

# Transnational Citizens and Identities: International Students' Self-Perceived Identities, their Social Networks and their Consumption of Entertainment Media in Australia

Catherine Gomes  
Basil Alzougool  
RMIT Univerisity

# Current studies on international students



- ▶ Social networks and use of media communication technologies as lenses to unpack the international student experience.
- ▶ Locate international students as a static group with singular national home-based identities or social networks exclusively connected to the home nation
- ▶ Significant and necessary but....


# International Students are multidimensional



- ▶ **Transnational citizens with transnational identities** who often face challenges attempting to both maintain established identities that are linked to the homeland while at the same time creating new ones reflective of their local experience during their time overseas.
- ▶ Have multiple **social networks**
- ▶ Exposed to and avid consumers of the **global entertainment media**

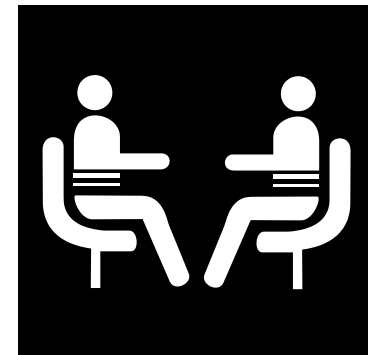


# Research Questions

- ▶ How do entertainment media and social networks in Australia assist international students with their sense of belonging to both the home nation and the host nation?
  - ▶ What are international students' (self-perceived) identities?
  - ▶ How do these identities help international students connect to both homeland and adopted country?
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# Methodology

- ▶ Thirty international students
- ▶ Recruitment through Gumtree, colleagues from various Victorian universities, international student society groups, City of Melbourne, snowball effect
- ▶ Focus groups, small groups and as individuals



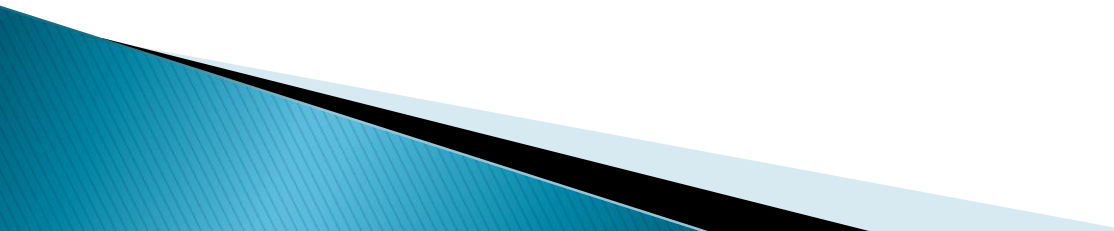
# Information on sample –eclectic mix

Gender	M (12)	F (18)
Age Range	18 to 20 (5) 21 to 25 (15)	26 to 30 (9) 31–35 (1)
Education Pursuit	Diploma (5) Undergraduate (9) Postgraduate (16)	
Discipline Areas	Arts (1) Biomedicine (1) Business (3) Commerce (5) Engineering (2)	Event Management (1) MBA (1) Medicine (1) International Relations (2) Science(3) Not Specified (10)
Country	Bangladesh (2) China (6) France (2) Germany (1) India (5) Indonesia (1)	Iran (1) Korea (3) Malaysia (3) Pakistan (1) Singapore (2) Vietnam (3)
Length of stay in Australia at time of interview	>1 year (7) 1 year to > 2 years (9) 2 years to > 3 years (5)	3 years to > 4 years (2) 4 years to > 8 years (7)
Lived in countries other than their homelands for work or study before coming to Australia	Finland (1) India (1)	Italy (2) New Zealand (1) Poland (1)

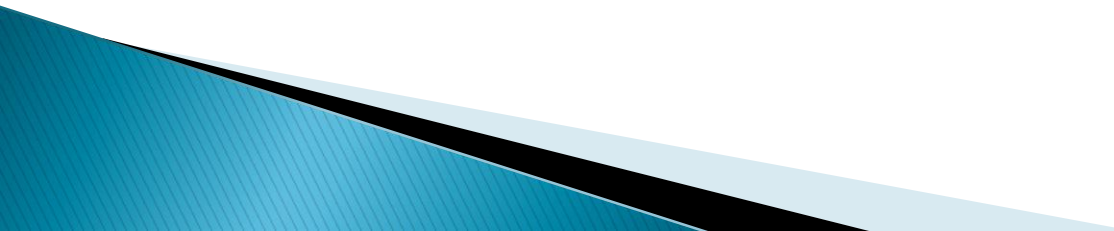


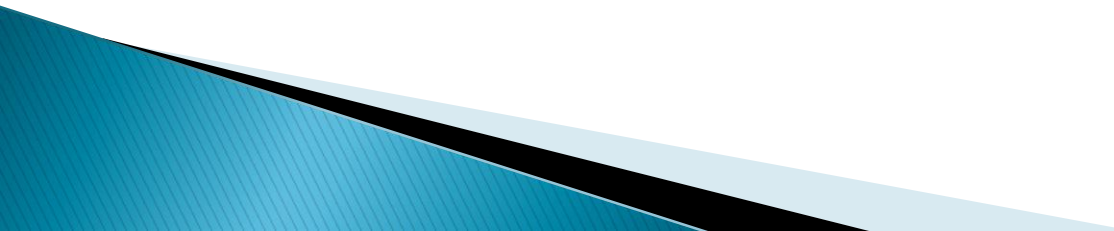
# Results

# Results Summary

- ▶ On the surface, international students **tap into entertainment media and social networks as sources for various and sometimes interrelated reasons** such as relaxation, community and wellbeing (e.g. to de-stress).
  - ▶ On a deeper level however, entertainment media and social networks also **help to maintain existing national and cultural identities in addition to aiding in the formation and reinforcement of new yet temporary ones** such as being an international student.
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# Exploring Transnational Identities through International Student Social Networks

- ▶ International students' self-identity is based on their current status as foreigners on temporary student visas more so than linked to their home country or ethnicity.
  - ▶ Participants rationalised that they are able to connect and identify more with non-locals because of similar and shared experiences of being foreigners and international students.
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- ▶ Not only **comfortable with fellow international students** from their home but also with international students from their region and elsewhere.
  - ▶ A reason for this is **to get to know cultures and people other than their own** – International students thus create a multicultural existence for themselves during their stay in Australia.
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# Global Entertainment Media Creates Connections to Home and Transnational Identities

- ▶ Regardless of the country participants come from, **entertainment media allows for a subliminally active and continuous sense of belonging to the home nation** through familiarity of content, the display of home culture, familiarity of characters and players, familiarity of language and so on

- ▶ Avid fans of American film, television and music
- ▶ Consume entertainment media produced outside the homeland in conjunction with products and productions from the homeland
  - consuming global media productions provides them with connections to home.

- ▶ The global entertainment media is also responsible in contributing to international students' transnational citizenship even before their arrival in Australia. This is because international students are already exposed to global entertainment through advancements in media technology which sees the rapid spread of media products and their messages

# What next?

- ▶ Journal on entertainment media consumption and communication media use
  - ▶ Online survey
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