through the Digital

I now explore I,.S emotions and digital media in the new place of study. Some I.S. described pre-UoL digital networking with UoL I.S. (one Ph.D I.S. had done a UoL Master's degree). The social/digital nexus raises questions about 'digital emotions' and place.

Interestingly, BOS revealed 18% regarded digital media to 'negatively affect feelings':

> 'If I see a photo of my friends on Facebook […] but I will not be there; for seeing the photograph I will be sad.'   [M,Ph.D,Iraq,FG3].

Yet, 79% of those surveyed agreed digital media gave emotional support at UoL: 72% said digital media produced positive feelings. This support appeared important for I.S. from China, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Nigeria, Taiwan, Thailand and USA (Figure 6.1):

> 'You feel lonely and you feel far from your family, so you are using this kind of social media to feel better.'   [F,Ph.D,Iraq,I].

> 'It's important to keep in touch with people you know, acquaintances and friends. It keeps you closer to people.'   [F,M.Sc,Brunei,S].

> 'I don't currently have a psych person, so my social media is proxy.'
>   [F,MA,USA,S].

> 'I use it to talk about my feelings and things, maybe blow off steam.'
>   [F,M.Sc,USA,S].

I.S. showed digital networking involved the circulation of embedded emotions which permeated daily digital practices. This was captured in the social media logs (5.5.2):

> 'I feel shocked at a gas explosion in Taiwan.' 'Talk to parents - feel fretful talking about the visa application to the UK.'   [Ting].

Figure 6.1 Digitally-Mediated Emotional Support
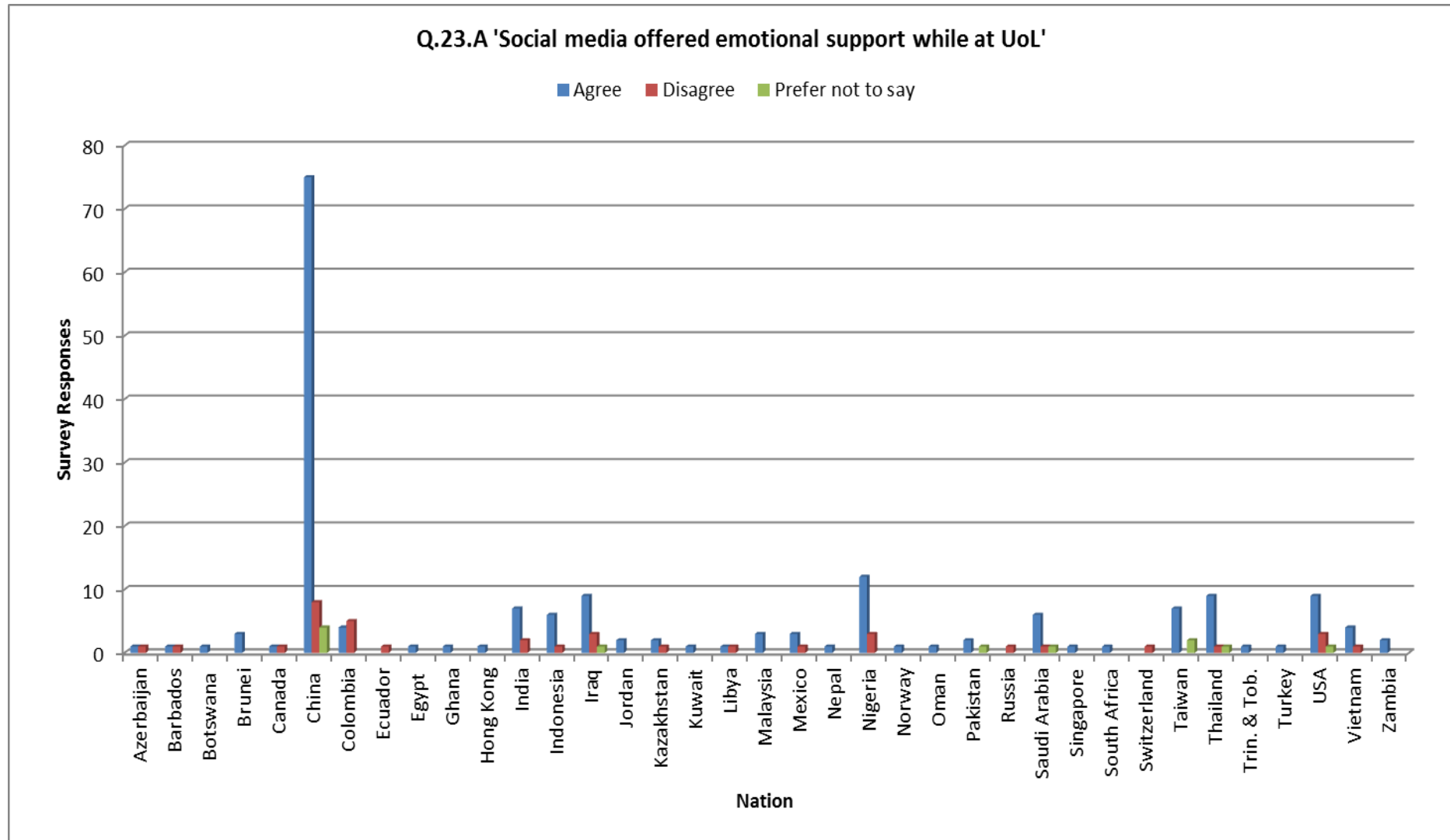
'Daily contact with my mum'. 'Making jokes to each other.' 'Discussing job pressures, my friend feels stressed in a job exam.' 'My elder cousin will get married I feel so happy.' 'Her husband is unfair to her; I feel so sorry to hear that and look forward to see her and give a big hug.'   [Zhilan].

This data suggests how digital media involved emotional (pre)-judgements, circulated around unstable feelings (Deleuze, 1988). The positive feelings - 'happy', 'joked' and 'excitement' were unbalanced by 'shock', 'fretfulness', and 'pressures'. Digital practices involved (inter)subjective/(de)centred one-way/two-way/circulated emotions (Bondi, 2005; Bondi and Davidson, 2011; Leys, 2011). In essence, I.S. bodies are like radios, transmitting and receiving emotions: via digital media, emotions are contagious (Kramer et al. 2014; Booth, 2014). I.S. do not exist in an emotional vacuum (Beech, 2014a), their voices imply that many emotional centres inform experiences.

Following Deleuze (2001:29), who argues 'life is everywhere', the international study social/digital nexus involves many place/emotions and a flux of relationships between actors (Madge et al. 2015). Consideration of such emotional entanglements and experience of emotions during international study remain quite limited in the literature but were extremely prominent during my research. This was important, as we begin to see how international study is an emotionally entangled space through digital networks, which can also alter the material effect of place. Wang and Collins (2015:1) argue emotions affect the way we move, see, hear, touch and perceive our past, present and future. In advancing understandings, my study suggests emotional pasts/futures (prior place/onward mobility) can be equally 'or' more important within UoL experience. Indeed, I.S. were seldom disconnected from digital networks which interconnected places, experiences and emotions, as considered below.

6.2.3 Constant Digital Connection

This section considers constant digital connection and student experiences. I explore the plurality of worlds existing via digital mediation. Wilson (2014:538) argues 'digital technology begets new spaces of interaction'. Constant connection permeated I.S. daily lives, mediating their experiences. For most students, being 'physically absent yet electronically copresent' (Hjorth and Pink, 2014:43) involved the sharing of emotional gestures/time/space, as many vectors of emotional support during international study.

Most students were constantly digitally networked (locally, 'home' and elsewhere), operating as a direct connection, or in the background (5.2.3). Students described constant connection to digital networks as palpably emotionally cathartic. This shaped students' lives and was more important if students felt upset. One I.S. described how constant digital connection reconciled feelings of absence during aversive events, in this case, to assuage feelings about safety concerns of family in a war zone.

> 'It's very upsetting. The situation makes it difficult being at UoL, makes me feel bad. For two to three days when they were in danger, I used it [SNS/Skype] to know about them, to encourage them, tell them not to be scared. It's very difficult; you are a long way from the situation. What was happening to them, I wanted to happen to me.'   [M,Ph.D,Iraq,I].

In addition to allaying anxiety, constant connection could also generate anxieties. For example, one student distrusted digital news sources about her home (Iraq) posted on Facebook. She became aware of the extent that Facebook sources influenced her feelings whilst at UoL, which negatively affected her studies:

> 'It's hard, especially during my upgrade, very distracting. You cannot trust Facebook […] the government were telling stories, not reality. I don't like to look at Facebook. I even deleted my apps on my phone because things were not true. […] I want to focus on my study. I have to study, I'm a sponsored student, with many responsibilities. If I look at Facebook everyday many times, it's not good for me, even if it is true; I don't want to see these truths at the moment.'   [F,Ph.D,Iraq.I].

Feelings of mistrust are implicit in this quotation. This evidences digital media as a 'false friend' (6.6) and acts in opposition to ideas about the digital phone as a friend. This negative digital copresence was a less desired facet of the international study social/digital nexus experience. These experiences interplayed between places, bringing digital translocality to the fore, as explored below.

6.2.4 Translocal Emotions through the Social/Digital Nexus

This section considers translocal international study experiences facilitated via constant digital connection as an emotionally permeated experience (see Case 5.1) (Longhurst, 2016a). I advance upon being 'one click away' (Metykova, 2010) by instead arguing constant connection shapes I.S. experiences and emotions. As pointed out by Ash and Gallacher (2011:358), 'virtual worlds do not sit alongside the 'real' world; they

are themselves 'real' worlds', and I.S. voices instilled the sense that other people/places were not so physically distant and were complicit in international study experience:

> 'I contacted family and friends on Facebook, so I didn't feel too much difference when I saw them in person. Looking back, because of Facebook, I always felt I'm connected to the people I know.'   [M,M.Sc,Taiwan,A].

> 'Most social media is for friends and family […] I found other students the same. If we're from other countries, we tend to use it more for 'going back' to our countries.'   [F,Ph.D,Mexico,I].

These I.S. appear to be voicing transient weaving-in and out of trans/local corporeal/digital life space (Collins, 2010b, 2012a): fully embedding the social/digital nexus in their international study experience. Madge et al. (2009c:145) point out the 'reiterative use of the virtual and place-based worlds' which are inseparable. In my research, feelings of being elsewhere evidenced how digital experiences appeared simultaneously part of, and de-centred from, material place and co-constitutive to the international study experience (Panelli, 2010; Brickell and Datta, 2011; Ash and Gallacher, 2011, 2015). Thus, while the physical/material place of UoL, in generating experiences remained very important, feelings that were supported digitally were equally, or sometimes more important, as presented by Mia (Case 6.3).

Mia had attended other IHEIs, 'loved learning' and voiced positive anticipations about UoL. However, limited taught study (2-4hrs/week), course costs (+£14,000), perceived discrimination on the basis of nationality in classrooms, accommodation issues and health issues such as insomnia (Polos et al. 2015) mismatched her expectations and created emotion dissonance. Positive anticipation turned to disillusionment and mis-matched realities resulted in Mia adopting a routine of increasing digital practices, notably Facebook: some might regard this as 'Facebook addiction' (Ryan et al. 2014; Andreassen, 2012; Akin and Iskender, 2011). Mia, becoming aware of her very high Facebook use, closed the account, but discussed the 'need to feel at home', and adopted Twitter instead (centred on Colombia). Each morning Mia interacted on Twitter as a type of networked-citizen journalist (Bruns et al. 2012; Valenzuela, 2013; Loader et al. 2014). Mia viewed 'being back home' as therapy to counter her dissatisfied international study experience.

Case 6.3 Mia: Digital Syncretic Habitation   [Female,M.Sc,Colombia,FG1]

'I was really happy, really excited about coming here […] it's like I shake! I'm supposed to love this [study] but it hasn't been happening here. […] Ask the professor for help face-to-face, it's like he's giving you a favour […]. Back home, the professor, he has to do it, it's his job.'

'I know that when you're abroad you use Facebook more, but the way that I was using it here, it makes me feel really bad. It's like I was on there all the time and that's never happened before…I'm checking it and checking it […]. I closed my Facebook account because it was consuming all my time. […]. I used What's Up, Line, Viber, I needed to be connected, I'd rather have a little distraction than feel lonely; to stay alive is with digital media!'

'I always used Twitter, but not to interact with people, I use it here not to check news, which was the way that I was using it before, I use it here to interact with someone elsewhere. I started listening to Colombian radio stations online and follow them on Twitter… I feel quite at home during the mornings…Colombian politics that's kind of sad… and I tweet. So I interact with people who are actually concerned with what is happening on the other side of the world. So I am not in England during the mornings, I'm in Colombia. That helps me a lot, helped me to sleep […] it's a therapy to keep my mind busy in the politics in my country. I have no idea what has happened here. It was bad, now it's much better, thanks to Twitter.'

Mia's feelings evidenced digitally-mediated spatiality (Leszczynski, 2014) and instantaneous pluralisation of place (Moores, 2004, 2012), leading to ideas of syncretic habitation. Martin and Rivzi (2014), in advancing Lee's (2010:267) ideas about transnational hybridization of physical and digital experiences, consider 'syncretic habitations' as the process by which I.S. interweave between local and transnational media to transform spatial practices locally. Mia appeared to be a classic example of such syncretic habitation. She was transcending her experience of a local place (UoL) by being 'at home (Colombia) in the mornings', which as suggested by Martin and Rivzi (2014) 'contribute to the constitution of here,' as being in Colombia simultaneously infected UoL experience to 'produce new spatial and experiential contexts' (ibid:1023). Mia's syncreticism between UoL/home offered a sense of belonging in 'real' space (Longhurst, 2016:133) supporting and enabling her retention in UKHE.

In sum, I found that place and emotions shape complex individual relationships within the international study social/digital nexus. This comprises an emotional multiplex of I.S. (UoL-situated)/(trans)local lives and their many emotional centres. As my study progressed, group relationships also emerged, involving feelings of 'collective difference'. This was significant, as I.S. are a very variegated group (Madge et al. 2015) but policy/recruitment narratives discursively identify I.S. as a single political sub-set 'labelled' collectively as 'international students'. I consider feeling different below.

6.2.5 Negotiating Feeling Different through Digital Collectivity

'Facebook acts as an ice-breaker: I'm not so alien.'   [M,M.Sc,India,FG2].

The lead quote reveals one student's use of Facebook to reduce feelings of alienation at UoL, as examined next. Findings involve relational identities (Lee, 2006) of 'those who belong and those who do not belong' (Horton and Kraftl, 2013:164) and 'how identities are perceived, by the self and the other' (Holton, 2016a:73) around 'complex hierarchical interconnections' (Holton, 2017:4). I found Facebook usage was not exclusive to single co-national groups; findings contrast to Lim and Pham's 'co-national cultural silos' (2016:2171). Importantly, 'feeling different' was reflected by Facebook usage between I.S. from diverse cultures, where usage was allied with feeling different.

BOS showed 75% of I.S. agreed social media helped overcome national divides between I.S., signifying how I.S. are overcoming difference via digital networks. This notably applied to I.S. from China, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia Taiwan, Thailand, USA and Vietnam (Figure 6.2). Sadly, however, many I.S. voiced Facebook friendships did not exist with UK students. Overcoming national divides involved networks between other I.S., rather than between I.S. and UK students. Some I.S. described the beneficial role of the UoL International Office in linking co-national/regional I.S. (e.g. Caribbean and South American I.S.) via Facebook groups (see 7.3). All interviewees voiced their potential vulnerability during international study. Friendships were very important to counter feelings of vulnerability. Two quotations underlined the significance of I.S. friendships made between different I.S. groups:

> 'Home students already got friendships, and don't need to create new, or, it's o.k to keep themselves to themselves. But for the international student, like us, we have to make our friendship circle from start.' [F,M.Sc,PRC,FG5].

> 'I don't think I integrated with the UK students at Leicester, just with international students. Being an international student is more than being a student. I like my life but not because of the UoL, but because of the other international people I met.'   [F,Ph.D,Mexico,I].

Figure 6.2 Digital Media Bridges National Divides between International Students

Q.23.E 'Social media has helped to bridge national divides'

■ Agree   ■ Disagree   ■ Prefer not to say
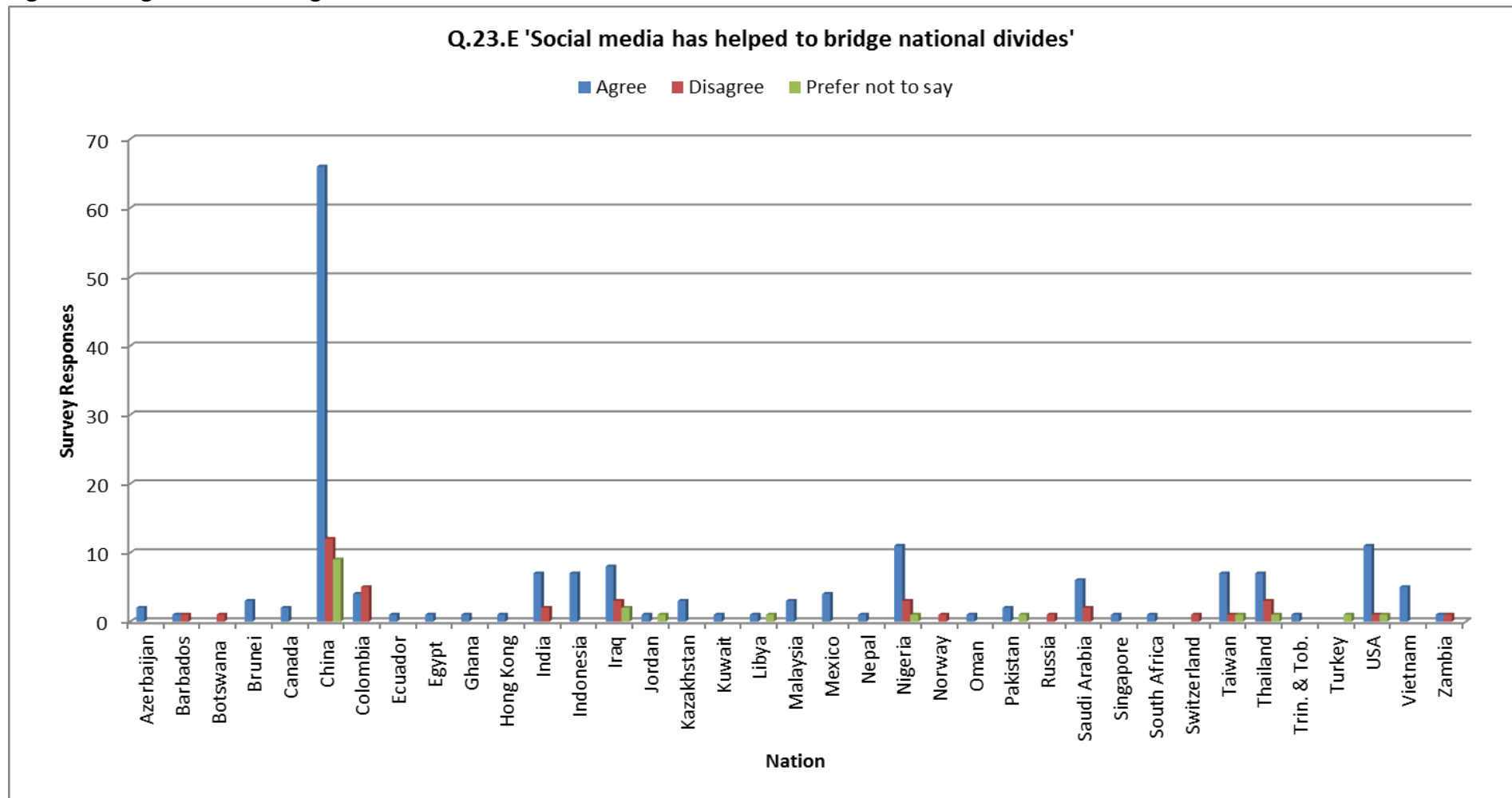
I.S. conveyed a sense of collective difference between themselves and UK students. These differences involved political, ethnic, economic, cultural, pedagogic and linguistic issues. Facebook was used as a space to join together collectively as I.S. as different I.S. gravitated for friendship/support amongst themselves. This reduced the differences between I.S. groups. At the same time Facebook was also used to articulate feelings of difference from UK students. Facebook enabled I.S.. to negotiate their differences while creating a sense of belonging through this difference. Facebook thus aided overcoming some of the challenges of international study:

> 'We normally don't talk to each other; we became friends on Facebook' [...]. I don't know if they are friends, or not [...]. They are like colleagues, I would not say shallow, they are more temporary.'   [Female, M.Sc, Japan].

> 'Facebook is for the international students.'[F1,M.Sc,PRC,FG1]…'Exactly, for friends, we use WeChat, or QQ, for me it is fully so.'   [F2,M.Sc,PRC,FG1].

I.S.. were aware of 'being different' (to UK students), partly owing to the pre-defined categorisation of an amorphous "I.S." by UKVI/UoL management practices. I.S. were internationally mobile, yet this mobility could also be variably restricted by nationality:

> 'It's hard being in Leicester. The E.U, U.K, American citizens, it's easy for them to go anywhere. It would be good to go freely, but the visa is everywhere, takes months, or maybe you don't get it. I can't go anywhere. What's the difference between me and everyone else?'   [M,Ph.D,Iraq,I].

Sadly, students feeling alien, insignificant, excluded, marginalised and discriminated against was evident in my research:

> 'Compared to local students, we are different [...]. In terms of the professor, it is the same, they care differently for different students.'
>   [M.Sc,Iraq,FG1].

> 'Comparing my Master's degree in Holland and here, it's very different, totally. In Holland, all of the students were…like integrated [...]. Here, I cannot find this; we see a clear difference here.'   [M,Ph.D,Ecuador,FG4].

> 'In the lab, I'll give you an example, with international students compared to home students. In my country I can ask a question and get an answer for an hour, here it's one minute [...] Sometimes you are of interest; sometimes you are disappointed.'   [M,Ph.D,Iraq,FG3].

> 'The bad was loneliness throughout the whole process. It's the lack of integration with the university, like local students and local things here.'
>   [F,Ph.D,Mexico,I].

International study at UoL was a stratified experience for these students. This signals the importance of understanding how I.S. feel inside *and* outside of the classroom (Kraftl et al. 2007; Madge et al. 2009a). I found I.S. groups variably negotiated their differences via varying intensities of digital practices. Feelings of greater difference appeared linked to more intense digital practices to mediate that difference, as Case 6.4 reveals. This group of Iraqi-Kurdish I.S. felt very different from UK students. Their emotions shaped intense Facebook use focused upon 'home', UoL co-nationals, non-I.S. communities and I.S.. This group also voiced financial hardships more than other nationalities. Feelings of intense difference produced intense Facebook usage. For one student, usage changed from being limited at home to over 10 hours each day; digital networks also shaped 'night-time socialising' (Holton, 2017c:70) for another I.S..

Case 6.4 Digitally-Mediated Negotiation with Feeling Different   [M3,Ph.D,Iraq,FG3]

Betin: When I finish, I'll return home. The UK focuses just on money, no interesting things, they work, work, work. If they can't work, they stay at home, or go to the bar.

Amez: It's a different culture. Life has changed for us here. The biggest issue is religion, the restriction. In Kurdistan I went everywhere, for example the café, for coffee. The biggest restriction here is that everywhere people drink; drinking alcohol is haram. We can never drink, if you go anywhere in the UK you have to sit with people 'drinking'. We can't sit down with somebody that drinks.

Betin: Yes, we come from a different culture. After work we meet others for coffee.

Amez: This is a big problem. In the UK it's very difficult to make friends…I mean the British friend, not international friends. If it was easy to make British friends, you would learn English more easily, be more interesting in the study. This is a restriction.

Betin: British don't connect or contact with others, not just with us, but themselves. Maybe the British only have a few friends. In my country I have at least 100 friends, can contact anybody I want, make visits to families any time. Here they're restricted, just in the weekend they are free. They're more formal, polite, our country is much more friendly, anyone will talk to you, showing you places, or invite you to the restaurant.

Chiya: The environment is different, and involvement with people is 'very' different here.

Amez: Here, for any non-work time, I go on Facebook. Here, I have to open and check my Facebook each 30 minutes.

Chiya: I didn't use Facebook so much at home, but I use it a lot more here in the UK.

Betin: The reason is because he is lonely here […]. Sometimes I meet people, the first time they come here, they cry!

Amez: Yes!

Betin: In our country, for me, maybe one, two times a week, I look at Facebook, but here, 'all night', I see my Facebook.

Amez: Yes, life has changed for us here. I cannot spend 'any day' without Facebook […]. I use Facebook maybe 10 hours each day. I didn't use Facebook much at home, I use it a lot here [...]. It's very difficult to continue your study without social media. […]. If one felt lonely, and couldn't communicate with family or friends, you'd go crazy here.'

Facebook practices thus articulate this collective difference, supporting Sidhu et al. (2016) where international study is not always about 'valorization and achievement' but also about 'apartness, rejection, exhaustion, loneliness, isolation, poverty and institutional neglect' (ibid:9). The data revealed some of these interactions, where feeling different resulted in collective Facebook use amongst I.S. who collectively expressed and negotiated their perceived difference through this medium. Facebook use related to a sense of (not)belonging (Marlowe et al. 2016). Facebook appeared to aid well-being through international friendships (Rae and Lonborg, 2015; Brooks, 2015), countering some of the challenges of feeling different (although these actions might promote self-segregation from non-I.S., see Holton, 2016b). I next consider altered worldly social perspectives.

6.3 Altered Worldly Social Perspectives

I now discuss the role of the social/digital nexus within student digital subjectivites (sense of self-position relative to others) and digital identities. My interest involves nested scales (Marston et al. 2005) of I.S. experiences involving their sensibilities and digitally networked (trans)local lives. Place and mobility have been suggested part of identity construction (Cresswell 2006; Easthope, 2009). Bagnoli (2007, 2009) suggests the gap between (un)familiar centres, of 'the self and other' are also implicit in identity issues. However, as noted earlier, constant 'home' connection maintained social organisation and relationships, reducing experiences of difference. I found the social/digital nexus (variably) implicated in I.S. subjectivity and identity issues, where this matrix variably arbitrated the gap between (un)familiar experiences. This appears to blur the role of place during mobility for study, which affects belonging and identity positions. Digital subjectivities (6.3.1) digital nationalism (6.3.2), digital intercultural identity (6.3.4) and digital cosmopolitan identity (6.3.5), are considered below.

6.3.1 Digital Subjectivities

'I think freedom is much more important than money.'   [F,Ph.D,PRC,I].

I now examine changed social subjectivities through the international study experience. The lead quote shows how mobility for study is not always about economic imperatives. Where the economic motivations for study are well

documented, I found subjectivities also influenced motivations for study, ranging from personal to more cosmopolitan subjectivities. BOS established international study was, for many I.S., a mission of self-development and discovery centred on: developing confidence (31% very important; 36% important), social skills (28%;31%), English language skills (41%;30%), while broadening worldly horizons (38%;32%), experiencing British culture (30%;30%), meeting 'local British people' (27%;32%) 'British students' (25%;32%) and I.S. (19%;22%). Meeting co-national I.S. (10%;15%) was a lower priority.

These statistics confirm the importance of scales of perspectives; concerning personal, local, national, cultural and global capacities entangled with economic motivations for international study (see 4.3.1). Many interviewees voiced their "altered worldly perspectives" during digitally networked international study. This involved personal self-development, discovery and socially progressive viewpoints:

> 'When you compare UK to Colombia it's very different. [...]. In Colombia it's crazy...when I went to the UK I realised these things.'   [M.Sc,Colombia,A].

> 'The UK opened my mind, opened my eyes. Before I wasn't like now, and I see differently.'   [M,Ph.D,Iraq,I].

> 'After one year here, and I connect with my friends in Taiwan, I feel I'm not familiar with them anymore.'   [F,M.Sc,Taiwan,A].

Digitally networked international study involved digital global citizenship for one I.S.:

> 'Studying in UoL encouraged me to use social media more than before, and to care about international affairs, since putting myself in a position as a global citizen.'   [F,M.Sc,PRC,S].

These I.S. voices were in-situ at UoL. Work exploring post-UKHE subjectivities is rarer. Chen (Case 6.5) gives a rich alumni view of transformations during digitally networked international study. Chen reveals a liminal/chaotic education space of identity transition and conflicting national and ethnic positions (Lan and Wu, 2016). His international study experiences culminated in identity re-invention (Huang, 2010; Oikonomidoy and Williams, 2013). Chen travelled to UoL with other Taiwanese I.S., met via a pre-registration Facebook network in Taiwan, and was digitally supported by this co-national network while at UoL, together with supportive digital vectors from Taiwan, a place which posed national/political and cultural uncertainties. His international study space was digitally saturated whilst also allowing a space of

reflection about Taiwan.[26] Chen's voice typifies the emotional entanglements between places and emotions felt during international study. Digital networks provided familiarity with language and culture which alleviated international study pains during

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Case 6.5 Chen: Self-Discovery and Transformations   [M,M.Sc,Taiwan,A]

Some I.S. described social media lifelines, or great comfort at UoL. How do you feel about this?

'I felt quite stressed at UoL, assignments every day, the seminar almost killed me, the reading list was too long. […]. I cracked down sometimes, but I didn't wish to kill myself thinking that Facebook is a lifeline. It can help comfort me if I contact my friends in Taiwan on Facebook when I'm upset. I didn't like to bother friends in Leicester because they have their worries for their studies. I can message on Facebook or talk on Line. I cracked down sometimes because I was upset and there's no one to contact in Taiwan due to the time difference. […] home friends just know how to comfort people in the home-way.' […]. I learnt how to deal with myself better after every time I cracked down.'

How changed are you as a person as a result of your time at UoL?

'I feel more independent now. I've experienced lots of things. If I stayed in Taiwan I wouldn't be able to know what people or things are like in other countries. There's always a myth about foreigners in Taiwan, for some people and my friends. I can now tell them what the myths are.'

'People always judge the behaviour of the foreigner from the knowledge of the movie they watched. If people didn't go abroad to see the world they might be unconsciously brainwashed by American movies or publications in Taiwan. I'm immune from the cultural invasion in my brain now. I'm more aware of the position I should put myself and country in the world now.'

'There were lots of Chinese in Leicester, so there were some problems. Some Chinese people respect Taiwanese saying we are an independent country, but some just don't. I was confronted by some Chinese when I needed to mention Taiwan as a country. They just don't agree my opinion. My friend said she was shouted at in public, when applying the nationality of Taiwan.'

'Nationality has always been a problem for Taiwanese. After study in Leicester I know Taiwanese as a group better; what are the differences and similarities between Taiwanese and Chinese, as well as comparing to people from other countries. I become clear of the different ways people with different education in other countries think. I know better why people do the things, I didn't know why before. When I know the people better I also know myself as a Taiwanese better. I am more aware that my culture influences my thinking, and its different comparing to the cultures in China and Singapore where the Great Chinese Culture is prevalent. It did make me feel stronger as being Taiwanese. However some Taiwanese philosophies are pains to me now. I don't like to talk to the elders that often because I felt they always talk nonsense and they like to judge people in their own opinion.'

'I feel I'm not really 100% compatible to general Taiwanese culture and society now. I now don't like the way my parents' generation think. I have good ideas that conservative people will not care about. After I have lived in the UK I found it is less acceptable to be rejected.'

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an on-going reappraisal of his position in the world. Temporary exclusion from Taiwanese networks appeared part of his changed outlook. UoL had also been a contested space of tension, conflict and discrimination with some Chinese I.S.

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[26] The Republic of China (Taiwan) is the largest non-UN state. Statehood is contested by PRC and recognised by USA.

(Sakamoto, 2011). Chen's contested Taiwanese identity involved the competing cultural and military power centres of PRC and USA.

For Chen, UoL became a new space of reflective comparison and interpretation of worldly differences which clarified feelings about self-conceptualisation, national and cultural identity, born out of new understandings of Chinese I.S. encountered via international study. Other I.S. were key agents in his altered perspectives, presenting how I.S. are interrelational mobile agents of change (Collins, 2010b; Madge et al. 2015) who can act upon others. Chen's UoL experiences also involved repetitive digital practices, while international study enabled a greater understanding of personal and national identities, associated with independence of mind, strengthened-self and introduced new cultural values and beliefs (Li, 2015). Indeed, 'identity reinvention is very common to happen on I.S. and on how they negotiate in their new social context the process of exposed to a new culture may change their national identity' (Li, 2015:8). International study also resulted in feelings of separation from traditional Taiwanese culture. Chen revealed shifts in 'values, insight, skills and identity' which are 'continuous, profound and far-reaching' (Gu, 2015:76). A triadic interrelationship appeared vital relative to the self, minorities and larger groups at UoL (see Gu, 2015).

Another alumni shows us how digital media can be involved in altering worldly views:

> 'Before UoL I didn't use social media much. When I finished I'd changed, 'a lot'. I wanted to travel and know other cultures. I wouldn't have thought this way before UK study. At and after Leicester, social media became an important part of my life for contacting UoL, in my school, for friends from other countries; it's much more important now.'   [F,M.Sc,Colombia,A].

This I.S. discloses subjective transitions over the international study period. She experienced new social/digital organisation and experiences which appear complicit in her thinking and identity issues (Kim, 2016:1). Worldly views might continually be (re)appraised (Anderson 2006:735), suggesting digital practices are supple and subject to processional experience, self-exploration and discovery (see 5.5.3). Changing subjectivities relate in complex ways to identities. I discuss digital nationalism below.

6.3.2 Digital Nationalism

This section examines national/political identity where digital networks appear to (re)articulate relations between nations/nationalism (Merrimann and Jones, 2016). Digital nationalism involves nationalistic emotions (Closs Stephens, 2016) and everyday belonging (Skey, 2011). The social/digital nexus poses particular interest relative to identity 'differences' and 'similarities' involving 'individuals' and 'collectives' as distinguished by social relations (Hopkins, 2013:6, citing Jenkins, 2004:4).

BOS showed 63% decided digital media strengthened feelings about home, belonging and national identity (27% disagreed). Digital media variably reinforced I.S. identity: I.S. from China (see 6.3.3), India, Indonesia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Nigeria, Singapore, Taiwan and Vietnam noted a stronger national identity forged via digital media, while I.S. from Barbados, Canada, Kazakhstan, Libya and Mexico recorded no change and Colombian and USA I.S. evidenced weakened nation identity (Figure 6.3).

People and place remained important. In addition to the BOS findings, UoL, UK student and I.S.-centred 'disconnections and disassociations' (Matthews and Sidhu, 2010:60) shaped I.S. experiences (6.2.5) which appeared to often strengthen national and cultural I.S. identity positions. Digital networks often involved distinct national bonds (e.g. I.S. from China, Taiwan), cultural proximity (e.g. 'Latins' - Central and South Americans, South East Asian students) and religion (Iraqi Kurds - see Nyland and Near, 2007). Identity articulations were expressed via social/cultural meetings (e.g. cooking ethnic cuisines together; national societies) which (re)-produced cultural/national outlooks. A stratified UoL setting appeared implicit in I.S. identity construction which involved UK students, other I.S., and I.S. acuities about the care given by UoL to them.

Individualizing/collectivizing feelings via the social/digital nexus posed particular interest, as many students discussed 'feeling more national' during international study:

> 'I feel stronger about my Kurdish identity. When I came here, even some people didn't know I was Kurdish, what was Kurdistan. When you come to country with different nationalities you feel your nationality become more stronger, you identify with yourself, and people from different backgrounds. I am feeling more Kurdish than before.'   [F,Ph.D,Iraq,I].

> 'Politically I'm in Nigeria. If you see me venting anger, it's about my political views of happiness in my country.'   [M,Ph.D,Nigeria,I].

Figure 6.3 Digital Media Strengthen National Identity during UK International Study

Q.23.C 'Social media at UoL has strengthened feelings about home, belonging and national identity'
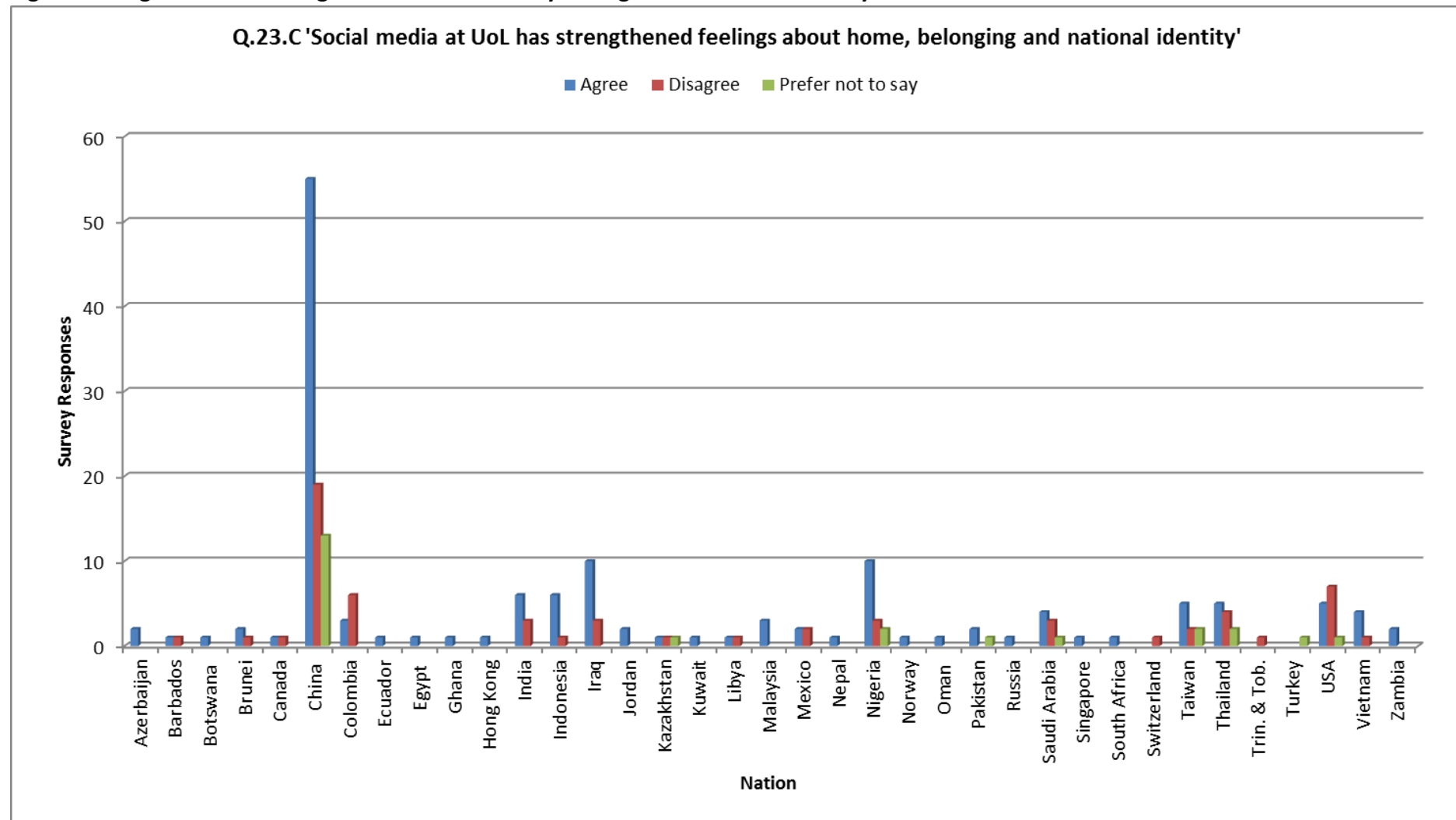
Within the UoL national groups, Chinese students formed one of the highest BOS response rates where digital media increased feelings about home, belonging and national identity (63% agreed, 22% disagreed, 15% pns). This supports Wang and Quang (2013) where Chinese student digital practices were important for information, entertainment and ethnic maintenance reasons conducted through Chinese digital media (CDM). Below, I explore the digital expressions of Chinese student nationalism in detail. Ideas link to translocal identity positions, digital border-crossing and 'performances of citizenship' (Smith et al. 2016).[27]

For many Chinese students, UoL became a space of nationalistic interpretation, negotiation and contestation. Being outside national borders mattered for CDM practices, which appeared bound with feelings of national identity. No doubt, Chinese students explored non-CDM; however, continued high use of CDM appeared to involve feelings of nationalistic re-assertion which reiteratively appeared to strengthen CDM routines. Some Chinese students advocated the increasing importance of CDM:

> 'WeChat is a famous digital media site in China, and it is becoming more and more widely used in the world.'   [F,M.Sc,PRC,S].

> 'WeChat is a Chinese export to others consequent of numbers here.'
>   [F,M.Sc,PRC,S].

Six Chinese students (FG5) discussed CDM with a sense of nationalistic pride. Some literature has positioned Chinese I.S. as politically indifferent, but I found Chinese students politically engaged, even nationally impassioned (Case 6.5). Several Chinese students challenged BOS when 'China and Tibet' appeared together as a national identifier. These students alerted me via strongly worded emails that they would not complete or recommend BOS to others until Tibet had been removed. The situation corroborated Liu's (2012, 2015) suggestion that Chinese students were far from politically indifferent. Chinese I.S. also gave examples of other frictional encounters:

> 'It's a problem, sometimes I'm not happy in Britain, it's very narrow angled what is said about China, what you see on TV; they misunderstand the culture and even misunderstand you […]. Some people, the first time they see you, they don't like you, 'you are Chinese', no reason, except you are Chinese. I don't know why?'   [F1,M.Sc,PRC,FG5].

> 'They misunderstand me and I misunderstand them.'   [F2,M.Sc,PRC,FG5].

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[27] National identity is viewed as a fluid component in other identities (e.g. personal and social identity).

'We always cook a lot together, but had trouble in the kitchen. In other student minds, we're always a group, they think Chinese people always make trouble, in their mind there's a bad memory due to our nationality.'

[F3,M.Sc,PRC,FG5].

'I was totally different; sometimes ignored by local students. Yes, I feel a bit offended by this.'   [F,M.Sc,PRC,FG1].

'Lots of cultural conflict, lots of new information. There's misunderstandings, new friends are difficult with the British way.'

[F,Ph.D,PRC,I].

A lack of international diversity on-course was problematic for some Chinese I.S.[28]:

'We wish to be exposed to other international students, but Chinese students are occupying the UK's universities I think.'   [F,M.Sc,PRC,FG5].

'I was disappointed when I arrived, so many Chinese classmates, that's not what I expected. Like the others [FG participants] I was hoping for many British students.'   [F,MSc,PRC,FG2].

Contested UoL place also involved a continued high CDM usage. I regard these digital practices as a form of digital nationalism (Saunders, 2011; Conversi, 2012). Contested space raised questions about perceived inequalities and the role CDM might play in (re)producing imaginations (Rizvi 2001), as networks continually (re)shaped national identity (Rizvi, 2005). Ideas about oppression have been viewed relational by Davidson et al. (2012:7) and might be linked to identity reinvention (Oikonomidoy and Williams, 2012; Li, 2015). A social/digital nexus suggests national identity (re)invention via prior/current/post international study digital networking, although cautions are needed as political attitude, coercion/fear might also shape these CDM practices.

Ideas about digital nationalism involve political identity, self-representation, citizenship, which engender an 'absence of liberal subjectivity' (Koch, 2013:411)[29]; a complex schema in relation to the digital world. Fears exist that Chinese authorities monitor digital practices during international study via WeChat (Davison, 2012; Muncaster, 2013; Mandalia, 2013). Perhaps these uncertainties were evidenced in the earlier BOS question (15% of Chinese respondents 'preferred not to say'- much higher than other nationalities). Most Chinese students were Chinese Communist Party members and CDM was necessary to contact 'home'. This evidences non-boundless

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[28] Case 6.1 previously evidenced how UoL was viewed as a place of cultural similarity
[29] Questions exist about 'collaborative performance' of Chinese identity in focus groups (see Koch, 2013).

digital space (Sullivan, 2014) where political borders extend beyond physical nation states and into education space (Brooks 2015a). This supports Rizvi (2010:162) where transnational formations seldom occur outside national configurations as the nation-state is agentic in promoting the transnational subject. CDM practices can also challenge authoritarianism (Yang, 2014). It will be interesting to see how digitally contested space 'versus' increased nationalistic self-representation, develops as more Chinese middle class I.S. enter into international study. Whilst exploring digital national identity, some I.S. also voiced digital intercultural identity experiences.

6.3.3 Digital Intercultural Identity

I now explore digital intercultural identity. Gu (2015, citing Jenkins, 2004:22) submits 'identity is constructed in transactions at and across the boundary' (of other cultures). At UoL, digital media enabled connections and cultural associations (see 6.3.2) which might not be available in the classroom. Where 75% of the surveyed agreed digital media helped bridge national divides (17% disagreed), 42% believed digital media created a sense of being inbetween home and host nations (Figure 6.4) and 35% decided digital media weakened feelings about home (Figure 6.5). Some I.S. voiced "feeling intercultural" through digital media.

Digital intercultural inbetweeness was captured in the survey:

> 'You can study the influence social media have on international students feelings of being in-between two communities, their home country and the UK.'   [F,Ph.D,Egypt,S].
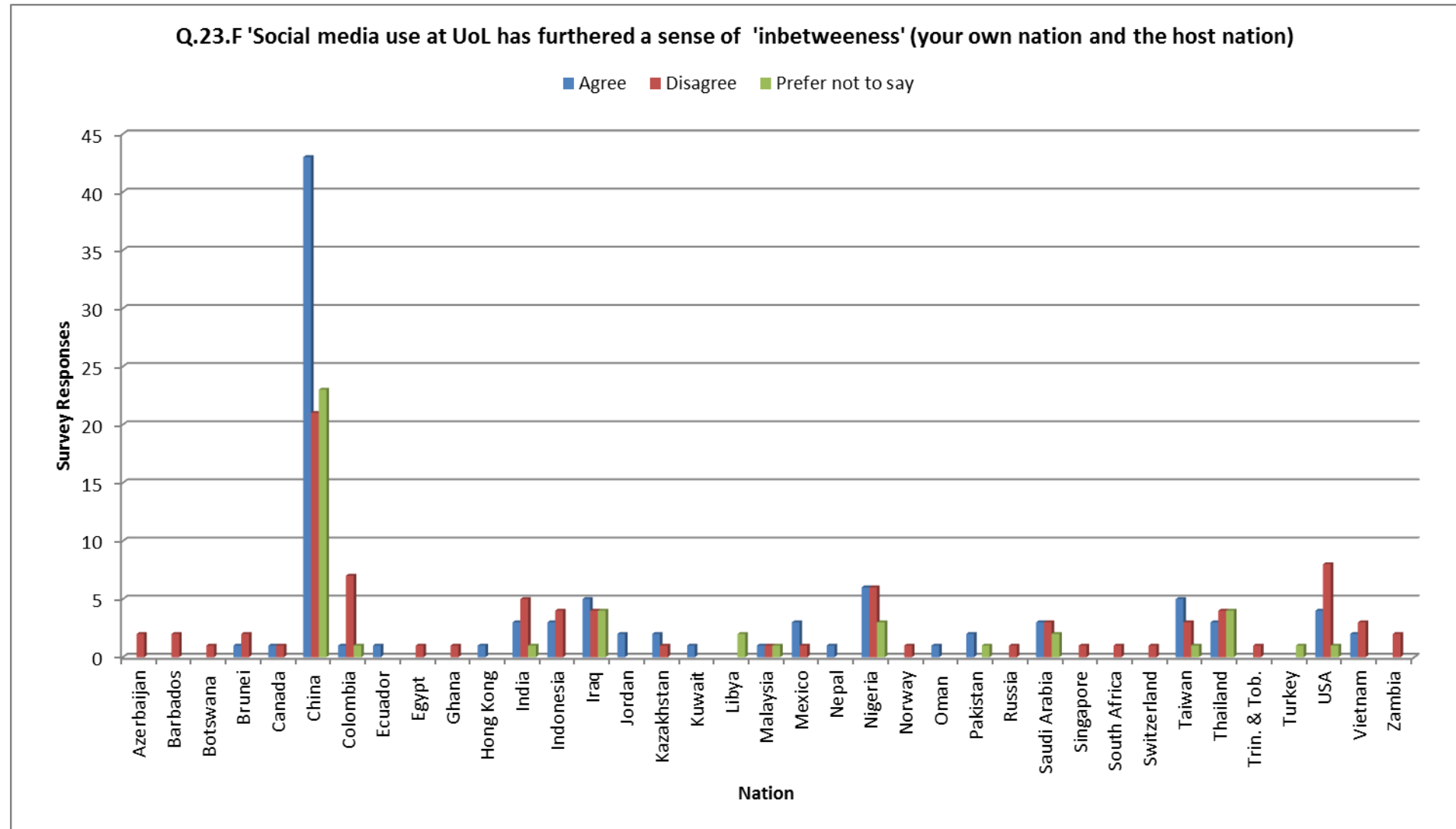
One student described how international study produced new intercultural awareness resulting from face-to-face (campus) and digital interactions (Facebook and Twitter):

> 'In terms of change to you, it's not only about dealing with culture from your country, it's also cultures from other countries; how they talk, what they like to talk about, how their social behaviours are. If I go to another country and meet someone like I've met here, I'll know how to deal with them, my understanding has broadened.'   [M,M.Sc,India,FG2].

A USA student reflected upon Anglicisation:

> 'I've definitely changed [FG2:'yeah'] for the better. I lived in New York for 33 years; I find being in a more pleasant, verbal environment, made me step back, I'm less aggressive. I'm getting Anglicised.'   [F,M.Sc,USA,FG2].

Figure 6.4 Digital Media and Feeling 'Inbetween' Cultures

Q.23.F 'Social media use at UoL has furthered a sense of 'inbetweeness' (your own nation and the host nation)

■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Prefer not to say

Academic structures also shaped new digital intercultural encounters:

> 'Academically, the Facebook Group made a big difference, how I met more people, other Colombians, other people, locals and other students.'
>
> [M,M.Sc,Colombia,I].

For one Chinese I.S., the social/digital nexus involved weaker national identity and stronger intercultural appreciations:

> 'I use a lot, maybe eight, both Chinese and Western [platforms]. I've got so many different ones, for example QQ, WeChat, then Twitter, Facebook and Instagram…to follow some stars, and Western countries celebrities.[…]. Definitely I've changed, especially my attitude. I've found my heart become strong to accept everything, no matter if it is strange […]. I have instantly accepted the western culture, when I go back to China I will not be very in captive in our Chinese culture.' [F,M.Sc,PRC,FG2].

One I.S., fluent in Mandarin, English, German and Japanese languages commented:

> 'I'm not part of UK, I don't feel British, one year is not long enough, maybe 10 years? I've been to Japan eight times; I now have a Japanese personality.' [F,M.Sc,Taiwan,A].

Maria (Case 6.6) voiced an intercultural identity position intermediated through digital networks which caused emotional flux and identity conflict (Brown and Brown, 2013). Prior to international study Maria felt fully Mexican, but four years at UoL, and on-going networking with Mexico, made Maria feel inbetween 'homes'.

Case 6.6   Maria: 'Where is Home Now?'   **[F,Ph.D,Mexico,A]**

'I don't think ever again I will be in a single place. I'll always have a relationship here, but if I come back and work here, I'll still have a relationship in Mexico. Social media makes me feel my life is divided between here and Mexico. Without social media, I would have been really lonely, like from the Mexican-side, and the UoL-side. […] 'I now use Twitter for personal stuff, thoughts my life and so on.'

'I need to settle in a place, that's a hard decision. Mexico is my home and culture, in a way I feel more comfortable there, but there are things in the UK I don't have in Mexico, so I think I'll just keep moving backwards and forwards. For example, I now get upset from things I learned in Britain. In Mexico we're a collective society, no notions of privacy, but now I have that in me I get frustrated if people don't go fast, people here run, they don't want to chit-chat like in Mexico. That was then, but now … I'm 'kind of here'… I don't care about anything, just about work. The problem is if I go to Mexico, I don't feel fully Mexican…You start doing British things, but I'm still aware of my identity… I'll now drink tea like crazy! But when I come here I'm clearly not British, so I don't know what I am, I have an identity crisis. But then social media is cool, because I can find other people, who have the same identity crisis… you see I'm not British, but I don't feel like a Mexican anymore, I am feeling inbetween.'

'Home was always Mexico, but my course is ending, I have to go back home, but where is home now? For me it is clearly not Mexico, but here is not my home either. So where is it? I would like to have my English language and the best of the U.K, and the best of Mexico, and shake them up and make somewhere else.'


Maria depicts how digital networks can alter cultural sensibilities producing emotional dissonance associated with feeling inbetween places (Wang and Collins, 2015). Digital media (re)produced identity conflict as Maria sought similar identity-conflicted people online. For Maria, digital media presented an on-going challenge to ideas about her Mexican identity, as Mexico was no longer the centre of belonging. International study had resulted in an intercultural identity (Kim, 2009) feeling inbetween 'homes' which was negotiated via the social/digital nexus. Maria's case also reveals the embedded nature of identity, intellectual subjectivity and emotions in social, academic and national structures. International study acted as a space of intercultural reflection involving reflexive self-(re)evaluation, where willingness to engage across cultures posed identity (re)-negotiations, intellectual curiosities and emotional meanings in relation to existing and transforming social and academic structures. This supports Kim et al. (2009:156) as the digital mediates 'affinities and differences of the home and host cultures'. Globally increasing levels of ISM and the increasing ubiquity of digital media might increase this intercultural experience, furthering contested ideas surrounding global citizenship and cosmopolitanism, considered below.

6.3.4 Digital Cosmopolitan Identity

I now consider digital cosmopolitan identities. Here 'subjectivities, private and personal experiences, (digital) biographies and imaginaries come together' (Smith et al. 2013:132, digital added), which I term 'digital cosmopolitanism'. Wang and Collins (2016:15) argue moving 'between different relationship networks' produces everyday cosmopolitanism. This everyday cosmopolitanism (daily new experiences) aligns with cosmopolitan imagination (digital narratives expressing global citizenship ideas) (Baillie et al. 2011). This "cosmopolitan imagination" involves 'self-awareness, reflection, and active translation of practices that generate different kinds of interactions with others' (Wang and Collins, 2016:3). Using this framework, I discuss I.S. relationships with others elsewhere during ISM (Brooks and Waters, 2010; Collins, 2009a).

BOS found 34% agreed social media weakened feelings about home and created a sense of feeling much more transnational/cosmopolitan (Figure 6.5). Feeling cosmopolitan appeared instilled within some I.S. digital networks where digital

Figure 6.5 Digital Media and Feeling More Cosmopolitan

Q.23.G 'Social media has weakened feelings about home and created a sense of feeling much more transnational/cosmopolitan'
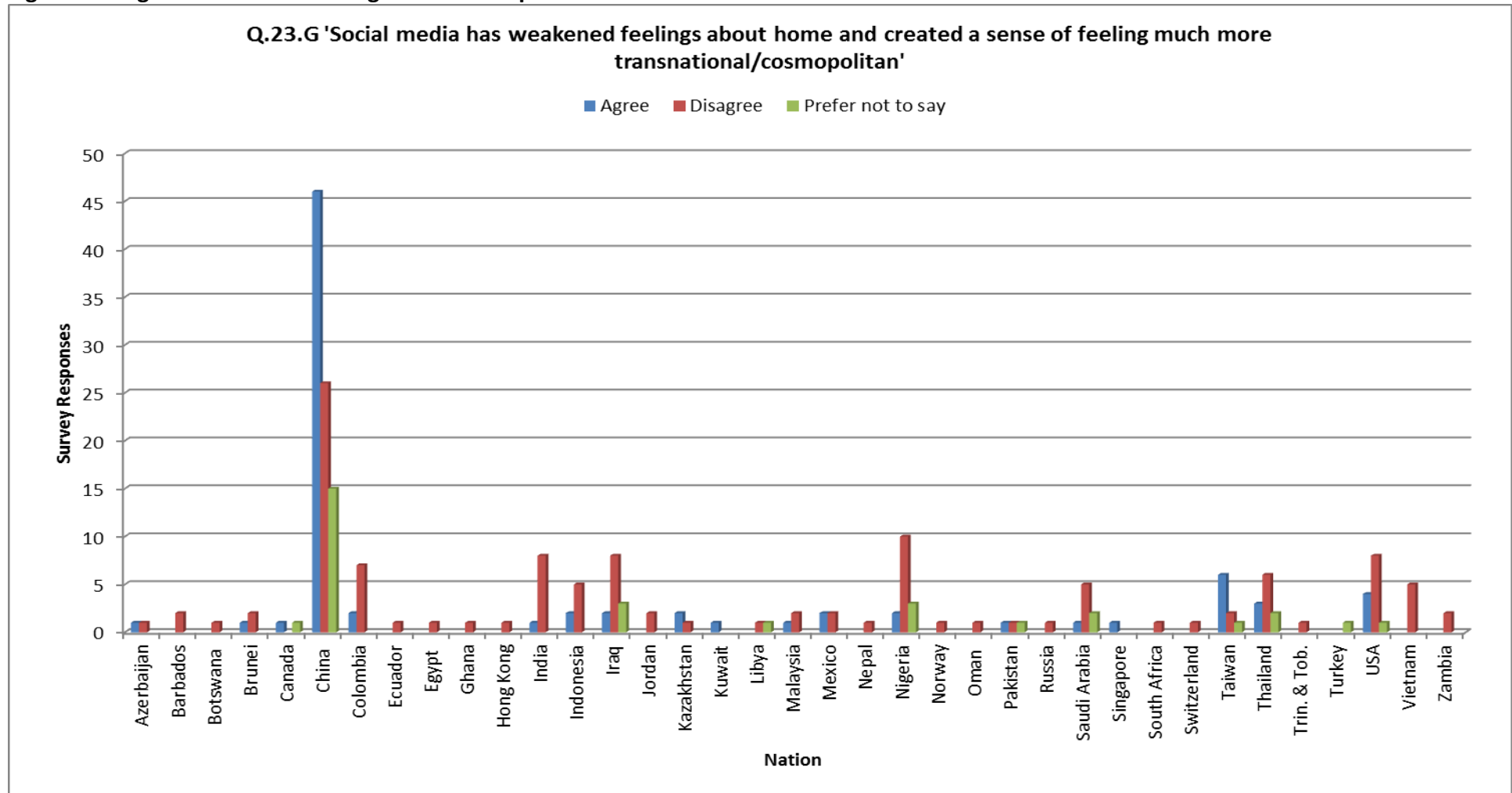
transmissions of international study experience, produced a type of digital postcard, supporting Collins' (2009a:842) 'transnational diary'. Such transmissions spanned national frameworks inwards ('home') and outwards (globally) (see Caruana, 2014:88).

Digital postcards involved 'sharing the lived experience' (Beech, 2014b:341). These were experience descriptions about discoveries and encounters in the new place of study, digitally disseminated. I.S. experiences often involved mundane/vernacular interactions with difference. This situation conveyed the overall importance of place as the experience-centre within other knowledges and imaginaries (networked digitally).

> 'I discussed this region. I felt so excited after attending a church activity last week.' [F1,MSc,PRC,FG5].

> 'Victoria Park and Abbey Park… very nice, I told others.' [M,M.Sc,Iraq,FG1].

> 'I let them know I'm happy here, although, in the case of the weather sometimes I want to see the sun.' [F,MSc,PRC,FG1].

International study experience imagery involved emotively framed vernacular place-specific information, depicting how students act as everyday digital agents of everyday (vernacular) cosmopolitanism. Such digitally networked experiences appeared also implicit in encouraging others to enter international study.[30]

BOS highlighted the cosmopolitan sensibilities of some Chinese students, as exemplified in Case 6.7. Biyu narrated and daily-digitally networked international study experiences. This digital cosmopolitanism involved a cosmopolitan identity. Biyu was self-driven to change existing social dynamics, downplayed her Chinese collective cultural side and was drawn into international study through other travellers' digital postcards of 'fantastic lives' (see below). Biyu embraced difference, and wished to fit into UKHE. This position showed independence and critical thinking (Liu, 2012, 2015).

Biyu viewed cross-cultural interactions as global citizenship. Supporting Collins (2009a:848), Biyu's digital diary acted as a digital biography founded on images of her UoL life, as digital networks easily maintained friendships while 'acting as a window to lives that are now physically distant' (ibid:851). Biyu viewed her online broadcasts as philanthropic by sharing humanity and community (Smith et al. 2013:129).

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[30] Digitally connected alumni might continue this cosmopolitan cycle through their onward mobility (6.7; 7.4).

Case 6.7 Biyu: 'Diary of My Life.'   **[F,Ph.D,PRC,I]**

'In China we're like products from a factory, ask a thousand people one question you'll get the same answer. Here, you're taught to think differently, people are much more open-minded, more critically engaged; here is the key why people want to go abroad, wanna get some fresh air, not living in a box, more ideas from a group of people who don't agree with you.'

'I left home early, didn't waste much time with my parents, it was boring and Peking was suffering horrible air pollution. I was living in Peking and Shanghai, sometimes you pray for a peaceful life from those big cities. I thought maybe I should go abroad. A major important thing was my old classmates, about 70% were living abroad, very well, and enjoying their fantastic lives, they always posted their photographs online, like on Facebook and Twitter. Many others were saying 'why don't you come?'

'Leicester is quite small, is nice, better than London, not having to keep an eye on the edges, just keep an eye on your work. I share photos and my feelings about Leicester. Digital media is just a natural reaction, I don't think about it, I like to take pictures, I feel I have to post pictures online…diary of my life, kind of. I never feel lonely although I think I could not be here without social media… just people in the office, no, all people in other cities, life should be like this, they are calling every day, every day'.

'Being a world citizen is really appropriate in my mind. For many people of my generation, most of us only child, you think we are separate all our life, we are independent, get along with yourself; but social media is very important, we are chatting online very frequently, I'd feel lonely without it. I 'fear' being away without any internet or social media, it's 'very important'.

Biyu's Chinese identity appeared suppressed and replaced by a surrogate cross-cultural lone (only child) traveller identity, although digital media fulfilled an umbilical link to dispersed social networks providing advice and encouragement (Beech, 2014a:339). Biyu 'feared' digital disconnection from her digital collective. This connection appears to support personal cosmopolitan views and psychological well-being (Li et al. 2013). Biyu's interpretation and performance of cosmopolitanism appeared implicit in her own personal transitions. Upholding Collins (2009a, 2010b, 2012a,b, 2012b; Beech, 2014a), digital networks played a key role in Biyu's decision to study and relocate overseas. The UoL appeared to jointly inform decision-making processes (subject requirements and IELTS tests) however, digital social networks were of key significance, appearing more important than economic imperatives, supporting her international study. The 'digital diary of life' is considered further next.

Beech (2014b:170) suggests students construct diverse perceptions of place over long periods of time. Whilst this may be true, the immediacy of digital media adds complexity. Digital narration modes (Herring, 2015) involve networked representations of experience at the 'push of a button':

'Facebook is like the story of ups and downs since you were studying here.'

[F,Ph.D,Mexico,I].

While subject to authorship and style, the instantaneity of 'posted experience' may be a powerful factor in the construction of international study imaginaries over minor timescales. Few interviewees used UK agencies to enter UKHE (e.g. UKCISA), instead most had consulted informal digital networks. One concern involved I.S. as 'archetypical 'strategic cosmopolitans'' (Waters (2012a:A1, citing Miller 2003) and the unreal images of UKHE circulated via digital media (Case 6.9). Questions involved narcissistic self-representation (Mehdizadeh, 2010; Wang et al. 2012) and also fear of failure relative to cosmopolitan capital in the 'true' sense (as an identity without boundaries). While conjectural, digitally networked I.S. imaginaries might cause positive and negative effects; overly positive I.S. might grow the gap between potential I.S. expectations and reality. Cosmopolitanism might also be digitally circumscribed.

Waters (2009) proposes cosmopolitanism, linked to transnational elite labour markets (in the context of Hong Kong), creates stratification, unequal access to international study and unequal employment prospects. Murdock (2011) claims the 'technorati', the 'lucky few' who can access technology, are 'wealthy, well-travelled and well educated', and are not 'most people' (ibid:62). These examples raised questions about digital elites and exclusive/inclusive digital media which (re)produce ISM advantages. Is the digital world so fundamentally cosmopolitan and expansive? Given the previous findings, suggesting social and spatial digital inequalities, this may not be the case. We increasingly see how I.S. identity involves 'the social', 'the cultural', 'the political', 'the economic' 'the religious' *and the digital*. This complex matrix can develop new experiences or might reinforce existing identity positions (blurring identity issues). I.S. identity appears fluid, evolving and digitally networked and involved static, stronger and weaker positons. These scales of experience involve individuals linked to digital communities, which are investigated below.

6.4 Variegated Digital Communities

As the study progressed it emerged that social and academic identities were not just individualistically formed and expressed but also related to the experiences accorded via informal social groups and research networks located at UoL and elsewhere. These digital communities variably infused and lubricated international study experiences.

6.4.1 Informal Social Networks

Informal digital social networks developed for many reasons, and included friendships, family relationships, romantic liaisons, academic socialisation and recreation purposes. Social groups varied in size and formed during pre-UoL registration and post-UoL arrival. I.S. voiced a flux of relations during the settling-in processes, when support and information needs were highest, upholding Ellison et al. (2007) and Steffanoe et al. (2011). I.S. rarely described reducing their network size, while network roles could change: ties seemed weaker across broader networks. Digital social networks were key where classroom socialisation could be limited (p.218). Nationality, culture, language, religion and cohort size shaped group dynamics. Social groups formed around three broad networks: 'co-national', 'other I.S.' and potentially with 'UK students'.

Some co-national groups were extensive at UoL, notably Chinese I.S., where large group dynamics appeared complicit in subjectivity and identity issues (6.3.1-6.3.4). The strength of these Chinese social groups raised questions about limiting interactions outside of the group and integration at UoL. Matters are complex. Mikal et al. (2015:212) found that Chinese pre-registration social groups remained insular during international study, but these groups provided advantages via empathic, emotional and informational support in a 'culturally appropriate manner', 'levering collective wisdom' and 'maintaining important home obligations' (ibid: 212). This expresses a digital social limit to ideas of flexible citizenship and transnationalism (Waters, 2009).

Taiwanese students also formed a cohesive digitally networked group:

> 'I set up a Facebook group for Taiwanese students who decided to study in Leicester.' [M,M.Sc,Taiwan,A].

> 'Facebook is for arranging parties (birthdays), meet-ups (coffee, lunch in students union or library cafe), traveling (find partners or arrange with friends), celebrate Taiwanese national events (lunar new year), overseas deliveries (reduces costs together), seeking academic help (looking for someone to help SPSS analysis), borrow textbooks that are away on the library shelf), selling second-hand goods to the students coming to UoL next year (preparing coming back to Taiwan).' [M,M.Sc,Taiwan,S].

Some international groups were less defined by nationality and more by cultural proximity (e.g. Latin American or West African students):

'I think with Latin Americans there's a close relationship; it's very easy to get together. With other cultures, it's very difficult, for example the Islamic culture, very difficult to go inside, and the Chinese are very different. I think British people are more apart too much. It is quite difficult to socialise here in Leicester.'   [M,Ph.D,Ecuador,FG4].

Other students were members of diverse international social groups. One I.S. from a small Caribbean island described difficulties finding Caribbean friends. Her minority status shaped membership of diverse groups. 'Weak ties' allowed greater interaction with others, supporting Ye (2005, 2006a,b) and Ellison et al. (2007), which might aid adjustment (Hendrickson et al. 2011) and permit expansive intercultural experiences. As such, weaker digital group ties could be part of more expansive social identities.

Some Iraqi I.S. described digital networks between UoL and UK diasporic communities centred on religion/culture (Hopkins, 2007; Brown; Brown et al. 2014) which helped to establish a sense of place through familiar culture (Collins, 2010; Holton, 2016):

'Through Facebook I have many British and international friends around the country, but they are not students.'   [M,Ph.D,Iraq,I].

Regarding UK student communities, none of the I.S. voiced membership of these groups, which were extensive at UoL (Madge et al. 2009a). Sadly, none claimed friendships with UK students. It seemed to many I.S. that UK students inhabited parallel social worlds (Summers and Volet, 2008; Glass and Westmont, 2014). This contrasts markedly to Forbush and Foucault-Welles (2015), who found social media key for connecting Chinese I.S. to local students in the USA. They found significant diversity in international and national social networks in their study. This was not the case at UoL.

The UoL situation is indicative of the well-documented problematic social and academic links with UK students in UKHE (Brown 2009a,b,c; Scudamore, 2013; Welikala, 2015). Non-mixing has been termed passive xenophobia by Harrison and Peacock (2010). Cultural and pedagogic (mis)understandings remained an issue at UoL:

'I've been surprised, I asked myself is it that British people don't want to relate to international students? Most friends at UoL are international students, no close friends from Britain. I ask myself why they don't want to socialise with others. I have many Chinese friends, but none from Britain.'

[M,Ph.d,Nigeria,I].

'I approached English students, which are not many. I tried to make friends with some, but they remained very independent. I think it's the English culture, they're more independent, not because we're not getting on.'

[F,M.Sc,Colombia,I].

'The UK student, they're not friendly…nice, very polite, but they don't make relations. They are not for me. You talk at work, they go home, they live independently, not sure why, maybe because we are international students, or it's the culture.'   [M,Ph.D,Iraq,I].

In sum, informal social networks were not ubiquitously multi-national and complex social and spatial configurations existed. Digital social groups helped to mediate daily encounters with difference, aided well-being and augmented the overall UoL experience. These networks offered a place of belonging for I.S., where UK students appeared socially and digitally dislocated to this aspect of I.S. experience. Indeed, I.S. appeared remorseful about lost friendship building and interaction opportunities with UK students. During the examination of informal social groups it became clear that digital research communities were also important, as discussed below.

6.4.2 Research Networks

This section considers Ph.D I.S. researcher experiences in digital networks. Ideas involve diasporic intellectuals (Hall and Chen, 1996), intellectual emigration (Adorno, 2009) and I.S. as mobile change agents (Robinson-Pant, 2009; Chen and Koyama, 2013). Madge et al. (2015:585) submit that dynamic transnational networks are embedded in international study which can involve diverse international movements and experiences. Specifically I explore academic identity, new research spaces, knowledge production and circulation via the intellectual contributions of digitally de-centred research communities. I explore digital intellectual mobility via research networking.

BOS revealed 56% agreed that digital media increased sense of academic community (30% disagreed; 11% pns); of this figure 59% of Ph.D I.S. agreed (30% disagreed, 11% pns) compared to 55% of Masters I.S. agreeing (30% disagreed; 15% pns) (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1 Digital Media use Increases Sense of Academic Community

UoL Degree Programme	Total Survey Response by UoL Degree Programme (Number)	Agree (Number)	Disagree (Number)	PNS (Number)
Ph.D	54	32	16	6
Masters by Type				
LLM	1	0	1	0
MA	66	39	19	8
MBA	2	0	0	2
M.Phil	1	0	1	0
M.Sc	102	54	32	16
PGD	3	3	0	0
Masters Total	175	96	53	26
All Programmes	229	128	69	32

Overall, 43% agreed digital media increased academic sensibilities (41% disagreed; 17% pns); of this figure 50% of Ph.D I.S. agreed compared to 41% Masters I.S. (Table 6.2).

Table 6.2 Digital Media use Increases Sense of Academic Identity

UoL Degree Programme	Total Survey Response by UoL Degree Programme (Number)	Agree (Number)	Disagree (Number)	PNS (Number)
Ph.D	54	27	19	8
Masters by Type				
LLM	1	0	1	0
MA	66	29	27	10
MBA	2	1	0	1
M.Phil	1	0	1	0
M.Sc	102	39	44	19
PGD	3	2	1	0
Masters Total	175	71	74	30
All Programmes	229	98	93	38

Figure 6.6 shows 28 nationalities felt part of digital academic networks which were multi-nationally significant. Figures 6.6 and 6.7 reveal that 12 nationalities felt more part of academic communities at UoL which furthered their academic sensibilities. This phenomenon appeared higher for students from Brunei, China, Indonesia, Iraq and Vietnam. Previous findings about the digital campus, where many students from China and Iraq described the benefits of critical engagement during UKHE (Case 6.7) may account for these changed sensibilities. Within the various nationalities, academic identity was more important for Ph.D I.S. researchers than Masters I.S..

The academic specialism of a Ph.D can create academic isolation. However, some Ph.D I.S. described multi-national digital networks with researchers outside of UoL/UKHE, linked by common research interests. Digital research networks involved sharing ideas,

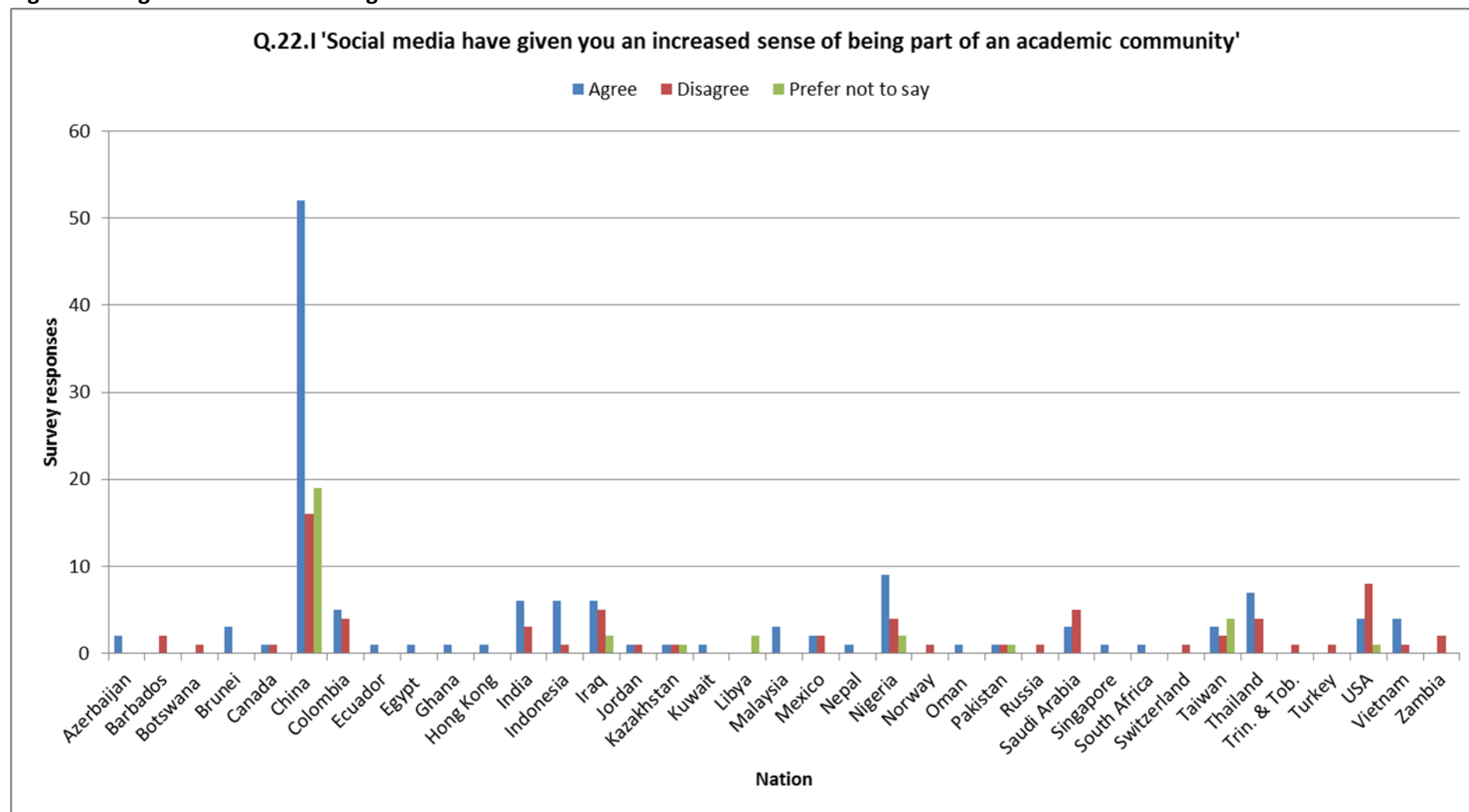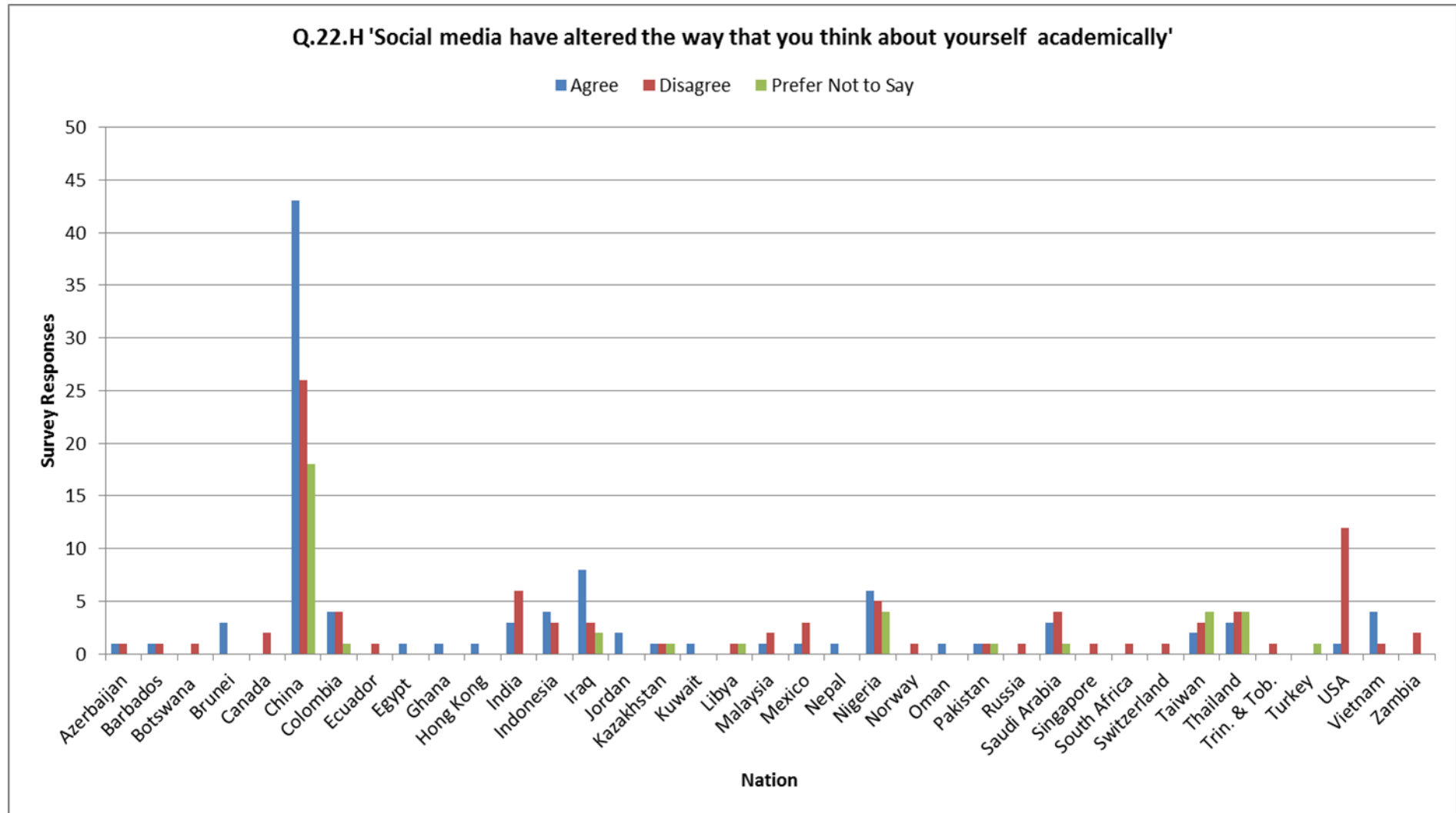**Figure 6.6 Digital Media and Feeling Part of Academic Networks**

Q.22.I 'Social media have given you an increased sense of being part of an academic community'

Figure 6.7 Digitally-Mediated Academic Sensibilities

Q.22.H 'Social media have altered the way that you think about yourself academically'

■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Prefer Not to Say

problem solving and different perspectives on research issues. Networks were based on research centres (IHEIs) and independent amalgams (non-IHEIs). Key platforms were particularly important and these included LinkedIn and Google Groups:

> 'It's a natural decision going online, sometimes you need help where things are difficult, I log on and put it out there. My research group is mainly Google+ organised by Colombia University in New York; there're others, most of my research groups are based in LinkedIn […]. There're many researchers, we're now in cross-contact by emails…we're met for life. There's a German guy, we met on LinkedIn, another in Kenya, another in Iran. We'll meet one day. We just bumped into each other on social media. Many links around the world now, it works for me.'   [M,Ph.D,Nigeria,I].

One student described using research network outputs:

> 'I'm not part of groups, but I use answers from groups.'   [F,Ph.D,Mexico,I].

Digital media clearly influenced other students:

> 'I have learnt to develop my knowledge [using SM].'   [F,Ph.D,Oman,S].

> 'Social media brings everyone closer together, it creates more bondage, more links to new ideas.'   [M,Ph.D,Nigeria,I].

These examples show the impact of digital academic space (Wu, 2013) in aiding intellectual mobility and promulgating academic identity. Digitally de-centred knowledge networks and circulations are an important part of the international study. This finding concerns transfer of academic subjectivities as transnational intellectual mobility through digital networks. Kim (2010:575), considers 'brain transfer and transformation in globalised space', as academics physically move across national borders. I suggest digital research networks, involving experiences across national borders (without physical mobility), enable intellectual mobility via digital networks, circulating rather than transferring knowledge. My study provides an alternative view, based on digital intellectual circulations rather than physical mobility and intellectual transfer. As such, 'the digital' unsettles extant knowledge geographies.

Ph.D research networks raise wider questions about intellectual subjectivities (Kim, 2010) knowledge production and circulations (Jöns, 2007; 2010; 2015) 'accelerated' via digital media which can involve a more instant and de-centred perspective to knowledge bases/circulations. Digital networks are important in the creation of diasporic academic communities. Indeed, my research places I.S. centre stage as

change agents in connection with knowledge production, dissemination and storage; indicative of how I.S. can alter worlds around them (Madge et al. 2015). Digital research networks thus provide a new discursive thread relative to knowledge geographies (Kim, 2008) involving changed temporalities and de-centred knowledge production: a matter omitted in most literature. Kwizera (Case 6.8) provides a key example below.

Case 6.8 Kwizera: Transnational Academic Digital Collaborations   [M,Ph.D,Rwanda,I]

'I use Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn too. I'm a member of about seven Facebook Groups academically: my departments Ph.D students, the New Theory in Education Group; an open resource group I created to reach Rwandan people, in South Africa dealing with education technology, the Association of Learning Technologies, special interest groups; also a home group of fellow college students and academics…(more social)… also the heuterology group.'

'I get most papers from the online community, not the library; it cannot offer resources about open education. There're communities specialising in the field. Social media is essential for me, all my research is online, by the time it gets to the library electronically, it's too late: most resources in my field are shared instantly to everyone. I'm connected with people in the Commonwealth of Learning, UNESCO, many people involved with open education… a strong part of my life. I Skype, mostly academic…online academic orientation dominates social use.'

'I've reached many people, including policy makers; meeting them physically it's quite difficult, but with social media it's much easier. I'm using it to reach people I think might be collaborators in the future. I have more links with people interested in the field of research theorem…the OU, and more links at the University in Canada, it's a specialised link. I'm in [UoL School], but mine is a different interest to what is here. I'm not sure about academics here, I'll keep in touch academically, but it's those researching in my field more that matter.'

'I use Twitter a lot; I'm connected around the world. I'm looking at MOOCs from the USA, UK, Europe, Australia – I group ideas from them all. Everyday I'm concerned with MOOCs. Academics and other networks sponsored by Open Global Educational Graduate Network, hosted in the OU of the Netherlands, some in Japan, some South Africa. The more I participate the more I see. I feel really quite confident. We are in touch all the time and share everything.'

Kwizera was committed to implementing MOOCs in Rwanda, with a longer term vision of a reducing inequality in HE provision in his home country. At UoL his academic life was centred on digital networks. During his previous academic career Kwizera had traversed multiple IHEIs and developed memberships in multiple globally sited research networks, which he accessed via digital media. However, UoL now formed his research centre and acted as a portal and gatekeeper to his wider global networks. Some of these research networks were IHEI-based; however, amalgams of researchers on Facebook and LinkedIn were equally important (non-IHEI). Kwizera's research can be conceived of as digitally de-centred in transnational digital space. Kwizera evidenced digital intellectual emigration and the importance of digital diasporic

networks as agents of knowledge production and circulation. As such, digital media may be challenging institutional gatekeeper power, captured in a quote:

> 'There's resistance, in the UK they have some support, but it's not the same. In the UK and Australia you have the same mind-set, and Germany. There's also resistance towards me, not only in MOOCs, it's Open Education, there's resistance.'   [Kwizera].

Kwizera revealed how digital media permeate classroom walls (Madge et al. 2009b:37) and how the 'black box' of institutional knowledge (Madge et al. 2015:694) may becoming de-centred through transnational digital research spaces. Supporting Rizvi (2010:167, citing Connell, 2007) digital media were 'transforming global academic processes', around 'complex relations between knowledge and power across cultural traditions' involving transnational experiences'. Ph.D I.S. negotiate the transnational spaces they inhabit (Holton and Riley, 2016:624), which links to academic identity (subject to the constraints/opportunities within transnational networks which are also linked to wide ranging competition pressures, see Rizvi, 2010:169). Moreover, during these reflections it also emerged that digital media saturated daily academic activities at UoL. These experiences are examined below in relation to pedagogy and language.

6.5 Digital Intellectual Subjectivities

6.5.1 Digital Pedagogic Experiences

This section explores pedagogy where I.S. informal digital practices evidenced an international study space as an outcome of I.S. agency. BOS revealed to learn and think in English was the ninth UKHE entrance motivation (42% very important; 25% important: Table 4.1). I.S. digital practices helped to bridge pedagogic divides. I.S. came from diverse education/learning cultures not completely aligned with UKHE practices and culture; for some this posed problems:

> Emma: 'I'm the only international student on my course. There's lots of discussion about class systems, lots I don't understand. Some make comments, and I'll say: 'I have no idea what you're talking about!' It's a cultural understanding, certain things go right over my head; actually, over my head and I don't even know sometimes.'   [F,MA,USA,FG2].

> Amit: 'If it's difficult for '*you*', you can imagine how difficult it's for people from '*completely out*' of the country.'   [M,M.Sc,India,FG2].

Many interviewees described problematic classroom experiences. Different pedagogic practices were also identified, such as lecture styles, assessment formats and relationships between I.S. and staff. External pressures from family and sponsors were also noted to shape learning experiences. Some I.S. voiced misunderstandings during pedagogic adjustment processes. However, a strong theme emerged that educators and staff were unaware of the depth of challenges faced by I.S.. This lack of awareness appeared embedded in some classroom dynamics, corroborating Kim (2011) and raising questions about 'teaching teachers' (Madge et al. 2009b; Welikala, 2015). This is important because negative experiences can limit I.S. learning outcomes and can be interpreted by some educators/UK students as a negative problem associated with I.S. themselves, rather than an insensitive learning system (see Zhou et al. 2008). These positions can also affect identity constructions (Holt, 2007; 2015).

In this environment, BOS (using multiple answer questions) revealed only 29% of respondents viewed digital media 'mainly for academic matters'. While 79% responded that they used multiple academic platforms at UoL. All interviewees were members of informal digital academic networks (notably Facebook; also Google, WhatsAp, WeChat). These were used for two key functions (often combined); the first concerned study practicalities:

> 'We've a Facebook Group, for deadlines, work questions, finding library books...small questions, but there's a lot of information.' [F,M.Sc,Taiwan,I].

> 'For my dissertation I found lots of interviewees using Facebook.'
>
> [M,M.Sc,Taiwan,A].

The second function aided negotiation/interpretation/translation of UKHE pedagogy 'differences' through I.S. collaborative networks. These were structured by an educational regime of limited classroom time which emphasised self-directed study. Digital media enabled I.S. to extend pedagogic practices 'well beyond the classroom walls' to more 'intersubjective and interdiscursive' learning spaces (Madge et al. 2009b). Self-regulated, de-centred education/learning networks, or 'personal learning environments' proliferated (Dabbagh and Kitsantas, 2012; Dabbagh et al. 2016):

> 'Having other people along on the journey i.e. classmates helps. If I don't understand something I just post it, because I only see them for two days a week.'   [F,M.Sc,Trin&Tobago,FG1].

> 'My course has Facebook group, most others will have one. You have a question, rather than sending an email, I'd ask the Facebook group, others with similar opinions hang onto it and it grows, it becomes like a story.'
>
> <div align="right">[M,M.Sc,India,FG2].</div>

Facebook was viewed '*the*' informal collaborative network. Emails were more formal.

One taught I.S. voiced resistance to formal collaborative structures on Blackboard:

> 'My lecturer tried to implement an online community with students (we are 80 students), to discuss topics and post comments on Blackboard, but out of 80 only five responded. People were not interested because Blackboard felt more academic and people switched off. The online discussion group didn't really happen.'   [M,M.Sc,Colombia,I].

Twitter was widely used by Ph.D I.S.. Twitter was a key digital space beyond the classroom walls:

> 'Sometimes I see a senior professor on social media, you can extend ideas, it's a really open system, you have an opportunity to express yourself, they often accept your view, which they might not do together in person. Social media brings everyone closer together, it creates more bondage, more links to new ideas.'   [M,Ph.D,Nigeria,I].

I.S. employed digital media to bridge pedagogic inexperience. I.S. (and academic staff) sensibilities appeared softened online, centred on mutually beneficial digital collectives. As noted by Madge et al. (2015:690) there is 'pedagogic importance of proximal relations between different groups of learners': at UoL digital collaborations contributed to informal learning experiences between such proximal learners. Such informal digital groups represented learning networks outside of institutional control, as digital practices facilitated a de-centred space of informal pedagogy/knowledge production: one depiction of the 'porousness of the lecture room walls' (Madge et al. 2009:37). The full educational value of Facebook (see Hurt et al. 2012; Manca and Ranieri, 2013) is still to be determined, raising wider questions about pedagogy.

In conclusion, I.S. informal digital networks evidenced agency to bridge pedagogic gaps. This presented a blurring of pedagogical boundaries as I.S./UKHE pedagogic practices were in constant flux, although often running in 'parallel', revealing the continued rigidity in UKHE pedagogic practices. This situation raises questions over pedagogic responsibilities and practices associated with 'local international study' and an international curriculum which recognizes the importance of pedagogy from other

education centres (Madge et al. 2015). Students' digital practices reflected I.S. interdependence, mutuality and agency (Madge et al. 2009a) in attempting to surmount situated pedagogy. This informal digital education space might present opportunities for new future learning spaces (Dabbagh and Kitsantas, 2012; Bower, 2015). The pedagogic divide also presents concerns, notably of 'digital cheating'.[31] Whilst discussing pedagogy, many I.S. also voiced how digital media aided English language skills, as discussed below.

6.5.2 Digital Language Skills

This section explores I.S. informal experiences of digital media in improving English proficiency. BOS revealed 'developing English language skills' was the seventh UKHE entrance motivation (Table 4.1) where 41% agreed 'UKHE enabled development of English language skills' as very important (29% important). Many students preferred English whilst at UoL compared to national/regional group languages:

> 'I didn't interact with UK students. There's Libyan, Iranian, staff are Polish. I'd much prefer to interact with English people, my subject is in English, I need it. I even told others I couldn't speak Arabic, so they wouldn't speak Arabic to me.' [F,Ph.D,Iraq,I].

A Chinese student discussed intra-national language barriers:

> 'Language is so important. Even some of us from the same country, have trouble talking together here.' [F,M.Sc,PRC,FG5].

I.S. of different nationalities also developed English language proficiency together:

> 'I have met many people from Asia, and we didn't talk in Chinese, we were o.k to talk in English, there's a common interest here.' [M,M.Sc,Iraq,FG1].

Students voiced employing a mix of English, and their own national language-based digital media. Informal language development practices were important, such as using general YouTube videos, as well as more focused language tutorials and English T.V news (e.g. BBC, CNN) to improve their language skills. Downton Abbey was favoured by some Chinese women for improving understanding of the English language (also culture and history). Digital radio was also significant (see Case 6.C):

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[31] Lancaster (2013), Rogerson (2014) and Lines (2016) discuss digital cheating (essay mills/banks, ghostwriters). Mostrous and Kenber (2016) cite a plagiarism epidemic by non-EU IS viewed over four times more likely to cheat than UK/EU students.

> 'BBC Leicester is very very nice, I enjoy listening to it. […]. I went to the Indian community here; one of my friends is doing the radio broadcast show, I was a guest.'   [M.M.Sc,Iraq,FG1].

Digital media such as Waygo and Google Translate aided English language translation which lowered language barriers, encouraged social interaction between students and enabled language practice. Grammarly aided proof-reading. Digital networks also intermediated stressful language events:

> 'My English was not good enough to talk more topics, so I needed to stop a conversation after a short talk. After exchanging Facebook account, I can talk to them by texting on Facebook, this allowed me time to check the words […]. When I'm in a bad mood, I don't like to talk to foreign friends, because if so, I needed to talk in English, which is not really a restful thing when being stressed.'   [M,M.Sc,Taiwan,A].

Language can limit verbal communication, however, it can also limit the way thoughts are conveyed (Kim, 2011:286). One student, who made high use of English-based digital media to develop language skills, described 'thinking academically in English':

> 'The key is English, my vocabulary is just 2000 words, I'm so sorry about that… just like some five year old child! In fact, most of my colleagues are not Chinese people, so you can communicate in English. I can now turn on to English mode immediately, that's your work language.'   [F,Ph.D,PRC,I].

However, academic writing in English remained a worry for another student:

> 'I can speak and understand, but writing is very stressful…especially during my first year, I was not sleeping thinking about tomorrow.'   [F,Ph.D,Iraq,I].

Finally, language is not such a barrier between people online. Images and sound-bite files were commonly used across cultures including drawings, cartoons and slideshows. This is because emotional expressions are not bounded by language:

> 'Sometimes I don't think language is a barrier between people, using body language or drawing pictures is important.'   [F,Ph.D,PRC,I].

> 'Pictures on Line are very cute and useful. Sometimes there's no word to describe a message reply, so you send pictures instead.' [M,M.Sc,Taiwan,A].

The findings suggest that digital media are multitasking agents (Junco, 2012c) and a powerful tool to motivate better language learning skills (Akbari et al. 2016). Future (in)formal digital spaces of language practice need to involve I.S./staff/institution.

In sum, I.S. informal education spaces could prove a valuable enhancement to international study/outcomes. Such informal spaces also present policy issues (see 7.4.1). The extent of I.S. agency reflects parallel systems and gaps which also reflect the need of care for I.S.. While digital media may be viewed as a gateway of opportunity for 21st Century UKHE, it is also important to identify that digital media also caused some I.S. issues. In linking back to I.S. wariness of digital media (4.5.3) there remains a final discussion of problematic digital practices, as detailed below.

6.6 Dysfunctional Limits to Digital Media

Wariness and scepticism of digital media existed prior to international study (4.5.3). There were other negative emotional responses to digital media revealed by my research concerning digital excesses, which evidenced problematic education space (or UoL dysfunctional learning environment). My study has already revealed some interesting findings regarding digital media and social problems. This suggests a more nuanced attitude is needed, whereby the social implications of digital media on I.S. well-being are differentiated according to nationality, culture, pedagogy and language.

My research reveals mis-matched education expectations (6.2.1; 6.2.4), perceptions of discrimination (6.2.5; 6.3.1), social isolation (5.2.3; 5.2.4), cultural isolation (6.3.1) academic isolation (6.7.1) and language issues (6.7.2) associated with digital media. A final issue identified by students was the dysfunction associated with digital media: this is an under-researched area. A measured approach is needed since digital media practices varied over the life-time of international study as experience intensities changed (Bissell, 2009:914, citing Deleuze 1991:92) shaping digital morphologies.

Transitions in digital media practices occurred as students traversed UKHE:

> 'In the beginning there was addiction, no one to talk to. I stayed at home talking online. It was loneliness, after a few months I met others and stopped using social media so much.'   [F,Ph.D,Mexico,I].

'Addiction' was often voiced by students. The above quote reveals how addiction is fully relational to adjustment processes, as temporary digital addiction can be supportive during settling-in processes. However, while I.S. described digital media supportiveness, there was a (variable) fine-line between digital support and excess:

> Lian: 'At home, when I wake up, the very first thing is open my eyes, the second is to check my micro-blog. Here, the second thing is check my Facebook.'   [F,M.Sc,PRC,FG1].
>
> [Group]:'Yeah'
>
> Ning: 'First, I check my WeChat then my Facebook.'   [F,M.Sc,PRC,FG1].
>
> Mia: 'I was staying on Facebook 'all the time', I'm checking it, and checking it and checking it!'   [F,M.Sc,Colombia,FG1].

Other students voiced how obsessive constant online checking (socially) wasted time. Such dysfunctional outcomes could lead to study distractions. Some I.S. imposed self-regulation (Kaplan and Berman, 2010) and 'unplugged' to reduce study distractions:

> 'Just de-activated my FB, almost idle on Twitter. I'll probably re-activate them once home. I was spending too much time on FB distracting me from my studies.'   [M,MA,Jordan,S].
>
> 'Takes up too much time, just another way to procrastinate.' [F,MA,USA,S].
>
> 'Had to close my Facebook account, it was consuming all my time.'
>   [F,M.Sc,Colombia,FG1].

Various I.S. voiced how distractive digital media damaged study (6.2.3). For one I.S. constant digital connection involved fears about 'a syndrome', together with her experience of I.S. online-bullying, and events led to her disconnection from Facebook:

> 'At times you don't want to work, Facebook is an escape, lose yourself for hours. It can be distracting, makes me not bothered to study. I used to have it on my phone...think I had that syndrome, your mobile is vibrating but it's not! Also, I had problems with other girls here, a difficult time; I closed Facebook.'   [F,Ph.D,Mexico,I].

However, as digital academic networks saturated international study, a digital detox (fully unplugging) was problematic. One student, aware of her obsessive nature, acted to separate herself from the digital world where digital saturation was a worry:

> 'I'm very obsessive, I've not got a smartphone...I would be obsessively, compulsively checking it, you get addicted easily. If I had a smartphone I would get saturated. It would be easy to get into the horrible circle of posting to comrades. I carry my laptop; you wouldn't turn it on just to send a Tweet. I have a Kindle, but I still read paper books to get away from devices.'   [F2,Ph.D,Mexico,I].

The above student voiced another dysfunctional theme: the 'horrible circle', reflecting digital peer pressures (Park et al. 2009; de Zavala et al. 2009). This digital pressure involved feelings of guilt and sadness around social rejection (Kross et al. 2011):

> 'You can't leave it alone. I want to check so much, messages, news, information on Facebook, also Line. If you send messages, when people read them, it shows. This is a problem… if people read and don't respond, somehow I feel sad. It's a pressure. In this situation, if people send me messages I feel I have to respond because I've read them, if I didn't I'd feel impolite. It's the same for everyone!' [F,M.Sc,Taiwan,I].

This socially digitally saturated environment could be overwhelming:

> 'Yes, too many platforms I can't really handle them all. I really can't manage all the social media, it's just too much, I don't really have time, it's wasting time trying to manage all the accounts.' [Female,MSc,PRC,I].

Another student voiced worries about privacy invasion:

> 'It's invasive! Before I come to UK I do what I wanted on Facebook, if I liked a post, I just click like and make comments. At UoL, I stop it, because I know people can know which picture you like by comments; it's my privacy, so I stop it. I don't want people to know too much about me, I mean my private life. It's too close and personal. [F,M.Sc,Taiwan,I].

Further work might examine the psychological geographies presented by I.S. in these digitally saturated situations, notably where emotions have shown to be both 'genuine and feigned' (Shouse, 2005). For example, does Facebook fulfil I.S. social connection needs or increase unhappiness from limited direct contact? (Kross et al. 2013).

Giorgio (Case 6.9) exemplified worries about digital media. Giorgio demonstrates compulsive checking, guilt over needless use/time wasting, false representations of life[32], loss of time awareness, fears about loss of control and threat of malicious account infiltration. 'Feeling overwhelmed', supports Longhurst (2016:133, after Madianou and Miller:2) who describe social ruptures produced via perpetual digital connectivity. Damage to future careers was also a concern relative to damaged reputation, personal distress and compromised academic integrity (Rowe, 2014) where imprudent actions online may damage future professional status and public trust (Woodley and Silvestri, 2014). Issues also concerned currency, quality and validity of information (as online content is unregulated and anonymous), where confidentiality, privacy and account hijacking might cause harm of physical/mental well-being.

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[32] Herrick (2015) cites 11 false attributes: appearance, relationships, partying, travelling, food, diet, fitness, babies and pets, coolness, clothing and perfection.

Case 6.9 Giorgio: 'Online it's Different to Real Life'   [M,M.Sc,Colombia,I]

'There's a constant looking into my phone, you wanna get emails or comments on Facebook, sometimes it's every five minutes, it distracts a lot; Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Imessage, Facetime, Skype… everything is on my phone, it does distract me. There's a need to let people know what I'm doing, see what others are doing, for no reason. Sometimes I try to be disconnected, put my phone off, but messages and notifications still come, it's overwhelming.'

'Lots of people use GrindR, it gives me sometimes guilt, because it's addictive, well maybe not guilt, I don't know. I met a lot of people, and I've made friends, but sometimes I feel I'm wasting time; I don't really think when I'm using it.'

'People want attention; they look for this attention by making comments, or posting pictures. Online it's just different to real life. Also, you lose notions of time, you spend so much time looking at pictures and comments; I'm probably on it three hours every day.'

'I was in a Colombian group; as soon as I got here I didn't use it. A lot of information wasn't accurate, especially with visas, it's different for every person, so the comments were too generalised.'

'I get messages from people I don't know, I have lots of pictures on Facebook, so many I don't know if I can get out now… take them off, it would take so long. I worry someone will get into my account and make comments to others. It happened to a friend, she left her account open and they made a mess of it, people thought comments were from her, that type of thing really worries me. There are just too many… keeping up with all of them, you get messages from WhatsApp, Facebook, emails - I have five email accounts. It's too much, so wasteful.'

Giorgio suggests his continued high value placed on face-to-face interactions. By contrast, the 'network effect', interceded through digital media worried Giorgio, where postings can be permanent to increasingly global audiences. For example, unfounded 'group think' (Mendoza et al. 2007) appeared to cause worries about rapid dispersion of misinformation spread maliciously or naively (Andrews, 2016). This evidences how emotions are produced individually and also digitally networked 'as actions and practices' (Zembylas, 2012:167).

Finally, excessive home-links/total dependency on digital media presented another dysfunctional practice, since this often limited social expansion at UoL (further supporting Collins, 2009a). However, many students, whose international study experiences were facilitated through home-centred digital media, regarded these routines essentially supportive and not problematic (Cases 5.1/6.4). Here, we see how cultural divides can persist through distinctive digital cultural topographies. Digital dysfunctionality reveals how place can dominate I.S. experiences which shape unwanted digital practices. This leads to a final, short, thought provoking reflection about digital networks and I.S. experiences.

6.7 Exiting UKHE: Not the End of International Study

> 'I feel completely different in professional terms, confident, prepared to start my professional journey. I discovered things about myself.'
>
> [F,M.Sc,Colombia,I].

The lead quote indicates international study transitions where the student's emotional journey continues (Case 5.B). Through I.S. onward mobility, I suggest international study does not end; rather it is expanded via the digital networks established in UKHE (5.5.4). Alumni voiced how they had maintained UoL friendships and academic networks. All interviewees concurred with future digital network intentions, also captured by BOS:

> 'Keep in touch with friends all over the globe.'   [M,M.Sc,Singapore,S].
>
> 'Easy way to contact people around the world.'   [F,M.Sc,Thailand,S].
>
> 'Interact with friends from here, post pictures and videos of them.'
>
> [F,M.Sc,Brunei,S].
>
> 'Keeping in touch with people that I've met here around the world.'
>
> [F,M.Sc,USA,S].
>
> 'Maintain my relationship with international friends.'   [F,M.Sc,Indonesia,S].
>
> 'If necessary I will keep using Facebook in China by VPN.'   [F,M.A,PRC,S].

International study changes human spatial vectors, bringing differentiated people together. One student commented 'we are met for life' (p.234). 'Met' and 'meet' were principal verbs that defined holistic (before/during/post-UKHE) international study to its subjects. Social, academic, professional and personal digital morphologies might shape on-going interconnected student lives via many diverse international/transnational associations and friendships.

Linking back to Chapter 4, where findings show the importance of prior place for understanding international study at UoL, Chapter 6 concludes that the human-digital vectors created during international study exist long after international study at UoL. Such vectors evidence interrelational translocal phenomenon around human/digital past(s), present(s) and future(s) as I.S. emotionally negotiate with different place (prior place, UoL/UKHE and uncertain futures). This presents international study holistically through digitally networked, emotionally saturated experiences which can circulate through different places via digital media. Through this digital mediation we see how

international study space can link differentiated people and places. Might this digital connectivity help level uneven place and promulgate socially and culturally progressive relationships? Alternatively, might international study (re)-produce the inequalities of global capitalism? It is clear that more research is needed to unpacking these ongoing relationships between I.S. and digital media on exiting UKHE. Ultimately, the key reflection concerns the importance of I.S. digital networks during international study which can (variably) develop into a plurality of multiple associations across diverse cultural/place/space topographies. Chapter 6 closes here, with a summary of key chapter findings below.

6.8 Summary of Key Findings

My research has revealed the extent that I.S. experiences and emotions are interwoven via the international study social/digital nexus (as multiply-located education space). Complex human/digital relationships recursively reflect place and transform digital practices. This confirmed 'location is an 'organizational principle' for the entire complex of online content' (Leszczynski, 2015a:5). Constant digital connection simultaneously involved local (inward) and dispersed (outward) 'translocal networks' which co-constituted I.S. experience, evidencing 'situatedness' during international study (Brickell, 2011:3). Digital networks 'contaminated' place, reducing the material effect of place (through different emotional centres). This recursive relationship was evidenced by I.S. who negotiated feeling different via Facebook digital collectivity (as belonging). Also by how I.S. sensibilities were affected by digital media in sometimes chaotically experienced UK international study.

I have evidenced the extent of the international study affective imprint (Holloway et al. 2010) upon the embodied canvas (Waters, 2017). Digitally saturated international study appeared part of altered I.S. worldly perspectives which involved social and academic subjectivites and identities. As a co-constituent of international study experience, daily digital practices can be implicit and explicit within personal self-development and discovery. The digital can be viewed as (variably) instilled within I.S. identity issues, as I.S. experience identity gaps through international study. For example, regarding ISM, Caruana (2014:87) states 'there is little evidence to suggest

the benefits of international mobility for cultural understanding'. I found that where the classroom can limit cultural interaction, international study can involve self-reflection, self-contestation, (re)-evaluation and (re)-negotiation of subjectivities, national, cultural and cosmopolitan identity. Digital media (variably) shaped these positions. Following Holt (2008, 2010), and Holt et al. (2013), feeling different also shaped I.S. subjectivity, identity, adjustment processes and friendship patterns (Hotta and Ting-Toomey, 2013). While I.S. verified the extent of their varied digital identities, the importance of variegated digital communities also came to the fore.

Multiple informal local/dispersed digital social networks mediate I.S. experience, although UK student digital networks were conspicuously absent. The size of groups (e.g. co-national, cultural, religious) shaped digital morphologies. Minority status involved membership of more diverse local groups; larger national contingents maintained a nationally-centred ethos (as all I.S. made high usage of home-centred networks). At the same time, digital academic networks saturated international study experience. Ph.D I.S. research networks appeared to digitally accelerate academic identity (Kim, 2010). This unsettles mainstream intellectual mobility perspectives (notably historical nation to nation physical mobility involving academics). Ph.D I.S. evidenced shorter-term knowledge circulations through digital diasporic (Chen and Koyama, 2013) research communities. Here, we begin to see how students can act as digital change agents, mediating knowledge circulations (Madge et al. 2015; Jöns 2010; 2015). Other intellectual subjectivities through digital media were also evidenced.

Extensive informal I.S. digital groups, operating outside of institutional control, helped I.S. bridge pedagogic divides. UoL teachers might not be aware of the extent that digital practices mediate this divide. This (circumscribed) I.S. agency raised questions about the benefits of 'situated pedagogy' during 'international' study presenting the need for a more internationally-based curriculum. Digital media also improved English language experiences, which I found could be (variably) stressful for I.S.. Some I.S. articulated the struggle with English language throughout international study but they responded to this struggle through their active agency via informal digital practices.

The wariness and scepticism of digital media evidenced prior to international study also continued at UoL. Some I.S. did not need, or chose not to use digital media, as

internet legacies influenced non-use. UK international study was also found to be a space of dysfunctional learning and dysfunctional digital practices associated with social and academic problems. Digital stresses reflect UK international study frictions, created through experience gaps, which I.S. sought to mediate digitally, and although supportive, digital excesses could be detrimental, revealing digital well-being issues (Beetham, 2016b). My findings further evidence the need for a nuanced, caring perspective towards I.S.. Digital stresses reflect how policy is required to address underlying issues (see 7.4.1). However, matters are complex, digital media countered loneliness, illustrating a delicate tipping point between support/saturation/excess where digital media, for instance, were very important during settling-in/home-links.

I have revealed how exiting UKHE is not the end of international study. Digital networks continue to mediate post-UoL experiences which might enrich wider progressive personal, social, cultural and professional topographies, as digital mediation brings humans closer, across divides (akin to how the digital campus levels digital inequalities). While it remains to be seen if international study digital outcomes might mediate wider inequalities and change longer term human geographies?

In taking a step back, Waters and Brooks (2012:21, citing Vertovec's 1999 typology of transnationalism) argue that limited work has discerned I.S. transnational experiences. This chapter has answered this call, since I.S. voices of experience and emotions demonstrate how international study is emotionally/digitally saturated, affecting both I.S. lives, and the lives of invisible others elsewhere, as I.S. progress through the UK international study journey. Indeed, a key finding concerns how I.S. experiences were founded upon local and dispersed emotional centres. Through digital networks, (dis)located digital emotions variably shaped I.S. daily lives. As such, non-Leicester digital emotional socialities could manifestly shape UoL experiences. Through the social/digital nexus multiple co-presences are implicated in UK international study besides I.S., evidencing the sheers depths of mobility, emotions and human/digital relationships: emotions constantly shape I.S. lives and their importance cannot be over-stated. My findings involve complex, multi-scalar, multi-layered, multi-located nebulous phenomenon facilitated through digital media which recursively reflect place and emotions. I have attempted to summary this complexity in Figure 6.8.

Figure 6.8 The UK International Study Social/Digital Nexus

Chapter 7 Conclusions and Policy Implications
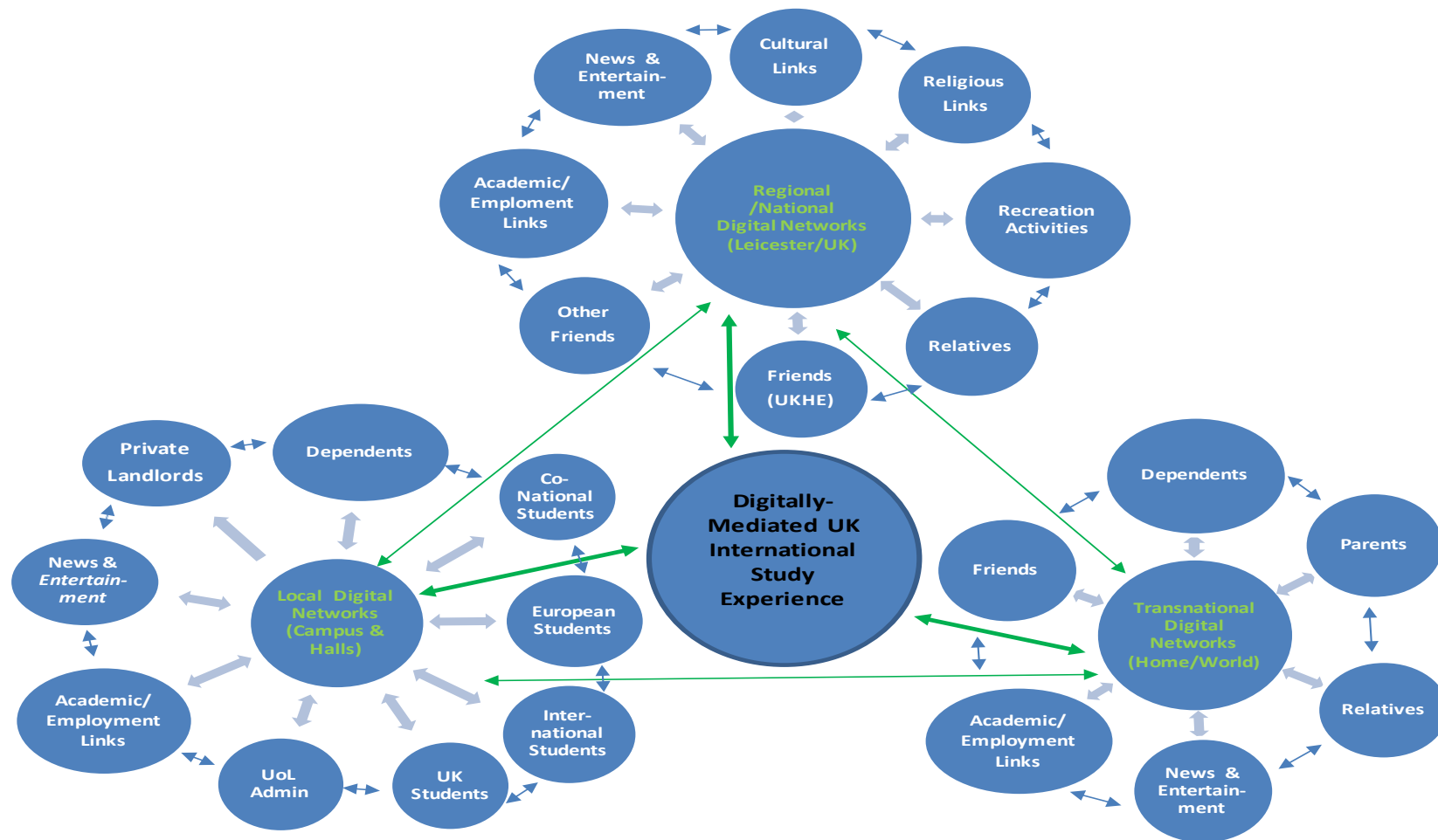
UK international study extends digital, social and academic morphologies between local/distant places which can influence I.S. belonging, attachments, security, subjectivities and identity, as I.S. negotiate education structures via everyday digital practices (embedded within international study). Indeed, digital media saturate the UK international study experience, providing social/digital capital, enabling information and a coping mechanism. The socio/digital nexus evidenced complex, blurry and often taken-for-granted emotional support, aiding many I.S. to overcome negative feelings whilst mediating identity gaps around differences, although this very use was also implicated in identity transformations. As such, digitally networked UK international study shapes, and is shaped by socio-spatial morphologies and simultaneously (re)produces education space.

In closing, UK international study is a complex and interrelational phenomenon which is being transformed by digital media, but it is also transforming digital media practices too. Digital media allowed UoL-located I.S. agency to virtually cross borders, permitting virtual co-presences in different spaces, exemplifying complex translocal lives inextricably involving emotional circulations and communication, debate and production of knowledge. As such, we begin to see the extent that I.S. are socially, academically and emotionally digitally interconnected where this is also viewed in terms of recursively expansive networked social (re)production. This presents a reconsideration of ISM through I.S. experiences of digital networks. My research has generated many conclusions and identified policy issues. For instance, on how to better make I.S. feel more welcome, on educating UK home students and 'teaching the teacher' (Madge et al. 2009a,b) to better appreciate the complex experiences and emotions which constitute I.S. lives during their (digitally-translocal) UK international study journey. These policy implications are now addressed in Chapter 7.

Chapter 7 Conclusions and Policy Implications

7.1 Introduction to Main Findings

Chapter 7 (7.1) introduces my findings. These are discussed according to the research questions (7.2) before I cite my key contributions to knowledge (7.3) and nine policy recommendations (7.4). Lastly, I note research limitations and future directions (7.5).

My study has used a systematic empirical case study at UoL to investigate I.S. digital practices before, during and in leaving UKHE relative to personal, social, academic and professional roles. Rich empirical data have been produced by I.S. voices of experience, and by charting their everyday digital routines. I have explored the differentiated experiences, emotions and identities of international study and I.S. lives. My findings present pragmatic, social, academic and emotional international study experiences, which provides a more spatially and socially attuned analysis of international study via I.S. experiences and digital practices. Complex I.S. lives reflect place and thus present policy implications. The findings are discussed by the four research questions below.

7.2 Key Research Findings

7.2.1 RQ1: How do non-EU full time postgraduate international students employ digital media during entry, attendance and exit of international study at the University of Leicester?

With regard to how I.S. use digital media during entrance into UK international study, I have found that the internet is not always worldwide, nor always a great leveller. *'Digital deserts' still exist* (Graham 2014a; Dodge and Kitchin, 2002), although matters are intricate and go beyond a lack of internet connection that is often associated with the digital divide. Complex economic, social, cultural and political relationships implicitly interleaf with international study futures. Different places comprise uneven digital cultural topographies which dynamically shape network interactions with UK international study. Here, differing digital technological capacities and affordability dynamics interweave with techno-political, education and social relationships, techno-cultural limits, and in some circumstances violent conflict, to create digital privileges and inequalities linked to international study presents and futures. Digitally uneven prior place can deny, facilitate 'and' concurrently shape digital network morphologies

linked to UK international study (e.g. I.S. wariness and scepticism of highly politicised digital media in the domicile nation, or when digital deserts limited 'homeward' digital connections, also shaped UoL digital morphologies). Questions exist about I.S. digital agency in next place, relative to the re-shaping of digital deserts (see 7.2.2). These *digital legacies of prior place* conceptually align with translocal/national concepts (Brickell and Datta, 2011), although work tends to ignore 'digital translocality'. In stepping back further, I suggest my findings support relational assemblage and non-linearity theory (Anderson et al. 2012), through digital networks.

I found that diverse motivations precipitated entrance into UK international study. Charting I.S. digital practices during the UKHE entrance phase has evidenced how *digital networks are implicit within ISM.* Where I.S. are omitted in migration literature (Waters and Brooks, 2012; King and Raghuram, 2013), the key role of digital media within mobility trajectories advances theory. Here, world university rankings (Jöns and Hoyler, 2013), accessed via digital networks, shaped ISM vectors. While entrance into UK international study dictated using formal digital channels, concurrently, many I.S. used informal digital networks to support entrance decisions. I.S. (pre/current/alumni) digital networks circulated UK international study ideas (and imaginations) and also shaped ISM vectors. This I.S. digital agency is omitted in the literature.

Diverse informal pre-UoL digital networks revealed *the significance of I.S. social networks* (Brooks and Waters, 2011) in mediating the transition to international study. However, I.S. digital networks also extended emotional and academic relationships during study aspirations, motivations, selections and relocation. Pre-UoL network interactions involved some I.S. physically meeting to overcome practicalities and emotional geography associated with international study relocation. For other I.S., it was the emotional support gained from other digitally dispersed I.S. that was more important for the journey ahead. This (variable) informal digital mediation of entrance into UK international study again indicated *I.S. digital agency*. The importance of digitally (de)centred emotional support advances the literature. Moreover, I.S. digital emotional geography evidences how ideas need advancing within student geography.

Once at UoL, I.S. found themselves in a digitally saturated place (Selwyn and Facer, 2014). The digital campus levelled the digital unevenness of prior place. Omnipresent

wi-fi enabled fluid I.S. digital interactions. UoL became a space of digital proliferation, although digital practices appeared to narrow. *This supported the primacy of place, which recursively shaped digital routines.* Some I.S. described UoL as a space of digital freedom. Variable I.S. digital practices linked to the personal and learning environment, UoL groups, 'home' and other affiliates. I noted that I.S. digital experiences were uneven (notably academic practices). This depicted how prior place intermingled with the new study place and shaped digital experiences. Digital practices varied by nationality, gender and study level. By putting students first (Holloway et al. 2010) I.S. were *revealed as inherently heterogenous* (see Holton, 2015).

For most I.S., *UoL life generated a flux of I.S. face-to-face and digital relationships concurrently involving local/dispersed actors* (Hjorth and Pink, 2014). If 'home' allowed outward digital links, 'home' relationships moved online. Some meaningful relationships only existed online (e.g. some pre-sessionally digitally networked Taiwanese I.S. kept online only contact throughout their education journey). That said, face-to-face interactions could also be online only, as image/voice-based digital media (e.g. Skype, Facetime and Line) blurred the interface between 'off' and 'online' encounters. UK international study triggered many I.S. inward (UoL-centred) network interactions which variably exposed I.S. to axes of difference, as new social and academic encounters (Andersson et al. 2012) also involved *digital negotiations with difference.* This (digital) education space is multi-scalar: micro I.S. experiences appeared 'infected' via the macro UoL interface. Digital networks were simultaneously inward-looking and outward-looking. As such, *UoL was a recursive digital social and academic environment, as offline experiences shaped online practices, and digital practices also shaped the offline world*. This relationship exemplified complex UK international study space which was mutually constituted through I.S. lives which were at once digital/material. I suggest this finding presents how international study (Madge et al. 2015) can be re-evaluated through recursive digital/material (inter)relationships.

As the education journey progressed UoL campus experiences could lead to I.S. *digital saturation and well-being issues. Some I.S were emotionally vulnerable* (Sherry et al. 2010; Park, 2010) leading to dysfunctional digital experiences, and involved issues such as addiction, time wasting, study distraction, peer pressures, privacy invasion and

negative network effects (digital exhaustion lead some I.S. to digitally detox) (Davis, 2001; Caplan, 2006; Ryan et al. 2014). My findings reflected *problematic UK international study space.* The extent of potential problematic internet use amongst I.S. presents a new discursive thread to the literature. My finding presents wide-ranging future study opportunities whilst being a key basis for policy interventions.

Finally, regarding onward mobility, I.S. revealed many future plans. For most I.S., as they contemplated their next move, *digital media infused their career transitions*. Some I.S. voiced feelings of empowerment via digital networks which fortified tactical career processes, enabling I.S. agency and positional leverage. Digitally networked onward mobilities reflected neoliberal employment pressures and dynamics (Punteney, 2012; O'Connor and Bodicoat, 2016; Goodwin and O'Connor, 2012). Social media allowed I.S. to distinguish themselves from others in the job market, being preferred to emails, as social media were less formal, quicker and more contemporary to professions (Brooks et al. 2012). To negotiate with employment pressures, I.S. made high use of LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter for career research, job seeking opportunities and self-promotion. Such digital practices proved the extent that social media were entwined with onward I.S. mobility experiences and suggested how this international study phase cannot be viewed in isolation from future career aspirations.

7.2.2 RQ 2: What, when and why are digital media used, or not used, in everyday international student life at the University of Leicester?

This research question has *uncovered complex interconnected I.S. lives where everyday digital practices shaped I.S. lives*. I.S. digital behaviours varied by frequency, usage parameters and meaning. Elevating I.S. voices (Waters and Leung, 2014) has exposed multi-layered personal, social, academic and professional network morphologies which often involved geographically diverse, (de)-centred, digital channels and platforms. Following Horton and Kraftl (2005:136), I.S. voiced complex socio-spatialities that were 'never neutral' with 'loads going on, on all sorts of levels' where 'spaces are multiple, created in, and through bodies, personal and collective' (ibid:136). I have revealed the importance of digital media in this process. Through digital networks, we can see how complex networked spatialities link I.S. and educators, emotionally and politically

together (Madge et al. 2015:681). I also advance the literature where other 'invisible' actors also shaped the education journey (e.g. parents, friends, family, researchers, employers). *The breadth and depth of I.S. experiences, via digital networks, has added to existing knowledge about international study space* where this education space is transnational, translocal and interrelational (Vertovec, 2009; Ley, 2010; Nedelcu, 2012; Madianou, 2012). The digital paradigm further supports digitally (dis)located, multiply-located, (de)centred education space (Rizvi 2005, 2010; Madge et al. 2015). This complexity is further exemplified by another key finding, as discussed below.

A key finding concerns Ph.D I.S. digital research networks and knowledge geography. Until recently, I.S. have been omitted from knowledge geography studies. Prior work has examined long-term historical physical circulatory movements linking academics and knowledge hubs which result in knowledge circulations (Jöns, 2011; Heffernan and Jöns, 2007, 2008, 2013). I argue that digital research networks enable much more immediate border-crossings and global circulations. This upsets historical explanations. *I suggest immediate (e.g. constant digital connection) and short-term (e.g. daily) I.S. participation in digital research networks advances existing knowledge circulation theory.* The digital paradigm progresses ideas through changed temporalities and de-centred knowledge production. This has theoretical implications for human geography.

While the importance of I.S. within knowledge geographies is a current debate (Raghuram, 2013; Madge et al. 2015), *I argue that digital knowledge networks need much more attention within geography theory*. Work too often examines brain drain, or the mobility of academics (Rizvi, 2005; Kim, 2008; Chen and Koyama 2103), rather than the digital circulations and digital contributions to knowledge by I.S.. Ideas about intellectual mobility (Adorno, 2009; Kim, 2008; Kim et al. 2009, 2010) relative to academic identity capital and embodied and encultured knowledge can be reframed via the digital paradigm. I argue that I.S. can act as change agents (Madge et al. 2015), digitally, relative to shorter and longer term local/dispersed lives. Thus, I.S. can affect wider society, during ever-changing mobile lives (Findlay, 2012), digitally. *I.S. digital change agency is seldom considered in other work*. For example, I.S. returning home to 'digital deserts', might change local digital cultures 'from within' (as I.S. micro-digital practices are re-shaped via international study processes). This digital agency might be

implicated in other issues. For example, I found how everyday vernacular knowledge (Wang and Collins, 2016) appeared linked to ideas of (digital) cosmopolitan capital.

Finally, in concurrence with Collins (2012b), *digital networks involved much more than simplistic information sourcing.* Digital networks acted as a social bridge which materialised 'real' everyday support (Collins, 2009a). For example, Facebook usage involved I.S. ideas of collective difference and digital belonging (Marlowe et al. 2016). Digital networks were also dynamic during the education journey as academic and social cross-overs ensued, notably for academic and professional roles aligned to onward mobility (i.e. network meanings changed during international study). As such, many I.S. sought less information and emotional support as their education journey progressed. However, place-centred dissonances (e.g. social, academic, cultural, religious) presented a continued problem for some I.S.. Such frictions intermingled with divergences between I.S. expectations and UoL reality (see 7.4.1). *Digital networks sometimes helped to mediate these cognitive dissonance gaps*. Indeed, a key finding shows that for some I.S., digital networks were 'vital' for UK international study retention. Thus, digital networks could be essential for international study futures.

7.2.3 RQ 3: How do digital networks effect international study experiences, emotions and identities at the University of Leicester?

A key contribution concerns how, by placing I.S. centre stage, I have challenged ISM 'neutral studies'. Such work objectifies (disembodies) and ignores I.S. as complex, differentiated, agentic and emotional beings imprinted upon by ISM processes as social, academic and digital beings (Kell and Vogl, 2008; Holloway et al. 2010; Brooks and Waters, 2010; Sidhu and Dall'Alba, 2012; Madge et al. 2015). *I found I.S. are highly differentiated by experiences, emotions 'and' digital practices.* This reflects what Singh et al. (2007:198) consider 'the mess and confusion of actually living in today's very different world'. As such, complex international study space involved complex human behaviours which were spatially, socially, emotionally and digitally multiply differentiated and digitally interconnected (i.e. through the social/digital nexus). ISM is not an isolated event; digital networks act as 'social glue' connecting many people and places during international study (Madge et al. 2009c). Supporting Waters and Brooks

(2012:32), ideas about homogenous I.S. flowing from sending nations to receiving nations, being educated and simplistically contained by nation states before returning home, are a total distortion of UK international study which exists through complex human/digital circulations and processes. Borrowing from hooks (1994:15), who debates teacher/student relationships, I.S. are 'whole human beings with complex lives and experiences rather than simple seekers of compartmentalized bits of knowledge'. I argue that m*y embodied/networked ISM perspective further supports the need to reframe ISM through complex international study digital socialities.*

Digital networks were deeply embedded within the everyday 'doings' of I.S. Digital media lubricated I.S. life, facilitating (variable) control of neoliberal education space. Digital networks were multi-dimensional: past places, present experiences, emotions and future aspirations often coalesced via these digital networks. Digital networks were therefore more than digital infrastructures, rather they 'modify the affective capacities of different forms of life' (McCormack, 2016:1). *This education/digital/life space is blurry and fluid, but a real space of lived experience, affecting I.S. embodied sensibilities* (see below), although place still mattered (Madge and O'Connor 2002, 2005, 2006; Collins, 2010, 2012b).

My research supported the primacy of place in complex I.S. lives (Collins, 2009a; Holton, 2013, 2015a). However, *place/digital practices recursively affected sense of place,* which could be diluted/intermingled by the co-constituted nature of the social/digital nexus. Some place-centred effects appeared weakened through digital routines, as revealed by digital syncretic habitation; others were strengthened, as exemplified by digital nationalism. UoL networks linked UK/multi-cultural experiences, whilst I.S. were concurrently subject to translocal geographies via digital networks. Place sense appeared 'elastic' (Barcus and Brun, 2010), being variably (de)constructed by I.S. digitally networked experiences during the education journey. As such, I.S. place perceptions also involved prior place/UoL/onward mobility. *Complex digital socialities involved contractive, expansive or static experiences, relative to place.* This interrelationship created a multiplicity of personal geographies imbued with emotions.

I found that emotions permeated digital practices. Indeed, UK international study generated some intense emotions and *digital networks became implicated in complex*

emotional spatialities. Emotions appeared to circulate through emotionally 'contagious' digital networks. Most I.S. lives were founded upon digitally networked emotional entanglements (e.g. family, friends, other students, educators and future employers). As such, (de)centred emotional foci co-constituted I.S. experience (i.e. dispersed emotional centres could shape UoL experiences). Supporting Longhurst (2016:125), I.S. voices and the social media logs highlighted that I.S. emotions were not 'wholly internal or private' and moved 'through bodies and through media' being 'individual and collective'. Facebook, in particular, was a space of feelings associated with collective difference and belonging, while Twitter was more political. 'Digital emotions' involved diverse 'real-life' feelings such as joy, sadness, fear, anger, surprise and anticipation, which intermingled with I.S. self-awareness and their UoL encounters. *My ideas about emotionally (de)centred education space present a new discursive thread to the literature.* Indeed, 'digital emotions' has implications for geography theory, notably in relation to subjectivities and identities, as discussed next.

The digital paradigm grants an alternative view of studentified space. I have uncovered complex I.S. subjectivities and plural identities (Collins, 2010b; Fincher, 2011; Hotta and Ting-Toomey, 2013). Campus geographies involved identity formations and transitions (Holton, 2013, 2015a,b,c 2016a,b,c) 'and' digital identities. I.S. negotiated, constructed and performed their identities contingent upon relationships and situations with the self and other peoples, cultures and places (Eastthorpe, 2009; Phan and Saltmarsh, 2013; Li, 2015). Digital media played a role here. Different places and cultures appeared entwined within digital practices, and (variable) identity constructions. Matters such as study motivations, aspirations, being at UoL, absence from 'home' and onward mobility, complexly interleafed with I.S. identity issues (e.g. digital networks were an important element of academic/professional identities). My findings involved complex spatialities, notably as digital networks compress distance and time experiences. Here, 'feeling close to home' appeared to constrain identity expansion. Individual and group identities were sometimes strengthened, other times weakened, and sometimes remained static (relative to place/digital media). *My view of digitally (dis)located I.S. identity weakens place-centred arguments.* Culturally diverse micro social and academic 'digital transitions' were thus implicit during the education

journey. This interstitial view presents how I.S. unnoticeably act as agents 'within' international study processes. The findings again evidence how I.S. lives are translocal: digital networks permeate classroom walls (Appadurai, 1996; Horton and Kraftl, 2005, 2009a,b). I.S. digital identities assumed various forms, as considered next.

I.S. digital identities were evidenced through different scales of consciousness (of the self, and through digitally networked communities) which involved local, national, intercultural and cosmopolitan identities. I noted that I.S. were variably interested in learning new culture; those intent on returning home did not view themselves as intercultural subjects, but more clearly as 'students'. At UoL, experience of 'gaps' (or frictions) produced different outcomes for different I.S., as local/global spheres coalesce through the digital (Kim, 2009:153). Larger cultural gaps instilled strong digital links 'home', sustaining and/or strengthening national/political identity. The social/digital nexus thus (re)produced existing power relationships, notably digital nationalism (Sakamoto, 2011; Collyer and King, 2015). Digital relations could involve culturally differentiated digital platforms besides Facebook (e.g. WeChat, Viber, Line) (UCL, 2017; Saw et al. 2013). Some I.S. revealed how digital experiences involved entanglements between different places and social and material attachments. These I.S. articulated more intercultural feelings, as expansive intercultural digital networks involved shared experiences for mutual benefit (Conradson and McKay, 2007; Kim, 2009, 2010, 2011; Raacke and Bonds-Raacke, 2008; Park et al. 2009). Some I.S. did appear 'archetypal transmigrants', 'embodying a cosmopolitan sensibility' (Waters and Brooks, 2012:23) via digital practices. Cosmopolitan sensibilities linked to digital encounters of different languages and cultures experienced during the education journey. As such international study can develop I.S. as micro (digital) change agents.

Finally, my analysis supports the *importance of everyday digital capital* (Ellison et al. 2007; Steffanoe et al. 2011). The concept of digital education space advances ideas of individual capital acquisition (Waters, 2006, 2009, 2012). International study education space also involved digital circulations of social, cultural and academic capital. Digital capital involved I.S. resource needs (e.g. information via online groups) and emotional support needs (i.e. coping mechanisms) to mediate international study gaps/frictions (culture, language, pedagogy, religion etc). Most other studies tend to demarcate

between information and supportive needs. *I suggest everyday digital capital (whether perfunctory or critical to study retention) is innately emotional and can (un)noticeably mediate I.S. well-being needs*. This complex interrelationship is something perhaps not recognised in previous literature.

7.2.4 RQ 4: From the findings of this thesis, how might a clearer view of the role of digital media in international students' everyday lives promote and enhance international student study experience at UoL and in the UKHE sector?

The social/digital nexus is a real education space. Complex I.S digital socialities reflected complex I.S. lives. Heterogenous I.S. emotions, social, academic, cultural, political and economic morphologies reflected place, which reciprocally shaped the social/digital nexus. Digital media delivered information, opportunistic, individual (one-way consumption) and collective (two-way prosumption) emotional support (Madge and O'Connor, 2006; Ash and Gallacher, 2011; Meek, 2012). Multiply-located, (de)centred digital networks mediate I.S. lives as a dynamic, contingent I.S. negotiation of neoliberal HE space. Although, digital practices presented circumscribed agency within wider structures (Ley 2004; Madge et al. 2009a,b; Lima, 2011; Kraftl, 2013a). I have tried to summary the social/digital nexus within complex structures in Figure 7.1.

Place thus co-reciprocally affected the meaning of the social/digital nexus within complex I.S. lives. This education space involved the self, groups, encounters, transitions, co-presences and emotions which were entangled with and mediated through digital networks. This matrix brings international study into being, as an expansive and restrictive multiply-located social/academic event (Madge and O'Connor, 2006; Collins, 2009a). Importantly, I.S. voices of experience and their digital practices also reflect positive and negative aspects of UK international study space. This digitally networked education space has presented some social and academic issues. Here, policy implications are addressed in Section 7.4, which aims to promote and enhance I.S. experience at UoL and the wider UKHE sector. However, before moving to policy implications I next summarise the key contributions to knowledge made by my thesis.

Figure 7.1 The Role of Digital Media during Multi-Layered International Study

IS World
- Emotions
- Subjectivities
- Identities

Other Students
- Current IS/EU/UK
- Alumni

Campus Space (Administration, Teaching, Living Space)
- Department/School/Research Centre
- Teachers (pedagogy)
- Language
- Landlords (UoL; private; other)

Locality/Place-Based Influences
- Religious-based affiliations
- Cultural-based affiliations
- Practicalities (transport/arrival)
- Local employment
- Finance

Wider World
- 'Home'/Prior Place (parents, family, friends, culture)
- UoL Agents
- British Council
- Immigration regimes (UKVI; UK consolates)
- Government links (including historical networks)
- Onward mobility (employers)
- Supranational organisations and funding bodies

Digital Media

7.3 Key Contributions to Knowledge

Following calls for new conceptualisations of both student and digital geographies (Holton and Riley, 2013; Madge et al. 2015; Wilson, 2014) the UoL case study has provided a much needed systematic empirical local investigation of UK international study. I have applied a timely, innovative study angle to produce original thesis data. During the education journey I.S. were immersed in digitally saturated experiences linking people, places, experiences and emotions. My contributions are founded upon ideas of simultaneous local/dispersed social and academic (non)linearity, (dis)location, (inter)connectedness, (inter)relationality and multiplicity 'through' digital networks.

A key contribution concerns how the digital legacies of prior place can infect future place and recursively shape digital behaviours. Prior place (or 'home') digital linkages have scarcely been considered in the literature. 'Home' is important 'for, during and in leaving' UKHE. 'Home' is a foundation which can mould I.S. social/digital morphologies throughout UK international study. Digital networks link pre, existing and post UoL I.S. relative to prior, current and future place. These ideas point towards holistic UK international study, existing through digital networks. Matters conceptually align with translocal geographies as spatialities are changed through digital networks. Here, 'digital translocality' has scarcely been considered within wider education studies, and notably student geography, where my research advances ideas.

Digital translocality is consequential to the recursive nature of the social/digital nexus. The everyday I.S. digital networks of UK international study present a co-constituitive local/dispersed 'real' space of education centred upon I.S. experiences and emotions (Ash 2009; Ash and Gallacher, 2011, 2015; Brickell and Datta, 2011). My findings suggest how ISM can be re-evaluated via I.S. experiences, emotions and international study digital networks. This matrix involved (variable) I.S. power dynamics (i.e. I.S. agency was circumscribed by wider structures). Indeed, it is timely to move away from 'neutral' ISM perspectives, as the social/digital nexus provides insight into (dis)located social and academic impacts of internationalisation. My findings thus advance more mainstream 'binary' understandings of ISM and UKHE.

A key finding involved I.S. Ph.D research networks relative to knowledge production, diffusion, storage and circulation. I submit that I.S digital practices presented changed

temporalities and de-centred knowledge production through digital networks. These ideas are generally absent within knowledge geography literature and present a new discursive thread based upon digital knowledge circulations. My findings also point towards notions of (de)centred 'digital academic identity', which advances historical explanations involving physical mobility. Such digital circulations also present how I.S. are digital change agents. Through international study digital networks, we begin to see how I.S. might be embedded within cultural, social, professional and economic circulations within wider society. This understanding advances current theory.

Another key finding concerns I.S. emotions. I have clarified the sheer depths of emotions which saturate I.S. experiences: these depths cannot be over-stated. Emotions infuse everyday international study experiences, being ever-present in digital practices. Digitally (de)-centred emotions are viewed as 'digitally contagious' (through people and networks) and 'infected' multiple centres. Dispersed emotional centres can become more important than those presented within the Leicester locality. Such ideas change how we look at 'the local' within emotional geography, geographies of education and particularly student geography. My analysis complements existing (limited) work on student emotional geographies (Waters et al. 2011; Tse and Waters, 2013; Holton, 2017), however advances matters through the digital paradigm.

Importantly, the above ideas presented a more distributed view of polymedia beyond western media: global media, as alternative life spaces, permeated UoL classroom walls (Holloway et al. 2010; Horton and Kraftl, 2005, 2008). Differentiated and diverse I.S. use polymedia emanating from diverse centres. This presents a counter-hegemonic view to local-centric explanations of digital practices. I suggest this changes how we need to see studentified space (Holton and Riley, 2013), notably in relation to subjectivity and identity issues. The digital paradigm presents opportunities to re-theorise student geography (e.g. digital practices weaken place-centred materialities).

The matters openly discussed above verify the importance of I.S. everyday voices of experience, emotions and digital practices (Holloway et al. 2010). I.S. have provided rich empirical detail, where the social/digital nexus has helped to reveal the less visible aspects of internationalisation (Galloway, 2012; Rose, 2016; Silverman, 2013). Importantly, rich empirical data have unveiled the recursive relationship between

place, I.S. experiences, emotions and digital media. Elevating I.S. voices and their everyday digital practices has been a highly successful way of seeing the less visible.

Stepping back, the social/digital nexus allows insight to the more hidden workings of international study. This education space existed through interrelated matrices: unequal educational structures, economic, social and emotional costs, invisible actors in other places and digital co-presences, 'within I.S. international study experiences'. We see how prior/current/future place/space dimensions are complex and deterministic within I.S. experiences through their digital practices which constitutes the international study event. The primacy of place remains important. Place conditions I.S. experiences, but digital practices mutually condition place. Thus, I argue international study is an elastic, (trans)local event which is variably constructed through (dis)located I.S. experiences and emotions through the social/digital nexus.

Investigating I.S. experiences and emotions during international study has presented policy issues. My understanding of matters has benefitted by the geographical framing which sees digital practices as a recursive reflection of place. This view has presented an incisive, powerful angle to provide valid policy recommendations based upon voices from below. The policy implications of my research findings are considered next.

7.4 Policy Implications of Research Findings

My study raises nine policy points. I apply a nuanced view to how UoL might enhance I.S. experiences; these ideas being also generalizable to wider UKHE. Geographers lead calls to care for I.S. (Madge et al. 2009a:43). This involves viewing I.S. beyond short-term fiscal values. Although it is widely recognized that 'originally universities started recruiting for money' [UoL administrator], Dixon (UoL PVC) has recently argued 'the quality of the educational experience is key', which can be forgotten in the drive for internationalisation (UoL, 2016d). UoL administration tends to view this I.S. experience in terms of teaching, satisfaction, employment and careers. I argue I.S. voices need listening to where their digital practices are an important element of UoL experience.

Historical success in relation to student recruitment cannot guarantee future success:

'The I.S. situation is very volatile. We see changing [ISM] patterns every year. There's emerging growing markets; from post conflict, or countries

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experiencing significant political shifts. Also factors like demographics: Taiwanese and Chinese I.S. are starting to drop, and set to carry on dropping. It may stabilise? We know UK as a whole is losing a lot of ground. UKVI is very damaging, very short-sighted. UKHE has done well to maintain I.S. numbers in the face of negative policies. The government's attitude is massively unhelpful…getting worse all the time.'   [UoL,administrator].

Concern exists that I.S. numbers attending UoL are slowing (Dixon, 2016). WURs have also fallen. UoL is now ranked 46th from 122 UKHEIs in the Student Experience Survey (Bhardwa, 2017a). Competition from more welcoming HEIs is increasing (UoL's rival, Loughborough University, is second, being ranked first in 2016). UoL needs to listen to I.S. to improve survey rankings where it faces increasing (inter)national challenges.

I fear a tipping point exists. (Inter)national challenges could damage UoL/UKHE. Using study findings, and UoL/I.S. voices, Section 7.4 delivers nine policy recommendations (supported by study observations) which variably involve digital media. Policy recommendations follow the I.S. journey. I begin by exploring more theoretical and general ideas, then how prior place matters, before examining I.S. transitions into UKHE. Finally, I discuss UoL I.S experiences. The key message involves changing some UoL ground-level appreciations and conditions by talking and listening to I.S..

7.4.1 Policy Recommendations

Policy 1: The need for a more careful consideration of the categorisation of I.S. which recognizes differences and similarities between student groups.

There is the need for a policy imperative to *start to take a more differentiated view of I.S.:*

'There's a tendency to talk about home, EU or international students. We don't like that. International students tend to be grouped, but there're so many diverse groups. I guess if you spoke to lecturers they would see them as individuals, or certain groups of nationalities, but when you get into professional service departments it becomes a little more mixed. Hierarchies probably see more sets of students. We don't even count EU students as being international students, even though they are. There are some labelling issues.'   [UoL,administrator].

As noted above there can be a tendency to aggregate non-EU I.S. together and as separable from I.S. from the EU, North America and home students. This reference to student regional sets systematically stratifies I.S. from (broadly speaking) 'other' parts

of the world. This UoL categorisation might filter down to classrooms (teacher, tutor, inter-student positions and wider views about I.S.). Hence the use of the term international study in this thesis, which can be used to incorporate students studying at UoL from multiple places, as well as students from UoL who go to study abroad.

Policy 2: An approach to policy which is emotionally imbued and full of care for I.S..

Administrators, teachers and other students need to empathise with the complex situations of I.S. who are subject to local/dispersed pressures. Shorter term ISM should not limit empathies of the sheer impact of ISM to I.S. inside/outside of the classroom. I.S. can feel isolated by systems within structures which can affect their confidence. For example, part of current I.S. pastoral care is structured through religion:

> 'The chaplaincy represents as multi-faith, or no faith, but it's very loaded in terms of its name and its presentation. They bill themselves as a place to go for a cup of tea and a chat, but if you have a Chinese student from a secular system, it's not ideal.' [UoL,administrator].

UoL policy must advance to include more empathy towards the complex, multiple and diverse pressures I.S. face. An *'empathy mission statement'* recognising some of the hidden pressures in I.S. lives could educate other actors to better see I.S. complex lives.

Policy 3: Appreciation about the importance of prior place: where students are coming from really matters.

UoL needs to be aware of how *prior place shapes I.S. access to UoL and experience while at UoL* (i.e. digital legacies evidence how UoL cannot assume all I.S. have the same digital knowledge) (see Policy 9). An effective, single, current UoL website is vital. I.S. argued the UoL website was frustrating in parts and could be better improved:

> 'I propose UoL teach potential students details about tuition fee payment/guidelines. I noticed UoL did not provide sufficient and clear information about it; no process flow! As compared to other Universities, they clearly guide the student from A to Z. In my experience, I had to browse all department/office webpage in order to obtain the required info, which wasted most of my time. It is suggested UoL upload all the relevant info in the social media such as YouTube. It is the fastest way to communicate with the students, easy to understand, user-friendly and saves time so the students won't send many query emails or make a phone call to any officer anymore.' [F,MA,Malaysia,S].

As noted above an integrated approach between formal/informal channels (e.g. UoL YouTube or Instagram vlog/podcast information) may benefit students. Detailed, accurately signposted content is crucial for pre-UoL/current I.S.. Vlog imagery matters. A networked interface should also link pre/current I.S. within the UoL website. Links to the UoL web-page also need creating in non-UK-centric digital media (e.g. Line, Viber).

Policy 4: Inclusive everyday practices need to be always mindful of the varying needs of I.S., where these needs are embedded throughout everyday policy.

Everyday institutional/student-led structures need to be more inclusive to international students. For example, student-led structures were one noted issue:

> 'It's a big shame. The Students Union sees its role as putting on nights for undergraduate students and that's about it.'   [UoL,administrator].

> 'Well, entertainment here? All the stores close before 8.00[pm]. Young girls can only go to the bar. There's nowhere for use to go with our friends, so maybe we use more online apps to communicate with others. We have a very colourful life. We don't go to bar […] maybe restaurants, bookshops or coffee shops [in China]'   [F,M.Sc,PRC,FG5].

I.S. digital practices reflect how UoL must change and engage with I.S.. Linking back to Policy 2, empathy towards I.S. involves dispelling ideas about 'integration'. *Integrating I.S. 'into' UoL presents the students as the problem*. Rather what needs to happen is the institution needs to change, not the student. The institution needs to move from seeing the student as deficient to seeing the institution as deficient, and in need of change. For example, Fresher's Week could incorporate more non-alcoholic related events. Regarding Ph.D I.S., in the Geography Department, we have a 'Ph.D picnic in the park' (for all Ph.D students and their families), regular coffee and cake meetings, also 'Tasty Tuesday' (weekly dining-out at a Leicester bistro), so all are included. This view of including differentiated I.S. might create a greater sense of belonging for I.S..

Policy 5: The introduction of a digital buddying scheme.

Feeling lonely or isolated at UoL was a re-occurring theme throughout this work. While women were more likely to voice loneliness, men, often more reserved in expressing feelings of pain, also revealed loneliness and vulnerability. UoL variably conditions the importance of local and 'home' networks. Most I.S. used informal digital networks which acted as a support/coping mechanism. However, many I.S.. continued to voice

loneliness/isolation (notably Ph.D I.S.). *Loneliness might be countered by a digital buddying scheme, where Facebook presents one ideal platform*. This would involve a UoL-centred digital network connecting pre-UoL/starters to existing I.S. and alumni, utilising their experiences to provide informal guidance, online friendships and potential emotional support to new/existing I.S.. Indeed, current I.S. and alumni experiences, as a resource to welcome/support new/existing I.S. are under-developed at UoL. This does exist for some nationalities at UoL, but needs greater development:

> 'There's a Colombian's Facebook group. It's really active. If we have a one-off Latin American student from South America, I'll offer encouragement for them to join it… the kind of stuff they want to know… they can find answers there. Students have even asked people they don't know about house sharing. So it's certainly made my life easier.'   [UoL,administrator].

Some I.S. discussed time-zone issues which barred home links (often in the evening). Globally dispersed and digitally networked alumni can overcome time-zone limits to provide support as needed by UoL I.S.. All alumni in my study described UoL with a sense of pride and wished to continue their association with UoL. Alumni need to be better valued; their experiences are a key, but under-used resource. Digital buddies suggests how alumni can also act as digital ambassadors, whilst serving to connect I.S. via networks which link I.S. post-UoL, as internationally connected UoL students.

Policy 6: There is the need to reduce the gap between I.S. expectation and reality, especially with the advent of digital media.

Many international students voiced an initial willingness to engage in UoL community (5.2.2). However, dissonances could surface over time. Such 'frictions' involved divergences between I.S. expectations and reality (Rizvi, 2010:164) (see Figure 7.2). The social/digital nexus could be widening the gap between expectations and reality. Some I.S. described overly utopian online accounts, notably through Facebook (4.5.3, 6.6). Here, online peer pressures might be shaping online international study façades. Divergences between experience and reality involve different layers. For instance, the role of overseas agents raises questions about how their purpose is shaped; their mediation might mean pre-UoL students are not gaining sufficient self-generated information? Also, whilst many I.S. research international study using informal digital media, inaccurate information is problematic (hence Policy 3 and Policy 7).

Figure 7.2 Examples of I.S. Divergences between Expectations and Reality

- I.S. questioned the roles of overseas agents (i.e. ethical recruitment/marketisation issues).
- I.S. found pre-UoL promoted course modules unavailable following arrival at UoL.
- I.S. perceptions are shaped by prior place HE systems. Some I.S. had very limited advanced knowledge of UoL pedagogy (notably critical, self-directed study).
- Limited classroom time presented issues (some students cited only two hours a week).
- High course costs worried I.S., notably where UK living costs had been under-estimated.
- Unequal English language proficiency between I.S. limited classroom engagement.
- I.S. voiced feeling 'desired' (economically) but 'unwanted' (political structures, perceived discriminatory, UoL educator practices, stand-offish UK students, feeling alien).
- Other actors lacked empathy towards local and dispersed international study pressures.
- Better explanation of systems was needed (e.g. banking, accommodation, motoring).
- Large co-national/culturally proximate I.S. groups narrowed cross-cultural encounters.
- I.S. felt socially divided from UK students (i.e. limited British cultural experience/friendships).
- Some I.S. accompanied by partners and family voiced major accommodation hardships.
- Ph.D I.S. researcher loneliness and isolation present vulnerability issues.

UoL may need to exercise tighter control over overseas agents, give better assurances to the correctness of degree programme information, re-assess IELTS proficiency levels, pre-sessionally introduce I.S. to UKHE pedagogy and provide a more detailed financial view of Leicester/UK costs. Here, social media can variably mediate issues.

Policy 7: Making the most of social media for enhancing international student experience in relation to the specific needs of these students.

Social media are not just for socialising, and information searching was also important. A rapid response to I.S. information needs was viewed as caring (and time efficient). *Social media can give real time support at different levels* (e.g. admissions, International Office, department, supervisor, accommodation). *This could also include pedagogy and language issues.* Microblogs pose a key resource (e.g. Twitter, WeChat) to help direct I.S. information needs. Basic messaging can enhance I.S. experiences:

> A brief email about activities, links to clubs, basic things you need to know…would have helped me so much.'   [F,Ph.D,Mexico,A].

> 'Most of the Twitter information and Facebook pages push out stories and information that is of interest to home undergraduates, which is kind of the core market.'   [UoL,administrator].

> 'UoL needs a 24/7 capability to reflect global networks, not a nine to five approach!'   [UoL,administrator].

However, social media also shapes concerns and reticence to change at UoL:

> 'Social media is good, but also really dangerous [...]. It's difficult, it's not up
> to us to decide how people want to receive information, it's up to the user
> to decide.'   [UoL,administrator].

A UoL 24/7 social media support service is needed. Instant messaging can enhance I.S. experiences. Journal/archive outputs could be released for wider I.S. consumption. Openings also exist to engage with I.S. pedagogy and language issues. This policy moves UoL closer to I.S. digital lives and aligns with some competitor strategies.

Policy 8: 'Digitally bridge' student groups and "internationalise" the campus.

All interviewees wanted closer relationships with UK students. I.S. often viewed UK students as courteous, but socially and academically dislocated from I.S.. While I recognize UK students possess complex lives, and are also subject to transitions (Jindal-Snape and Rienties, 2016b:271), their limited relationships with I.S. reflected Harrison and Peacock's (2010) passive xenophobia. Regrettably, during accelerating internationalisation of employment, UK students are not benefitting from the rich international social, academic, cultural and professional experience provided via I.S.. *The hiatus of 'UK experience' needs inverting: UK student experience needs to be internationalised from "within".* Thus, UK students do not need to go overseas to learn about other places/cultures. For example, see the University of Sheffield's 'established international outlook' under 'we are international' (UoS, 2017).

Digital networks can act as ice-breakers, softening face-to-face encounters between differentiated ethnic positions and bridge asymmetric relationships to enhance intercultural experiences (i.e. inviting extensions to physical interpersonal limits). A sense of 'I.S. community' existed through Facebook (Blackboard was too academic). This dynamic needs inverting to become 'UoL community'. Social media offers the potential to knit student groups and UoL closer together. UoL needs to digitally engage with student communities where networks can promote a 'UoL internationalised community'. Digital networks could generate more ground-level encounters revolving around UoL international life (e.g. cuisine, cultural events: Chinese New Year, Diwali; (inter)national days, celebrating diversity etc.). UoL must think more globally, locally. Facebook could be advanced by launching an open international digital forum capturing UoL community (above HE and student nationality) to promote UoL's IHEI

position: linking local/global audiences. This schema could promote UoL via the digital community as an mien of positive UoL experience. This also involves trust issues:

> 'Somebody might assume that if they say something bad, they might get bad marks or something like that.' [UoL,administrator].

In sum, an international digital forum could nurture a relationship with future, current and alumni I.S., reduce parallel social and academic worlds, soften encounters to digitally/locally unite students, whilst promoting a globally orientated graduate base.

Policy 9: Listening to I.S. (via digital networks and focus groups) to improve I.S. lives.

I.S. at UoL turned to creating information, networking with 'home' friends and potential UoL I.S. (posts also inform other HEIs via digital media). Few interviewees had accessed UK agencies during entrance and attendance of international study (e.g. UKCISA), most consulted informal networks. *The agency of student informal digitally networked voices should not be under-estimated during UK international study*:

> 'Facebook is like the story of ups and downs since you were studying here.'
> [F,Ph.D,Mexico,I].

I.S. commonly stated that the UoL was unwilling to listen to their concerns (3.6.2; 3.6.3). However, I.S. digital diaries were used and acted as peer/consumer reviews. Negative online posts (5.3.2) present unease: posts are immediate, irretrievable and global and present UoL procurement strategy issues. Here, ground-level frictions need addressing at UoL. These frictions were mirrored by some of the dysfunctional digital practices shaped by UoL, where problematic (digital) stresses presented non/digital I.S. wellbeing issues. These frictions can be better understood through con-current dialogue with I.S.. *Digital networks present an ideal method to hear directly from I.S., on their terms*. For instance, regarding the UoL I.S. exit survey, an administrator commented 'free texts boxes are more useful than all other aspects'. An exit survey lacks empathy. Basics, such as housing provision on arrival, and making all I.S. feel wanted must be addressed:

> 'Social science Ph.D [I.S.] are by themselves. Pure science is different. Also January starters, wherever you're from, it can be tough, especially if they have family, it's hard to integrate them.' [UoL,administrator].

Pre, current and alumni I.S. must be viewed as intangible assets. Their voice can promote/deny the UoL brand of positive experience. Informal I.S. voices are far more

trusted by potential I.S. than UoL official marketing voice. By getting UoL experience right, I.S. will promote UoL via social networks. The UoL needs to better understand the effects of I.S. networked voices. A glocal mind-set sees the extent that local experiences are diffused globally. A holistic approach incorporates understanding of I.S. agency to motivate others via networked UoL experiences involving prior, current and alumni I.S.. For instance, prior place significantly shapes I.S. digital socialities:

> 'Students from China are so used to bodies of authority telling them stuff. There's a lot of mistrust with what governments say to people. We found Chinese students contact other Chinese students…they have always been led to distrust what official sources say.'   [UoL,administrator].

Chinese students might not know who they are talking to face-to-face: networks can offer a sense of safety, although complex co-national/cultural dynamics exist:

> 'Chinese students: what we don't' know is how many is too many. There needs to be enough to tune into, if you want to feel more at home, but there's a cut off, where it becomes overwhelming.'   [UoL,administrator].

This example shows the importance of talking and listening to I.S.. Via focus groups, I heard how some Chinese I.S. felt overwhelmed by co-nationals; others discussed beneficial meetings with previously provincially separated co-nationals (i.e. Chinese I.S. are highly differentiated). *This raises the question of whether there are regular UoL focus group exercises to gain appreciation of I.S. positions, experiences and voices?*

Thus, appreciation of I.S. experiences can only be gained by listening to differentiated I.S.. Getting I.S. experience right is strategically imperative for UoL/UKHE futures: getting I.S. experience wrong can have serious negative networked/real impacts. UoL must talk (reflexively acknowledging its authority position), listen, act and change. By empathizing with I.S. complex lives and seeing how experience shapes digital practices, UoL can forge a greater sense of UoL community and enhance experiences by human/digital means. I now consider research limitations and future research.

7.5 Research Limitations and Future Research

Four research limits emerged during my study. Firstly, wider I.S. definitions may have benefitted the study from the outset. I could have included I.S. undergraduates and EU I.S.. Also, part-time and distance learning I.S. would have provided alternative views of 'home' and campus networks. Secondly, IRB ethical restrictions limited a methodology

which originally aimed to use online data collection methods 'within' I.S. digital networks. I recognise online data collection of private sources can affect anonymity, however, data from within I.S. digital worlds (such as Facebook or Line) would have enhanced my analysis (new encryption technology may now resolve issues). Thirdly, my research may have benefitted from the completion of more social media logs. I could have integrated this approach within the call for study participants through BOS. Fourthly, I originally set-out to understand the role of social media within I.S. lives. However, students did not have a clear understanding of the term social media (I.S. often referred to Web 1.0 only enabled websites). As the research progressed, I therefore chose to use digital media, but recognise that this may be problematic. These limits also present two future research ideas.

Firstly, future research could capture temporal and spatial international study network changes. A longitudinal study including prior place and alumni is needed to investigate the importance of digital media for longer term international study outcomes. Within this framing, prior place has received very little attention in other studies and poses a key interest where pre-UKHE digital networks remain under-researched. Concurrently, alumni pose major knowledge gaps. Research which explores everyday alumni voiced experiences, emotions, transitions and digital practices is scant. Questions involve alumni futures: how does the personal/social/academic/professional/digital nexus mediate alumni lives and shape longer-term sensibilities? What are the temporalities and spatialities of alumni networks (e.g. alumni and pre/current I.S.)? Here, the 'stuff of digital networks' could examine alumni blogs relative to pre-UoL I.S. futures.

Secondly, the digital paradigm provides an as yet untapped wealth of future research prospects. Everyday digital media present key data collection methods, notably in relation to prior place, I.S. futures and digital networks. For example, video-media (e.g. Skype, Line) pose crucial openings to investigate globally dispersed (pre/post) I.S. lives in real time. These techniques remain under-utilised for investigating international study and can offer added values to orthodox researcher-to-researched positions (Hanna, 2012; Longhurst, 2012b, 2013b; King-O'Riain, 2015). Moreover, recent developments in researching HE through the digital pose exciting methods for future studies. Digital tethering (24/7 tracking of how students use digital media, as a way of

being through digital media) could explore constantly digitally connected I.S. lives within digitally participative/(re)productive culture (as a reflection of I.S. terms of digital engagement). Savin-Baden (2017) discusses the 'different ways/forms of 'reading' and 'interrogating' that we have not yet come to understand, as well as different ways of being and managing left behind identities'; further arguing it is important 'to understand how students live and learn across the many digital media available to them and what is new, changed, or changing about how they live and learn today, and what evidence there is for these shifts'. Similarly, digital métissage (I.S. narratives of history, memory and stories of becoming through digital media) examines 'cultural spaces, generations and representational forms' and presents another exciting new research approach (see Hasebe-Ludt et al. 2009 and Savin-Baden, via NCRM, 2017).

In closing my thesis, an epistemology centred on 'through the digital', has enabled a multiplex of new ways to see evolving, highly differentiated and complex I.S. lives during the UK international study journey. My research has evidenced the need to include the digital paradigm into future student and international study literatures. Furthermore, other inter- and sub-disciplinary geography branches might also benefit by adopting this epistemology to uncover complex digital/social life processes.

Figure 1.1 International Students (World) 1975-2012 (OECD, 2015)
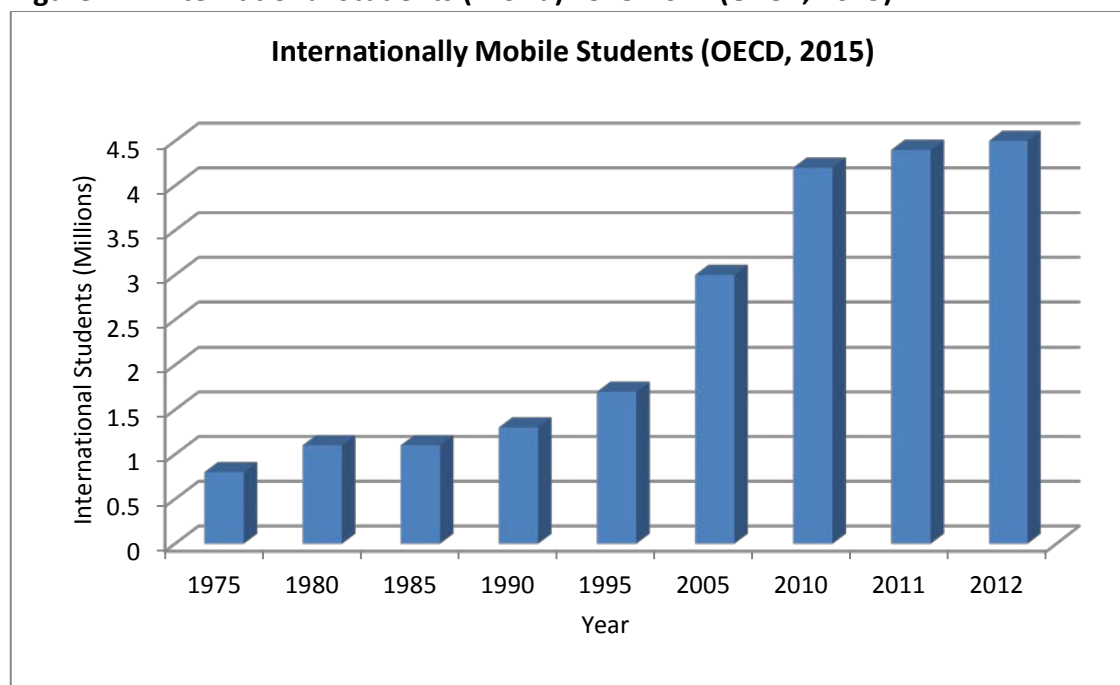
Source: OECD (2015), latest figures.

Figure 1.2 Evolution of International Study by Region (OECD, 2014)
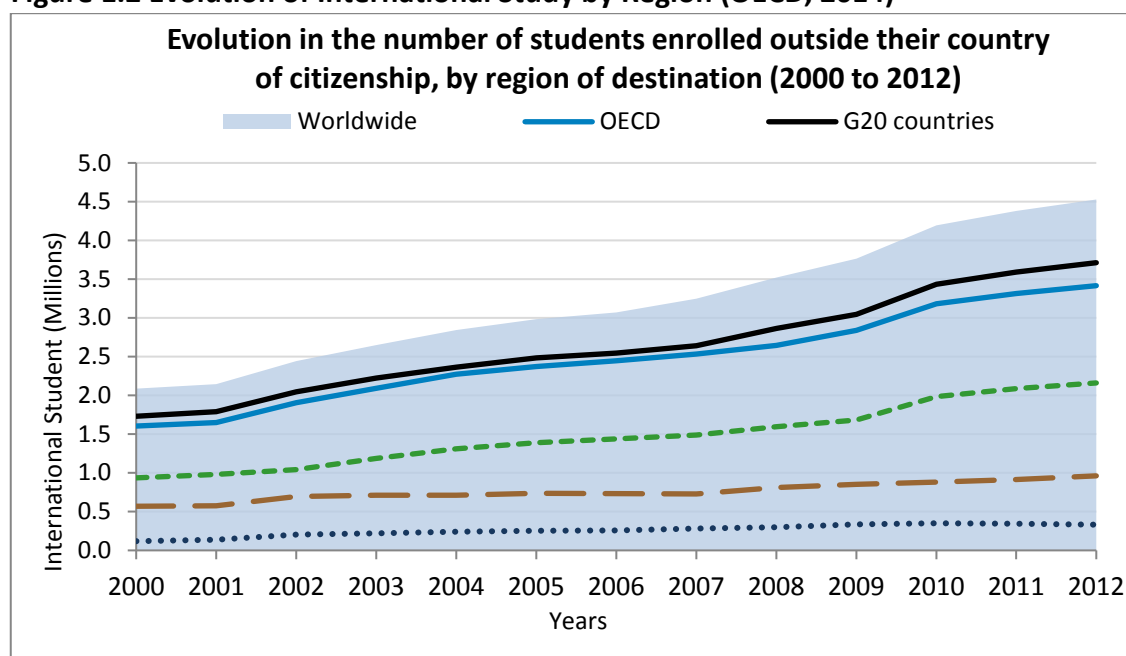
Source: OECD (2014) Education at a Glance. Table C4.6 (latest figures).

Figure 1.3 'Foreign' HE Students by Destination Countries (OECD, 2013)*
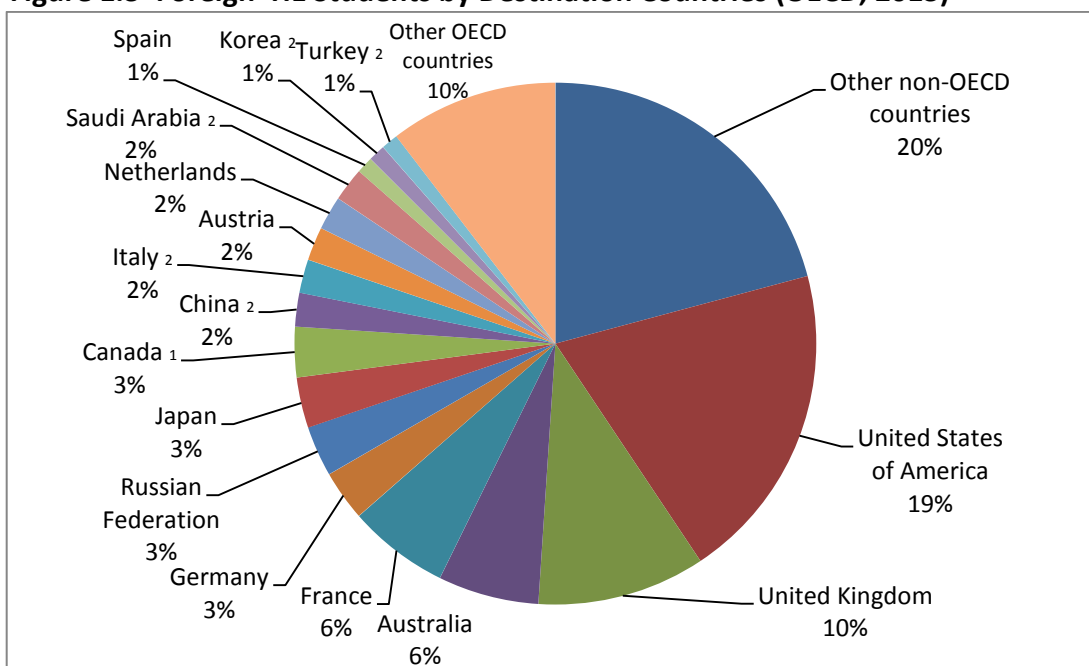
Source: OECD (2013) Tables C4.4/C4.6. 1: Reference year 2012. *2: Data refer to 'foreign' (a country specific term).

Figure 1.4 EU/Non-EU I.S. Passenger Inflows for UK Study (1991-2014)
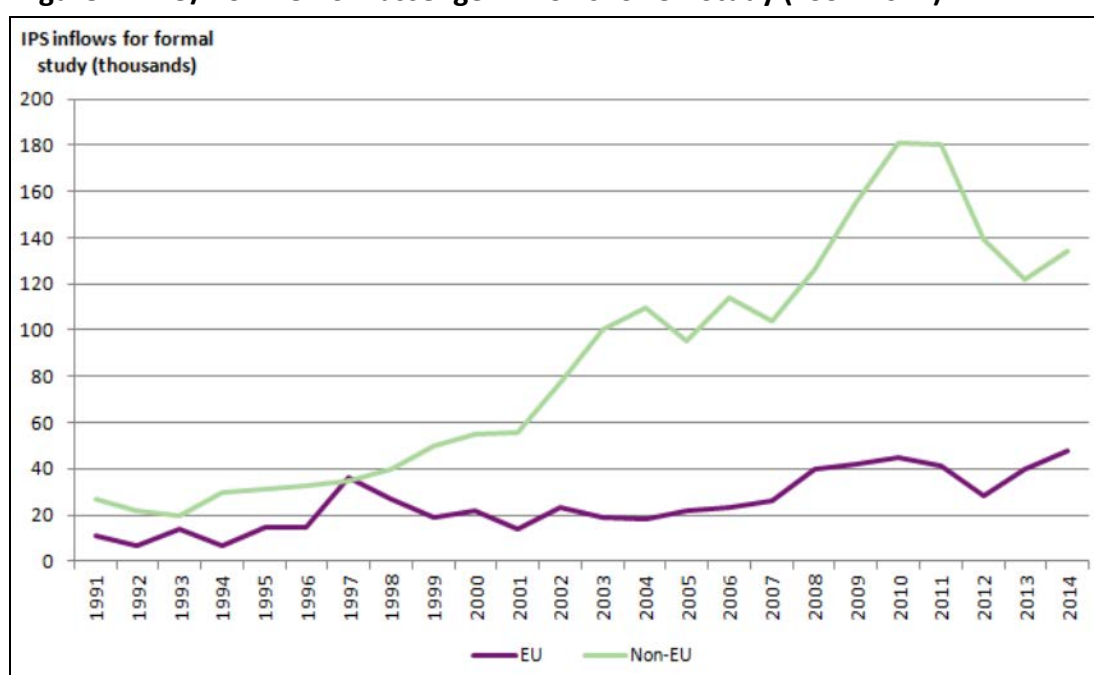
Source: ONS Population Briefing International Student Migration (2016).

Table 1.1 I.S. Immigration: Latest Trends (Year Ending March, 2016)

	Year end March 2015	Year end March 2016	Change	Change (%)
Study visas granted (excl. short-term students)	216,372	206,162	-10,210	-5%
Of which (top five):				
China	64,477	70,515	6,038	9%
United States of America	14,076	13,970	-106	-1%
India	12,097	10,705	-1,392	-12%
Malaysia	10,719	9,563	-1,156	-11%
Hong Kong	9,387	9,021	-366	-4%
Short-term study visas (main applicants only)	68,770	64,798	-3,972	-6%
	Year end Dec 2014	Year end Dec 2015	Change	Change (%)
Long-term immigration for study (excl. dependents)	134,000	112,000	-22,000	-16%
Long-term (1yr or more) study visas (excl. dependents)	142,513	137,506	-5,007	-4%

Source: Gov.UK National Statistics Survey (2016).

Figure 1.5 I.S. Immigration: Long-Term Trends (2005-2015)
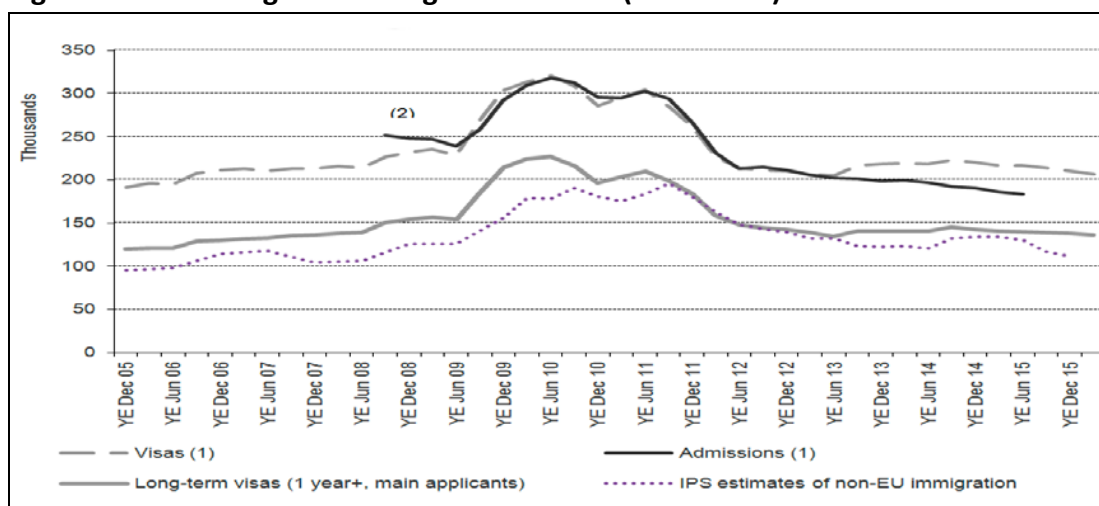
Source: Gov.UK National Statistics Survey (2016).

Figure 1.6 Extensions Granted to Former I.S. (2011-2015)
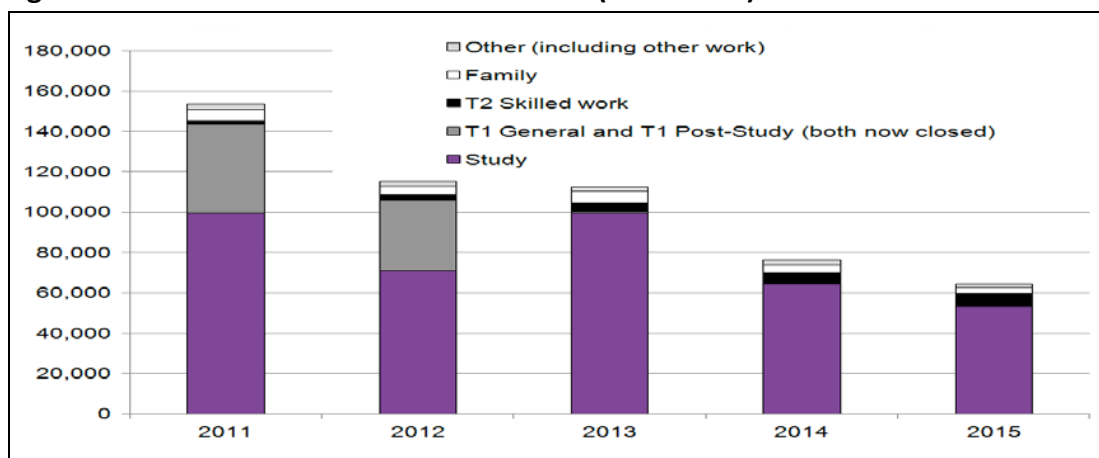
Source: Gov.UK National Statistics Survey (2016).

Figure 1.7 Overseas Transnational I.S. Studying for a UKHE Degree (2014-15)
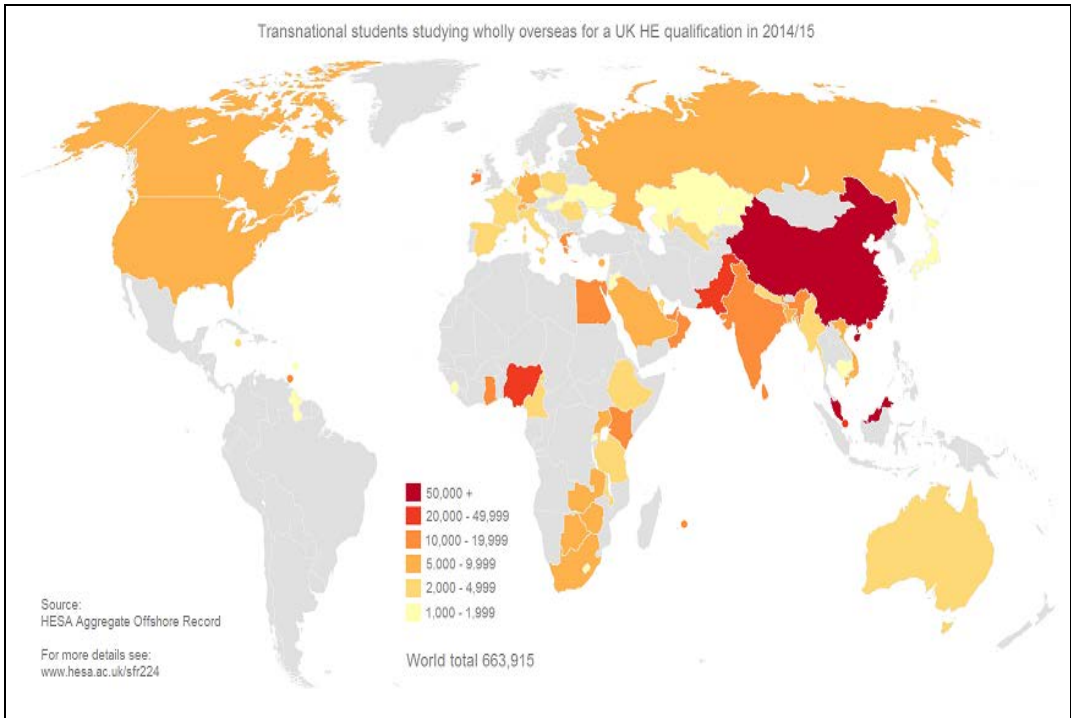
Source: HESA (2016).

Figure 1.8 First Year Non-UK Domicile Students by Region (2005-2015)
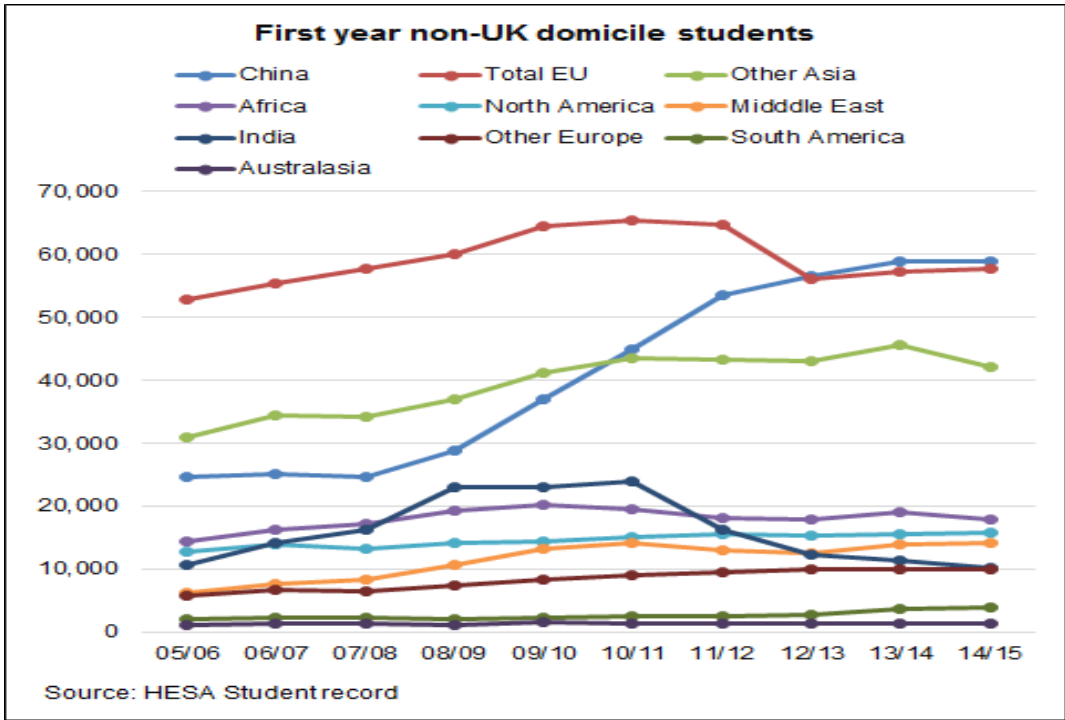
Source: HESA (2016).

Figure 1.9 Postgraduate International Students in UKHE (2014/15)

Chart 3 - HE student enrolments by level of study, mode of study and domicile 2014/15

Percentages in this chart have been rounded and may not sum exactly to 100%

■ UK ■ Other European Union ■ Non-European Union
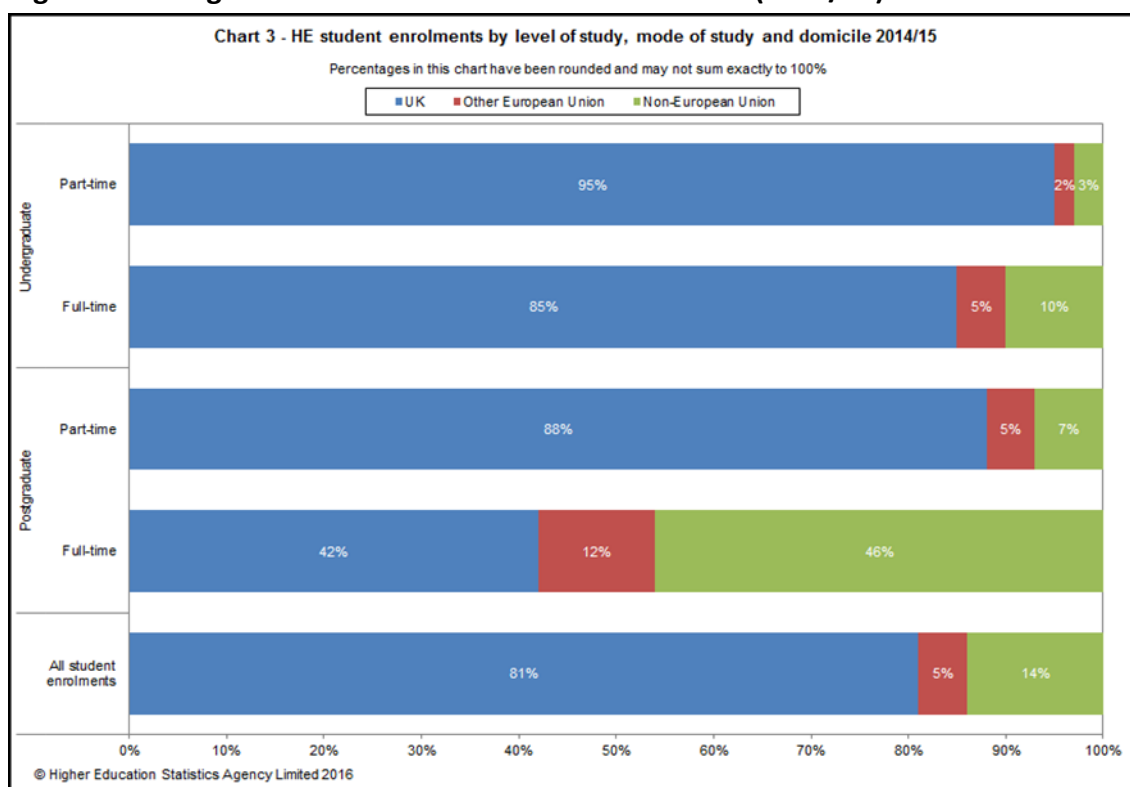
Source: HESA (2016) HE Student Enrolments & Qualifications Obtained at HEPs in UKHE (2014/15).

Table 1.2 Top Ten Student Enrolments by Domicile (2010/11-2014/15)

All UK HEPs*	2010/11	2011/12	Change 2010/11-2011/12 (%)	2012/13	Change 2011/12-2012/13 (%)	2013/14	Change 2012/13-2013/14 (%)	2014/15	Change 2013/14-2014/15 (%)
China	67330	78715	16.9	83790	6.4	87895	4.9	89540	1.9
India	39090	29900	**-23.5**	22385	**-25.1**	19750	**-11.8**	18320	**-7.2**
Nigeria	17585	17620	0.2	17395	**-1.3**	18020	3.6	17920	**-0.5**
Malaysia	13900	14545	4.6	15015	3.2	16635	10.8	17060	2.5
USA	15555	16335	5.0	16235	**-0.6**	16485	1.5	16865	2.3
H. Kong (SARC)	10440	11335	8.6	13065	15.3	14725	12.7	16215	10.1
Saudi Arabia	10270	9860	**-4.0**	9440	**-4.3**	9060	**-4.0**	8595	**-5.1**
Singapore	4455	5290	18.7	6020	13.8	6790	12.8	7295	7.4
Thailand	5945	6235	4.9	6180	**-0.9**	6340	2.6	6240	1.6
Pakistan	10185	8820	**-13.4**	7185	**-18.5**	6665	**-7.2**	6080	**-8.8**
All other	103375	104030	0.6	103270	**-0.7**	107830	4.4	107875	0.0
All UKHEPs	298125	302680	1.5	299970	**-0.9**	310195	3.4	312010	0.6

Source: compiled from HESA (2016). Stat Release 224 (latest data) *HEP (higher education provider).

Figure 1.10 Top 10 Student Enrolments by Domicile (2010/11-2014/15)
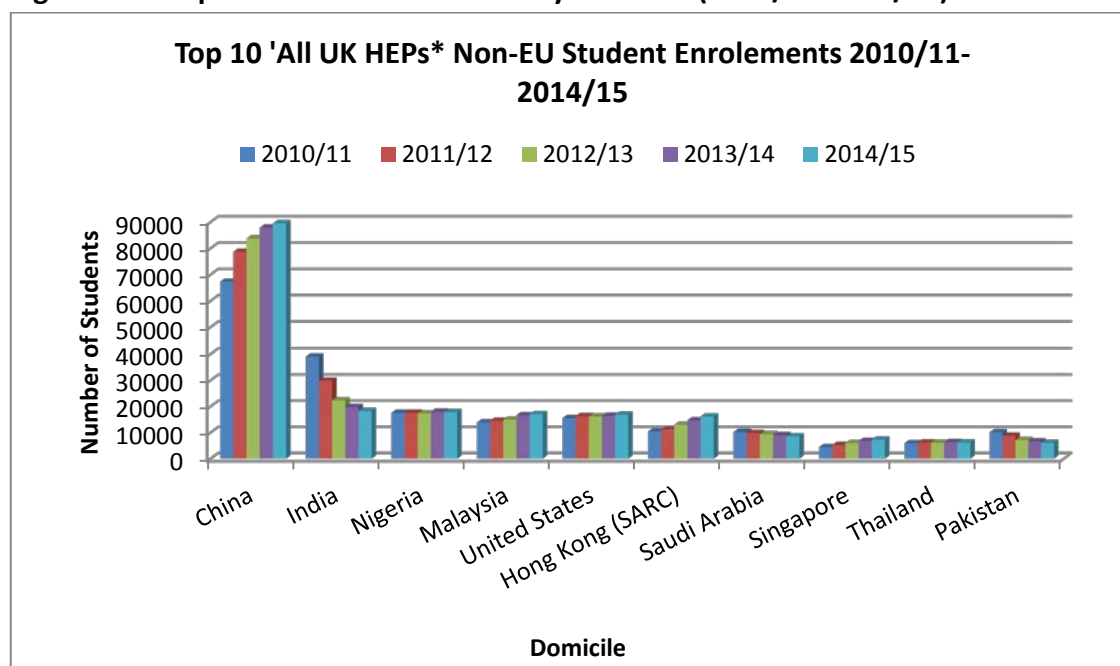
Source: compiled from HESA (2016) Stat Release 224 (latest data) *HEP (higher education provider).

To gain an in-depth longitudinal view of P/G.I.S. in UKHE, I compiled HESA data for qualifications gained by domicile between 2002 and 2015. My focus first addressed 'all study levels' before narrowing to UKHE P/G student populations (Figures 1.1-1.5)[33]. My compilation provides an overview of the nationally strategic importance of P/G.I.S..

Figure 1.11 Qualifiers: Non-EU P/G.I.S. Compared to All Students in UKHE
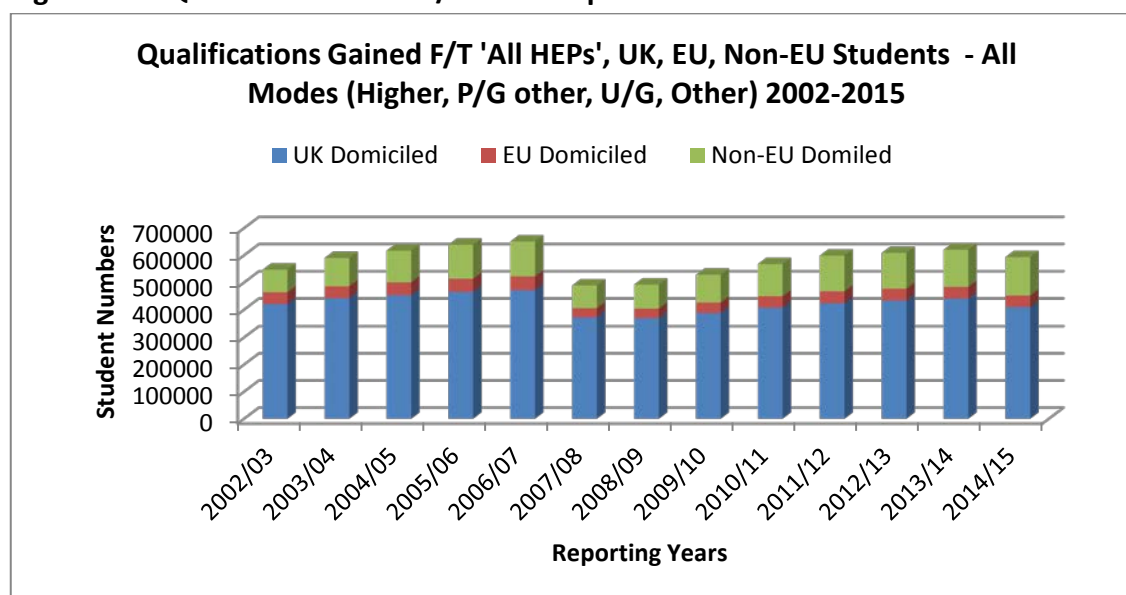
Source: compiled by author from HESA (2016) Qualifiers by Domicile and Level (quals 0203-quals 1415).

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[33] HESA Standard Registration Population was changed in 2007/08 to exclude writing-up and sabbatical students. These students are included in the tables for earlier years, which are therefore not comparable with those for 2007/08 and later (HESA, 2016).

Figure 1.12 Qualifications Obtained by EU and Non-EU Students
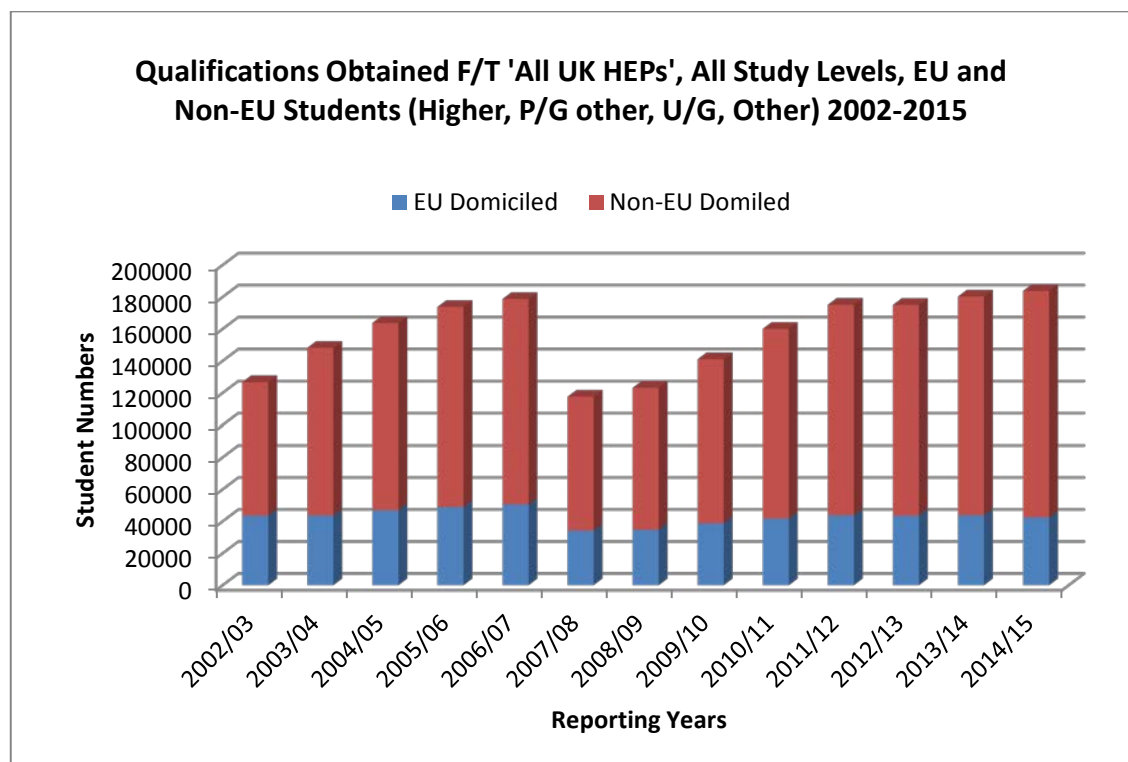
Qualifications Obtained F/T 'All UK HEPs', All Study Levels, EU and Non-EU Students (Higher, P/G other, U/G, Other) 2002-2015

Source: compiled by author from HESA (2016) Qualifiers by Domicile and Level (quals 0203-quals 1415).

Figure 1.13 Non-EU P/G.I.S. compared to All Doctoral Students in UKHE
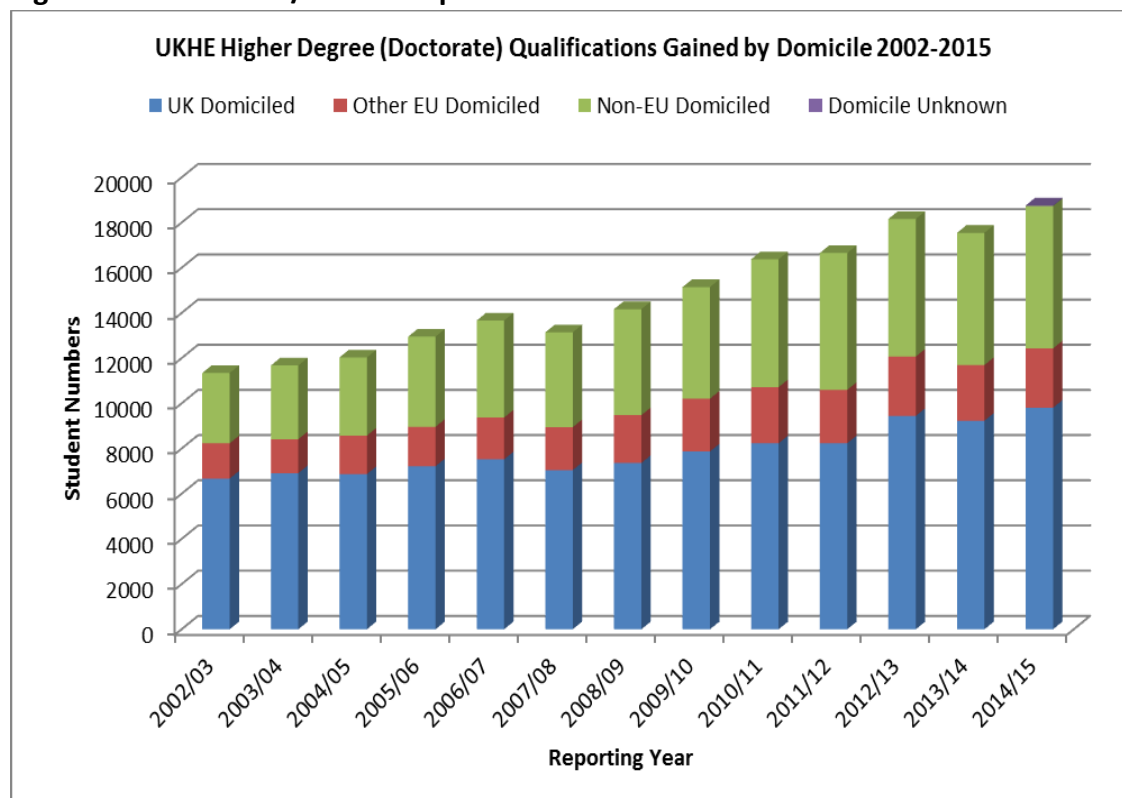
UKHE Higher Degree (Doctorate) Qualifications Gained by Domicile 2002-2015

Source: compiled by author from HESA (2016) Qualifiers by Domicile and Level (quals 0203-quals 1415).

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Figure 1.14 Non-EU P/G.I.S. compared to All Masters in UKHE
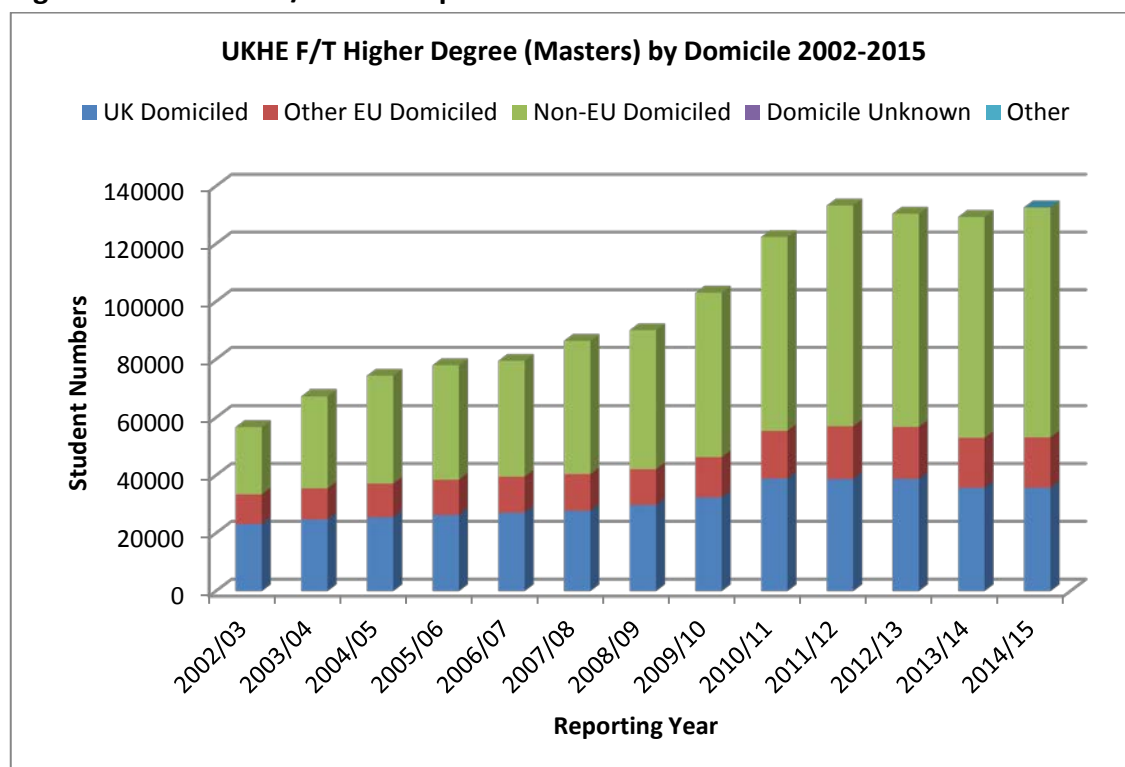
Source: compiled by author from HESA (2016) Qualifiers by Domicile and Level (quals 0203-quals 1415).

Figure 1.15 Non-EU P/G.I.S. compared to P/G Studying Other P/G Qualifications
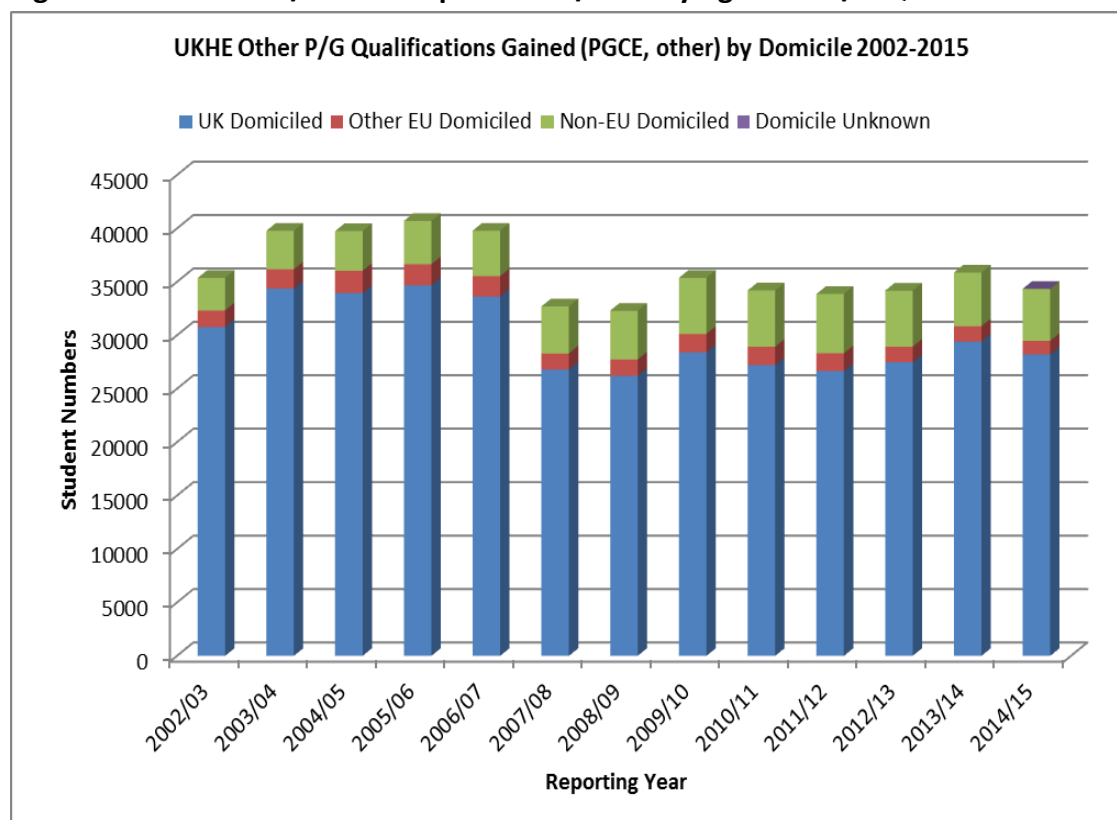
Source: compiled by author from HESA (2016) Qualifiers by Domicile and Level (quals 0203-quals 1415).

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Figure 1.16 Higher Degrees (Masters and Ph.D) by Domicile 2002-2015
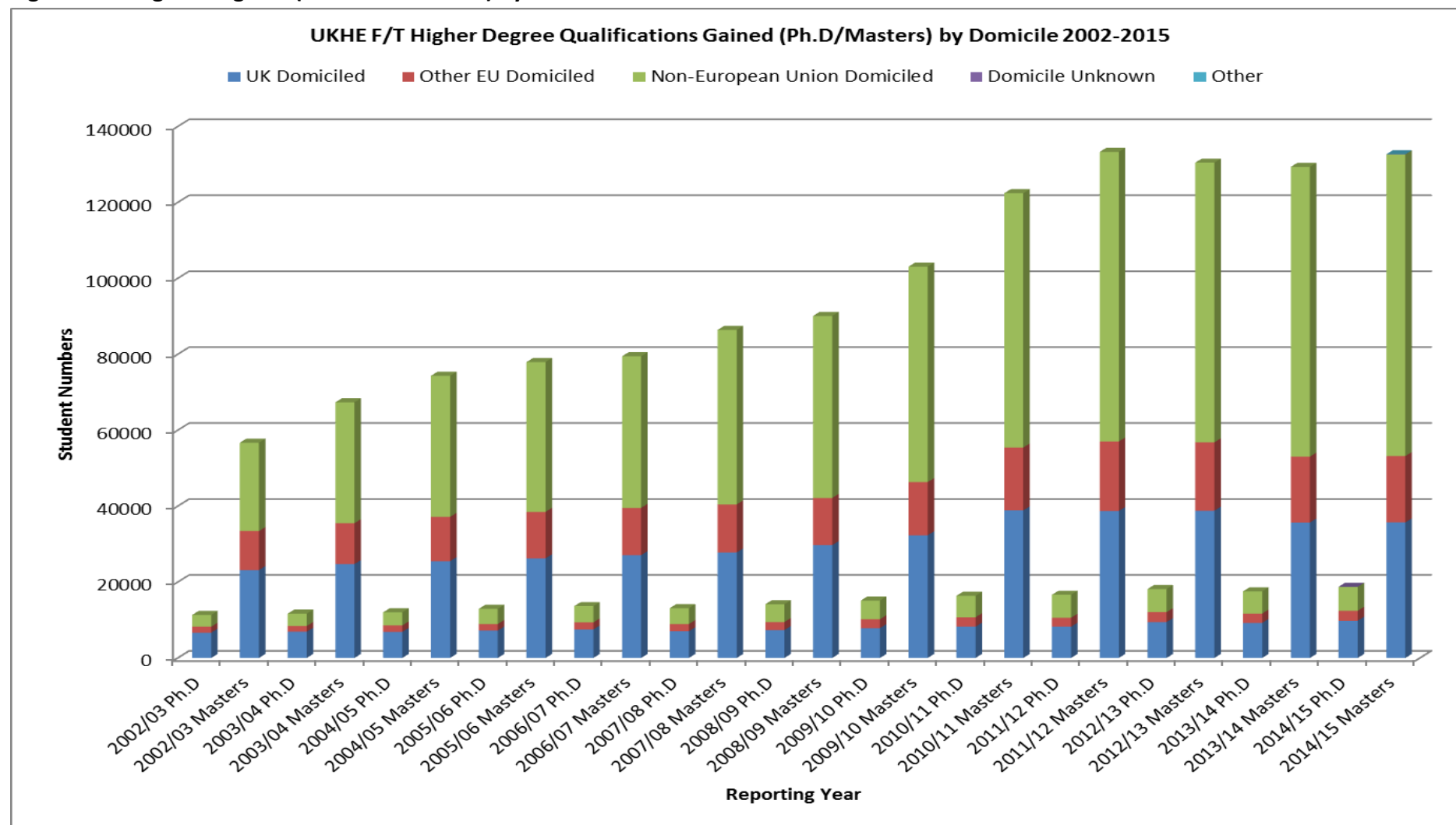
UKHE F/T Higher Degree Qualifications Gained (Ph.D/Masters) by Domicile 2002-2015

Legend: UK Domiciled | Other EU Domiciled | Non-European Union Domiciled | Domicile Unknown | Other

Y-axis: Student Numbers

X-axis: Reporting Year

Source: compiled by author from HESA (2016) Qualifiers by Domicile and Level (quals 0203-quals 1415).

Appendix 2
Bristol Online Survey

Bristol Online Survey (Introduction: Email Version)

The Internationalisation of British Higher Education & Social Media; Academic Identities and Transnational Socialisation

Dear Postgraduate International Student

You are invited to join a survey which forms part of a Ph.D research study taking place at the University of Leicester (UoL) entitled: 'Internationalisation of British Higher Education and Social Media; Academic Identities and Transnational Socialisation'. The use of social media concerns online chatting, sharing photographs, being part of groups, reading what others say and various other forms of interaction. This study aims to gain an understanding of your academic and social uses of social media during different points in your academic career.

My name is James Booth. I am a second year Ph.D student based in the Department of Geography at UoL. My research is sponsored by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) which considers evidence-informed changes in UK higher education (UKHE) policy geared to improving student experience. My research is 'student-centred' where I am aiming to understand the complex experiences faced by international students. Your contribution through joining my survey could therefore inform future policy and be beneficial to international students.

If you would like more information I am more than happy to discuss questions you may have. Further details verifying my position and details of my research are available at: http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/geography/people/james-booth and http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/doctoral-prog/j-booth

My survey is 7 pages, taking about 20 minutes to complete and divided into 4 sections - 'About you', your use of social media 'before', 'during' and on 'leaving' UoL. You cannot return to a completed page so please think carefully before responding. Once you click 'continue' you will be directed to the first section of the survey. When you arrive at the final 'thank you' page, you will know that your responses have been received.

As a small gesture of thanks for completing the survey, there's a chance to enter a prize draw where the first two participants drawn out will each receive a £25 UoL Bookshop voucher. To enter please leave your email address at the end of the survey. I am also recruiting for focus groups and interviews for this study. I appreciate you taking the time to answer this survey and help me with my Ph.D research.

Many thanks
James Booth
Department of Geography

Anonymity. Your participation in the survey is entirely voluntary and remains anonymous. This survey operates through a fully activated encryption function. However, if you wish to participate in a focus group, be interviewed by the researcher, receive research feed-back about future research findings or enter the prize draw, there is an opportunity for you to leave your email address at the end of the survey; these email addresses will only be retained by the researcher and kept in a separate location from the survey answers. The prize draw will be held by the end of January 2014, where email addresses provided for the prize draw will then be deleted.
Withdrawal. You are under no obligation to participate in this study. You can withdraw consent at any time up to the point when data analysis begins (January 2014).
Data Protection Act (1998). This survey complies with the Data Protection Act (1998) and the University of Leicester Information Assurance Services Policy.

Postgraduate International Student   **Social Media Survey**   **(Printed Version)**

                                                                £20 Amazon Voucher

Department of Geography   **Funded Project**

Are you a 'Full-Time Postgraduate International Student (Non-E.U)' attending the University of Leicester – Masters or Ph.D level?

If so please take a little time to complete this survey - please put completed surveys in the box.

This research aims to help international students. Completed surveys can be entered into a prize draw for a £20 Amazon voucher.

This survey is also available online at: https://www.survey.bris.ac.uk/leicester/socmediarelaunch

NB: THIS SURVEY 'IS NOT' FOR UNDERGRADUATES, PART-TIME OR DISTANCE LEARNING STUDENTS.

Dear Full-Time Postgraduate International Student (Non-E.U)   - Masters or Ph.D Study Level Only

This survey forms part of a Ph.D study taking place at the University of Leicester entitled: 'Internationalisation of British Higher Education and Social Media; Academic Identities and Transnational Socialisation.'

What is Social Media? The use of social media concerns online chatting, sharing photographs, being part of groups, reading what others say and various other forms of online interaction. This study aims to gain an understanding of your '*academic and social uses'* of social media during different points in your academic career. The study also seeks to understand what it 'feels like' to be an international student.

My name is James Booth. I am a second year Ph.D student based in the Department of Geography at UoL. My research is student-centred and sponsored by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) - geared to improving student experience. I am aiming to understand the complex experiences faced by international students. Your contribution to my research could inform future policy and be benefit international students.

If you have any questions please email me at jdb41@le.ac.uk. Further details verifying my position and details of my research are available at:
http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/geography/people/james-booth and http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/doctoral-prog/j-booth
This survey takes about 20 **minutes to complete** and is divided into 4 sections – 'About You' and your use of social media – 'Before' 'During' and on 'Leaving' the University of Leicester.

I am also recruiting for focus groups and interviews for this study. I appreciate you taking the time to answer this survey and help me with my Ph.D research. Please put the survey in the box once completed.
Many thanks

James Booth
Department of Geography.

Anonymity and Contact
Your participation in the survey is entirely voluntary and anonymous. If you wish to participate in a focus group, be interviewed by the researcher, or receive research feed-back of future findings there is an opportunity for you to leave your email address at the end of the survey. If you wish to be entered into the £20 Amazon voucher prize draw, email addresses provided will be deleted after the draw. Email addresses will only be used by the researcher.
Withdrawal
You are under no obligation to participate in this study. You can withdraw consent at any time up to the point when data analysis begins (May 2014).
Data Protection Act (1998) and University of Leicester IAS Policy
This survey complies with the Data Protection Act (1998) and the University of Leicester Information Assurance Services (IAS) Policy.

Section 1:   About You

1. Please state your nationality:-

2. Please state your age:- 21-25 years old [ ]   26-30 years old [ ]   31-40 years old [ ]   41-5-
years old [ ]   51-60 years old [ ]   61 years or older [ ]

3. Please indicate your gender:- Male   [ ]   Female   [ ]   Transgendered [ ]

4. Please state your ethnicity:-

5. Please indicate if you consider that you have a disability:-

   Yes   [ ]   No   [ ]   Prefer not to say [ ]

   If yes please offer brief details (optional):-

**6. Please state your Department, Research Centre (RC) or Institute at the
University of Leicester:-**

| |
| |

7. Please indicate your full-time postgraduate degree programme:-

| |
| |

8. How long is your full-time postgraduate degree programme?

9. Which year of your postgraduate degree programme are you in?

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Section 2: **Your Use of Social Media and Other Factors 'Before' Attending the University of Leicester (UoL)**

Notes: **Social Use of Social Media** means non-academic online contact with friends, relatives and acquaintances (e.g., chatting, sharing photographs).
Academic Use of Social Media means online interactions at academic level (e.g., discussing course related matters e.g., in groups or forums).

10. Please name 'up to 5' favoured social media sites used ACADEMICALLY during your decision to attend UoL. (E.g Teach Street, Google Groups).

Academic sites used 'BEFORE' coming to UoL

a. 1

b. 2

c. 3

d. 4

e. 5

11. Please name 'up to 5' favoured social media sites used SOCIALLY DURING your decision to attend UoL. (E.g. Facebook, Ren Ren).

Social sites used 'BEFORE' coming to UoL

a. 1

b. 2

c. 3

d. 4

e. 5

12. Please tick the relevant statements according to level of importance for the different types of social media used while deciding to come to UoL:-
You may not have heard of some of these types of social media – if so tick 'not important'

	Very Important	Important	Moderately Important	Slightly Important	Not Important
a. Social Networking Sites - Personal accounts (e.g. your own Facebook, Seino Weibo)	○	○	○	○	○
b. Social Networking Sites - University of Leicester based Facebook	○	○	○	○	○
c. Blogs and Microblogs - Personal (e.g. Twitter, Blogger)	○	○	○	○	○
d. Blogs and Microblogs - University of Leicester based Twitter	○	○	○	○	○
e. Bulletin Boards - University of Leicester based	○	○	○	○	○
f. Bulletin Boards - Non-Leicester University based	○	○	○	○	○
g. Chat-Rooms/Forums	○	○	○	○	○
h. Folksonomies - grass roots content (e.g. Digg, Delicious)	○	○	○	○	○
i. Mashups (open application interfaces)	○	○	○	○	○
j. Multi-User Dungeon -MUD or MOO's (e.g. play spaces)	○	○	○	○	○
k. Photo and Video Sharing Sites (e.g. YouTube, FlickR)	○	○	○	○	○
l. Wikis - open collectives of information (e.g. Wikipedia)	○	○	○	○	○

13. Please state the importance of the following factors during your decision to enter United Kingdom Higher Education (UKHE):-

Please tick only one answer in each category.

	Very Important	Important	Moderately Important	Slightly Important	Not Important
a. UKHE allows quicker completion compared to elsewhere e	○	○	○	○	○
b. UKHE improves your academic career prospects	○	○	○	○	○
c. UKHE improves your non-academic career prospects	○	○	○	○	○
d. UKHE offers a better chance of working overseas	○	○	○	○	○
e. UKHE offered scholarship funding 'pulled' you to UKHE)	○	○	○	○	○
f. UKHE offered via a 'home-based' scholarship (funding 'pushed' you to UKHE)	○	○	○	○	○
g. UKHE costs are lower compared to elsewhere in world	○	○	○	○	○
h. UKHE favoured by pre-existing employer	○	○	○	○	○
i. UKHE encouraged by a home country academic	○	○	○	○	○
j. UKHE offered working with particular academic/s	○	○	○	○	○
k. UKHE offers different teaching methods	○	○	○	○	○
l. UKHE enables development of English language skills	○	○	○	○	○
m. UKHE offers the chance to 'learn and think' in English	○	○	○	○	○
n. UKHE offers exposure to British culture and lifestyle	○	○	○	○	○
o. University Rankings - UKHE specific (e.g Guardian)	○	○	○	○	○

p. University Rankings - International (e.g. Q.S Ranking)   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

q. University Rankings – from home of UK universities   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

14. Please state the importance of the following factors influencing your choice in coming to the University of Leicester (UoL).
Please tick only one answer in each category.

	Very Important	Important	Moderately Important	Slightly Important	Not Important
a. UoL International Office (e.g. recruitment event)	○	○	○	○	○
b. UoL programme was the best available in your subject	○	○	○	○	○
c. UoL has friends and acquaintances from your home	○	○	○	○	○
d. UoL has many other students of your nationality	○	○	○	○	○
e. UoL has many other international students	○	○	○	○	○
f. UoL offers good support for international students	○	○	○	○	○
g. UoL enables you to access family/friends who live near	○	○	○	○	○
h. UoL was the only place to accept your application	○	○	○	○	○
i. UoL costs lower compared to other UK universities (e.g. course, accommodation, and living costs)	○	○	○	○	○
j. UoL being based in the 'City of Leicester itself' is important	○	○	○	○	○

15. Please rate the importance of the following other factors for entering United Kingdom Higher Education (UKHE):-

Please tick only one answer in each category.

	Very Important	Important	Moderately Important	Slightly Important	Not Important

a. Asylum/refugee status influenced your decision   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

b. Broaden your worldly horizon/vision   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

c. Gain confidence   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

d. Gain social skills   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

e. Meet local British people, in Leicester and elsewhere   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

f. Meet British higher education students   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

g. Meet other students from your home country   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

h. Meet other international students (non-home country)   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

i. Get away from parental control/exercise independence   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

j. Obligation to parents means gaining overseas HE degree   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

k. Parents offered finances favouring attendance in UKHE   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

l. Overseas HE is considered a 'must do' for your generation   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

m. Marriage prospects enhanced by gaining a UKHE degree   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

n. Marriage prospects reduced by gaining a UKHE degree   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

o. You are interested in moving to the UK (after degree)   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

16. How important was social media during your decision-making process to enter into United Kingdom Higher Education (UKHE) at the University of Leicester:- Please tick one answer from below.

     i.   Social media played no part in my decision to attend the University of Leicester   [ ]

ii. Social media played a minor role in my decision to attend the University of Leicester, but other factors were more important [ ]
iii. Social media played a significant role together with other significant factors in my decision to attend the University of Leicester [ ]
iv. Social media played a key role in my decision to attend the University of Leicester [ ]

Section 3: Your Academic and Social Use of Social Media while Attending the University of Leicester

17. While at UoL describe your approximate 'average use' of different types of social media for 'academic purposes'.
If you don't use social media academically please select all categories in the first column.

	Academic Purposes								
	I do not use this type of social media for academic purposes	A few times a month	A few times a week	Up to 1 hour a day	1-2 hours a day	3-5 hours a day	6-8 hours a day	9-12 hours a day	Over 12 hours a day
a. Social Networking Sites - Personal accounts (e.g. your own Facebook)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. Social Networking Sites - University Based	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. Blogs/Microblogs - Personal (e.g. Twitter)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. Blogs/Microblogs - Departmental (e.g. individual academics using Twitter or Wordpress)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. Bulletin Boards (Leicester University based)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
f. Bulletin Boards (Non-Leicester University based)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
g. Chat-Rooms/Forums	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
h. Photo and Video Sharing Sites (e.g. YouTube, FlickR)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
i. Wikis - e.g. Wikipedia	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

j. Folksonomies - grass roots content (e.g. Digg, Delicious)

k. Mashups (open application interfaces)

l. Multi-User Dungeon (MUD or MOO's) (e.g play spaces)

18. **While at UoL describe your approximate 'average use' of different types of social media for 'social purposes'.**
    If you don't use social media please select all categories in the first column.

Social Purposes

	I do not use this type of social media for social purposes	A few times a month	A few times a week	Up to 1 hour a day	1-2 hours a day	3-5 hours a day	6-8 hours a day	9-12 hours a day	Over 12 hours a day
a. Social Networking Sites - Personal accounts (e.g. your own Facebook)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. Social Networking Sites - University Based	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. Blogs/Microblogs - Personal (e.g. Twitter)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. Blogs/Microblogs - Departmental (e.g. individual academics using Twitter or Wordpress)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. Bulletin Boards (university based)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
f. Bulletin Boards (non-university based)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
g. Chat-Rooms/Forums	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
h. Photo and Video Sharing Sites (e.g. YouTube, FlickR)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
i. Wikis - (e.g. Wikipedia)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
j. Folksonomies - grass roots content (e.g. Digg, Delicious)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

k. Mashups (open application interfaces)

l. Multi-User Dungeon (MUD or MOO's) (e.g. play spaces)

19. While at UoL name 'up to 5' favoured social media sites used for 'academic purposes.' (E.g. Epernicus, Facebook or Google Group).

Academic Sites While at UoL

a. 1

b. 2

c. 3

d. 4

e. 5

20. While at UoL name 'up to 5' favoured social media sites used for 'social purposes'. (E.g Facebook, Cloob, Ren Ren, or you may socialise on Academic sites).

Social Sites While at UoL

a. 1

b. 2

c. 3

d. 4

e. 5

21. Please select which statement best applies to your use of social media while at UoL:-
i.   Now that I am at UoL I use social media more than before coming to Leicester   [ ]
ii. Now that I am at UoL I use social media about the same as before   [ ]
iii. Now that I am at UoL I use social media less often   [ ]
iv. Other, please write details below   [ ]

If you selected Other, please specify:

22. **Please select which statement you agree with regarding your current use of social media at the University of Leicester:-**

Please tick only one answer in each category.

	Tick if you agree	Tick if you disagree	Tick if prefer not to say
a. Face-to-face contact is far more important than social media	○	○	○
b. Face-to-face contact is now secondary compared to using social media	○	○	○
c. Increased face-to-face friendships at UoL have led to increased use of social media	○	○	○
d. Increased face-to-face friendships at UoL have led to decreased use of social media	○	○	○
e. Increased use of social media at UoL has led to more face-to-face friendships and acquaintances	○	○	○
f. Social media are important for maintaining online friendships at home	○	○	○
g. Using social media at UoL is mainly linked to social matters	○	○	○
h. Social media have altered the way that you think about yourself academically	○	○	○

i. Social media have given you an
increased sense of being part of an
academic community

23. Please select which statement you agree with regarding your current use of social media at UoL:-

Please tick only one answer in each category.

	Tick if you agree	Tick if you disagree	Tick if prefer not to say
a. Social media offered emotional support while at UoL (e.g. by reducing stresses associated with transnational relocation - e.g. homesickness)	○	○	○
b. Social media negatively affects your feelings (e.g. emphasised distance from family and friends)	○	○	○
c. Social media at UoL has strengthened feelings about home, belonging and national identity	○	○	○
d. Social media use means that your primary friendships are maintained in your home country	○	○	○
e. Social media has helped to bridge national divides	○	○	○
f. Social media has furthered a sense of 'inbetweeness' (where you do not feel quite part of your own nation, or part of your host nation)	○	○	○
g. Social media has weakened your feelings about home and created a sense of feeling much more transnational/cosmopolitan	○	○	○

Section 4:   Your Use of Social Media when 'Leaving' the University of Leicester

24. Please state how you use/intend to use social media for leaving UoL. *(Optional)*

If you have answered above to 'how' you use/will use social media, please state why this is so below:-

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25. What are your future life/career plans? ('HE' refers to Higher Education)   Tick all that apply

a. Academic career   - HE in home country- (research and/or teaching)   [ ]

b. Academic career   - UKHE – (research and/or teaching)   [ ]

c. Academic career   - HE in Europe – (research and/or teaching)   [ ]

d. Academic career - HE Elsewhere (research and/or teaching)   [ ]

e. Research career outside of HE (e.g private organisation, charity or industrial environment)   [ ]

f. Teach - Home - below HE level   [ ]

g. Teach - Elsewhere - below HE level   [ ]

h. Professional career – Home   [ ]

i. Professional career – UK   [ ]

j. Professional career – Europe   [ ]

k. Professional career – World   [ ]

l. Self-employment   [ ]

m. Remaining with employer who has sponsored your degree   [ ]

n. Gap Year/s - time off (e.g travel/work experience)   [ ]

o. Undecided on what to do   [ ]

26. Please name 'up to 5' favoured social media sites used for LEAVING UoL (e.g LinkedIn, HR.com, Ryze)

Social Media used for Leaving UoL

a. 1 [   ]

b. 2 [   ]

c. 3 [   ]

d. 4 [   ]

e. 5 [   ]

27. Please rate the importance of the following different strategies that you are using/aim to use in terms of career progression:-

Please tick only one answer in each category.

	Very Important	Important	Moderately Important	Slightly Important	Not Important
a. Academic work (e.g writing papers, conducting seminars)	○	○	○	○	○
b. Agency work	○	○	○	○	○
c. Careers fairs	○	○	○	○	○
d. Creating your own job	○	○	○	○	○
e. Direct and personal contact	○	○	○	○	○
f. Job advertisements - local/national press	○	○	○	○	○
g. Job advertisements - international press	○	○	○	○	○
h. Job advertisements - home nation recruitment websites	○	○	○	○	○
i. Job advertisements - international recruitment websites	○	○	○	○	○
j. Online networking - with potential employers	○	○	○	○	○
k. Online networking - with friends and acquaintances	○	○	○	○	○
l. Online networking - with academic contacts	○	○	○	○	○
m. Personal contacts (referrals)	○	○	○	○	○
n. Unpaid work to gain experience	○	○	○	○	○
o. Use of Social Media sites specific to career advancement	○	○	○	○	○

28. Finally, please enter below anything else you wish to add about your use of social media and your UoL experience:-

Further Contact - Focus Groups, Interviews, Further Research Information and Prize Draw

This survey will be followed-up with focus groups and interviews. If you would like to participate please enter your email below, or you can contact me, **James, at jdb41@le.ac.uk**

 Again, many thanks. I do appreciate you taking the time to answer this survey and help me with my Ph.D research. Please select an option from
 below James.

Please Tick

Participate in a focus group (one session of 45-90 minutes)	Yes [ ]	No [ ]	If yes please enter your email here:- _____
Participate in an interview (one interview of 40-60 minutes)	Yes [ ]	No [ ]	If yes please enter your email here:- _____
Receive further future information about this research	Yes [ ]	No [ ]	If yes please enter your email here:- _____
Enter into the Prize Draw for a £20 Amazon voucher	Yes [ ]	No [ ]	If yes please enter your email here:- _____

ETHICAL STATEMENT
This survey relates to the research project 'Internationalisation of British Higher Education and Social Media; Academic Identities and Transnational Socialisation', which is funded by the Higher Education Academy, and taking place at the University of Leicester. The researcher has made every effort to comply with the University Of Leicester Research Ethics Code of Practice. You are under no obligation to complete this survey, but should you choose to participate you can withdraw your consent at any point up to the point that survey analysis begins (June 2014). The researcher is James Booth, Ph.D student at the University of Leicester, and may be contacted at jdb41@le.ac.uk. A profile of the research is available at
http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/geography/people/james-booth
DATA PROTECTION
This survey has passed the appropriate permissions in accordance with the University of Leicester Information Assurance Service and meets the requirements of the Data Protection Act (1998) and University of Leicester local policies. All information will be treated as anonymous; however, participants may leave their email address for the purpose of participating in a focus group, being interviewed by the researcher, to receive future research feed-back from the researcher. Your contact details will only be used to contact you for the stated purposes and will not be shared with any third party. If you chose to supply your e-mail address for further contact, this information will be stored separately from the survey data. Email addresses held for the purpose of sending feed-back to those participants that have requested feed-back will be held securely by the researcher. Feed-back will involve an update of findings relating to the research project. Findings will not be available until the end of the University of Leicester second semester of 2015.

Appendix 3
Bristol Online Survey: Selected Data Tables

Table 3.1 I.S. Nationality by UoL Schools, Departments and Research Centres (2013-14)

American Studies (RC)	0.44%	**Education**	5.68%	**Geology**	0.44%	Azerbaijan	0.87%	Taiwan	0.44%
Thailand	0.44%	China	1.75%	Pakistan	0.44%	Saudi Arabia	0.87%	China	0.44%
Arch & Ancient Hist.	0.87%	USA	0.44%	**Health Sciences**	0.87%	Iraq	0.87%	Jordan	0.44%
USA	0.87%	Pakistan	0.44%	India	0.44%	USA	0.44%	**Museum Studies**	3.93%
Biochemistry	0.44%	Mexico	0.44%	Colombia	0.44%	Indonesia	0.44%	USA	2.62%
Zambia	0.44%	Nigeria	0.44%	**Hist.l Archaeol. (RC)**	0.87%	Norway	0.44%	Mexico	0.44%
Biology	0.87%	Colombia	0.44%	USA	0.44%	Zambia	0.44%	Canada	0.44%
Iraq	0.87%	Saudi Arabia	0.44%	Iraq	0.44%	Brunei	0.44%	China	0.44%
Cancer Studies	0.44%	Iraq	0.44%	**Historical Studies**	0.44%	Nigeria	0.44%	**Physics & Astronomy**	0.87%
Libya	0.87%	Barbados	0.44%	Kuwait	0.44%	**Mathematics**	3.49%	Turkey	0.44%
Saudi Arabia	0.44%	Kazakhstan	0.44%	**History**	0.87%	Nigeria	0.87%	Iraq	0.44%
Card. Vasc Sciences	0.44%	**Engineering**	3.06%	Iraq	0.87%	Colombia	0.87%	**Politics & Int. Rels**	0.87%
Vietnam	0.44%	India	0.87%	**Hist. of Art & Film**	0.87%	Pakistan	0.44%	Colombia	0.87%
Cell Physiol & Pharm.	0.44%	Switzerland	0.44%	USA	0.44%	USA	0.44%	**Psychology**	0.87%
Saudi Arabia	0.44%	Nigeria	0.44%	China	0.44%	Botswana	0.44%	Trin. & Tob.	0.44%
Computer Science	3.93%	Thailand	0.44%	**Infect., Imm. & Inflam**	0.87%	Iraq	0.44%	Iraq	0.44%
Nigeria	1.31%	China	0.44%	Nepal	0.44%	**Media & Comm.**	19.21%	**Museum Studies**	0.44%
India	0.87%	Mexico	0.44%	Iraq	0.44%	China	13.10%	Hong Kong	0.44%
Singapore	0.44%	**English**	0.87%	**Lab. Mkt Studies (RC)**	0.44%	Indonesia	1.31%	**Sociology**	0.44%
Egypt	0.44%	Saudi Arabia	0.44%	Nigeria	0.44%	Oman	0.44%	China	0.44%
China	0.44%	Indonesia	0.44%	**Land. & Clim. Res (RC)**	0.44%	China	0.44%	**Urban History (RC)**	0.44%
Iraq	0.44%	**Eng Loc. History (RC)**	0.44%	China	0.44%	Saudi Arabia	0.44%	Jordan	0.44%
Criminology	2.18%	China	0.44%	**Law**	0.87%	Canada	0.44%	**Victorian Studies (RC)**	0.44%
Malaysia	0.87%	**Genetics**	1.31%	Nigeria	0.44%	Malaysia	0.44%	Saudi Arabia	0.44%
Taiwan	0.44%	India	0.44%	Kazakhstan	0.44%	Colombia	0.44%		
Barbados	0.44%	Thailand	0.44%	**Management**	29.26%	Russia	0.44%		
Brunei	0.44%	Indonesia	0.44%	China	15.28%	Ghana	0.44%		
Economics	4.80%	**Geography**	3.93%	Thailand	3.06%	Taiwan	0.44%		
China	3.06%	Nigeria	2.18%	Taiwan	2.62%	Brunei	0.44%		
Vietnam	0.87%	China	0.87%	India	1.31%	Kazakhstan	0.44%		
Mexico	0.44%	South Africa	0.44%	Vietnam	0.87%	**Modern Languages**	1.75%	**TOTAL**	
Indonesia	0.44%	Ecuador	0.44%	Colombia	0.87%	Thailand	0.44%	**38 UoL Bases**	**229 PIS**

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Table 3.2 Masters & Research I.S. by UoL Schools, Departments & Research Centres

School/Department/Centre	PGT	PGR	School/Department/Centre	PGT	PGR
American Studies	-	1	Historical Studies	-	1
Arch. & Ancient History	1	1	History	-	2
Biochemistry	-	1	History of Art & Film	2	-
Biology	-	2	Infection, Immunity & Inflam.	-	2
Cancer Studies	2	1	Labour Market Studies	-	1
Cardiovascular Sciences	-	1	Landscape & Climate Res	-	1
Cell Physio & Pharmacology	-	1	Law	1	1
Computer Science	8	1	Management	59	8
Criminology	5	-	Mathematics	6	2
Economics	8	3	Media & Communication	42	2
Education	10	3	Modern Languages	2	2
Engineering	5	2	Museum Studies	7	2
English	2	1	Physics & Astronomy	-	2
English Local History	1	-	Pols & International Relations	2	-
Genetics	1	2	Psychology	3	-
Geography (Phy. Sciences)	3	6	Urban History	1	26
Geology	-	1	Victorian Studies	1	-
Health Sciences	2	-	**Total Responses**	**175**	**54**
Historical Archaeology	1	1			

Table 3.3 I.S. Declared Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Number	Ethnicity	Number	Ethnicity	Number
Afro Caribbean	2	Caucasian	15	Mongolian	1
Arab	8	Han	37	Muslim	1
Armenian	1	Hausa	3	North-African	1
Ashkenazi	1	Kazakh	2	Taiwanese	3
Asian	8	King	1	Thai	8
Asian Javanese	1	Kurdish	7	Vietnamese	1
Asian Indian	5	Latino	6	Yellow	4
Azerbaijan	1	Malay	5	(blank)	97
Black African	10	Mestizo	1	**Grand Total**	**229**

Table 3.4 I.S. Age Group by Nationality and Gender

Age Group/Nationality	Female	Male	Trans/g	Grand Total	Age Group/Nationality	Female	Male	Trans/g	Grand Total
Age 1-25	**42.36%**	**11.79%**	**0.00%**	**54.15%**	**... cont Age 26-30**	**13.97%**	**8.73%**	**0.00%**	**22.71%**
China	27.07%	6.11%		33.19%	Jordan	0.00%	0.44%		0.44%
USA	3.06%	0.44%		3.49%	Trinidad and Tobago	0.44%	0.00%		0.44%
India	1.31%	2.18%		3.49%	Norway	0.00%	0.44%		0.44%
Thailand	2.18%	0.44%		2.62%	Azerbaijan	0.00%	0.44%		0.44%
Vietnam	0.87%	0.87%		1.75%	Kuwait	0.00%	0.44%		0.44%
Taiwan	1.31%	0.00%		1.31%	Libya	0.44%	0.00%		0.44%
Brunei	0.87%	0.44%		1.31%	Malaysia	0.44%	0.00%		0.44%
China	0.87%	0.00%		0.87%	**Age 31-40**	**6.99%**	**12.23%**	**0.00%**	**19.21%**
Colombia	0.87%	0.00%		0.87%	Iraq	0.87%	3.49%		4.37%
Kazakhstan	0.44%	0.44%		0.87%	Nigeria	0.87%	3.06%		3.93%
Barbados	0.44%	0.00%		0.44%	Saudi Arabia	1.75%	0.00%		1.75%
Switzerland	0.00%	0.44%		0.44%	Thailand	0.87%	0.87%		1.75%
Russia	0.44%	0.00%		0.44%	Colombia	0.44%	0.87%		1.31%
Hong Kong	0.44%	0.00%		0.44%	Indonesia	0.44%	0.44%		0.87%
Botswana	0.00%	0.44%		0.44%	Mexico	0.00%	0.87%		0.87%
Malaysia	0.44%	0.00%		0.44%	Malaysia	0.00%	0.44%		0.44%
Pakistan	0.44%	0.00%		0.44%	Libya	0.00%	0.44%		0.44%
Iraq	0.44%	0.00%		0.44%	Vietnam	0.00%	0.44%		0.44%
Azerbaijan	0.44%	0.00%		0.44%	Barbados	0.44%	0.00%		0.44%
Indonesia	0.44%	0.00%		0.44%	South Africa	0.00%	0.44%		0.44%
Age 26-30	**13.97%**	**8.73%**	**0.00%**	**22.71%**	Kazakhstan	0.44%	0.00%		0.44%
China	3.93%	0.00%		3.93%	USA	0.00%	0.44%		0.44%
Taiwan	1.75%	0.87%		2.62%	Oman	0.44%	0.00%		0.44%
Nigeria	0.00%	1.75%		1.75%	Pakistan	0.00%	0.44%		0.44%
Colombia	1.31%	0.44%		1.75%	Nepal	0.44%	0.00%		0.44%
Indonesia	1.31%	0.44%		1.75%	**41-50 years old**	**1.31%**	**1.31%**	**0.44%**	**3.06%**
Saudi Arabia	0.87%	0.44%		1.31%	Nigeria	0.44%	0.44%		0.87%
Iraq	0.00%	0.87%		0.87%	Saudi Arabia	0.00%	0.44%		0.44%
Canada	0.87%	0.00%		0.87%	Ghana	0.44%	0.00%		0.44%
USA	0.87%	0.00%		0.87%	USA	0.00%	0.00%	0.44%	0.44%
Mexico	0.87%	0.00%		0.87%	Ecuador	0.00%	0.44%		0.44%
Zambia	0.00%	0.87%		0.87%	Pakistan	0.44%	0.00%		0.44%
Thailand	0.44%	0.00%		0.44%	**51-60 years old**	**0.44%**	**0.44%**	**0.00%**	**0.87%**
Singapore	0.00%	0.44%		0.44%	USA	0.44%	0.00%		0.44%
Turkey	0.00%	0.44%		0.44%	Jordan	0.00%	0.44%		0.44%
India	0.00%	0.44%		0.44%	**Grand Total**	**65.07%**	**34.50%**	**0.44%**	**100.00%**
Egypt	0.44%	0.00%		0.44%					

Table 3.5 I.S. Motivations for Entering UKHE

Rank	Score	Driver	UKHE Entrance Motivation
1	2.01	WUR/ranking	Attend a world class university with high WUR rankings
2	2.03	Career	Improves career prospects
3	2.05	WUR/ranking	Attend a UK university with high UK-based WUR
4	2.10	Personal	Broaden worldly visions
5	2.11	Career/£	UKHE degree completed quicker than elsewhere
6	2.12	UoL	Degree programme - best available by subject
7	2.18	Personal/Career	Develop English language skills
8	2.20	Personal/Career	Develop confidence
9	2.25	Personal/Career	Opportunity to learn and think in English
10	2.34	Personal/Career	Experience British culture and lifestyle
11	2.38	Personal/Career	Develop social skills
12	2.41	WUR/ranking	Domestic (home) ranking of UKHEI
13	2.42	GB experience	Meet local British people in Leicester and elsewhere
14	2.45	Pedagogy	Different methods of teaching to your home country
15	2.46	Intercultural	Meet British higher education students
16	2.49	Career	Improves non-academic career prospects
17	2.59	Support	Offers good level of support to international students
18	2.62	Intercultural	Meet international students (non-home country)
19	2.76	Careers	Offers better chance of working overseas
20	3.08	Inspirational	Chance to work with academic/s who inspired you
21	3.10	Marketing	UoL International Office e.g. recruitment event
22	3.13	Inspirational	Encouraged to enter by a home academic/supervisor
23	3.14	Careers	Favoured by pre-existing employers/professional links
24	3.28	Diversity	Has many other international students
25	3.29	£	Lower costs compared to other UKHEIs
26	3.30	Leicester City	Being based in the City of Leicester is important
27	3.34	£	Lower costs compared to elsewhere in the world
28	3.36	Pressures	Overseas HE considered a 'must do' by your generation
29	3.39	£	Parental financial connection favoured UKHE
30	3.45	'Home'	Meet other students from home country
31	3.44	'Home'	Friends and acquaintances already at UoL
32	3.51	£	Scholarship funding 'pulled' to UKHE
33	3.53	Independence	Get away from parental control and exercise independence
34	3.62	UK migration	Interest/aim to move to UK post UoL degree programme
35	3.63	Parents	Obligation to parent/s to gain an overseas HE qualification
36	3.65	£	Home-based scholarship funding 'pushed' you into UKHE
37	3.68	'Home'	Has many other students of your nationality
38	3.72	'Home'	Easier access to nearby family/friends
39	3.98	Choice limits	UoL only UKHEI to accept your application
40	4.07	Choice limits	Asylum/refugee status influenced your decision
41	4.19	Marriage	Marriage prospects positively affected by UKHE qualification
42	4.36	Marriage	Marriage prospects negatively affected by UKHE qual.

Note: BOS Likert scores were ranked from one to five, where one rated as very important, two as important, three as moderately important, four as slightly important and five as not important. The sum of all responses produced mean values ranked in the table above.

Table 3.6 BOS: Digital Media Practices by Specified Platforms

Pre-UoL 'Academic' Digital Platforms (Cumulative count top 5 answers)		At UoL 'Academic' Digtial Platforms (Cumulative count top 5 answers)		Pre-UoL 'Social' Digital Platforms (Cumulative count top 5 answers)		At UoL 'Social' Digtial Platforms (Cumulative count top 5 answers)		UoL-'Exit' Digital Media Platforms (Cumulative count top 5 answers)	
Google	46	Facebook (incl groups)	100	Facebook	147	Facebook	160	LinkedIn	80
Google Scholar	26	Google Groups	34	Twitter	51	Twitter	48	Facebook	77
Baidu (incl Baike, Wenko)	25	Twitter	25	Wechat	49	Wechat	45	Twitter	20
Google Groups	23	Google	24	RenRen	42	Instagram	35	Wechat	20
Facebook	20	Google Scholar	21	Sina Weibo	34	Renren	27	Sina Weibo	19
Wikipedia	20	Blackboard	16	QQ (incl Wei Xin)	32	YouTube	20	HR.com	14
UoL Website	13	YouTube	16	Instagram	22	QQ (Incl Wei Xin)	18	Google (Groups)	15
LinkedIn	12	LinkedIn	15	YouTube	16	Google (+/Groups)	13	RenRen	11
YouTube	11	Baidu (incl Wenku)	9	Line	14	Skype	12	Instagram	10
Sina Weibo	8	Sina Weibo	8	LinkedIn	13	Line	11	Ryze	8
Twitter	8	Wiki	8	Skype	12	WhatsApp	11	YouTube	8
Academia.edu	7	WeChat	7	Google	11	LinkedIn	9	QQ	5
Yahoo!	7	Academia.edu	4	WhatsApp	10	Path	4	Line	5
Wiki	5	UoL Website	4	Sina Weibo	8	Sina Weibo	4	Skype	3
Douban	4	Epernicus	3	Douban	5	TumblR	4	WhatsApp	3
RenRen	4	QQ	3	Personal Blog	5	Email	3	Yahoo!	3
Teachstreet	4	Skype	3	Gmail	4	Vkontakte	3	Academia.edu	3
The Guardian	4	UoL Email	3	Wiki	4	Weixin	3	Baidu	2
Complete University Guide	3	UoL Library	3	Wikipedia	4	Wikipedia	3	Personal Blog	2
QQ Groups	3	Web of Science	3	Yahoo!	4	Douban	2	Email	2
Skype	3	WhatsApp	3	Blogger	3	Flickr	2	Monster	2
The Student Room	3	Yahoo!	3	Google Groups	3	Pinterest	2	ResearchGate	2
Top Universities Guide (QS)	3	Blogs	2	Path	3	Viber	2	UoL Careers	2
Wechat	3	Gmail	2	Vkontakte	3	Weico	2	Vkontakte	2
WhatsApp	3	ResearchGate	2	Google Plus	3	What's Up	2	Weico	2
Find A Masters	2	UoL Facebook	2	Hello UK	2	Wiki	2	Zhilian	2
JSTOR	2			Hi5	2	Yahoo!	2		
Line	2			QQ zone	2	Yahoo! Groups	2		
Times Higher Education Ranking	2			Taisha	2				
				TumblR	2				
				UoL Website	2				
				Yahoo! Email	2				
				Yahoo! Messenger	2				

Single entries:- Find A Phd; Instgram; Moodle; Sakai-Rutgers University; University of Glasgow; University of Newcastle; UoL Delegation Visiting; Yahoo! Groups.

Single entries:- CIKI; CNKI; Douban; Emerald; Forums; GoingOn; Google Academic; Google Books; Google Docs; Google Scholar Forum; Ideas; Lore; Mathworks; RenRen; Ted Lectures; UoL Library Café; News.cn; Newstatesman.com; Yahoo! Answers.

Single entries:- Academia.edu; Baidu; BBM; BBS.Taisha; Find A Ph.d; FlickR; Google Hangout; GrindR; Hornet; Kakao Talk; UoL BBS; UoL Groups; Lore; MySpace; Nimbuzz; Pantip; Reddit; Student Forum India; Tagged; Ten Cent; Tieba Baidu; Twoo; Viber; Xandan; Yahoo! Groups, Zhi Wang.

Single Entries:- 500px; Academia.edu; Baidu; Blackboard; Cloob; Epernicus; GrindR; Ins; Kakao Talk; Livejournal; Lore; My People; Personal Blog; Reddit; Sina micro web; My People; Personal blog; Reddit; Sina micro web; Snapchat; Tianya; Tieba; Web of Knowlwdge; Web of Science; Yahoo! Mail.

Single Entries :- Company websites; Dajie.com; Direct.gov; Edu.net; Job Street; Jobs.com; Reed; Studentjob; Target Job; Tianji.com; United Nations website; Web of Knowledge; Web of Science; Wiki; Wikimedia; Xin lang; Youku; Zhihu.

Appendix 4
Research Documentation

Participant Information Sheet
The Department of Geography
University of Leicester
University Road
Leicester
LE1 7RH
0116 252 3823

Dear Potential Participant,
You are invited to take part in the research study: 'Internationalisation of British Higher Education and Social Media; Academic Identities and Transnational Socialisation.' It is important that you understand who I am, what the research is about, your potential involvement and how you may withdraw from the research any time.

What is the Purpose of this Study?
My name is James Booth, I am a second year Ph.D student based in The Department of Geography at the University of Leicester. My doctoral programme concerns researching how pre/post-doctoral level international students use social media (for example, Facebook or Sino Weibo) in connection with their time at the University of Leicester. The reason you have been chosen as a potential participant is because you meet with these research requirements. The main aims of my research are:-

- How you use social media during different points of your academic career, including starting at Leicester University and in your return 'home.'
- How you use social media for socialisation.
- How your use of social media helps to develop your own student identity, and how this identity may change over time. This concerns your changing notions about what it means to be an academic.
- How you feel during your time in higher education at Leicester University and how this affects your use of social media.

Your Involvement
You are asked to take part in a face to face interview and/or focus group to discuss how you use social media whilst at the University of Leicester, as set out in the above research aims. An interview may take from 30 - 90 minutes and/or a focus group involving 4-6 participants could take 45 - 90 minutes. With your permission I would like to record the interview and/or focus group. The recordings will be written-up and encrypted and you will be offered a copy to keep, which will be sent by email. You will not be identified and I will use pseudonyms. I may, at a later date request further email correspondence if any issues come up from the analysis of the interview and/or focus group that I need to clarify.

If You Wish to Take Part
I am more than happy to discuss any concerns or questions you may have regarding my research. If you have questions or decide to participate please contact me, James by email:

jdb41@le.ac.uk

Further details verifying my position and details of my research are available at: http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/geography/people/james-booth

If you decide to participate, I will arrange a time and date suitable for the interview and/or focus group to take place. The place of interview and/or focus will be on-site at the University of Leicester and I will confirm this by email at least 7 days prior to our meeting. Interviews and/or focus groups will begin in January/February, 2014.

Research Results

The results of this research will be used in my Ph.D thesis.

Confidentiality

It is important to stress that no names or personal details will be used in the write-up of my research. All information collected will be kept strictly confidential. The only contact information that will be required will be an email address. At the end of the study all voice recordings will be destroyed. Your name, contact details will never be recorded. My academic supervisor will have access to the anonymous transcripts of recordings but only I will have the original recording, consent form and any contact details.

Withdrawal

You are by all means under no obligation to participate in this study. Likewise should you agree to participate then change your mind, please inform me and you shall not be considered in my research further.

Dr Clare Madge is my supervisor, and should you have any further queries please get in touch at cm12@le.ac.uk. Thank you for reading this sheet and I hope your response will be a positive one.

Yours faithfully

James Booth
Ph.D Candidate
Department of Geography.

Interview/Focus Group Informed Consent Form

Interview - Informed Consent Form

Study Title: **'Internationalisation of British Higher Education and Social Media; Academic Identities and Transnational Socialisation.'**

Please Tick

1. I confirm that I have received, read and understood the Participant Information Sheet for this study and that any queries or issues I have raised have been answered and dealt with by the researcher. □

2. I understand that participation in the study is voluntary, and I can withdraw from the study at any time, even if initially giving informed consent, without giving a reason. □

3. I give my consent to take part in the study described in the Participant Information Sheet. □

Please Tick **Yes/No**

	Yes	**No**
4. I agree to the interview being audio-recorded and understand that at the end of research all voice recordings will be deleted.	□	□
5. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in the written work or reports based upon this study.	□	□

_____

Participant Name Date Signature

_____

Researcher Name Date Signature

Appendix 5

Focus Group and Administrator Interview Schedules

FOCUS GROUP SCHEDULE/RUNNING ORDER

Opening of Session:
- Thanks answering BOS and responding to my FG invitation, thanks for time/input.
- Brief introduction about me.
- FG session:
  Informal,
  Enjoyable
  Informative where take away something positive
  If feel uncomfortable in any way, free to leave the session at any time.
- FG Timescale and themes.
- FG needs 'housekeeping points' (to include academic protocol), explained as below.

Housekeeping:
Fire Alarm : Outside car park between here and library.
Comfort Breaks: Down stairs across foyer, as required.
Ethic Protocol
- Anonymity in write-up.
- Right of withdrawal, (how to withdraw, time-period - July 2014.
- Consent form
- My contact details: JDB41@le.ac.uk.
- My supervisor contact details Dr Clare Madge cm12@le.ac.uk.

Digital Recording, Note Taking and Name Tag
- Clarification on anonymity, explanation why FG recorded – any one unhappy?
- Hand-written notes for me.
- Is everyone ok to wear a name tag?

Aim of the Focus Group:
Purpose of FG to understand how postgraduate international students use social media, socially, academically, personally, in groups (explain terms):-
- Before
- During
- Leaving

Sign Consent Form
- Any clarifications needed? Then sign-off.

Name Tag: Introductions
- With everyone's permission.

Explanation: About the FG:
To **hear** how you are using social/digital media during your involvement with UoL.
Explain the succession of themes.
What I would like from you, and what I do.
- I introduce a theme and move a discussion through areas of interest
- This forms an exploration -so no right or wrong answers.

Icebreaker Task 1: 'Object' or 'A Thought' brought to Share With Other I.S.

As a reflection of your identity/international student identity - 30 second exercise.

Thought: Something meaningful - about you or about social/digital media and being an international student. This is to be a 30 second activity

Icebreaker Task 2: World Map Exercise

Coloured Pins into world map - identify towns/cities attended HE prior to UoL.

Start Recording

FG Progression

- Outline of Themes.
- 'Before', 'Now', 'Leaving', 'How You Feel' as an I.S. and digital practices
- How the focus group works.

Questions

Do you have any questions?

Commence Focus Group:

Theme 1: About You and Being an I.S.: Your Journey so far:

Map: Are moves local, regional, international; any patterns country/continent evident?

Observation: The map will show different movements between places over what may be large distances across the world.

Question: From your experiences so far, what does it feel like to travel and be an I.S.?

Prompts:

o   Why HE?
o   Why HE in the UK and UoL?
o   Are you enjoying being an I.S.?
o   Do you feel international study is a necessary life transition? Why are you undertaking?
o   Did you wish for international study or is it a necessity for future life chances?
o   Do you see yourself different from home students? In what ways/or why not?
o   Does UoL make you feel different compared to home students?
o   What makes an I.S.?
o   Key difficulties you have faced - visas, tuition fees, language, pedagogy etc.
o   What have been the 'high points' of your experience. Anything is applicable.
o   Does being UoL I.S. meet with expectations. Is it worthwhile (quality/careers/ costs)?
o   How do you think you feel about being an international student?

Theme 2: Coming to the University of Leicester.

    Points for FG to consider before question:

- Smartphone, Android device, accesses internet for chats blogs, shop online?
- How many of you use Facebook/Twitter/LinkedIn/My Space/Tumblr/Yahoo or similar to communicate socially/or to institution? Access the internet from home?
- What is your main type of access for SM sites?

    Question: What sort of contacts did you have with UoL prior to arriving?

o   Which technology do you use?

    Question: Your contacts?

o   Links to UoL before arriving at UoL (UoL, agents, other students)?
o   What means did you use for contact?
o   Out of such contacts how important was the use of SM to you?

Question: How important to you was social media relative to other factors in your decision to come to UoL?

o How was SM involved here?

o Part of an online social network which influenced your decisions?

o How many social networks?

o Did you follow SM accounts from UoL before applying? I.S. or UoL centred?

o Were you influenced by UKHE as a product, company or brand?

o How does use of SM compare to other information sources? (e.g. web-pages, British Council, endorsements, HE agents, online prospectus, exhibitions,, ads, academics).

Question: During your decision to come to UoL, are you able to tell me about how you felt in choosing to make this journey, what that meant to you?

Theme 3: Use and Importance of SM at UoL?

Question: Now that you are at UoL what does it feel like to be here?

Question: What are your main uses for SM while at UoL and relative importance to you when compared to more traditional relationships?

Prompts: Types of Online Activity

o E.g. SNS, news/info, emailing, UoL/other work) entertainment, downloads, shopping etc.

o Most frequently used social networking sites?

o Belong to more than one SNS and are these different for different categories of friends?

o How often do you change between social networks? (Does this change with age?)

o Have you upgraded while at UoL, or is your connectivity the same as prior to arriving here?

o Has your personal social and academic development led to a change in SNS?

o Has your use of communication technology changed while at UoL?

o Which factors influence social and academic habits at UoL? How does SM fit?

o From these types of SM, how 'immersed' are you in the use of SM?

Explore: Maintain Relationships – Importance of

o Connection with other students that you know from home who are also at UoL.

o Connection to friends/family in your home country.

o Connection to friends geographically dispersed elsewhere (home; HEIs; elsewhere).

o How important are social relationships via SM to you? At UoL; not at UoL?

o How important are academic relationships mediated through SM to you?

o Has your sense of academic identity changed at UoL. Is SM within this process?

o Does SM help in the formation of a collective/group identity?

Explore: Develop New Relationships – Importance of

o Social networking new friends as a direct result of connection with UoL

o How easy/difficult has it been to meet new friends.

o Has the maintenance of old friendships limited/enhanced new contacts at UoL?

o How important has SM been for academic matters and the relationship with your study?

o Has the involvement with academic matters led to the formation of many new 'meaningful' friendships? (That may continue beyond UoL).

o Does SM help in the formation of a collective/group identity? Does it help to enforce segmentation or break divisions down?

Prompts:

o Has SM helped to lessen or increase personal impacts to you as an I.S.?

o   Do you feel personally changed by your experience (from where you have come from, and how you feel now, please expand). Does SM play a role in this altered feeling?

o   Any sense of being between (hybridised space and identity). How might this influence where you may go next?

Theme 4: **Leaving the University of Leicester.**

Question: **How important to you is SM in the process of leaving UoL?**

Prompts:

o   How does SM compare to other media?

o   Which SM are important to you for this purpose, how did you become aware of them?

o   Has the way in which you use SM changed during your academic career and has this influenced your social and professional connections online?

Theme 5: **SM, Your Social/Academic Relationships During I.S. Journey**

Question: **From your journey as an international student, please comment upon how important SM has been for your overall social and academic relationships?**

Prompts:

o   Significance of SM -an essential component in your life; just necessary; unimportant; taken for granted, unnoticed? Realisation of level of immersion?

o   Could you manage without SM?

o   Has SM altered/informed your views as an individual - socially and academically?

Theme 6: **Your Feelings – How SM fits into I.S. Experience**

Question: **How has SM helped/not helped you through your journey so far?**

Prompts:

o   If SM were to be taken away from you how would you feel about this?

o   Would you have preferred it if you could have followed another course of HE – either nearer to your home or at home?

o   Does using SM make you feel happier? Is SM a vent for problems? Is SM an escape?

o   Does it keep you 'safe'?

Finally

- We have covered a certain amount of specific ground in the topics discussed.

- Does anyone have anything else to add?

- Is there anything that anyone would like to ask me?

- Some of you may think of something afterwards, or maybe think it's trivial. Please email me.

Closing

- Thank You.

- Do any of you wish to withdraw from any part of the FG?

- What the next steps are – moving onto interviews, detail.

- If wish to see transcripts please email me: jdb41@le.ac.uk

- Ph.D completed would you like to see results?

- Hope you have enjoyed this FG and taken something from it.

- Re-state my contact details.

- Copy of the transcript available if requested.

Interview Schedule UoL Administrator 1

Q.1 As Director of (Redacted) please tell me about your role at UoL?

Q.2 Please tell me how you understand career development for I.S.?
Is this different compared to UK and EU students?

Q.3 Do you find that I.S. wish to buy into an 'internationalised experience'?

Q.4 To what extent is the UoL moving towards the 'internationalisation model' (based on ideas of global citizenship/passport) rather than student assimilation into UKHE based practices)?
I.e. via the courses that it offers; the approach of UoL academics to 'internationalised education'; making graduates global graduates?

Q.5 How does the UoL engage with the internationalisation/marketization of HE?
I.e., Does UoL seek to maintain reputation/foothold in international HE markets?

Q.6 To what extent is the UoL involved in furthering internationalisation via the promotion of exchange programmes (government/UoL/other initiatives)?
How does the UoL engage with 'sending' and 'receiving' students?

Q.7 Do you actively research the international student experience?

Q.8 A recent British Council publication* found that gaining overseas cultural experience was a stronger motivation to international study objectives than academic experience and/or employability. Please would you offer your views on this with regard to the UoL experience?

Q.9 Does the UoL have a policy for connecting international students together before coming to UoL, while attending UoL and post-UoL?

Q.10 Preamble: Information is highly important to international students; many have said that non-UoL social/digital media channels can be very important in supplying information. However, this information can be non-current/incorrect.
The UoL uses Facebook channels. However, evidence suggests that many I.S. are not aware of these channels. However I.S. also prefer forum-type online engagement, involving online posting of information from current and former I.S..

 Background:
#1. Some I.S. voiced issues in gaining non-academic/academic information? E.g. accommodation, cultural matters, financial, language, learning and pedagogy.
#2. Whilst some I.S. managed to settle-in (e.g., to socialise; to adapt to different pedagogy), others found their experience could, as one student put it, be 'devastatingly lonely'.

Q.10 Given these scenarios: Is the UoL aware of the potential importance of 'unofficial social media sites'? And…

Q.11 Would the UoL consider introducing a UoL-based international student online forum?
For example, co-ordinated by 'independent' former and current international students e.g., liaising with UoL, to improve information, and student experience?

Q.12 Various I.S. voiced that other overseas universities have an 'International Day', to celebrate diversity/enable students to identify with their nationality openly? Some students stated that UK students are missing out on valuable cultural exchange opportunities/international experiences. Given this:
How does UoL view the promotion of diversity between I.S. (as for all students)?

Q.13 What are your views on an International Student Union?

Q.14 Comments: Whilst many students were happy with their student experience at   UoL. Some students (notably Ph.D) expressed concerns over a lack of empathy/care towards them once they were attending UoL; they felt isolated. Please could you offer your views on this situation, and whether there is any policy in the pipeline to address concerns?

Q.15 Do you have any questions for me, or anything else that you would like to raise
having heard my questions and some of my findings?

*Broadening Horizons 2015: The Value of the Overseas Experience. UK and USA students, available at (restricted Access): https://siem.britishcouncil.org/ei-item-display/broadening-horizons-2015-value-of-overseas-experience

Interview Schedule UoL Administrator 2
I.S. Transition and Retention Initiatives
Q.1   What is the role of the (redacted) at UoL?
Q.2   What is your role?
Q.3   Does the UoL use external agents during I.S. recruitment?
Q.4   Do you find that I.S. wish to buy into an 'internationalised experience'?
Q.5   How are I.S. viewed generally by UoL management? Do you view I.S. differently?
Q.6   Do the UoL (or your Office) actively research international student experience?
Type of Internationalisation of Higher Education
Q.7. How does UoL engage/drive towards the international marketization of HE?
I.e. Does UoL seek to maintain reputation/foothold in IHE markets?
Does government policy financially incentivise I.S. recruitment at UoL?
Are there incentives for international partnerships with other IHE institutions?
Sponsorship programmes with overseas government?
Are there incentives for 'exporting' other types of HE packages (TNE)?
Q.8   To what extent is UoL moving towards the 'internationalisation model' (based on ideas of global citizenship/passport) rather than I.S. assimilation into UKHE based practices)?
I.e. via the courses that it offers; making graduates global graduates?
Financial Value of International Students
Q.9   What is the financial value of I.S. to UoL relative to UK and EU students?
Induction Protocols -Could UoL use Social/Digital Media Better?
Cultural shock (moving home/working in a second language). Some I.S. are unfamiliar with living and learning independently. 'Information about differences' was a theme from I.S. interviews. Some I.S. asked for better provision of information in advance of arrival (e.g. examples of daily living costs, examples of British culture).
I.S. question: 'Is there a cultural introduction course at UoL? Even basic things are misunderstood or you do not understand.'
I.S. quote: 'Small amounts of information can make a big difference.'
I.S. quote: 'The UoL should be clearer about differences in the [HE] system'.
I.S. quote: 'Personal touch really counts; we should not be treated as just numbers.'
Q.11 Does the UoL have a code of 'Induction Protocols for I.S.? (Prompt: if so does this include cultural induction (UoL cultural representatives) and academic induction (notably given the many different learning approaches)?

Q.12 Does the UoL operate a 'buddy system' for international students? Could there be an online Buddy system? (E.g. some I.S. had few co-national friends).

Q.13 Does induction take into account different intakes through the academic year? E.g. January starters (Ph.D) were disappointed over lack of contact and induction.

Q.14 I.S. accompanied with family/partners experience accommodation problems.

Social Media

Many I.S. said they were unaware of UoL Facebook.

Q.15 Does the UoL have a policy relating to I.S. and social media use? (Recruitment strategy; support during transitions to UoL, and when at UoL etc.).

Q.16 Does the UoL have a policy for connecting I.S. together before coming to UoL, while attending UoL and post-UoL? How do social media fit here?

Q.17 Is there a UoL online forum specifically for I.S.? (Enabling new-starter/current student interaction, but also for publicising events and disseminating information). *Issues for discussion: accommodation, money, learning/pedagogy, language (online practice of English language skills).*

Q.18 Many I.S. said they were confused over the number of online channels (UoL Facebook, Twitter, Blackboard, Prose, Ph.d Chat etc. Do you think this situation should be addressed, and if so how might this be done?

Q.19 Non-UoL social media channels (informal/personal) may be very important for some I.S.. Is the UoL aware of the potential importance of image/representation passed on via informal social media?

Social Inclusion at UoL (and the Role of Social Media)

Whilst some students managed to settle in and socialise, others found that their experience could, as one student put it, be 'devastatingly lonely'.

Q.20 Does the UoL introduce I.S. to the 'social-side' of UoL; to encourage mixing of students? - What about contact from Student Union societies?

Q.21 Various students commented that other overseas universities have an 'International Day', to celebrate diversity/enable students to identify with their nationality openly? (Some students also stated that UK students are missing out on valuable cultural exchange opportunities). Given this:

How does UoL view the promotion of diversity between I.S. (as for all students)?

Q.22 What are your views on an International Student Union?

Q.23 Is there any type of community outreach project to help forge I.S. experience and links with the local community in Leicester?

A Question of Empathy

Comments: Whilst many students were happy with their student experience at UoL, several expressed concerns over a lack of empathy/care towards them once they were attending UoL. E.g. concerns came from both younger and older I.S. (younger I.S. face leaving home and parents/family, older students may face leaving 'own family' (spouse and own children, plus home and parents/family).

Feelings of isolation were a concern for some I.S..

Q.24 Is there a UoL policy on 'empathy towards international student situation'?

Q.25 Do you have any questions for me, or anything else that you would like to raise having heard my questions and some of my findings?

Interview Schedule UoL Administrator 3

Q.1 Please tell me about the role of (redacted) at UoL?

Q.2 Please tell me about your role?

Q.3 Does your Office use external agents for this service?

Q.4 Can you tell me how I.S. are viewed by the UoL? I.e., Does your office view I.S. differently to other management tiers?

Type of Internationalisation of Higher Education

Q.5 To what extent is the UoL moving towards the 'internationalisation model' (based on ideas of global citizenship/passport) rather than student assimilation into UKHE based practices)? I.e. via the courses that it offers; making graduates global graduates?

Q.6 How does internationalisation affect what you do at UoL?

Q.7 Does the UoL have a policy on I.S. Experience?

Induction Protocols: Could social media be used more effectively here?

Introduction: Cultural shock – (moving home/working in a second language). Some I.S. are unfamiliar with living and learning independently. 'Information about differences' was a theme from interviews. Some I.S. asked for better provision of pre-arrival information I.e., advice on what to expect (e.g., daily living costs, British culture).

Examples of Discussion areas:

I.S. question: 'Is there a cultural introduction course at UoL? Even basic things are misunderstood or you do not understand.'

I.S. Quote: 'Small amounts of information can make a big difference'.

I.S. Quote: 'The UoL should be clearer about differences in the HE system'.

I.S. Quote: 'Personal touch really counts; we should not be treated as just numbers'.

Q.8 Does the UoL have a code of: 'Induction Protocols for I.S.'? (Prompt: if so does this include cultural induction (UoL cultural representatives?) and academic induction (notably given the many different learning approaches?)

Q.9 Does the UoL operate a 'buddy system' for I.S.? Could there be an online buddy system? (E.g. some I.S. have limited co-national friends).

Q.10 Does induction take into account different intakes during the academic year?
E.g. January starters (Ph.D) were disappointed by lack of contact and induction.

Social Media
Prompt: Many I.S. said they were unaware of UoL Facebook page(s).

Q.11 Does the UoL have a policy relating to I.S. and social media use? (Recruitment strategy; support during relocation to UoL, once attending UoL).

Q.12 Does the UoL have a policy for connecting international students together before coming to UoL, while attending UoL and post-UoL?

Q.13 Is there a UoL online I.S. forum? (Enabling new-starter/current I.S., also for publicising events and disseminating information).
Issues for discussion: accommodation, money, learning/pedagogy, language (online practice of English language skills).

Q.14 Prompt: Many students said they were confused over the number of online channels at UoL (UoL Facebook, Twitter, Blackboard, Prose, Ph.D Chat etc.) Do you think this situation should be addressed, and if so how might this be done?

Q.15 <u>Prompt:</u> Non-UoL social media channels (informal/personal) may be very important for some I.S..

Is the UoL aware of the potential importance of image presented/passed on via informal social media to other potential UoL I.S.?

Social Inclusion at UoL (and the Role of Social Media)

Whilst some I.S. managed to settle in and socialise, others found that their experience could, as one student put it, be 'devastatingly lonely' [Ph.d, Mexican].

Q.16 Does the UoL introduce I.S. to the 'social-side' of UoL; to encourage mixing of students? What about contact from Student Union societies?

Q.17 Prompt: Various students commented that other overseas universities have an 'International Day', to celebrate diversity/enable students to identify with their nationality openly? (Some students also stated that UK students are missing out on valuable cultural exchange opportunities with international students). Given this:

How does UoL view the promotion of diversity between international student and between international student and home/EU students?

Q.18 What are your views on a 'UoL International Student Union'?

Q.19 Is there any type of community outreach project to help forge international   student experience and links with the local community in Leicester?

A Question of Empathy

<u>Comments:</u> Whilst many students were happy with their student experience at UoL, several expressed concerns over a lack of empathy/care towards them once they were attending UoL. E.g. concerns came from both younger and older students (younger students face leaving home and parents/family, older students may face leaving 'own family' (spouse and own children, plus home and parents/family). Feelings of isolation were a concern for some students.

Q.20 Is there a UoL policy on empathy towards the situation of I.S.?

Q.21 Do you have any questions for me, or anything else that you would like to raise   having heard my questions and some of my findings?

1. Example Focus Group Question Schedule and Transcription

Chinese I.S. Focus Group (FG5) Date 02.04.14   **[Note: All female I.S.]**

Note: one object identified with being an I.S.. Macramé item produced in home town, hand-made, South China. I.S. stated 'China has 36 nationalities, this was made by a Chinese minority imagine it, you can buy a lot the same in China, as in the UK, but this is distinctive to my home'. One I.S. said 'I don't have an object, my town is like western'.

Question. Why did you wish to enter high education?

A. (MA - Media and Communication). To get a better job.

B. (M.Sc - Globalization and Communication). I just want to change my major. I trained in business, but now I prefer media, this is natural choice and a new chance.

C. (M.Sc - Marketing). I also changed my major, in my last degree I chose media, but in Masters used Master of marketing, interested do this for job in this field for my future.

D. (M.Sc - Media and Communication). I from Macao, I want a change of culture and a better job.

E. (M.Sc - Media and Communication). I want to be more competitive for getting a good job, but my town is also nor a big city, but in the future I want to go to shanghai and Beijing, I have to get this degree.

F. (MA - Media and Communication). This is a tradition in my family. I worked for a year, to get, experience I want to learn more about this area.

Question: Why did you decide on UKHE and the University of Leicester?

A. The money and the time is very important comp to USA and Australia, and only 1 year. My budget is not that high. I picked UoL because of my budget, UoL lot cheaper compared to London.

B. Same reasons as A. But UoL I did a search of Great Britain, the Media course at UoL is very good, third reason, is I have a good friend who is here, likes the course, safe place, showed pictures, we chat on Twitter.

C. UK the same, also this country is much safer than USA, also IAS scores are lower, easier entry, I also do not have a business background, UoL does not have this requirement.

D. I have the same reasons, was not originally coming here, but unfortunately my English score was low. UoL has a good school for me to come to.

E. I have a cousin working the UK family member offers more safety, feel better, not feel lonely is important.

Question: How important was SM with this?

A.   I chose calls, depends on my personality because I'm not the person who needs others help. I know the person is there

Question: Where is the person?

F. Liverpool Hope University.

B.   Quite similar as others. One year and don' t need a guaranteed fee, UoL not first choice, that was Warwick, but even the highest score, my school is not ranked that high. I wanted to do the major, also on internationalisation. Also Newcastle, but it quire cold.

Question: Going around the table, how many choices of university do you have?

A. 3; B. 4; C. 5; D. 4; E. 4; F. 7.

A. My choice was Wales, Cardiff, but a lot of people told me don't go to Wales - they speak Welsh!

B. I think England is more popular, more higher teachers.

Question: How did you find out about Wales?

A. The first people is my teacher she had to go to Cambridge to teach, the second people is my good friend, where the education is lesser, maybe everyone thinks England is better

Question: Are you enjoying being an I.S.? What is your experience like?

A. The English people are friendly, and gentlemen the men are gentlemen, especially compared to Chinese boys, to be an I.S. because on my major 99 per cent of people are Chinese.

F. For me being an I.S. is a little bit interesting. For me going to a bar was the first time I experienced it here in the UK with going to the bar with my other friends from other countries. In this place it is quite pub-culture, it is quite puzzling I went to a bar almost every Friday night. Just me and my friends yeah,

Question: Are you happy with what you are doing here, are you feeling comfortable here? How do you feel about it?

B. Well, entertainment here? All the stores close before 8.00 [pm]. Young girls can only go to just the bar. There's nowhere for use to go with our friends, so maybe we use more online apps to communicate with others.

Question: Back at home what would you do with the evenings?

B. We have a very colourful life. We don't go to bar, I won't if I go back to China, maybe with foreign friends, but no bar with Chinese friends, maybe restaurants, bookshops or coffee shops.

A. Well actually I do not like to go to bar in Britain but I prefer to go in my home town

Question: Why is that?

A. Actually one of the things my home town is good at is drinking [laughter], so if I go to a bar in my home town I feel safety. I find the situation is that most people in Britain like drinking but the situation is not good after that with them. I've noticed that even the 18 year old children are drinking more and they make some trouble to other people, it's making me feel unsafety

Observation: so safety is a prime concern to you

Table response: Yes.

And you said earlier that you feel it is safer in the UK than elsewhere, you said about the USA….

A. Yes that is true…true.

B. And the different situation is, I feel very strange here, I feel a lot of children are drinking more here, that is a different situation to China, I don't know why, and I heard about some children need protection from the law. My Britain friend told me that, that children get protection form the law, he told me don't anger with them, if they drinking more he told me you can't touch them because the law is protect them

F. It's not all about Britain, it is the teenagers.

A. I think you can buy the alcoholic drinks without your ID.

A. I think you cannot buy without your ID and be like 25, I can't remember.

Comment: No it is 18 years of age here in the UK.

A. 18!

E. I like they always make trouble.

F. Yeah, like some of my friends they told me never trust teenagers in the UK, never respond when you are confronted

Question: When you talk of teenagers are you talking about other students at UoL?

F. No, no, no.

Question: Teenagers outside of the University?

F. Yes, not from the University.

Question: Do you see yourselves as different to any other students? Both other I.S. and home students. Do you feel just as part of the wider student community?

A. No

D. Ah when I say different, I mean different cultures and different thinking scale, sometimes they misunderstand me and I misunderstand them, but I think language is always an important issue. Even coming from the same country coming here we have some trouble, so with this situation sometimes we may want to involve this situation have a different cycle about friends

E. I feel that sometimes mm…Chinese people are always be a group of people sometimes I think the situation is divided by a group of Chinese people and just a single native speaker, why I say that is because several weeks ago in my accommodation, er… some native speaker just quarrelled with my Chinese friend because we just er of the kitchen clean, he was suggesting that we always cook a lot [some laughter] so maybe they think we just make some trouble in the kitchen and that we have to be more responsibility about the rubbish, but you know sometimes they always use the kitchen, but maybe in their mind we are always like a group maybe five Chinese girls in my accommodation, [very broken English] so they think you Chinese people always make some trouble, so in their mind they may have just have a bad memory just due to the due to the nationality, and sometimes, and sometimes it is hard to explain that

Question: Where about are you living: a hall, rented house or elsewhere?

E. Freeman's Common.

C And me.

D. I live with just all Chinese.

F. Me too.

A. I live with just my flatmate

Question: So how did you get to know about where you were going to live before you came to Leicester? Did you have any problems with that?

A. Well actually I found my room-mate by the internet. There's like Leicester BBS or something.com, it's a Chinese community online you can find a house there, it's I kind of used the online forums on the internet, or find a room-mate, or a house or everything. [Clarification: LeicesterBBS.com]. Some if somewhere leaves there contact information on there, you can contact them to rent a house.

Question: Through this website, do you get to know other people online before you have actually met them? Or is the case that you might know people before you come to Leicester?

A. No, I don't know them. We didn't meet before I come here. So I just meet people on the website.

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D. I'm similar. Some people might leave their contact details on Rapstat [?] but I don't know them.

Question: Key high points or low points in your experiences?

A. Well, it's really, really hard to find a job or internship in the UK. I send out, say 20 resume's, just one or two reply. Yeah, that's really kind of disappointing.

Question: So you would like to stay the UK and work after completing your degree?

A. Er...maybe, but I've also applied for a job in Australia and the US. I've also applied for a one year internship in New York.

E. Issues with toilet cleaning in the toilets of the library, not being clean. Unhappy with staff, need to be cleaner in the library. But also I think it is really hard to try and make friends with our foreign people...students

Question: Has that been a disappointment?

E. Yeah.

Question: Did you come to the UK hoping to make a lot more friends, and friends outside of other Chinese students?

E. Outside of the Chinese community it is less than 10, less than 10   [vexed response]

Question: Have you made many new Chinese friends?

E. Yeah

D. I think it is difficult because at first er if we can be friends [non-Chinese] we have no ways to communicate when we go back to China. Maybe you use Facebook or Twitter, you know in China we cannot use it, we can only use email to communicate with you, so this is one point and the other is maybe the culture is really different between us so we are always in misunderstand with each other, so this is another point.

Question: This is an interesting point. As a group how you feel about the situation in China where you have a kind of intranet, where I think you do not have the same level of access to the internet because of the political situation, I mean like if you compare matters to in the UK, where there is a freer system of accessing the internet. How will you feel about that, and going back to China now that you have experienced a different system in the UK?

Observation: Divergent responses/ group issues.   [00hr.36m]

A. We can use Facebook and Twitter here, but when we go back to China we cannot. However, if you want to go on Facebook and Twitter you will find a way to get on.. [laughter]...there is always some way to do it.

B. You will find some way.

F. There is really a lot of software to get around things, it only depends on yourself.

A. Well If you want to go on Facebook you will find any way to go on.

E. I think maybe it is a problem, I want to say it is a problem sometimes I'm not very happy in Britain, but I would like to say that sometimes is very narrow angled what is said about China and about what you see on TV, and they misunderstand the culture and even misunderstand you...ah I don't mean you no offence. I mean some people, maybe the first time they see you they think you are Chinese and they don't like you, you are Chinese and they don't like you. No reason just because you are Chinese I don't know why

A. They think we are peasant, they really [?]   [00hr:37m:53s]

F. Like people always think that we cannot use Facebook or Twitter in China, actually our generation we use it all the time.

Question: How do you do this?

F. We do have other ways to escape this wall, this firewall

Group… Selective 2-3 in group…Yes ah..

F. So it is not a problem for me, I think that maybe because my major is media, so most of my formal [er?] colleagues in our company we use this and go 100 per cent, so it's not a problem for us I think.

E. And I think nowadays lot of foreign national students use Chinese social media, like We-Chat,

F. I don't think they want to they're willing to use, but because use it, they're not willing to use, it is only because they have too many Chinese classmates and have to use Chinese social media, I got quite a lot of foreign friends and they do have Wi-Chat, but sometimes they tell me you always speak too much Chinese on Wi-Chat, I can't understand what you are talking about, even though I got this Wi-Chat, it's no-use for them

Question: Tell me about We-Chat?

F. It's similar to ah, What's Up, so it's really weird, it's only used because they have Chinese classmate or Chinese friends   [00hr:39m:40s]

C. So I think maybe the best way is to promote communication with different cultures different people, for example maybe you want to know more about China, so you are more [?]

[0hr:39m:46s].

So I think that's why I feel happy, I mean I feel unhappy, no I mean happy, because I love Liverpool [?] [?] because I love the Beatles. But I'm not necessarily a fan of the rock music. Well actually I know that moat of the Chinese just go to Liverpool for the Beatles Story [?] they do not go to [?]. The Clan, [?] the Clab [club], I'm not sure…..

Response: The Club…you mean the Cavern Club?

C. I'm not sure, it's a Clab.

Observation/Question: I know Liverpool a little. I know it has one of the largest populations of Chinese students. Is your friend a student there?

C. Ah, yes.

F. Yeah, they got China Town. [Much cross talk] I love Liverpool because of the city, not Beatles. Yes, I like the city, it is beautiful.

D. I'm for The Beatles, [a lot of group…yeah]

F. Not the Beatles

C. Beatles is great! It's wonderful, it's [?]…sorry

C. I mean work as the Clab, my friend with me, which have two Chinese people, and now our people all come from a Britain but I feel better even though I feel depressed, I mean by coming to there a lot people buy shoes, they are very, very high and they talk with me and they we will sound some rock, so they think [?]. They give me a surprise and I now feel the situation in another place [?] and sometimes, especially in London, to be honest I not very like London, not because city just because of people, I don't know why, maybe just because I just because I met a lot of people in London, it's unfriendly, but with Liverpool people it is more friendly. So I feel the reason we all become happy all depend on people.

Question: Is everybody still happy, does anyone need to go?

Group: No.

[Note group were opening-up, very chatty, appeared very driven/engaged to be able to discuss experiences, and that I was listening/interested in their situation].

A. Yes, we need a holiday, yes from others.

Question: I have found one social media non-user. Do you have any views here?

A. I only know an old professor, he didn't use any social media, even the internet.

F. But how he sub..[mit?] it, his assignments?

A. He's a professor! Laughter, he don't need to submit anything.

F. Alright…but he have to organise his Blackboard..ok, dunno?

A. That's really interesting.

Question: Please can you tell me what sort of contacts you had with UoL before arriving here, and whether SM was involved in those contact…how did you communicate with UoL?

A; F; C. Email.

Group: Yeah emails.

Question: What about social media outside of UoL, for example, student forums, sites, info about the city of Leicester. Were those important, or not?

A. Well before we came here I think every Chinese student would use that websites that I said before, if they have to find information or something, yes. I think those are useful resources but, for the social media I don't think

D. Weibo…well some students were on Weibo yesterday and we helped the students

F. I'm sorry, I've heard of this. I use Weibo because a kind of a facial website, it's not it's just personal.. I think this people he opened this account because he used to study tin UK and he know many things about the UK and he just opened this account for the students who will go to the UK, and he will write something about how to open your bank account, and how to apply for your NHS and how to, you know different kind of things.

Question: Is that an existing student here?

F. No. Not here, I think he already graduate, but I think he might stay, he study in the UK, I'm not sure if he stay in UK or not, but he always gather different informations like in the UK what kind of holidays and [?] [fast walls?], and what did you do and, most important I think, it how from his airport to University of Leicester, he will write something like that. And he will gather other people's information like, different schools around the UK and gather the information together and post on the website, I think, but he will put this link to Weibo and I'm [?] glad [?of] [that?]…

Question: This sounds like this is a useful resource for you?

F. It's very useful.

Question: Would you say it's really important to have that?

F. I think I just want to know more, cos some, you know you can check, like Google things and check how to from the airport to Leicester, but it better to just read other people's experiments, especially you can compare different people, that use like bus or taxi or different kinds of transportations.

Question: Did the input of what you were reading about online influence your decision to come to Leicester or was it more direct contact with Leicester?

F. More direct.

D. Well, when I decide where I should go, er there are others what the university named, Acetera? [accepted?] [?], and I also received an offer and when I go to the international search for some information and some people on the Weibo they said Acetera is not a good school for Chinese student, they ask you to pay more for the language school fees.

Question: So just explain this again to me, so Acetera? What is this please explain again, is this at the UoL?

Group: No, in another city.

D. So they say some bad things about [?], I know it [?] so I don't want to go it, so I choosed Leicester

Question. So that did influence you?

D. Yes, so this is very useful.

E. Maybe it is because a lot of comments [?].

F. Yeah, I think it's quite like when you are aligned by some pedat [?] you just read a comment you know people already buy these things with what comment they got.

Question: Just to clarify this. Generally can you comment on how important social media was to you in coming to Leicester? For example, was it really important, was it there and you used it but other factors were more important or was it an integral part of the process of your decision.

B. Very important [only single answer, then silence].

B. I found my house on the internet online, and the second reason is I connect[?] with my parents by the social media, you know it is more cheaper than you call them, because I have through wi-fi, I just to pay money to Virgin, so I can use wi-fi, maybe every time I call them

Question: So that is whilst you are here at UoL

B. Yeah.

Question: But are you saying it was also important before you came here as well?

B. Er yeah, but maybe now it is more important, because where I live in China it's just a call away, and I can tell my parents I'm safety and I'm very happy on safety.

Question: I'm jumping to my next page here. Would you say that coming to UoL has made you use social media more than you were using it before coming here, or are you using it about the same, or maybe less?

B. I personally use it more.

A. Yes, more.

F. I use it more, yes. One way you have to connect with your friends in your home town, and the other way is that you have to connect to friends in this place, so it is more.

Question: Can you give me an idea, roughly of how often you go online to talk to your friends, or relatives, or acquaintances?

B; D; E; F. Everyday, everyday, everyday.   [Note: daily digital saturation]

A. Yeah.

F. Not my parents, my parents maybe once or twice a week, but yes for friends I think every day.

Question: Does that help you in being here, a long way from home, or does it not affect you?

F. For a short period of time I was a little bit bothered, because when I want to do some assignment I must concentrate, but it's kind of I want to check this phone, so it's really, I think I got some o the symptoms of like the digital addicts, yes I put the apps so that they are just invisible, so if I take the phone I can't see the apps and I won't [?], so I just constrain myself, [group laughter], that's quite important.

A. Yes

F. But if I got this apps visible I will tap, I will click like all the time like chatting to my friends when they send some message to me.

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Question: I am interested in how social media is embedded in your life. Just taking this further, what would you say if you didn't have social media? What would you say for example about being at the UoL?

D. Boring!

F. I can live without social media actually yes, but it's just friends, it's not about social media, it's just friends.

F. Without social media we would phone, or text or email. There are some friends and I don't have their phone and they don't have a social account so we just communicate on email.

E. And, I think this depends upon different personalities, because some people you know they are very, how do you say, intuitive [introverted?] - I don't know how to say that word – and I think I'm not introverted and I'm not rely on social media to remain a friendship with my friend because in my mind I think if they know me and can't remember me that's alright, yeah I don't want to just let others know that maybe [x] is the person that does always need to need the friend or their help, because I can, erm, do everything by myself.

F. For me also it is not to say hi all of the time because some of my friend they will organise activities on Facebook, they won't text you or phone you, they just organise on Facebook. It's like ok tonight say half past seven we will meet at some bars, if I don't chatter I won't miss that, so it's kind of ok

D. Maybe it's not just about how to communicate, maybe social media also give us some information about friends they post something, picture or their or some sentences to , to actually let us know how about their life.

B. What's going on in the China, and what's going on in about their lives.

C. Yeah, I'm with her, I think not only communicate with my friend, so I can live without it. Maybe if I haven't it, maybe I feel, not boring, it's I will feel personally [?] I mean I not only use it coming with my friends, also erm, use it to know the words, I mean we can use it to go around the world and we go everywhere, but we can use it to know the word, and about news and about culture and about different things and I love travelling so if I want go out er… for [?] official information it's more graduates to choose

Question: Ok so you use social media to get more non-official views/channels?

C. Yes, this is very important.

Question: So you are working with other people's experiences and their input?

C. Yes, back-pack information is more useful than the official information I think

Question: In your experiences does social media allow you to meet new friends? Or is it the case that you have friends that you have met f2f and then you keep in touch using social media? Or is it both? Do you have any thoughts on this?

F. The second situation, meet first then online.

A. Yeah

E. I'm not sure.

Pointer: There is not a right or a wrong answer.

E. Maybe, several years ago I first choice faced with people but nowadays I changed my mind because I have experience about a famous person in China. Actually if I hadn't social media I think I haven't had a chance to know her, er but because of social media, er because she's a famous person, but just by lucky chance we chat in the social media and she think I'm interesting, I was interesting so we make friends, now we have girlfriends, I mean we meet with each other in real world, but you know actually, maybe we meet some stars or some

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famous people but if you haven't a job, you no social media, it mean you never have a chance to know their real face.

Question: May I ask who the star is?

E. Er… she writed books, a writer but maybe you don't know her, er… just in China.

Question: Can you say how important social media is to you academically with regard to what you are doing at the UoL?   [00hr:59m:59s]

B. I think it is important, for example, she and me have the same group in our first term and about team work, and in it we have person she come from London and she hadn't time to go to Leicester to go face to face with us, so we need to communicate with each other in the social media and finally we finish our work. And also with the social media we have our chat group

F. Yeah, I have these chat groups in Facebook

Question: Do any of you also use Google Groups?

F. I don't use google Groups.

A. I think Google Plus is popular amongst the students, it might be quite popular around those who are fashionable, but not students, er… not many people using Google Plus I think [check this Groups/Plus overlap][no other answers].

Question: Has you use of technology changed as a result of being at the Uni of Leics compared to before you came here?

A. Is that talking about Apps, or something like that maybe?

Question: In terms of you coming to UoL, what different types of Apps and technologies have you used? What you were using before and now. I'm trying to understand if the process of coming to and being at UoL influences a changing use of different digital technologies

[01hr:02m:40s]

F. Alright, mm… I have to say, I bought this phone before I came here, because I used to have this phone but it's not smart phone, so it's very old and not careful, you know, it only two colours, not cache [?] screen for that price. I bought this one, it's a smart phone and with the apps I can do a video call with my parents that's why I bought this, so it kind of a little bit changed, yeah

A. Erm, before I came here I didn't use WhatsUp, and after I came here because of the friends around me, they almost all from Hong Kong or Malaysia or something, or somewhere else they use, they tend to use WhatsUp, rather than WeChat, or Weibo or something like that so that's why I started to use WhatsUp more, yeah.

F. I use Facebook more than Wi Chat. Wi Chat only for Chinese students or other groups, but Facebook foreign friends, yes foreign friends   [...Pause].

Question: Ok, does anyone else have an answer to that question?

Observation: So you have kind of said that using social media is important for maintaining social relationships, with people that you know from home and with people that you have met at UoL. Now I'd like to move this forward to developing new relationships, but I just wanted to clarify something first on meeting new people: Has it been more f2f first, then you use social media, or has it been that social media has been important for meeting new people first?

F. Just face to face and then social media.

[Group quiet]

Question: How important are academic matters, where you may communicate in a group to help with your courses at the university? How important has that been for you to find new friends? Or might you stay online only academically with one another? Or does it spill into, say creating new social contacts, that is you may keep in touch and maybe go out and meet them as a result of your academic links? Is this a separate process?

A. Erm I don't understand your question [laughter].

Explanation: When you talk to one another online about your work does that influence new friendship development at UoL? Or do you tend to keep it work contact orientated… so I might to talk to some colleagues about my work, but not get involved with anything else with those people outside of my university work. So… does being involved with academic matters alter how you may get involved with friends socially?

F. I think it depends, some people we have the same interests or things in common and we talk and yes because of that academic talk we become friends, but most of them I think we're just talking about the work and it ends after that.

A. I agree with her, it really depends upon whether we have a similar interest, or like personalities or something, like I like her , and I would talk about more other things we interested in and have in common and yeah, it's not only academic matters

Pointer: Ok, anyone else like to add to this?   [No responses].

Question: You have come from various places in China and you've come to the UK and you've used social media for academic purposes and for social purposes based around UoL. From your experiences does it make you feel at all changed in any way from the person who arrived here? I'm calling this a personal transition. Do you feel at all changed from when you started your journey? Could you let me know what you think about this?

F. I don't think I have changed, but I know more, like I have so many friends from other countries, like I know more others and their cultures and their traditions.

Question: So would you say you are maybe more informed culturally?

F. Yeah.

E. I've changed.

Pointer: Please explain more about your change.

E. Yeah, I think I have changed. Well actually before I come to Britain, I just had some difficult thinking about my ex-boyfriend [laughter from many] and I don't know how to choose the future, with my ex-boyfriend, these are difficult things, but maybe now I'm in Britain, maybe I get a new friend here, they have different cultural background and different thinking scales and ways in which they communicate with each other and the, er I know about the different [?] culture in your country and I know sometimes when with the culture in Britain in our culture maybe, there may be some misunderstanding..

F. Stereotypes again.

E. Yeah, we also have some stereotypes.

E. But I know after I come here, I know the real world in Britain and I check my whole mind [?] and So now I think how to choose my future and how to solve a problem with my ex-boyfriend, [laughter from many].

B. Were you angry with your ex-boyfriend?

No, I not sure why I come to Britain, maybe it's not my ex-boyfriend, I not sure, but now I think he need to be your ex-boyfriend, so it is a change, but I think it is good for me, I think I have a more broader…er broader..

Question: More of a broader vision?

E. Yeah, broader vision

Question: So maybe more broader vision is an important reason for travelling as well as higher education?

E. Yes.

Question: Ok. Leaving the University of Leicester, I know that you are all still here. Some students might put their c.v's, their academic and professional profiles online, for jobs, moving to travel or for various reasons., How important is social media to you in moving on to wherever you are going to next? Everyone might have a different view here. Will you be using websites? Are website just one part of the process? Or maybe you're not planning on getting a job after UoL. Any input on this? [01hr:10m:19s]

A. Well I'm always searching for job opportunities online and Google is a very useful search engine, and also I use LinkedIn to actually apply for jobs, but I didn't find out that many students are using the LinkedIn around me, I think I can't find any friends there, but I can see the professors.

Observation: Yes, LinkedIn is a professional centred platform.

A. Yes it's for the job, But, I don't know what to post on my LinkedIn, I just update my profile and add some skews [news?].

Question: Is LinkedIn important in China?

F; B. No.

E. There is a Chinese version.

F. Is there?

C. What is that?

E. Link [laughter]. I know it is Chinese version.

F. I got LinkedIn before I came here.

Question: Before you came here?

F. Yeah before I came here, I don't know how to use LinkedIn to find a job, but I just asked some groups and I about uploading my professional profile.

A. Ah yes, when your applying for some jobs via there official website, and I just finished the application of [? L'Oreal] [Company name] in New York, and they just have the choice that your apply with your LinkedIn and or you finish your information online – there's two options. I don't know if other companies have these options.

B. Sure.

C. I don't know.

F. I know some people they put this this LinkedIn address in their cv, but I never do it, because before I came here, some of my formal colleagues they suggest to me about LinkedIn, and they told me it is quite professional in west countries, so I got this idea to open an account there and open it for my works.

Question: Ok, and are you going to rely upon that solely? Or are there other ways that you are going to put yourself out there?

F. I not sure actually, yes I will just see how things go

Question: Ok, can anyone else comment?

Pointer: Ok, we're getting towards the last questions now. Thanks for your patience.

It might sound a little all the same, but you are providing me with a lot of information here, and it's really useful.

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Question: Can you say overall from your journeys from China to the UK how important social media has been to each of you… as kind of a one line or two line statement – in your experiences.

C. Yes, very important.

A Yeah, I'm really addicted to social media sometimes, so I had to lock them all and focus on my essays. I got some apps like 'stay focused' on my cell phone [laughter] and also one on my laptop so that when I start working I will just block all of the social websites out

Pointer: That is very interesting... you have a app for social media to block social media

[Much cross-talk around all participants]

A. It's not a social media app, it's a productivity app.

F. Maybe because we got wi-fi here all the time, because back in China I don't have wi-fi all the time, you know it is only in a particular place, like home, but actually I don't have wi-fi in my home, I only got in my work place, so I only search online during my work time, when back home your know it is all about papers, books, I'll just put my phone away.

Question: Right so are you just going to be able to go back and simply do that?

F. I'm not sure…[laugher from group], I'm not sure…I'm not sure!

Pointer: This is what I'm interested in.

F. But you know in this place I no have this kind of contract about how many hours, if I leave my dormitory and I will have wi-fi it's ok for me, yes I will just walk to some gardens or parks and enjoy the whole afternoon without, without social media, this kind of thing.

A. Even without the wi-fi you have the data to use!

F. No I don't have the data, no I don't buy this I don't want that because I barely use it if there's no wi-fi, so I can live without

Question: Ok, I'm just going to pick you up on a point there [laughter b/t F and A].

A. You are odd!

F. She always say I'm an odd person.

A. Yeah, you live in the 97's.

F. Oh nasty things [friendly cross-talk] [I.S. know one another before FG]   [01hr:16m:0s]

A. Ah, I helped you to upgrade because you have the smart phone here.

F. Ok, yeah.

Question: Well F, you've been very quick at answering my emails, so you must be connected quite often?

F. Yes, yes! Well I don't know, really I focus on my email all the time, I think you know.

Question: You view email as social media?

B. Yes but it's also a signature.

F. These are the features.

B. Er… but you will keep on the social media?

F. That's the point I got wi-fi, cos because like I don't got wi-fi if I no got wi-fi in my dormitory then I won't do this. Because I stay there, and because when I open my laptop the alarm will ring when some email comes in

Observation: This is a really interesting point…because you stay in your dormitory.

F. Yeah

Question: You are using social media more than you would 'normally' use it. Does the dormitory influence who you are meeting online? Can you describe your feelings - what you feel here in Leicester, relative to your cultural situation? I don't want to lead anything

here…but maybe if things were different and you had other places to go that related to your culture would that influence social media use differently?

F. Ah, I lived in Liverpool before for 20 days and there's no electric at all in Liverpool for 20 days, so no electric no wi-fi, no anything.

B. This is not a common phenomenon though.

A. Yeah, she's an odd person!

E. Cos I love travelling to, and when I go to some place, maybe sometimes I go to the countryside and there's no wi-fi, no 3G or other things it's ok for me but I don't think I can live without it er because for example I come to Britain and to be honest I haven't too many money to buy a lot of books but I love reading so now I think I choose Kindle more. If you have wi-fi you can download books and you can download some movies or you can download some music , so like she say that she can live without it but for example [thinking pause] …do you have too many money to buy a lot of expensive books? So you also need online website or social media so I think it's a good method if you like to know the word and reading maybe it's because she downloads, downloads books in the old place so it's I think it's based on the wi-fi.   [01hr:18m:50s]

F. For this e-books I really, I really I hate e-books [laughter] I hate e-books, I can't…Sometimes our lecturers they gave us some evenings like the e-books and you will read online I hate it sometimes I just you know back to the library this website and I search for the real book version and I went to the library and I borrow these books… I really hate e-books

E. This part I single with her, but I hate e-book too, but you know…I hate e-book too, but nowadays we cannot avoid it, so er, it's better maybe in Britain or another country, even [though] but in China the real book is very cheaper, I think it's no good, but you know maybe it's more convenient for you to buy it, when you come to Britain, if you want to buy a lot of books I think these are so expensive,

F. Yeah

E. So expensive, so maybe you can read it in library, but library might be more academic

Question: Do you download papers from the library?

E. Yeah.

F. It's really cool.

Question: Do you find it easy to access?

F. Yeah

E. Yes.   [Other I.S. not engaging].

F. I request some books and they send me names and then I collect them. Yes, library got us more books and I apply for books it's published January the 14th, you know 14, this year in January, and I filled this form and told them I want this book and the day before yesterday they sent me an email and told me we got this book these are new books and I'm so happy. It's so cool.

Observation: Some of the books are expensive.

F. Yeah, I searched around Amazon, and it's £60, so I ask the library for this book

JB. Well that's what you are here for, you pay your fees.

F.   Yeah, that's fair enough…[laughter from around table].

Question: So you have seen where I have gone with my questions, and I've explored a bit more than just social media. I've been getting to understand a little bit about who you are ... have

you got any other interesting points around where the discussion has been through, that you wish to give me at all? [...Group pause]

Pointer: It doesn't matter if you haven't anything else to say. [...Group pause]

Question/Point: O.k I'm going to close very soon. I'd like to put some key points we've been through together. Am I right in saying that you have come to Britain because you want the education, but you want the cultural experience as well? You'd like to have a broader mix with students outside of your own group though...is that correct? Am I right to say that, or are you happy with how it is? ....Would you wish to mix any more with other students? Or is that not an issue? [01hr:23m]

A. Even though we wish to be exposed to the international students, but we are international students [laughter] and the Chinese students are occupying the UK's university I think! You can see Chinese everywhere. [Much laughter].

Question. One of the things I've was told by other Chinese students (when attended Loughborough University), was that Chinese students have been surprised by how many other Chinese students there are in UKHE, Some said they wished to meet more non-Chinese students. How do you feel about this at UoL?

F. I'd say that.

A. The Chinese students tell you that?

Observation: Some said this elsewhere, yes.

F. Yeah, but I do think that I've got some more foreign friends, yes around me, yes from Greece, Canada, Malaysia, Singapore, yeah different countries.

Question to F. So do you think you have more links with international friends?

A. Asia, yeah, mostly from the Asia. Like we share the common cultural, common grounds, it mostly depends upon the commons.

FG5 Finished. [Note: diverse spoken English language proficiencies in FG5].

2. Example Individual Interview Question Schedule and Transcription

Profile: Interview 9: female, 32 yrs, Ph.D (Year 2), Iraqi-Kurd, accompanied by husband.

Question: Please tell me about your journey to UoL?

I.S.9: I'm sponsored by government, I searched online, I found my subject at the department, a small branch at the UoL. But before that I had friends study here, so I contacted them through Facebook, because some of met husbands friends did Masters here, they say it's quite nice city and the weather is fine. You search on the web for subjects, we had Facebook contact mainly. The Master student finished English and Sociology – these were all friends we know each before. Also UoL representative visited many university's I didn't meet UoL delegation they explain UoL, we got contact details, email phone, this was another way. UoL was my choice not the government, but there was a list of UK or USA universities to get an offer from, used to be any university but now a list.

Question: How are you using SM now?

I.S.9: Now not using Facebook so much, in fast = chat to friends, = more time before but now not the time. I use LinkedIn more; this is more for my future.

Question: What does sponsorship mean?

I.S.9: I already have a lecturer's job at University, I have to go back, I have a contract 3yrs = 6 yrs

Question: How do you feel about that?

I.S.9: Yes Im happy I have another choice; I don't like to teach so I can continue in research, not teaching.

Question: So SM not as often, what about academically?

I.S.9: Yes academically before.

Question: Would you explain about how you feel about your academic identity?

I.S.9: Yes when you explained your journey it was something similar. Before Ph.D, languages, for me first time abroad, and no language, I've listened but not speaking. I have learned to speak with time I used the centre, the radio, and going to YouTube listening to improve, even an assignment, especially YouTube is useful listening, that helps my discussion it was very good

Question: What about teaching environment at UoL. Does the system differ from home systems?

I.S.9: Very different, even the way the chairs around students work in a row with me are strange.

Question: Please tell me about SM for family contact?

I.S.9: We usually use Viba Tango also Skype, for my friends it different, I still use Facebook or Yahoo Messenger, in my country it's different, we don't have smartphone to connect to apps.

Question: Has the UoL 24/7 wi-fi affected you use of SM?

I.S.9: Yes, but not altered a lot, it's good to have wi-fi sometime. I live in private house, I use my phone to connect to server.

Question: Please tell me about the process of you getting to the UoL.

I.S.9: It was difficult, even to get a visa, now is better. The British Council are opening in my college, this helps, but in my case I went to Jordan to get a visa, near Xmas holiday. I was waiting, worried because the course started in January. I went to Jordan within 2 weeks I got the visa, some of my friends spent over 1 month there for the visa.

Question: Why Jordan?

I.S.9: At that time there was not a British Consulate in my city.

Question: Please tell me more about the visa process

I.S.9: I filled out forms, paid £400. It was accepted fine, no issues, I got financial support for everything… living costs and fees. When in Jordan, didn't know who to contact. I searched website, sent emails to UoL re visa –first person was my supervisor, was very, very, helpful, via International Office – even if come week later can still join.

Question: Now you are here, does it meet expectations?

I.S.9: Before I came here, I received a draft of what the study will be, but when I started working in the lab it will be very, very, different, I worked in a hospital, but here you can't [compare], from humans to molecular cells.

Question: What about the social environment of UoL?

I.S.9: I feel better now, at first no phone, or wi-fi in the building, so stayed for two days out of touch with my family, then after, we connected. ELTU [English Language Training Unit] is only 5-7 minutes away, but I could not find the way to go, my husband had to take me and pick me up. I wouldn't be here without my husband. I picked a course to bring him. It's been really hard to settle in this country. I was afraid of everything, looking around, how may they think of us, are we good, bad even?' It was really hard to settle in a different country. My husband came with me and he had a chance to do masters in English language teaching, he's just finished. That makes journey lot easier.

Question: Does he use SM?

I.S.9: Maybe he issuing [is using] it more than me. Before study he was looking for jobs, using SM to find jobs. Finally he was able to join three companies as translator. I would not have been here without my husband. UKBA less than 6 months dependents not allowed to come. I picked one course just to bring my husband. Now SM is used for contact with family, friends, my colleagues at university, back home I still receive everything that's going on there, I knew the situation, even the seminars in the dept.

Question: How do you find the Kurdish community here?

I.S.9: We have a Facebook group, if we have a meeting we sort it on the website, there are over a hundred in the group.

Question: How important is this?

I.S.9: I think this is good, sometimes I can't speak during the day, in the evening you can catch up, it's better to have it.

Question: How often are you using SM now compared to in your home country?

I.S.9: It depends sometime especially before the Ph.D journey I was using Facebook a lot more, but now maybe 2 days or sometimes the weekend, or just the evening, it depend. These days the situation in Kurdistan is not good, so we need the news to find out the situation. My family live in the capital. My brother works in the security forces.

Question: Does that cause stress?

I.S.9: If at home you know more, but the media is telling story in different ways, we see TV output, we call, and it's different. We look at BBC and Al Jazeera. BBC was talking about jihadists going, whereas Aljazeera was looking at the actual war. It's hard, especially during my upgrade, very distracting. You cannot trust Facebook. For example, some people in the government were telling stories, not reality. I don't like to look at Facebook. I even deleted my apps on my phone, because things were not true.

Question: So would you say that using SM makes you feel stressed?

I.S.9: This is true. I have said I want to focus on my study I have to study, I'm a sponsored student, with many responsibilities. If I look at Facebook everyday many times, it's not good for me, even if it is true, I don't want to see these truths at the moment.

Question: So SM affects your academic focus. Did you use SM during the settling into UoL?

I.S.9: Er, yes, you feel lonely and you feel far from your family, so you are using this kind of social media to feel better.

Question: Has your journey in influenced your political awareness?

I.S.9: Exactly, I look back.

Question: So you are not using Facebook so much socially, what about academically?

I.S.9: I don't use it.

Question: Do you use Twitter?

I.S.9: Yes, but not too much, we have a branch for sponsored students in London, if we need something, Twitter is useful for support.

Question: When you are online is there a distinct divide between academic and social use?

I.S.9: Sometimes its pure academic, but as you get to know them more, maybe be a friends and contact informally on social media e.g. my teacher on my language course – was very professional we not have to talk outside of, but at the end two of them are my close friends, one is an artist, and she posted her work, now we are friends. I look in different angles; they are my teachers and friends.

Question: Has using social media furthered your sense of academic identity?

I.S.9: Yes, it has.

Question: Has this sense of academic identity made a closer relationship other students or your supervisors?

I.S.9: Yes with my study. When I started in the lab, two of them from Leicester, talking Leicester accent it was very different it takes time to understand them, I understand as my work is numbers. My group is very close together, tea break together, talk to each other sometimes dinner outside, very nice.

Question: Are there many other I.S. in your group or other Kurdish or UK students?

I.S.9: I didn't interact with UK students; there a Libyan and Iranian, but the staff are Polish. I prefer with interact with English people because my subject is in English, I even told them I could not speak Arabic, as then they would speak Arabic to me, I usually interact with English people, no problems. It depends on the discipline, in my area we are a group, I need them and they need me, we depend on each other for the research. So I did not suffer like this. [standoffishness]   [37m:37s]

Question: Has 24/7 wi-fi altered how you feel about SM

I.S.9: UoL is v good you know everything from your email account, where I came from things were separated out, disjointed, at UoL you receive an email to tell you instrument not working, you go somewhere else, wi-fi is very important to enable university /research to function. Ph.D chat/ café research, I don't go. It's a very good environment to present your work.

Question: How are you finding your Ph.D?

I.S.9: Stressful, time come to write is going to be hard, concerns me. I can speak I can understand but writing is very stressful, esp. during my first year, not sleeping thinking about tomorrow.

Question: Do you consider SM to be an emotional support in this place?

I.S.9: Yes, I have my husband makes a difference. When I came I used SM more for more confidence and help , we came from different families, we are now familiar, it is safer here more that my country and even my family I was thinking of going back at Christmas, but even my father said no it's not good for you, just stay there and concentrate on your study.

Question: Broadening horizons

I.S.9: For me it was very important especially when I started my ph.d .I assumed it would be very different, I would have all of these facilities, especially the library, the electronic things are v important. I faced diffs in getting articles just from a journal, a that time my supervisor helped me through his account. The lab was very different.

Question: Official SM channels when arrived?

I.S.9: What other people were telling me was more important than UoL Facebook, easier to get from others

Question: How wide?

I.S.9: Just people that had been to UoL

Question: Parents relatives SM conversant

S Older people they are not familiar with software and SM, but my brothers sisters they have Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, to advertise their work.

Question: Do you feel a change sense of national identity, global citizen?

I.S.9: maybe I feel more stronger about my Kurdish identity. When I came here, even some people didn't know I was Kurds, what was Kurdistan area, but when you come to country with

different nationalities you feel your nationality become more stronger, you identify with yourself and people from different background I.S.9: I can say that I am feeling more Kurdish than before, yes sometimes you represent your country even if I'm the only Kurdish within my group and sometime this situation when there is news on the TV about Kurdistan, they ask where is the city you are from, in the past I didn't know that one day I could talk about politics, but now you are involved in a different situation because you are Kurd and people want to know about your country.

Question: Your online group of 100, do you have an online study group?

I.S.9: No, maybe just to communicate, because we are sponsored, and something related we use, sometimes people on the Kurdish society express ideas how things will affect use. Sometimes an event, 21 March new Kurdish Year – how we arrange it –it's easier than calling everyone. It's cheap and free.

Question: Do you still use the telephone?

I.S.9: Just my sister, she not using SM and my aunty she's old, very few calls, very costly.

Question: If you could describe to me your journey identify with these words feel emotionally

I.S.9: I say it's a challenge to deal with different people, diff language, diff teaching environment, I still think i it will be challenging until I submit my thesis, every time you face difference, even I'm familiar with my lab now, I'm not familiar with my area backgrounds, the challenge will be there every day about different things, and working different types of techniques.

Sometimes we are thinking the longer time here it will be better, but we are missing our family, but then we say no we will go back home even with everything we still love our country and we will go back. [56.00]

Question: Anything to add?

I.S.9: I decided to come, but most persons say they would be afraid to come, they're quite suspicious. Their voice will not be heard! In your study perhaps you can represent the international student? [57.00]. For me personally, language, settling… the different environment was very challenging, you don't know how to find a home or place to live…searching website - telling it by the mile, how do we know this? Practicalities were hard, we didn't know anybody. A professor gave us an email address of two Kurdish guys, one in Birmingham, one near there, he waited a long while, we didn't know him f2f. He took us to his home, we stayed the night. He took us to UoL; we stayed another two days with another Kurdish family, and they helped us find accommodation and everything. [Networks]

Question: So you didn't have a house?

I.S.9: No because when we searched on the website. It was easy for singles to go to open colleges near the uni, it wasn't for family though. We were not familiar with this type of agency to rent. [Family accommodation issues]

Question: Just double checking… your sponsorship cover your accommodation costs?

I.S.9: Yes it's covered, food, fees good sponsorship. We are paid for one travel per year also health. In my country its very different, it not like agency there's no letting signs in my city, and say I'm here I'm English, there will be 10 people who say you can stay here it's very open very social. Great Britain is go, go, go, no time to stop and talk. My friend in the US, students come to me, she say they started to ask me questions. I said I never seen anybody ask me, maybe a different culture, but when you know them it's very different.

Social Media Log Sheet - Notes To Aid Completion
One Week (Consecutive Days) of Social Media Usage While at University of Leicester

i. Please pick a seven day period to record your online activity using social media that is 'averagely representative' e.g., 'not' a week when you are away from campus.

ii. Please add notes to clarify e.g. you are making a higher use of Facebook Groups because you are working on your dissertation. If relevant also describe your feelings which may have caused you to use social media, e.g. 'Social media used- Facebook: Why used? - To contact my wife/children: log your feelings.

iii. It is not necessary to record every single message e.g., if you are accessing your Facebook account, or email account, enter time online, and total messages accessed.

Data logging involves sending and receiving online communication, and includes email (if this is too involved, i.e., too many emails, please put down a daily total figure)

I have given a few examples of how to complete (below the notes). I realise that it may not be practical to record everything, if it proves difficult please try to remember where you have been in your social media use and complete entries at various point of the day e.g., at lunchtime, early evening or after your work in the evening.

Information to Aid Completion of Log:

Key: UoL = University of Leicester   * = only if you know/remember

Date (day/month):   Log date of online contact.

Time of day: (24hr)   Log approximate time of online contact.

Duration: (minutes/hours)   Log approximate time spent online for this contact.

Name of SM: Social media site e.g., Yahoo, Facebook; also emails & Skype.

Academic Use (Y):   Log 'Y' if online contact was for academic reasons.

Social Use (Y):   Log 'Y' if online contact for social reasons.

Who: Two types here –academic use of social media 'or' social use of social media, ***enter just 'one term'*** *(see examples below)*:-

i. For academic use, enter one of the following terms:-

- *'Student'*   (e.g. other UoL students/course mates e.g., Facebook Groups).
- *'Other UoL'*   (e.g. supervisor, Blackboard, Prose, University Facebook).
- *'Other Academic'*   (e.g. academics elsewhere, anywhere in world).
- *'Other Students'*   (e.g. students elsewhere, other students anywhere in world).

Or…

ii. For social use, enter one of the following terms:-

- *'UoL '*   (e.g. friend/s at UoL).
- *'Friend - H'*   (e.g. friend/s from your home country).
- *'Friend - W*   (e.g. friend/s elsewhere in the world, name country).
- 'Family'   (e.g. family relation - at home or elsewhere in the world)

Where from*:   (e.g. UoL Department, library, campus elsewhere, house, train)

Where to *:   (e.g. friend in China – Beijing)

Device: (e.g. smart phone, laptop, pc, tablet etc.).

Social Media Log 1 [Adem]

Date	Approx. Time	Approx. Duration	Name of SM	Academic Use	Social Use	Who/Why	Where from (Place)*	Where to (Place)*	Device	Notes / Your Feelings
Day 1										
18.09	10.45	5 M	Facebook UoL email	Y	Y	Friend-H	Lab	Kurdistan	PC	Asking about Kurdistan news
18.09	15.22	10 M	Facebook		Y	Friend-H	Lab	Kurdistan	PC	Looking for news and general subject
18.09	21.15	35 M	Skype		Y	'Family'	Home	Kurdistan	IPAD	General talking / excited
Day 2										
19.09	12.00	5 M	Facebook		Y	Friend-H	Lab	Kurdistan	IPAD	General talking / excited
19.9	22.0	1.5 h	Skype		Y	'Family'	House	Kurdistan	Laptop	I was excited with talking with them
Day 3										
20.09	10.00	10 M	Whats Up		Y	'Friend -W	House	New Zealand	phone	General talking/ well
20.09	12.20	2 M	UoL email	Y		'Other UoL'	Lab	Department	PC	Discussing project issues
20.09	14.00	5 M	Viber		Y	'Family'	Lab	Kurdistan	Phone	General talking
20.09	21.00	10 M	Facebook		Y	Friend-H	House	Kurdistan	Ipad	General talking
Day 4										
21.09	11.00	3 M	UoL email	Y		UOL	Lab	Department	PC	Sending articles
21.09	17.30	15 M	Facebook		Y	Friend-H	House	Kurdistan	PC	Looking for news
21.09	21.30	45 M	Viber		Y	Family	House	Kurdistan	phone	General Talking
Day 5										
22.09	10.30	1 M	UoL email	Y		'Other UoL'	Lab	Department	PC	Sending presentation and articles
22.09	14.00	3 M	Yahoo email	Y		'Other Academic'	Lab	Kurdistan	PC	Discussing and sending academic articles
Day 6										
23.09	21.00	1 h	Skype		Y	'Family'	House	Kurdistan	Laptop	General talking with family.
Day 7										
24.09	10.00	10 M	Facebook	Y	Y	'Other Academic'	House	Kurdistan	IPad	Talking about lab devises.
24.09	17.50	15 M	Facebook	Y		'Other Students'	house	Turkey	phone	Talking about study there.
24.09	21.00	50 M	Skype		Y	Friends-H	House	Kurdistan	Laptop	Talking about academic and social

Social Media Log 2 [Ting]

Date	Approx. Time	Approx. Duration	Name of SM	Acad Use	Social Use	Who/Why	Where to	Where from	Device	Notes/Your feeling
Day1										
31.07	8.11	2 mins	Facebook		Y	Nobody		My room	Smart phone	Just check if someone leave the message via FB (no message) and also check certain posts by official news account (Apply Daily, BBC, CNN and so on)
31.07	8.13	1 min	Wechat group		Y	Friend- China	Beijing	My room	Smart phone	Reply the message left by one friend
31.07	8.34	4 mins	Google Email		Y			My room	Laptop	Check if someone send me an email (no new email), delete junk emails
31.07	8.41	1 min	Google Email	Y		UoL-student	unknown	My room	Laptop	Send an email to ask question
31.07	8.46	1 min	Google Email	Y		UoL-student	unknown	My room	Laptop	Send an email to confirm the answer
31.07	9.32	1 min	UoL email		Y	Myself		My room	Laptop	Send the documents from my UoL a/c to gmail account ensure I can get it online everywhere
31.07	10.13	5 mins	Wechat		Y	friend	Leicester	My room	Smart phone	A friend ask me some questions about national insurance number
31.07	11.16	10 mins	Facebook		Y			My room	Laptop	Play online games on FB
31.07	12.18	15 mins	Google email		Y	People from Couchsurfing	Italy	My room	Laptop	Check emails and send email to a man who is looking for a room in Leicester via Couchsurfing
31.07	13.05	9 mins	Google email		Y	People from Couchsurfing	Italy	My room	Laptop	Check email and reply the email
31.07	13.24	45 mins	Wechat video talk		Y	family	China-Qingdao	My room	Smart phone	Talk to parents feel fretful as we are talking about the visa application for them to travel in UK is extremely inconvenient
31.07	15.04	2 mins	Facebook		Y			My room	Laptop	Just check and browse the page
31.07	16.51	2 mins	Wechat		Y			My room	Smart phone	Just browse the official account
31.07	16.56	1 min	Google email		Y	People from Couchsurfing	Italy	My room	Laptop	Reply the email
31.07	17.29	1 min	Google email		Y	People from Couchsurfing	Italy	My room	Laptop	Reply the email
31.07	18.25	5 mins	Facebook		Y	friend	Leicester	My room	Laptop	Send message via FB
31.07	23.42	10 mins	Facebook		Y	friend	Leicester	My room	Laptop	Reply the message
Day 2										
1.08	7.31	5 mins	Wechat		Y			My room	Smart phone	Browse the post by others

1.08	7.38	6 mins	Facebook		Y			My room	Smart phone	Browse posts by others and feel shocked as gas explosion in Taiwan
1.08	8.08	2 mins	Google email		Y			My room	Laptop	Check email and delete junk emails
1.08	10.57	2 mins	Wechat		Y	friend	Leicester	My room	Laptop	Reply message
1.08	11.07	2 mins	Google email		Y	People from Couchsurfing	Italy	My room	Laptop	Reply the email
1.08	11.11	1 hour	Facebook		Y	friend	Italy	My room	Laptop	Add friend on FB and talk to friend
1.08	14.03	20 mins	Facebook		Y	friend	Italy	My room	Laptop	Message with friend
1.08	14.51	6 mins	Facebook		Y	friend	Italy	My room	Laptop	Message with friend
1.08	17.34	5 mins	Facebook		Y	friends	Italy, Leicester	My room	Laptop	Reply messages
1.08	23.01	4 mins	Facebook		Y	friend	Italy	My room	Smart phone	Reply messages
Day 3										
2.08	1.51	5 mins	Facebook group		Y	friends	Leicester	My room	Smart phone	Message with friends
2.08	7.12	3 mins	Facebook		Y	friend	Italy	My room	Smart phone	Reply messages
2.08	9.13	2 mins	Wechat		Y			My room	Smart phone	Check if someone left messages
2.08	9.31	2 mins	Google email		Y			My room	Laptop	Check emails and delete junk emails
2.08	9.33	5 mins	Facebook group		Y			My room	Laptop	Download photos post by friends on our group
2.08	9.52	6 mins	Facebook		Y			My room	Laptop	Play Facebook games
2.08	10.27	3 mins	Facebook		Y	friend	Leicester	My room	Laptop	Send message to friend
2.08	11.01	2 mins	Facebook		Y	friend	Leicester	My room	Laptop	Send message to friend
2.08	14.58	3 mins	Wechat		Y			Library cafe	Smart phone	Post photos on my timeline
2.08	15.02	3 mins	Facebook		Y			Library cafe	Smart phone	Post photos on my timeline
2.08	17.17	1 min	Google email		Y			My room	Laptop	Delete junk emails
2.08	23.48	2 mins	Wechat		Y	friend	Leicester	My room	Smart phone	Reply message
2.08	23.54	8 mins	Facebook group		Y	friends	Leicester and London	My room	Laptop	Reply messages
Day 4										
3.08	8.31	2 mins	Wechat		Y	friend	Beijing	My room	Smart	Reply message and browse the post by others

								China		phone	
3.08	8.34	2 mins	Facebook		Y				My room	Smart phone	Browse the post by others open a news link post by Apple Daily
3.08	8.35	1 min	Google email		Y				My room	Smart phone	Check emails
3.08	9.48	2 mins	Facebook		Y				My room	Laptop	Play FB games
3.08	10.34	2 mins	Facebook		Y	friend	Leicester		My room	Laptop	Message with friend
3.08	10.53	1min	UoL email	Y		UoL student	Leicester		My room	Laptop	Receive an Email from a friend who wants me to join her focus group
3.08	11.31	3 mins	Facebook	Y		friends	Leicester		My room	Laptop	Message with friends
3.08	15.17	13 mins	Wechat		Y	friends	Sichuan China		My room	Smart phone	Message with friends
3.08	18.35	1 min	Facebook		Y	friend	Leicester		My room	Laptop	Message to friend
Day 5											
4.08	1.32	3 mins	Facebook		Y				My room	Smart phone	Check messages
4.08	8.34	3 mins	Wechat		Y				My room	Smart phone	Check new post and official account
4.08	8.45	4 mins	Facebook		Y	friend	Italy		My room	Smart phone	Message with friend
4.08	8.52	3 mins	Google email		Y				My room	Laptop	Check emails and delete jun emails
4.08	9.26	2 mins	Facebook		Y	friends	Leicester		My room	Laptop	Send messages to friends
4.08	10.42	2 mins	Facebook		Y	friends	Leicester Italy		My room	Laptop	Message with friends
4.08	11.09	2 mins	Facebook		Y	friends	Leicester and Italy		My room	Laptop	Reply messages
4.08	12.35	1 min	Facebook		Y	friend	Leicester		My room	Laptop	Message to friend
4.08	13.35	3 mins	Facebook	Y		friends	Leicester		UoL library	pc	Message with friends
4.08	13.39	3 mins	Wechat	Y		friends	Leicester		UoL Library	Smart phone	Message with friends
Day 6											
5.08	1.14	3 mins	Facebook		Y	friend	Leicester		My room	Laptop	Message with friend
5.08	8.34	4 mins	Wechat		Y	family	Qingdao China		My room	Smart phone	Reply message
5.08	8.39	1 min	Google email		Y				My room	Smart phone	Check emails
5.08	9.31	5 mins	Facebook		Y	friend	Leicester		My room	Laptop	Message with friend

5.08	9.48	3 mins	Google email		Y			My room	Laptop	Delete junk email
5.08	9.54	2 mins	Google email		Y	employer	Rotterdam	My room	Laptop	Reply emails
5.08	10.27	5 mins	Google email		Y	employer	Rotterdam	My room	Laptop	Reply emails
5.08	10.34	2 mins	Facebook		Y	friend	Leicester	My room	Laptop	Reply messages
5.08	10.41	8 mins	Skype		Y			My room	Laptop	Download new version
5.08	10.46	3 mins	Facebook		Y	friend	Leicester	My room	Laptop	Message with friends
5.08	11.09	3 mins	Skype		Y	friend	Leicester	My room	Laptop	Video talk to friend
5.08	13.35	2 mins	Wechat		Y	friend	Warwick	Restaurant	Smart phone	Message with friend
5.08	14.23	3 mins	Facebook		Y	friend	Leicester	Restaurant	Smart phone	Message with friend
5.08	16.23	2 mins	Google email		Y	employer	Rotterdam	My room	Laptop	Reply emails
5.08	23.01	3 mins	Google email		Y			My room	Laptop	Reply emails
Day 7										
6.08	8.34	2 mins	Wechat		Y			My room	Smart phone	Browse the post and official accounts
6.08	8.36	1 min	Google email		Y			My room	Smart phone	Check emails
6.08	9.42	1min	Facebook		Y			My room	Laptop	Check if some one send message to me
6.08	11.24	2 mins	Google email		Y			My room	Laptop	Check emails
6.08	11.37	2 mins	Wechat		Y			My room	Smart phone	Post status on timeline
6.08	11.48	2 mins	Wechat		Y	friends		My room	Smart phone	Reply comments left by friends
6.08	12.32	2 mins	Facebook		Y			My room	Laptop	Browse the post
6.08	12.53	2 mins	Google email		Y			My room	Laptop	Check emails and delete junk emails
6.08	13.04	30 mins	Skype		Y	employer	Rotterdam	My room	Laptop	interview
6.08	13.39	2 mins	Wechat		Y	friends		My room	Smart phone	Message with friend and reply comments
6.08	15.03	3 mins	Wechat		Y	friend	Leicester	My room	Smart phone	Message with friend
6.08	17.27	30 mins	Facebook		Y	friend	Italy	My room	Smart phone	Message with friend
6.08	18.11	10 mins	Facebook		Y	friend	Italy	My room	Laptop	Message with friend

Social Media Log 3 [Zhilan]

Date	Approx. Time	Approx. Duration	Name of SM	Academic Use	Social Use	Who/Why	Where to	Where from	Device	Notes/Your Feelings
Day 1										
17.07	00.47	3hr 56m	QQ		Y	Family/Cousin	Australia-Adelaide	Accommodation	laptop	Discussing movies and baby because I want to make her relax
17.07	00.59	1hr	QQ		Y	Friend-H	China-Nanjing	Accommodation	laptop	Discussing cooking because both of us cooked lots of dishes today for friends
17.07	01.30	2hr 12m	QQ		Y	Friend-H(long time no see)	China-Suzhou	Accommodation	Phone	Discussing everything because we have not contacted to each other for a long period
17.07	16.33	5m	UoL emails	Y		Supervisor	Greece-unknown	Accommodation	laptop	Discussing assignment with supervisor
Day 2										
18.07	01.21	1hr 15m	QQ		Y	Family-Mon	China-Zhenjiang	Accommodation	phone	Daily contact with my mum—making jokes to each other
18.07	02.32	2hr	QQ		Y	Friend-H	China-Suzhou	Accommodation	phone	
18.07	04.25	15m	QQ	Y		Other Students	China-Zhenjiang	Accommodation	phone	Discussing some ideas of dissertation because he is good at studying
18.07	16.22	5m	WeChat		Y	Friend-UoL	UoL	Accommodation	phone	Leave a message for her because I want her to buy sth home to me
18.07	16.25	2m	UoL emails	Y		Other UoL	UoL	Accommodation	laptop	Check the email daily
18.07	17.01	48m	QQ		Y	Friend-H	China-Nanjing	Accommodation	phone	Discussing job pressure because my friend feels stressed in a job exam
Day 3										
19.07	04.20	2hr 2m	QQ		Y	Friend-H	China-Zhenjiang	Accommodation	phone	Discussing the party that will be held for me because I will go back
19.07	05.21	5m	WeChat		Y	Family/Cousin	Australia-Adelaide	Accommodation	phone	Sending some photos of travelling to her because it is the ideal place for her to relax
19.07	19.20	3m	UoL emails	Y		Other UoL	UoL	Accommodation	phone	Check the email daily
Day 4										
20.07	01.17	5m	WeChat		Y	Friend-H	China-Suzhou	Accommodation	phone	"
20.07	03.42	19m	QQ		Y	Friend-H	China-Nanjing	Accommodation	Phone	"
20.07	14.55	15m	QQ		Y	Family-Cousin	China-Zhenjiang	Accommodation	phone	My elder Cousin will get married and I feel so happy
20.07	16.15	3m	UoL emails	Y		Other UoL	UoL	Accommodation	laptop	Check the email daily

Day 5										
21.07	03.03	31m	QQ	Y		Other students	China-Zhenjiang	Accommodation	phone	Checking some ideas of dissertation because he is good at studying
21.07	11.13	31m	QQ		Y	Family/Cousin	Australia-Adelaide	Accommodation	phone	Discussing the pregnancy of my cousin because I am concerned about her
21.07	16.49	20m	QQ		Y	Friend-H	China-Nanjing	On the way home	phone	Discussing delicious food because I am so hungry at that time
21.07	17.00	3m	QQ		Y	Friend/Common friend	China-Guiyang	On the way home	phone	Leave a message for her
21.07	19.25	3m	UoL emails	Y		Other UoL	UoL	Accommodation	laptop	Check the email daily
Day 6										
22.07	01.52	1h 3m	WeChat		Y	Friend-H	China-Zhenjiang	Accommodation	phone	Discussing region because I felt so excited after attending a church activity last week
22.07	09.07	3m	WeChat		Y	Friend-UoL	Germany-Cologne	Accommodation	Phone	She has arrived the destination safely because I concerned about her
22.07	13.05	2m	UoL emails	Y		Other UoL	UoL	Accommodation	phone	Check the email daily
22.07	19.50	3m	Facebook		Y	Friend-UoL	House	Accommodation	Phone	Share some words with her because I am so happy to know she is in a relationship with a handsome boy in UK
22.07	22.30	10m	QQ		Y	Friend-H	China-Nanjing	Accommodation	Phone	Discussing the results of his job exam because I am concerned about him
Day 7										
23.07	01.17	1hr 2m	WeChat		Y	Friend-H	China-Zhenjiang	Accommodation	laptop	Discussing her husband who is unfair to her/ I feel so sorry to hear that and look forward to see her and give a big huge
23.07	10.20	2m	UoL emails	Y		Other UoL	UoL	Accommodation	laptop	Check the email daily
23.07	15.37	16m	QQ		Y	Family/mother	China-Zhenjiang	Accommodation	laptop	My daily contact to my families

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