Knowledge, experiences, perceptions and attitudes of the receiving society to international students

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Summary

International education is a global growth phenomenon. In Australia tertiary international students number practically 300,000, with the rate of growth within the sector twice that of other areas. International education is not only an important export industry for Australia, but one that significantly affects local residents as they perform everyday routines and practices. Bringing together literature from the fields of international education, mobilities and diversity studies, this thesis interrogates how the receiving society recognises, perceives and experiences international students. It analyses the intersection of global and local forces; neoliberalism and student mobilities; and the negotiation of difference in a highly diverse context. Its analysis offers an alternative to conventional intercultural studies that examine relations between seemingly disparate groups by measuring levels of integration, in that it applies a more complex approach and frame of analysis to explore relations in a mixt and rapidly transforming area of Sydney. The research uses a broad mix of ethnographic methods, including ethnographic observations concentrated in three sites, opportunistic discussions, extensive field-notes, focus groups, individual interviews and anonymous questionnaires. Drawing on this rich empirical data, this study argues that global and local phenomena are intricately entwined to affect how everyday relations are constructed and enacted. This approach provides critical, ambiguous, complex and indeed often contradictory insights into relations between international students and the receiving society, as well as offering possibilities for generating new distinctive imaginings for the City of Ryde, New South Wales. Additionally the findings include potential for scaling up into broader political debates that can translate into new policy directions.

Statement of Candidate

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled **'Knowledge, experiences, perceptions and attitudes of the receiving society to international students'** has not been previously submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also declare that the thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written by me. Any help or assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself have been appropriately acknowledged.

In addition, I state that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis. The research presented in this thesis was approved by Macquarie University Human Ethics Review Committee, reference number 5201300768.

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Ruth Gresham (43150624)

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I would never have begun this journey of inquiry, however, without impetus from the countless international students who have been a significant part of my life for more than 20 years. It has been an honour to work in international education, through which I have been able to 'travel the world' in a most unique and satisfying way. I thank each and every one of you for enriching my life.

Most importantly, I thank my truly fabulous, wonderful husband, Paul, who is always there for me. In truth much of this thesis belongs to him, for without all the things he has taken on when I have been 'too busy', this thesis would not have happened. I dedicate this thesis to him and promise that retirement starts now. *Andiamo!*

Introduction and research methods

For two decades I held a range of distinct professional positions at The University of Newcastle. As a result, opportunities opened up for me to become acquainted with international students from across the globe, some of whom trusted me with their personal stories of life in Australia. Over time I became familiar with the aspirations of countless students, told often through narratives of hope that were connected to journeys 'of becoming' by attaining an international education. Nonetheless within this context, I heard often too, of unfulfilled expectations and realities that were incongruous with anticipations, and from which emerged feelings of disenchantment, melancholy and despair. At the forefront of many of these accounts were habitual descriptions of 'failed' relations between the students and the receiving society, manifested occasionally through incidents of racism, abuse, or exploitation, but more often through less visible moments characterised by apathy, disaffection, or silent hostility. One of the most poignant images and narratives I carry to this day, is that of Chen a vivacious Taiwanese woman, whom I recall with tears streaming down her face, speaking of her humiliation in being excluded from 'group work' on the basis that her fellow students deemed her to be a liability; a person with nothing of 'value' to contribute. On the surface this incident might appear relatively insignificant, but its salience lay in how she, as an international student, was recognised by the receiving society; a body that represented deficit, limitation and burden.

Essentially it was these kinds of experiences, habitually repeated, that provided much of the impetus to commence this study - to start asking questions about relations between international students and the receiving society; how relations form and operate. What does the receiving society know about international students? How do they perceive them? Where do interactions between the receiving society and the students take place? What kinds of behaviours and communications occur? What is the impact of these interactions on feelings

and attitudes? How do feelings and attitudes influence and shape future behaviours? These questions I asked in an attempt to reconcile what the students told me about their lives and my own knowledge and experiences of the receiving society. Truly, at times I found it difficult to make sense of the hostility, apathy and unresponsiveness reported by the students, for one of my principal roles at the University of Newcastle was to spear-head a range of specifically-designed programmes[1] that mediated constructive and inclusive experiences for international students, whilst they built understanding across difference. Reliant on the good-will and support of local residents to perform these programmes, the students' experiences seemed at odds with the encounters I had with volunteers (and other local residents) who exhibited warmth, hospitality and friendliness. It was the paradox and inconsistency of this situation that created the departure point for my research.

Key research questions

This thesis poses the following key research question: What knowledge, perceptions and attitudes do the receiving society hold about international students? To assist in answering this question, I ask specifically: Where and how do interactions between international students and the receiving society take place? What do these interactions look like? What meta-forces might be at play? To what extent do these meta-forces influence perceptions and attitudes? What is the physical and emotional barometer towards international students in Ryde? How do everyday encounters contribute to feelings of inclusion and exclusion?

Approaching this topic from the standpoint of the receiving society, has been to date unexpectedly overlooked. A significant body of literature: identifies national policies and frameworks that regulate international education in Australia; elucidates key junctures within the international student experience; investigates issues that impact on relations between international students and the receiving society; and explores friendship patterns and social networks. Upfront I acknowledge the significance and contribution of this literature in

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[1] These include *International Student Care* programme, *Community Connections*, *Family Care* programme, *Cultural Connections* and *Homestay*.

elucidating the experiences of international students, but at the same time, I maintain that for the complexities of relations between international students and the receiving society to be expansively unpacked and understood, it is vital to fashion an all-encompassing understanding of how relations construct and function, including inherent challenges. This study attempts to do this. Its contribution lies in what it offers as an in-depth, ethnographic exposé, and for the potential it proposes to transform relations between international students and the receiving society. The concept of transformation is important, as for my fieldwork shows, inconsistencies and contradictions in relations exist, that if ignored, hold potential to challenge social cohesion at the local level. In this light I ask throughout this study: What ideas exist to improve relations between international students and the receiving society? How can these ideas translate into actions? Which individuals or organisations might carry responsibility for change? What are the input and resource implications for doing so? How might we lift up the answers to these questions so that they offer possibilities for change in a broader sense? These questions I apply as a secondary line of inquiry.

This study deviates from a common pathway of inquiry into intercultural relations, whereby attention is routinely attached to 'measuring' levels of integration (Padilla, Azevedo & Olmos-Acaraz 2015), to favour an examination of the ways in which complex processes of social interaction and individual reflection shape perceptions. Underpinning this approach is recognition of how perceptions and feelings represent social reality for many people, and as such, how they become fundamental drivers for explanations of beliefs (Colic-Peisker & Robertson 2015), and potentially self-fulfilling prophesies.

The study site and the participants

The study site

This study is concentrated in the Local Government Area [LGA] of Ryde, a district located 12 kilometres west of the Sydney CBD, comprised (fully or partially) of 16 suburbs. This site was chosen on the basis that Macquarie University is situated within this locale and because

significantly, 5.8% of the area's total population of 110, 791 are international students (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] Population and Housing 2011; GML Social Research 2011), just as 42.2% of the area's total population were born overseas. The three largest local ancestries (back three generations) are Australian, English and Chinese (Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Housing 2006, 2011). The Centre for Social Impact for the City of Ryde (2012) predicts the population to surge to 137, 310 over the next two decades with the largest increase among those aged over 55 years. By 2019, the dominant housing type is expected to be lone-person households, in line with the ageing population. Within this area, Macquarie University with a total student population of 40,209, is noteworthy for its relatively high proportion of international students - approximately 21% of total enrolments - or 8,572 persons (Macquarie University *Annual report* 2015).

The suburb of Macquarie Park is home to Macquarie University, along with global companies including Microsoft, Sony, Optus, Johnson and Johnson and Goodman Fielder. Earmarked as a zone for large-scale business ventures, Macquarie Park is currently undergoing further transformations through which it will become the fourth largest Central Business District in Australia behind Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. With plans afoot to create more than 40,000 additional jobs by 2030, massive redevelopments are in progress, reconfiguring existing infrastructure to make way for large-scale, high-rise housing developments, fresh public spaces, new retail opportunities and improved connectivity to transport (NSW Government Department of Planning and Environment 2013, 2014). Other suburbs in Ryde are tagged too for large-scale developments, with high-rise apartment blocks popping up across suburban skylines of North Ryde, Epping and West Ryde. These developments come on top of recent transformations in suburbs like Eastwood, where an influx of Chinese and Korean business people have, over the past two decades, made-over the suburb's largely Anglo-Celtic appearance to become one that is essentially Asian. Despite the obvious benefits that are earmarked to flow from these developments, many long-term residents express concern that community cohesiveness is under threat. Catherine, an older, long-term resident,

spoke for many of the participants I interviewed when she told of everyday life for her in the 'new' Ryde.

> *The owner, a recent purchase was 1.3 million and it's being rented – obviously an investment property. There's one new tenant after the other. This was originally a housing commission estate, so my house, well mine and a few others, are the last ones remaining, and they will be developed. The one next door has been developed, one on the other side has been developed, the one across the road has been developed – they are all coming down. There are hardly any of the original housing commission, which we are all fine over, they needed to come down. My mother still lives in our house so she has lived in the house for 65 years. But I don't know what will be the future there… The only time anybody ever speaks is if they want someone to stop doing something, or if my neighbour next door wants to know if I would agree to something like a pool or an easement, with the new property development. When they put the gas on, he asked me about that, that's basically all we ever talk about. They're Russian so he has difficulty with the language. So it is his wife – we're friendly enough, his wife is nice. The people in the one further down, I have never spoken to, and around the corner I have never spoken to. Across the road, a family was hostile to every neighbour before the Chinese couple bought for 1.2 million two years ago. They keep to themselves and are very nice. We actually wave to each other, but nobody speaks English and the people on the development at Number 1, the development beside me, they subdivided and nobody speaks to me. I don't speak to them. They come and go by car. Nobody walks.*

Catherine's story was not uncommon, especially among those who had lived in the suburbs of Ryde for many years[2]. A shared thread weaving through these stories was both acknowledgement of the inevitability of change and grief for a more familiar past.

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[2] Data from anonymous questionnaires showed it was usual for people to live in Ryde for many decades; some all their lives.

International students exist as a discrete, constant, yet mobile population within such contexts across Ryde. Neither drivers nor major beneficiaries of tagged urban transformations, this study shows that their presence is nonetheless noted because they, along with other newcomers, represent changes that are at odds with the imagined stability and fixity of the 'past'. Part of the flow of new people to the area, their mobility intensifies their difference and contributes to a collective image of them as strangers who place pressure on existing infrastructure and services.

The participants

I sought participants who were 18 years or older, lived in the Ryde LGA, or spent significant amounts of time in the area, as domestic students who attend Macquarie University might do (see Appendix A for participant details). The participants of this study reflect the super-diversity (Vertovec 2007) of the population of Ryde, through differentiations that give due consideration to migration histories, ethnicities, educational attainments, length of residence, social networks, legal rights, citizenship status, religions, human and economic capital. These kinds of variations I apply not just to minorities and migrants, but also to the Anglo-Australian population, many of whom have moved from other areas. In total, the data generated in the course of this study arises out of 12 individual interviews, eight focus groups (N=49), 21 written questionnaires, 42 opportunistic discussions and nine participant observations (over three concentrated sites). Additionally there are detailed field-notes, some of which relate to my attendance of community 'go-alongs'. Macquarie University Human Ethics Committee granted approval to undertake this study (see Appendix B).

Figure 1: Key groups of participants
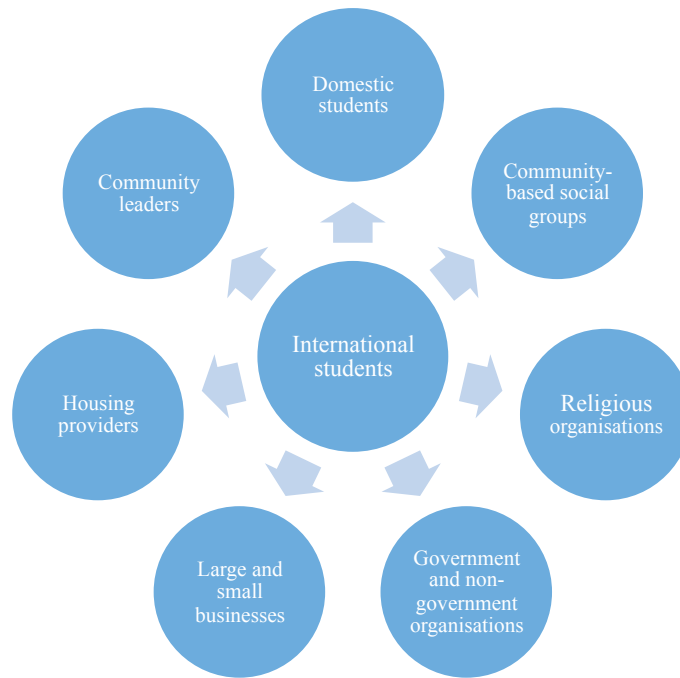
Snowball and purposive sampling methods resulted in participants being principally drawn from these seven key areas.

Conceptual frames

The principal contribution of this study is the way it references and coalesces three ostensibly discrete areas to construct a line of reasoning to explain the complexity of the subject at hand: the intersection of global and local forces; neoliberalism and student mobilities; and the negotiation of difference in a super-diverse (Vertovec 2007) context. Paid discrete attention at times throughout this thesis, these areas are also interwoven to fashion a complex, multi-layered interpretation of this study's topic. Central to my argument is the standpoint that today's global meta-forces cannot be de-coupled from everyday life, but rather intricately filter down to influence how people live together (Wise 2009). Within this construct, international students as mobile subjects who assemble into transnational flows, embody both the processes of globalisation and practices of proximate and distant social relations (Collins 2013).

The intersection of global and the local forces

The conceptualisation of globalisation as a meta-force is inherently linked to constant, snowballing, global flows. The *effects* of these flows penetrate, filter and seep into everyday lives (Urry 2000). Visible at the societal level through processes that deliver people, information, news, images and goods across borders, the effects of globalisation are ambiguous; embodying not only potential for constructive societal transformations, but also disruption and disorder. As an up-shot, not everyone is open to embrace globalisation, for some people are perceived to benefit, just as others register sentiments of exclusion and marginalisation (Cohen & Kennedy 2013).

Global capital is making considerable investment in knowledge industries (including international education) and the importance of the knowledge society is growing globally (Raghuram 2013) as 'economic, political, and societal forces [are] push[ing] 21st century higher education towards greater international involvement' (Altbach & Knight 2007, p.290). In the context of this thesis, this means that despite potential resistance at the local level towards structured and ideological meta-forces, globalisation in the form of transnational people flows that include international students, is likely to continue unabated (save for national, temporal and spatial variations). Mobility undertaken for the purpose of attaining knowledge capital has become a possible, normal, perhaps even taken-for-granted part of the life cycle for some, buttressed and fuelled by complex sets of motivations and financial considerations (Collins 2013; Conradson & Latham 2005). These might include the potential benefits international education offers for physical and social mobility, more cosmopolitan lifestyles, or greater career opportunities. Whatever motivations drive mobility for this set of people, 'a life "on the move" is viewed as a fundamental indicator of achieving "the good life" '(Elliott & Urry 2010, p.10), whilst 'multiple mobilities have become the drivers of symbolic power, bodily habituses and pleasure-seeking lifestyles' (Elliott & Urry 2010, p.10). The intersection of the global with the local creates fertile ground for this study. It raises the issue of how enduring mobile populations affect the lives of those who remain in an

'immobile' state (that is in neither a position of temporary or permanent migration), just as it focuses a spotlight on international students as an exemplar of transnational flows. Even though globalisation as a meta-force might remain ostensibly opaque to individuals going about their everyday lives, this study unpacks how its effects *are* present, albeit sifted to fit within quotidian scope (Wise 2009).

In ensuing chapters I attempt to capture the ambiguities, contradictions and uncertainties, emblematic of peoples' varied responses to the effects of globalisation. At once I describe how some hold tight to constructs that represent the solidity of the local; embodied in a deep sense of melancholy about idealised pasts and times when 'their' neighbourhoods were remembered as safer, less risky, more familiar and comfortable. Similarly, I mediate voice for those who elect to take a more forthright stance to protect localism, fashioned through the establishment of external alliances (Cohen & Kennedy 2013) that openly denounce the way in which transnational flows pose threat and disruption. I also unpack other positions too, those that perceive change as an opportunity to acquire knowledge, social and cultural capital, along with plural identities that reflect cosmopolitan outlooks. I argue throughout this thesis that people respond in multifarious and indeed sometimes contradictory and ambiguous ways to changes in their daily lives that are, at least in part, attributable to processes of globalisation. Irrespective of how people respond to globalisation, they are nonetheless propelled towards more dynamic, uncertain and indistinct footings; a position from which it is impossible to dissociate entirely. As such, the local and the global have become entwined; linked through limitless intersections, whereby each is contingent on the other. As Urry (2000, p.210) argued, 'they [the local and the global] develop in a symbiotic, irreversible and unstable set of relationships, in which each gets transformed through billions of iterations worldwide'.

The emergence of neoliberalism within international education

Despite the longevity of international education in Australia (traceable to the early 20th century), it was only in the aftermath of World War II with the inception of the Colombo Plan

for Cooperative Development in South and Southeast Asia [hereafter Colombo Plan] that attention focused on International Education policy. Devised initially to create gateways for international students from developing countries to take up opportunities for advanced training in scientific, administrative and technological disciplines, the Colombo Plan gave rise to the concept of education-as-aid, just as its policy framework privileged occasions that immersed students in host pedagogies and structured social experiences (Meadows 2011). Labelled sojourners or guests, international students who came to Australia under the Colombo Plan retained temporary visa status that was underpinned with a 'sunset clause', both precise and fixed.

The concept of education-as-aid continued as a key driver of International Education policy in Australia until the 1980s when in the aftermath of two nationally commissioned reports (that became known as the Dawkins reforms), a new model of international education surfaced; a hybridisation of education-as-aid with the concept of education-as-trade (Rizvi 2011). It was the inception of this new model of international education that opened up previously inconceivable possibilities for growth, evidenced by more than 270,000 international students studying on-shore in higher education in 2015 (Australian Government Department of Education and Training 2015). To achieve such exponential growth in little more than three decades has required student recruitment strategies to assume a dominant place within educational institutions. Employing unrelenting marketing approaches to recruit students, success within many institutions nowadays is defined in terms of student numbers (Rizvi 2011), whilst the fees that international students pay, prop-up precarious financial positions for many educational institutions. International education has evolved into an industry with administrative technologies, highly specialised structures and functions geared towards global operations. Moreover, it is an endeavour supported by national governments through organisations such as Austrade, casting it as a sector fulsomely embedded within the concepts of trade and globalisation (Rizvi 2011). This is an important consideration, for as I foreshadowed in the previous section, practices of globalisation have implications beyond

market relations. As such, the policies and processes of international education have come to incorporate an inherent ideology of self-regulation known as neoliberalism, a rationality that is embedded within concepts that privilege avarice over necessity; the rights of the individual in place of endeavours of common good; and apathy and unresponsiveness in lieu of care and responsibility (Cohen & Kennedy 2013). I argue throughout this thesis, even though neoliberalism is essentially a macro-force, its effects are deeply felt at the micro-level, influencing and shaping not only how educational institutions implement specific policies but also how they conduct relations with their citizenry. Such positioning has spill-over effects too, for it sculpts the views of the broader society towards educational institutions, just as it affects the ways the receiving society elects to enact relations with international students.

The nexus between education and migration (Madge, Raghuram & Noxolo 2009) is highly significant too, for it has become a key driver of policies and practices of global commercialisation of higher education (Lewis 2011). This connection, necessitated by two interlocking mechanisms: income for higher education institutions generated through student fees; and the need for governments to address key skills shortages in the face of ageing populations (Gribble & Blackmore 2012; Robertson 2015a), has resulted in international students being viewed as potential 'solutions' to both these issues. Noted by some as a flexible, skilled labour source embodied with sought-after characteristics of youthfulness, self-enterprise and adaptability (Ong 2006; Robertson 2014), international students are considered to be 'desirable' migrants within the neoliberal construct. As a consequence, national government policies that regulate the immigration-education nexus include conditions that allow for post-study expanded work rights and visas for international students, whilst these stipulations simultaneously deliver a degree of certainty and security for Australia to retain its stake in the competitive and lucrative international education marketplace.

Accordingly in little more than six decades, international education has evolved from a footing whereby international students funnelled along a precise trajectory that culminated in

return to their countries of origin, to far less fixed and certain circumstances that today are imbued with multiple post-study possibilities, one of which is migration. Made achievable through recognition of the transformative potential of higher education to generate social and cultural capital that is convertible for geographic and social mobility, international students who elect to switch their temporary status to permanency are able to do so because of knowledge acquisition (Collins 2013; King & Raghuram 2013). Knowledge has thus become a hallmark of the desirable migrant under neoliberal rationality (Robertson & Runganaikaloo 2014); a growing phenomenon that is not restricted to Australia, but rather revealed globally and moderated only by national, regional and temporal distinctions (King & Raghuram 2013). Nonetheless it is important to take into account that ideologies which privilege certain migrant 'types' are not new phenomena, as Australia has historically favoured those who have the ability to contribute to nation building (Castles 2010; Spoonley 2015), and are able to demonstrate particular 'desirable' traits (such as Whiteness, Anglo-ness and the ability to speak English). Notwithstanding, in the recall of the key principles of Migration policy (permanency, assimilation and stability) significant incompatibilities arise between the past, and today's flows of large-scale temporary migrants and revolving mobile populations (Robertson 2014).

Migration or mobility?

Alongside its positioning as a phenomenon associated with embodied flows of people, globalisation of education also denotes other complexities. These include geopolitics and cultural processes that have the potential to transform the way in which the 'value' of education is perceived and the way in which social relations are enacted (Sidhu 2007). For globalisation of education has come to be associated not only with the rise in international mobility, but also with changing cultural representations of education within universities. A product of neoliberal market-driven policies, whereby prospective students are 'sold' international education as a commodity, to enable both the acquisition of formal knowledge, social and cultural capital, international education nowadays also represents symbolic capital;

a distinctive identity marker in tune with cosmopolitanism, that can be used post-study to build international careers (Findlay et al. 2012). Enmeshed within this conceptual construction, is the way in which student mobility operates. Underscored as 'movement' over sending and receiving localities and perspectives, the concept of student flows through the lens of mobility is tied to understandings to do with shorter timeframes for movement and possibilities of mobile subjects either returning home (Castles 2010; King & Raghuram 2013), or using their mobile status to embark on global trajectories. Implicit within the mobilities' framework is the notion that whilst international students might traverse national borders and live for extended periods of time in a particular locality, they continue to preserve emotional, social and material ties elsewhere (Collins 2013). Their social relations are thus different to those whose lives are structured around geographical embeddedness and fixity, for interwoven with their mobile status is the potential to feel simultaneously 'at home' in various parts of the world (Castles 2013; Elliott & Urry 2010). With their mobility mediated by individuals and organisations, including families, friends, agents, educational institutions and nation states, international students become enmeshed in a social field that underpins and directs their mobility. At the same time, their accumulation of knowledge, cultural and social capital as outcomes of living and studying overseas, give rise to more cosmopolitan sensibilities (Collins 2012a); thus exposing a connection between student mobilities and globalisation of education.

Even though international education is attributed with opening up cosmopolitan dispositions, the opportunities that international students enjoy and their rights to ongoing affiliation within Australian society, are restricted and contingent upon their continuing financial commitment. Despite their temporary visa status advancing a melange of entitlements, relations between international students, the state and receiving society are understood and managed through contract and consumption (Robertson 2015b). As non-citizens, they are excluded from the possibilities of belonging that are intrinsic to permanency (Yuval-Davies, Anthias & Kofman 2005), just as their temporary resident status unleashes constant contradictions that allow

simultaneously for flexibility and mobility, marginalisation and exclusion. The substantial fees they are required to pay to institutions of higher education, coupled with hefty living expenses, compel many international students to undertake casual (sometimes illegal) work and live in sub-standard accommodation in order to meet their fiscal obligations. The details of these parlous situations come to light usually only when they are extreme, shocking, or sensational enough to warrant media attention, or when they are exposed as impinging on the rights of others to scarce resources that some associate with citizenship. Whilst many international students hold promise of being skilled workers in the future, their temporary student status as unskilled workers creates a perception within the receiving society that they are both a threat and an underhand, problematic and opportunistic collective, far removed from the imagery of the 'desirable' migrant who is associated with knowledge capital, one-way mobility, settlement and integration (Cover 2015; Robertson 2015a). Moreover attempts to recalibrate policies and frameworks have largely failed to counter perplexity within the receiving society around the multifarious representations of international students that include student-as-customer, student-as-worker, student-as-sojourner, student-as-wealthy-cosmopolitan and student-as-potential-permanent-resident (Robertson 2011a). As I unpack throughout this thesis, many of these complexities continue unchallenged because government and institution-based elites, imbued with neoliberal mindsets, elect to prioritise the financial viability of the international education industry over their responsibilities to advocate for students and engage with their everyday lives.

Negotiating difference in a super-diverse context

Much of the City of Ryde is illustrative of what Sandercock and Kliger (1998) term a 'site of struggle', where longer established residents and newcomers alike grapple for recognition amidst significant change and development. Whilst change is not new to Ryde, nor indeed other places, it is the 'spread, speed and scale' (Meissner & Vertovec 2015, p.546) of current transformations that is intensifying concerns for some, expressed as loss, disorder, undermined identities and loosening of fit (Back 2015).

The third oldest centre of European settlement in Australia after Sydney and Parramatta (Carmichael 1926), Ryde was initially a rich farming district, that drew Chinese market gardener migrants in the early days of the colony, followed later by other migrant groups, most notably the Italians (McAndrew 2009). White settlement in Ryde has thus been intertwined with a history of migrant flows to the area, albeit at a slower pace and lesser scale than today. That is not to suggest however there has been a history of unreserved acceptance by the dominant Anglo-Celtic population of Ryde towards migrant-settlers, for numerous accounts demonstrate how migrant presence has met resistance, in part by way of immigration policy restrictions (Batrouney & Goldlust 2005) and also through attitudes that fashioned parallel lives (McAndrew 2009).

Evolution from its agricultural roots, through an era of heavy industry (largely engineering and ship building) to the sprawling urban metropolis Ryde represents today, has been rapid, occurring largely since World War II. Continuing unabated, acceleration in the pace of change is currently symbolised in the major housing and employment projects that are underway across Ryde (NSW Government Department of Planning and Environment 2013, 2014). Already an area of considerable diversity, made apparent through significant numbers (42.2%) of local residents born overseas; a substantial population of older residents (those over 55 years); rising proportions of single-person and single-parent households; and individuals who possess a multiplicity of religious and educational backgrounds (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] Census of Population and Housing 2011), new large-scale developments are likely to further increase the city's complexity and diversity. Set within this turbulent, fluid context is a relatively small, yet constant population of international students, characterised by their own heterogeneity and highly mobile individual lifestyles.

Like other transnational people flows, international students who inhabit Ryde are comprised of super-diverse (Vertovec 2007) populations with varied ethnic backgrounds, mixt personal histories, socio-economic classes, educational attainments, religions, political affiliations and degrees of financial capital. Additionally they hold varying rights and legal statuses,

contained within the conditions of their student visa categories that affect variables such as how long they stay in Australia, work rights, access to public services such as schools and transport concessions. These conditions regulate relations between students and the state, its resources, the legal system and other structures (Marginson 2010). They also act as mediators for the students to build social and cultural capital. I argue that it is these distinct markers of difference, in combination with other transformations occurring at the local level, that cause anxieties within the receiving society, and lead to questions being asked about the students' 'real' intentions in entering Australia. Furthermore, I propose that their difference continues to intersect with biopolitical regimes, intertwined with race and citizenship, to fuel questions about their ability to 'fit' (Swanton 2010). At the same time, micropolitical techniques (Swanton 2010), such as those practised by the media, racialise international students as moral subjects, affecting not only attitudes and viewpoints, but also how encounters are enacted with them.

Complexity and contradictions to do with negotiating differences are most often revealed in public spaces. In Ryde, I uncovered both a sense of normalcy about living with difference; a distinct approach that reflected 'civility towards diversity' (Lofland 1989, p.464), and sentiments of anxiety around rapid change and living amongst diversity[3]. For many, encounters with those who were different were few and fleeting with restricted scope to transform relations. As an upshot, relations built in other places, such as churches, student clubs, playgroups and community-based English classes became important building blocks for buttressing these kinds of micro-encounters, and for minimising stereotypes and prejudice (Wessendorf 2014).

Within the private realm, I encountered very different narratives about life in Ryde to the ones I witnessed elsewhere, with many longer-term residents expressing outrage about the

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[3] See Chapter Two for detailed descriptions of the make-up of the 'local' receiving society. In brief, the largest ancestries of the area are: Australian, Chinese and English, with 42.2% overseas born in 2012 (*Census of Population and Housing,* Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] 2006, 2011; Centre for Social Impact for the City of Ryde 2012).

challenges they experienced in negotiating differences (Blokland 2003). Often in the course of meandering opportunistic conversations, or one-on-one interviews, long-term residents opened up to: express feelings of powerlessness in face of large-scale developments in Ryde; bemoan the likelihood that the future would bring additional flows of strangers (including international students) who would make ambiguous demands for the exchange of social rituals (Goffman 1959, 1971), just as their presence would fail to lessen social distance (Simmel 1971). At the heart of these meditations were often fears about rights of belonging and who in the future, would be the most powerful and symbolic owners of public spaces. And within this context, perceived threats to do with escalations of super-diverse populations, unified fears about social and material displacement, just as they buttressed shared identities among long-term residents (Lofland 1989). Throughout this thesis I demonstrate a pervading undercurrent of victimhood (Wilson 2014), especially among older residents of Ryde, as they look back to the comfort of once familiar local spaces for nurture, and feelings of belonging to off-set loneliness and need (Wise 2005). To illustrate, I return to Catherine as she continues her story of living in Ryde.

> *I find the community, such as it is, pressured, angry, hostile; people aren't interested in other people, they're not interested in talking with other people. I have a sense that people are keeping to themselves. Everyone I know where I live tends to keep to themselves and in a, what can I say, sort of like a defensive position, they have a moat around them. Each house is a self-contained castle where you don't really want anybody impeaching on your privacy. You try really hard not to impeach on their's. You hop in your car or two, and drive around the place. You go to a shopping centre, like Macquarie or Ryde, and people abuse you in the car park. They don't like the way you drive. If you wave to a neighbour - I have one neighbour who I wave to - I saw her with her baby when she was crossing the road so I waved to her and a man behind me blew his horn at me. I nearly got out and hit him. I just waved to my neighbour and she doesn't speak English. She just really appreciates it. Up at Ryde shopping centre,*

you've got facilities for mums with babies, and there is a hell of a lot of them, mums

with babies. They go up to the shopping centre and they stay outside Millers, at the

coffee shop outside, where all the baby clothes are, and go shopping.

Catherine's story of life in Ryde is one version. Throughout ensuing chapters I also lay bare alternative accounts of relations among the residents of Ryde, many of which are characterised through contradictory lens of coexistence that suggests both separation and mixing. And while some scenarios describe small-scale clashes and challenges that come with living amongst those who are different, above all this study shows a consistent, universal desire to live together peacefully amidst the turbulence of rapidly changing global and local environments.

Research methods

Overview of approach

In recognition that the participants of this study were drawn from the super-diverse (Vertovec 2007) population of the City of Ryde (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] Census of Population and Housing 2011), I acknowledged upfront the importance of securing a methodology that would encapsulate the richness of their multi-layered experiences through 'thick descriptions' (Geertz 1973). Given the dearth of prior studies on the subject matter (Ward, Masgoret & Gezentsvey 2009), I recognised that it was vital to adopt a methodology that would inspire nuanced accounts and deep insights, needed to explain the nature of the connections between international students and the receiving society. After careful consideration, it was evident that qualitative measures would best fulfil these objectives.

Accepting that social science conceptions need to be fluid because their subject matter, at least in part, is comprised of the views and thinking of social agents themselves (Willis 2000), I chose broad ethnographic techniques from the interpretive and phenomenological traditions within social sciences (O'Reilly 2009). Using a range of methods, I sensitively encouraged participants to tell their stories to the fullest and to communicate their innermost thoughts

(although not always expressed through language), in order to construct in-depth descriptions with a focus on 'why'. In line with the emphasis ethnographic research places on the process of constructing knowledge, as well as the knowledge product, I also carefully attended to documenting the process underlying this journey as it unfolded (Blommaert & Jie 2010).

Sampling and methodological limitations

I entered the City of Ryde as an outsider, which was simultaneously advantageous and problematic. As a stranger, one of my first challenges was to identify individuals, organisations and groups who would best fit the criteria to participate in this research. Without in-depth insider knowledge, I started with what was most familiar; student groups within the University. First, I contacted the leaders of these groups, in the hope that they would provide access to the organisations they represented, and also because they were likely to know of other groups I might contact. From these initial contacts within the perimeter of the campus, I progressively moved outwards in messy 'concentric circles' across the community to small and large businesses, accommodation providers, religious organisations, government and non-government organisations, community leaders (such as politicians) and community-based social groups. Embedded within my recruitment strategy was an element of opportunism (Bryman 2012), as I capitalised on openings presented through opportunistic discussions with individuals, who were usually complete strangers.

Although seemingly contradictory, I combined both random contacts and strategic networks as approaches to sampling, with the consequence that my recruitment strategies were both purposive and snowball, and in accordance with ethnographic studies, ongoing, iterative and practically limited. Whilst snowball sampling brought me into contact with individuals and groups who fit the eligibility criteria of this research, it also created limitations however, in that it impacted negatively on variability, shutting out those who might offer different insights and experiences. To some extent this was addressed by including other methods of data generation into the study, such as opportunistic discussions, through which I was able to

sometimes weave into casual conversations the questions posed by this study. Anonymous questionnaires too, provided opportunities to hear diverse voices and also to capture the kinds of information that some might have found difficult to express during face-to-face encounters (Lahire 2011). By employing a combination of diverse methods, I captured a range of voices with as much variation in gender, age, ethnicity and experiences as possible. Nevertheless spending just 14 months (from January 2014 to March 2015) 'in the field' placed limitations on my ability to connect deeply with all sectors of the community, especially those individuals who had little contact with international students. In truth, given the numbers of international students who reside in Ryde, I was surprised how many long-term residents declared they had limited knowledge of, and few interactions with them; factors that deterred their participation in this study.

Data generation methods

Individual interviews

Semi-structured interviews were an important method of data generation, so keeping in mind their potential shortcomings (discussed in the next section), I adopted a range of practices that to reduce the impact of issues such as power differentials in my interactions with the participants. I began each interview by offering the interviewee a brief re-cap of the purpose of the research and I provided assurance about anonymity. I explained my aspirations in undertaking this study (Lofland & Lofland 1984). The places and time of the interviews were negotiated, so that the interviewees were able to suggest public or private spaces that they found comfortable and easy to access, as I was aware that the context in which the questions are posed can affect the respondents' interpretation and the nature of their response, including intentional omissions or falsification of material (O'Reilly 2009). The 12 individual interviews I conducted occurred in diverse spaces including cafés, libraries, meeting rooms, offices, community halls, shopping centres, private gardens, a pub, a club and interviewees' homes. I paid attention to the schedule of the interview questions so that the least

controversial question was placed first and I endeavoured to create an environment that was as informal and relaxed as possible. I sought the interviewees' permission to audio-tape and I explained who would have access to the data and where it would be saved and stored. I encouraged interviewees to seek clarification or to criticise a line of questioning. In doing this, I attempted to open up opportunities for interviewees to contribute information they considered important. At the conclusion of each interview, I asked if the interviewee had any further information they wished to contribute and I remained with the interviewee for a short time afterwards, so they could de-brief about any issue if they chose to do so. At the conclusion of most of the interviews, the interviewees commented that they enjoyed the experience.

I remained mindful throughout that 'interviews are cooperative products of interactions between two or more persons who assume different roles and who frequently come from contrasting social, cultural, and / or linguistic backgrounds' (Briggs 1986, p.102), and as such, they involve a degree of control and formality that frequently work in the interviewer's favour. Although often described as a cooperative product of interaction, conversational reciprocity during interviews is usually lacking. Moreover, Ten Have (2004) argued that interviews constrain speech and are unlike ordinary conversations, whilst Kusenbach (2003) asserted that because interviews are static encounters, separated from routine experiences and practices of the real world, they do not allow all aspects of lived experience to be discussed. Additionally the way in which interviews are conducted allows issues that are not important to the interviewer to be overlooked (Goffman 1981). These kinds of arguments provided me with valid reasons to consider the degree of reliance that I should place on interviews, but as argued by Lofland and Lofland (1984), if facilitated sensitively interviews can also be enjoyable and informative dialogues.

Focus groups

In addition to individual interviews, I conducted eight focus groups. While focus groups share some of the shortcomings associated with interviews, they can facilitate interaction between group members (Lofland & Lofland 1984; Ten Have 2004). Moreover, they allow interviewees time to reflect and recall experiences, and for each participant to rethink and amend initial accounts so that some issues become amplified or qualified during the course of the discussion. This can be very useful as a reassessment tool for the validity of the group's own interpretations (Briggs 1986). A further strength of both individual interviews and focus groups is that they produce quotes that express the participants' experiences in raw words, powerfully capturing sensitive feelings.

As with individual interviews, I negotiated venues and dates to suit the participants' schedules. Most of the focus groups were conducted in offices or meeting rooms, but I facilitated one focus group over dinner at one of the University's halls of residence. Briggs (1986) claimed that the social situation of the focus group can be crucial, because focus groups proceed differently when they are the central activity and when they are conducted during other activities, so I was mindful in this instance of how I combined social interaction with the research agenda.

Anonymous questionnaires

When planning the methods that would generate data for this research, initially, I proposed that I would deliver 200 anonymous questionnaires to residences within Ryde, prioritising those neighbourhoods where students were likely to interact and reside. However, as I proceeded with the research process, it became apparent that delivering paper-based questionnaires randomly throughout neighbourhoods was unlikely to provide the numbers and quality of completed questionnaires that I required for this study. I made this judgement on the basis that potential participants were far more likely to respond to invitations to participate if they received information about the study either directly from me, or vicariously through

other people they trusted. In light of this realisation, I chose a different approach to disseminate the anonymous questionnaires. I asked those whom I met throughout the research process to invite their colleagues, friends, neighbours or family members to participate in this study on my behalf. This approach reduced the number of questionnaires that were distributed to 50, but elicited a high response of 21 questionnaires. The questions that I asked during interviews and focus groups were repeated for the questionnaire. The downside of this distribution method was that it probably reduced the diversity of responses. Regardless, it produced insights that were unobtainable through other data generation methods as it gave opportunities to participate to those who preferred to avoid co-presence with the researcher.

Ethnographic methods

Ethnographic observations concentrated in three sites

Ethnographic observations 'map flows of people and goods in spaces marked by cultural diversity, chart networks of association, analyse moments of intercultural exchange and track forms of civility which enable these flows' (Noble 2013, p.181). They also enable light to be thrown 'on pedagogies of routine, exchange, adaption and reciprocity which fashion cosmopolitan dispositions and intercultural conviviality' (Noble 2013, p.182). Their strength lies thus in the scope they provide to train attentiveness on what is unsaid (Back 2009).

During my time in the field, I conducted three concentrated ethnographic observations on three separate occasions across three natural settings: the foyer of the University library, Homer's Café in Eastwood and Woolworths at Marsfield. These sites were chosen on the basis of discussions and recommendations from students and local residents, and from other observations I made while 'hanging-out' in the field. I was also drawn to the library and Homer's Café on the basis that libraries and cafés are known to function as places that promote social interactions (Caidi & Allard 2005; Jones et al. 2015) and draw into fleeting relationships those who may not encounter each other elsewhere (Fincher & Iveson 2008). Homer's Café is situated in the Eastwood shopping mall. It is a popular meeting place for

students, partly because of its late opening hours and also because of its homely ambiance and atmosphere of conviviality. By contrast, Woolworths at Marsfield is small, situated close to the University and comprised only of a Woolworth's supermarket and petrol station. The supermarket is open until midnight, catering to students' lifestyles and is located close to apartment blocks and houses leased by students. Directly across the road is a row of retirement villages, making this shopping centre a nexus too, between older and younger residents.

Photo 1: Marsfield Woolworths

Photo 2: Homer's Café Eastwood

Photo 3: Entrance to the University library

It was only after several field-trips to each of these sites that I made decisions about the most suitable days and times for my ethnographic observations as I wanted to capture as much variation as possible in the activities of those I came to observe. The purpose of each one-hour observation was to examine the familiar in a way that questions its familiarity and to move away from participants' accounts of situations that rely on recollections and interpretations (O'Reilly 2009). The data I obtained provided useful insights that I was then able to triangulate with 'out of context data' that I gathered through interviews, focus groups and questionnaires (Lareau 2014). However, as observations take away participants' rights to offer only their public performance, they can be caught in a range of unbecoming moments (Ten Have 2004) that remain undisclosed to them. In some situations, ethnographic observations can thus be perceived as deceitful acts of omission (Lofland & Lofland 1984) that if discovered, engender feelings of being used by the researcher. Nevertheless within the context of this research, I justified my decision to include ethnographic observations on the basis that what I was observing was not individuals, but rather a delimited set of people; a 'way of life' in a natural setting (Kusenbach 2003). Moreover, the data I obtained through my observations was used continually to develop hypotheses that I 'tested' during interviews and discussions, so that ultimately the study's participants had input to the observations I made about others' collective behaviours.

Opportunistic discussions

Throughout the course of the data collection process, I took advantage of opportunities to engage in opportunistic discussions. In total, 42 discussions occurred, often impromptu interactions in diverse social settings, such as shopping centres, parks, local residential streets, the University campus and bus stops. I used these opportunities to further my knowledge of the research topic, through broad, often 'wandering' conversations that were informal and

casual. Occasionally, I asked a direct question related to my research and I used answers to these questions to probe gently for additional information.

Go-alongs

I took advantage of any opportunity that occurred through serendipitous encounters and unanticipated invitations. Some of these took the form of 'go-alongs' which Kusenbach (2003) describes as a hybrid between observations and interviewing. These occurrences were useful, as they were more systematic and outcome-oriented than 'hanging-out', while they simultaneously yielded opportunities to engage informally in real-life settings. As an example of a go-along, in January 2014 I attended New Year's Eve celebrations with a group of Chinese students. We met in the suburb where they lived and walked together through the streets to their townhouse. As we walked, we talked about the natural setting we were passing and how they engaged with their environment. Later as we prepared food together, we discussed aspects of their personal biographies in Australia and how the physical environment contributed to their trajectories. This occasion was the beginning of other social contacts which when melded together, formed a kind of cohesive picture (Hannerz 2003) that spoke deeply of their lives in Australia.

Field-notes

After being in the field, I vigilantly wrote field-notes that recorded my observations and emotional responses to those observations. My field-notes not only captured visual insights, but also took account of other senses, such as sound, taste and smell, in recognition of their power to give both solace and comfort; to signify different phases in life trajectories; and to evoke recollections of previous negative experiences (Low 2013; Rhys-Taylor 2013). In this vein, I was cognisant that those places and events that appeared at first surprising, were likely to soon become habitual, and through familiarity, I might overlook important details. Writing notes that recorded my first impressions of a location or an event thus formed an important initial step in this process. I followed up initial notations with other jottings that over time

gave fullness and depth to the content, while memos questioned what I had seen, heard or experienced. Some of my field-notes became a very personal biography of my time in the field, acting rather like a diary that contained my most intimate thoughts and emotional outpourings.

Additional data sources

Media, opinion pieces and local reports

To keep abreast of events and incidents that occurred throughout the course of this study, I regularly scanned national and local newspapers and in particular, I noted opinion pieces, letters to the editor and comments (via social media) that featured stories about international students. I found the *Northern District Times,* a free, weekly newspaper delivered to households within the northern suburbs of Sydney to be a rich source of information about local issues. I was especially drawn to 'letters to the editor' for their fruitfulness in highlighting public opinion about local issues. *The Sydney Morning Herald* offered coverage of national events and controversial discussion points and hence I used articles from this newspaper to not only keep abreast of issues involving higher education, international education and Immigration policy in Australia, but also for public commentary on these topics. Other newspapers such as the *Newcastle Herald* with a regional focus, often contained sensational stories of abuse, accidents and incidents of violence that involved international students, while the *ABC* and *SBS* programmes of *Four Corners* and *Insight* provided in-depth investigations of controversial issues. This aspect of my data collection was particularly useful to Chapter three, where I examine the influence of the media in persuading opinion about international students.

Statistical data

In addition to these media sources, I drew upon the latest available statistical data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] and reports, surveys and community consultations made available through the Ryde City Council and Ryde District Historical Society.

Reflecting on my time in the field

In retrospect I recognise that my time in the field exemplified a logical process that began by constructing a picture of what was normal, expectable and pre-supposable (Blommaert & Jie 2010) in the site of Ryde and then to using this information to develop a plan. Lahire (2011, p.138) argued that planning 'rests to a large extent on embodied practical knowledge' so with this in mind, I began by familiarising myself with the research area. I spent considerable time reading historical records, reports and personal stories provided by Ryde City Council and Ryde Library; activities that were followed up later by discussions with Council staff and members of the Ryde District Historical Society. Taking public transport, I visited (walked) all of the 16 suburbs that comprise the Ryde LGA. I 'hung-out' in local shopping centres and ate from their food courts. I spent time in cafés on the University campus and in the suburbs. I initiated conversations with strangers. At every site I observed and later noted who I encountered and what happened during these visits. I used these notations to guide future activities and to shape rudimentary plans. In an attempt to reduce personal bias, at the outset I also made a list of the assumptions, biases, beliefs and values that I held about the topic of this study. I referred occasionally to this list throughout the course of the research, comparing new ideas and perceptions with those I held prior.

Having neither prior professional nor personal experiences in Ryde, I brought with me advantages of strangerhood that enabled me to sense things that insiders perhaps no longer see (Simmel 1950) along with a kind of innocence and naivety to ask questions that insiders might not feel comfortable to discuss. Additionally, my presence as a stranger created opportunities to walk to some extent, in the shoes of an international student and to experience the uncertainties, discomfort and anxieties of being at once, a visible, yet unknown presence. Throughout my time in the field, I was constantly mindful however, that I never really belonged normally or naturally in Ryde, my presence rather 'like a foreign body which causes ripples on the surface of smooth routinised processes' (Blommaert & Jie 2010, p. 27). Although I formed some tentative connections, I remained aware of my 'observer's effect'

that created an invisible barrier. I frequently sensed that despite my Whiteness and Anglo-Australian profile, which to some extent legitimised my place (Neal & Walters 2006), I needed to substantiate my credentials to gain the trust and cooperation that was required of potential participants. In a way I offered a performance (Goffman 1959) as a means to building rapport with potential participants, by calling on aspects of my biography, in order to show that I was knowledgeable in the area of the investigation. At the same time, I orchestrated a fine balance between appearing knowledgeable and naïve, as I was aware that knowing too much could foreclose in-depth conversations, while knowing too little could appear rude and disinterested (O'Reilly 2009) and undermine my credibility as a researcher. I took heart from the words of Hakim Hasan (2014, p.827) who asserted that 'any sociologist who simply believes that time spent in the field qualifies him [or her] as 'one of the boys' [or girls] is not only sadly mistaken but in grave trouble'.

The connections that I managed to establish throughout the course of my fieldwork although productive, could also be described as fragile, and to maintain these relationships required me to be constantly mindful of potential threat. This included how my desire to obtain quality, in-depth data might overpower the sensitivities that were needed to keep my field relationships intact (Venkatesh 2014). I constantly assessed how things were going by remaining vigilant, looking out for signs that I might have overstepped the mark in some way, shown through subtle retorts such as being excluded from sharing a coffee, or the warmth of a greeting. I continuously reflected upon the relationships I was building and how my own social position was contributing to shaping this study. I endeavoured to keep my focus on the participants' stories, acknowledging that my own story of how the research was being done, if not checked, could overshadow what I came to learn about, and if taken to extremes could eventually make the participants seem different and exotic, thus producing the opposite effect of what I had set out to do (Duneier, Kasinitz & Murphy 2014). Establishing and maintaining the trust of the participants was a challenging but critical component of this project. This was made more complicated by my strangerhood which came with questionable trustworthiness; a

circumstance that required me to habitually convince participants to place their confidence (over risk) in me (Misztal 1996).

As focus groups represented the greatest challenge in that I had to convince groups of people to participate, establishing connections with the leaders or 'gatekeepers' of organisations, those who held positions of influence was vital. Over lengthy conversations that often took place amidst the casual ambiance of cafés or shopping centres, I listened, empathised and opened up to their ideas (Armour, Rivaux & Bell 2009; O'Reilly 2009) of how to build fruitful connections with others. It took time to establish and develop these connections, but it was important to do so, for when I finally met with those they represented, my presence came with their endorsement. During the first meeting with members of groups or organisations I provided a little information about my professional background, discussed my personal aspirations for undertaking this study and sketched a brief picture of what the study was about. For those who chose to take part, I expressed gratitude for the gift of their stories and for the trust they placed in allowing me to tell their stories to others. I viewed gratitude not only as a way to establish and maintain field relationships but also as a means through which more gifts[4] might be given in the future (Komter 2005). I adopted a similar process to establish connections with those who provided individual interviews, although the number of contacts between first meeting and the interview taking place were generally fewer.

During this study, I attended to nurturing relationships with all the participants and other interested persons by providing regular updates of my progress and inviting comments and feedback. I did this not only to consolidate trust but to demonstrate that my interest was genuine (Padgett 1998). On-going communications also opened up opportunities for individuals and organisations to shape and influence the direction of this study, while embedding it in the 'real world' (Nyden et al. 1997). Moreover, I acknowledged the

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[4] I use the word 'gifts' here in a figurative sense. In this context I am arguing for an ongoing relationship that implies give and take.

importance of this approach for its potential to establish interpersonal and inter-organisational connections that could be reignited after the project was completed.

Throughout, I remained aware of the unequal distribution of power in the research process (Liamputtong 2009). Consequently, I incorporated into my planning acts of reciprocity to demonstrate respect for the participants. Adopting this approach necessitated that the relationships formed throughout the research process became less about control and more about a genuine willingness to engage; a position underpinned by an ideology of doing research *with* the community, not *to* the community (Nyden & Wiewel 1992). From the outset I made clear that I was willing to engage in transactions of 'give and take' (Lempert 2007). Some of the participants took up my offer and as a consequence, I provided information to assist the coordinators of a community-based English programme in the orientation of new participants and I also made presentations about my research to a number of locally-based social groups.

Sharing the end result

My aspiration in undertaking this study was to uncover ideas that might be used later to build greater cohesiveness within Ryde. With this goal in mind, this thesis is written to communicate not only to academic audiences, but also to policy-makers and practitioners. How the findings of this study are disseminated at the local level is vital if it is to act as a stimulus for discussions about what might happen next. Even though it is commonplace for researchers to make available the findings of projects to interested persons by mailing out or emailing documents on request, it is perhaps less conventional to present the findings to a gathered audience[5]. I intend to do this. My presentation will be accompanied by a short report that outlines the key findings (see Appendix C).

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[5] In presenting and discussing the findings face-to-face with an audience, I hope to circumvent what Lareau (2014) encountered when she gave copies of 'raw' findings of her study to participants; a situation that led to 'bad feelings' among some participants and to the fracturing of relationships that she had carefully built throughout the research process.

Data analysis

The process of data analysis involved several steps. Although I present these below in chronological order, during data analysis I moved back and forth in a process that involved description, reflection and interpretation.

Step one: listening and noting

I listened to each interview or focus group several times, as soon as possible after taping, to ensure I understood its meaning. I particularly listened for intonation, pauses and expressions of emotion, such as laughter (Bryman & Burgess 1994) to gain an overall picture of the interview content. I made notes about the ways participants responded to particular questions and about the overall tone of each interview and focus group. Just as I listened to interviews, I re-read all the notes that I documented through opportunistic discussions, go-alongs, ethnographic observations and field-notes. This assisted me to not only gain a deeper understanding and perspective of what I had heard and observed, but to revive other sensual memories of time spent in particular places.

Step two: reading and noting

I downloaded each interview or focus group soon after completion and diligently transcribed verbatim what had been said (Bryman & Burgess 1994). I immersed myself in the data, listening to the taped discussions several times as I followed the written transcription. I attended to anonymous questionnaires by reading each one numerous times, highlighting as I went the key words, phrases and expressions.

Step three: organising the information

I began by recording on a piece of A3 paper, all the interview questions. Under each question, I carefully recorded what each participant had answered through focus groups, interviews and questionnaires. I used different coloured inks to highlight particular recurring words, ideas and phrases. After recording all this information, I read and re-read the information to obtain

an overall picture of the main ideas (Patton 1990). I later added in to this mix some of the information and ideas I gathered through my field-notes and I made notations of relevant information from ethnographic observations. The overall 'picture' that I produced in organising all this information formed a kind of map that showed what I had encountered, experienced and learned throughout the process.

Step four: developing emergent themes

The next step in this process involved coding or organising the information into 'chunks' (Creswell 2003) by taking words, sentences and paragraphs and labelling each of these with a term or category. The participants' language was used to determine the terms or categories. During this process, I wrote notes about emergent themes and focused on the words the participants used to describe their experiences, ideas and insights. I formed these *describing* words into a list and looked to see if there were patterns in what the participants had said. I made a list of all the themes, and sorted these into major and minor themes.

Step five: adding and coding data

Where I encountered information that did not fit existing codes, I made a list that I entitled alternative ideas or *exceptions* (Li & Seale 2007). I also considered how themes were connected to each other and I shaped these connections so that they formed general descriptions that demonstrated consistent arguments.

Step six: re-writing

During this step, I re-read all codes from all data sources, which I then incorporated into the writing process.

Embedding validity and trustworthiness into the findings

For a study to be trustworthy it must be carried out ethically, with the findings presented so that the experiences, ideas and insights of the participants are conveyed as truthfully as possible (Padgett 2009). As the researcher, it was my responsibility to ensure this study was

carried out rigorously and that I gave a faithful account of what occurred. To increase the probability of producing credible findings, I adopted activities of prolonged engagement, persistent observation and triangulation (Lincoln & Guba 1985). Through prolonged engagement, I endeavoured to build trusting (if tentative) relationships with the participants to demonstrate that the confidence they placed in me was honoured and that their interests were respected. I also looked to prolonged engagement to provide scope for the participants to have influence over the research process and to reduce the imbalance of power in the participant / researcher relationship. Persistent observation added depth to the findings, while triangulation assisted me to identify the most important elements of the study (Lincoln & Guba 1985). These activities were woven together through the various methods that I used for data generation (described earlier), and also by occasionally engaging in activities that were related to this study, but were outside the research process. For example, I attended open-day at Willandra, a historic home in Top Ryde.

Whittemore, Chase and Mandle (2001) argue that the criteria of explicitness, vividness, creativity, thoroughness, congruence and sensitivity provide additional benchmarks for research quality. I incorporated *explicitness* into the research process through the careful consideration I gave to choosing a qualitative methodology, making clear that alternative methods would not have served the study's purposes, or brought about desired results. I attended to *vividness* through the presentation of thick and faithful descriptions that often included the raw words of the participants. I demonstrated *creativity* in the approach I used to facilitating interviews, focus groups and opportunistic discussions. Listening carefully to participants' responses to questions, I probed for additional information with the resultant consequence that sometimes the participants' answers moved away from the scheduled questions. However, these kinds of deviations often provided interesting insights that would have been lost to this study had I remained fixated on adhering strictly to the scheduled questions. My data analysis showed attention to *thoroughness* as I applied attention to connections between themes and the full development of ideas. I paid attention to *congruence*

by ensuring connectivity between the key research questions, the methods chosen for data collection, the data analysis and the reporting of findings. Finally, I displayed *sensitivity* to the participants through acts of courtesy and in the efforts I made to build trusting and respectful relationships with them.

Chapter outlines

This thesis is divided into three parts. Chapters one and two position this study within global contexts, national policies, significant historical events and everyday debates that surround the presence of international students in Australia. Chapter Two in particular, identifies empirical studies that describe the experiences of international students on a quotidian basis, relating these to broader policy frameworks. Chapters three, four and five incorporate the key findings of this study, to reveal how the rubrics of media, urban spaces and other macro-forces, such as neoliberalism, penetrate, shape and influence relations individually and collectively at the everyday level. In conclusion, Chapter six merges the deliberations of the preceding chapters into a cohesive storyline that heralds possibilities for future action.

Chapter One provides the context for this dissertation. I open with a discussion of national policies of immigration and international education to highlight how they frame, shape and influence the way in which newcomers have, since the 1950s, been received by Australian society. I explore the role of higher education institutions in this process, incorporating the entrepreneurial stance they have taken in recruiting international students as a means to address financial challenges and internationalise university campuses. Finally, I drill down into the local sphere, touching firstly on the multi-layered history of the City of Ryde and follow this up with a potted history of Macquarie University. In particular, I focus on relations between the University and local neighbourhoods. Hence this chapter foregrounds some of the complex and multidimensional influences that underpin subsequent discussions of this study.

Chapter Two serves as a literature review on the experiences of international students in Australia. It does so in a way that focuses attention on how and where relations form and operate between international students and the receiving society. I introduce the theoretical terrain that is interwoven into the fabric of this thesis; a topography steeped in ambiguity, uncertainty and contestation.

Chapter Three commences my analysis of the central findings. I begin with a brief overview of how mass media, a macro-force associated with globalisation, plays on individual and collective fears to do with the fragility of everyday life. I trace the way in which anxieties, expressed through media-inspired moral panics are exploited in the pursuit and maintenance of influence and power. Within this context I present five media images of international students constructed through the informants' recollections and by way of items extracted directly from media sources. I critically examine the values that underpin media reporting; the ways in which the media wrestle with the concept of 'Otherness'. In the final section I offer a challenge to conventional media discourses of negativity and sensationalism, by suggesting avenues to open up more transparent and constructive communications.

Chapter Four explores how urban spaces underlie and contribute to the ways in which encounters between international students and local residents of Ryde emerge and transpire. I argue that urban spaces are comprised of collective memories, along with everyday social encounters. I contend that with multiple temporalities, urban spaces support multifarious and conflicting habits, significances and connections among people. Carved from the experiences and perceptions of this study's informants, I describe contradictions that occur in relations between international students and others; relations characterised not only by indifference and resentment, but also shared moments of conviviality and sociality that give hope for future possibilities for new and deeper localised affiliations.

Chapter Five describes how neoliberalism has emerged over recent decades as a macro-force associated with globalisation, transnationalism and super-diversity (Vertovec 2007). I discuss

the logic embedded within neoliberalism and how it infiltrates, shapes and upholds the ways in which relations are constructed and maintained within educational institutions. I examine the inherent ideology of self-regulation contained within neoliberalism, how the privileging of market-driven activity impacts on relations of care, responsibility and common good, and the spill-over effect this has on local communities. The central contribution of this chapter lies in the insights it offers about the effects of neoliberalism on the people who live within the state or come under its power, and the way in which such logic filters down to affect everyday relations.

Chapter Six as a conclusion, draws together and builds on the analysis of the key findings of this study. I begin by revisiting the main research questions to demonstrate how each is addressed in this study. I articulate the theoretical and practical contributions this study makes to the fields of international education, mobilities and diversity studies, just as I examine possibilities for future research. Finally, I discuss how the findings might be used to construct more affective relations for international students with receiving societies.

Chapter One

A history and background to this study

This chapter presents an overview of key national policies, historical events and local contexts that form the backdrop to this study. Particular attention is paid to Australian immigration policies since World War II and their relationship to the evolution of the international education sector. With emphasis on the nexus between immigration and education, this chapter additionally demonstrates the way in which national policies impact on local relations. Nestled within this exposé is a brief explanation of how international education influences societal perceptions of universities more broadly. Finally, this chapter lays out the current landscape of the Ryde Local Government Area [LGA], beginning with an historical overview and then proceeding to an exploration of significant events that are currently taking place. The significance of this chapter lies in the foundation it offers for subsequent discussions on everyday relations between international students and the receiving society in Ryde.

Successive immigration policies post World War II

In the aftermath of World War II, Australia, along with other countries such as the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Canada received significant immigration flows. The major driving force of the Australian immigration programme was the Displaced Persons Scheme, through which the national government, in agreement with the International Refugee Organisation, accepted several million refugees who were either unable or unwilling to return to their countries of origin (Sohrabi & Farquharson 2012). The selection process used to identify potential immigrants reflected the edict enshrined in the White Australia policy's

Immigration Restriction Act of 1901-1958[6], that anyone considered unlikely to 'assimilate',

who potentially 'posed a threat to social harmony', or was 'unemployable', should be barred

from entry to Australia (Jupp 2002). This policy specifically targeted Asian migrants[7], just as

it created an ideal image of 'White Australia' (the blonde, blue-eyed and Baltic in appearance)

and foundations for conceptions of national identity. Sentiments of distrust and hostility

towards Asians, particularly the Chinese, have a long history in Australia, stretching back to

the gold fields, shown through resentment of their customs and ways of working (Ang 2016).

Helen Irving (1999 cited in Ang 2016, p.260) argued, 'in the example of the "Chinaman",

Australians believed they had found the starkest example of what "Australians" were not'.

Hence young men who were single, fit and healthy were prioritised, with less favour extended

to families, lone women with children, the elderly, or people with disabilities, while a blanket

ban was enforced on Jewish people (Jupp 2002). Polish, Ukrainian, Slovene, Czech and

Yugoslav people, only became 'acceptable' later (during the 1960s and early 1970s), after the

supply of people who fit the preferred criteria dwindled (Batrouney & Goldlust 2005).

Essentially, Australian Immigration policy reflected a racialised process that privileged the

human, cultural and social capital of migrants to buttress economic objectives, with scant

consideration given to the effects this might have on the countries of emigration (Sayad

2004).

From 1947, migrant hostels funded by the Australian government provided temporary

accommodation and hosted English classes, and after 1950, Good Neighbour Councils

coordinated the efforts of volunteers in welcoming and assisting in the settlement of

immigrants. At this time, those who were not British subjects were designated as 'aliens', and

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[6] The inception of this Act in 1901 effectively ensured the exclusion of non-Europeans from settling in Australia. Through transparent administrative strategies embedded within this Act, such as the requirement for prospective migrants to pass a dictation test in any European language, the discretionary authority of immigration officials increased, so that on a day to day basis they had the authority to enable or circumvent entry to Australia. Followed up with the *Pacific Islanders Labourers Act* (1907), which required all 'Kanakas' (Melanesian labourers) to be deported, these two Acts became foundation pieces of legislation that formalised existing widespread support for the White Australia policy (Batrouney & Goldlust 2005).
[7] The official policy direction of assimilation was also embedded within policies to do with Indigenous Australians.

until they were granted Australian citizenship had fewer legal and political rights, just as limitations were placed on their access to some forms of employment and social security benefits. Consequently many became labourers or domestic workers (Batrouney & Goldlust 2005). Characterised by a 'two-class' immigration programme[8], the ideology applied at this time, treated British immigrants as equals of Australian-born residents, whilst non-British immigrants were relegated to inferior positions, both in the labour market and in society generally (Jupp 2002).

During the 1950s, with the supply of refugees diminishing and British immigrants less desirous of coming to Australia (in part due to full employment in Britain, shipping shortages and housing scarcity), the Australian government entered into a series of mutually beneficial agreements (including assisted passage), with a number of European governments in an effort to attract skilled immigrants from Northern Europe. Assisted passage was a mode of social engineering designed to keep Australian immigration fundamentally British and white, while simultaneously addressing gender imbalance issues and increasing the manual labour force. It was however, significant in another way too, in that it symbolically signified the first fissures in Anglo-Celtic selection (Jupp 2002). Nonetheless throughout the 1960s, immigration to Australia continued to draw primarily from the United Kingdom and Europe, despite the arrival in 1964 of several thousand Anglo-Indians and Ceylonese Burghers who were permitted entry on the basis that they spoke English and adhered to the Christian religion; these characteristics indubitably signalling their likely capacity to assimilate into existing cultural and social practices and institutions (Batrouney & Goldlust 2005).

Notwithstanding, towards the end of the decade, new doubts began to emerge about the national benefits and social effectiveness of persisting with a uni-dimensional immigration policy that stipulated assimilation (Colic-Peisker 2008), and out of this change in thinking arose public debate that called for a more nuanced approach towards immigrants' personal

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[8] Arthur Caldwell, Australia's first federal Minister for Immigration, speaking in 1945 articulated that the British would always be given priority to enter Australia. In terms of numbers, he stated that for every European migrant there would be 10 from Britain (Batrouney & Goldlust 2005).

trajectories. It also publically heralded doubts about the future of the White Australia policy. Significantly, the change in name of the Department of Immigration's *Assimilation Section* to the *Integration Section* in 1964 signalled that perceptible transformations were afoot. These came in the form of the removal of references to 'White Australia' from policy platforms in 1965; the decision to allow non-Europeans with professional qualifications to enter Australia in 1966; the granting of entry to 10,000 Lebanese people in the same year; and signing a migration agreement with Turkey in 1967. These shifts were noteworthy for numerous reasons, not least of which was the change they signalled in what constituted the racial, religious and geographic markers of acceptable immigrants. Finally in 1973 under the leadership of Gough Whitlam, came the end of the White Australia policy and the rescission of the *Immigration Restriction Act*, enabling immigrants and refugees from non-European countries such as East Timor, Vietnam and Lebanon to enter Australia. Indeed in the ensuing two decades, the number of migrants grew considerably, not only as a consequence of humanitarian and refugee programmes, but also via family reunion[9] and skilled migration provisions (Batrouney & Goldlust 2005). This was attributable in part to the adoption of more formal, planned responses to humanitarian crises that included discrimination, or human rights violations (Australian Government Department of Immigration and Border Protection 2012). Notably in 2013-14, the leading source countries of migrants to Australia were India, People's Republic of China, United Kingdom, Philippines and Pakistan (Australian Government Department of Immigration and Border Protection 2014).

Characterised by selection and exclusion, the priority shown to immigrants who possessed distinct human and social capital was an underlying thrust of post-war immigration policies (Castles et al. 1988; Raghuram 2013); enacted with the expectation that such processes would give rise to more confident communities (Hardin 1993; Uslaner 2012).

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[9] The family reunion programme includes immediate family members (parents, orphaned relatives and carers) of Australian citizens, permanent residents, or eligible New Zealand residents (Parliament of Australia 2013).

Underlying shifts: assimilation, integration to multiculturalism

At the core of assimilationist ideology was the notion that newcomers should attempt to 'blend in', to become invisible if possible[10]. For the most part, 'invisibility' in these circumstances was considered achievable through the display of particular physical characteristics; the acquisition of proficiency in English language; and the adoption of dress codes that resembled those worn by the receiving society. So pivotal was this concept of invisibility to the assimilationist viewpoint that in the 1950s, the Good Neighbour Council conference displayed photographs of selected children for delegates to choose the 'Australian' (Jupp 2002). This period was one in which Irish Catholicism was tolerated, but British Protestant ideology was favoured, just as non-Christians were looked upon with suspicion. The assimilationist stance, most active from 1947-1966 (Van Krieken 2012) thus confirmed the dominance of the receiving society, privileging Whiteness and Anglo-ness as it simultaneously sanctioned the inferiority of immigrants (Batrouney & Goldlust 2005; Mansouri & Lobo 2011).

From the mid-1960s until the early 1970s the assimilationist position became intermingled with integration policies (Van Krieken 2012), for most ethnic minority groups from this period, particularly working class immigrants from Europe, chose where viable to maintain associations along ethnic lines, to connect with each other, to share food and to publish media in languages other than English. These activities were accepted by the receiving society within limits, with the 'exotica of difference' (Hall 2007, p.147) even welcomed and encouraged, especially where it involved multiculturalism in the form of grocers, delicatessens and restaurant foods. Eating ethnic food as a form of celebratory multiculturalism, is nonetheless critiqued by Hage (1997), who alleges that it mediates opportunities for middle class, cosmopolitan multicultural elites to appreciate and 'consume' cultural difference from a disengaged perspective, while retaining power to decide who and

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[10] Bauman (1990b) explains assimilation as 'making alike' (p.155). He goes on to describe assimilation as a uni-directional process that promotes uniformity and similarity, drawing a conclusion that assimilation is a 'declaration of war on foreign substances and qualities' (p.158).

what is tolerable. Even so, the seeds that were sown through these practices indeed have had long-lasting impact, manifested today through the desire for public celebrations of diversity via the sharing of food in shared public spaces, fiestas, or in European scenarios of pavement dining (Jakubowicz & Moustafine 2010).

Nonetheless, the path towards a more socially inclusive society was sporadically bumpy, rarely more palpable than during the 1960s – 1970s when a series of moral panics arose about the potential for political violence, 'ethnic crime' (particularly in relation to the Mafia), and seeming lack of regulation around ethnic commercial and newspaper broadcasts. These localised fears were fuelled by news of riots and social disorder emanating from ghettos in the United Kingdom and US America, where immigrants were observed clustering in residential hubs, as they did in Australia (Jupp 2002). With little understanding of immigration as a social process whereby one immigrant often follows others from the same family or neighbourhood; collective longings surface to recreate small versions of home through social and economic infrastructures such as churches, shops, cafés and professional services; and social capital accumulates through supportive networks (Castles 2004, 2010; Collins & Kunz 2009), the media ignited and amplified local concerns about the impact of immigration on the receiving society. Paradoxically at the same time, doubts were mounting (largely among academic sources, educationalists, social workers and health professionals), about the national benefits and social effectiveness of policies that privileged an assimilationist stance; a viewpoint that acknowledged the difficulties associated with settlement, and the importance of continued association with cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Batrouney & Goldlust 2005). As such, the integrationist model of assimilation took hold, retaining cultural homogeneity as its centrepiece, but nevertheless acknowledging simultaneously that ethnic diversity would not disappear and that a strictly assimilationist stance was antagonising to many migrants who were by this time eligible to vote (Van Krieken 2012).

Finally, with the abandonment of the assimilationist position in the 1970s, came multiculturalism which was infused with principles and practices that demonstrated greater

tolerance of diversity (Jupp 2002; Sohrabi & Farquharson 2012). Imbued with an ideology that interpreted national identity as both dynamic and changing, yet underpinned by a sense of oneness (Moran 2011), multiculturalism represented a new approach to diversity. An upshot was closer ties forged with Asia during the 1980s and 1990s, as Australia attempted to more closely enmesh with Asia's economy. Even though multiculturalism was essentially a portrayal of what had already occurred, whereby people of multifarious origins had been morphed by, and transformed Australia's ethno-centric culture (Hage 2003), multiculturalism placed premium on pluralism and diversity. Writing in 1995, Jerzy Zubrzycki[11] contended that as an ideology, multiculturalism was highly significant for the respect it granted to different values and cultures, as a means to advance all Australians. This interpretation advocated for integration to engender feelings of belonging and comfort, without recourse to religious and social isolationism. It also promoted the importance of preserving minority cultures, just as it rejected the idea that binding social capital within groups would create tensions and impediments to building connections with others (Naraniecki 2011). As summarised by Castles et al. (1988, p.139), this form of multiculturalism demonstrated a 'complex and ambiguous balance between separatism of the varied groups, and cohesion of society as whole'.

The *Report on the review of the post-arrival programs and services to migrants* (1978), (also known as the Galbally Report), was an important document of this era, for it set out a plan for the enactment of multiculturalism. Establishing guiding principles for the delivery of multicultural services, this report underscored the salience of: equal opportunity and equal access to programmes and services; maintenance of cultural ties without prejudice or disadvantage; and special services, along with generic ones to ensure access. The report advocated for specific programmes to be developed by service providers in cooperation with clients, as strategies to optimise self-reliance and reduce dependency (Koleth 2010). This represented a further significant shift in rationality, for it opened up opportunities for ethnic

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[11] Jerzy Zubrzycki was a key figure and the first policy advisor in the 1960s to fully develop multiculturalism policy.

organisations to apply for funding to deliver services to address socio-economic, legal and cultural issues for their respective communities. Although this service delivery model was later criticised for the costs associated with its implementation and its potential to create divisiveness, it successfully created scenarios for ethnic organisations to determine and advocate their priorities (Castles et al. 1988).

Yet, despite being regarded as a social policy with capacity to promote the social integration of ethnic groups, multiculturalism has more recently emerged as politically problematic. It has attracted criticism on the grounds that it enhances fragmentation and separatism by reinforcing in-group ties at the expense of strengthening trust and relations across difference (Castles et al. 1988; Verkuyten 2005). These criticisms come from both the progressive and conservative ends of the intellectual and political spectrum. One of the more fervent critics of multiculturalism policy, John Stratton (1998), argued that from the outset multiculturalism had as its core, an agenda to privilege Anglo-Celtic culture and to confront the non-assimilation of immigrants, particularly those from southern European countries. Moreover, Stratton maintained that this agenda was designed to keep ethnic cultures on the periphery, whilst highlighting their incompatibilities with the majority value system. This viewpoint is echoed by Hage (2002, p.419), who described multiculturalism in Australia as linked to 'colonial paranoia' about 'a fear of loss of Europeanness or Whiteness and the lifestyle and privileges that are seen to emanate directly from them'.

International issues including the global threat of terrorism (and its association with Muslims), has, since 9/11 increased challenges for creating inclusive and cohesive societies, especially in those societies comprised of ethno-cultural diversity. Growing anxieties around living with difference have impacted on notions of multiculturalism and resulted in policy shifts around integration, citizenship and immigration (Giddens 2007; Modood 2007). Even though there has been some recognition of the need for unity within this context, the view that immigration is harmful, dysfunctional and a problem to be fixed has also surfaced, giving rise to policies that call for tighter border controls and edicts that discourage potential immigrants

from leaving home (Castles & Miller 2003). Furthermore, the coupling of immigration with fears of terrorism has legitimised the reassertion of national identity and shared values, as ways to guard against internal and external threats (Castles 2010, 2011; Lentin 2008), just as the stranger has become once again cast as the 'Other'; a threat to all that was once static, certain and safe (although probably non-existent) (Hage 2003).

Parallel paths: immigration policy and international education in Australia

Although the history of international students in Australia can be traced to the early twentieth century it was in 1951, with the inception of the Colombo Plan for Cooperative Development in South and Southeast Asia [hereafter Colombo Plan[12]] that attention became focused on international students in schools and tertiary institutions. Serving as a catalysing force in the abolition of the White Australia policy, the Colombo Plan created opportunities for building relations between Australia and Asia, through initiatives that brought thousands of students from developing countries of Asia to acquire advanced technical, scientific and administrative training at Australia's tertiary institutions (Meadows 2011). Designed primarily as an aid programme, the Colombo Plan represented a commitment by wealthier Commonwealth countries to assist in the transfer of knowledge and to capacity-build participants so that on their return to countries of origin, they would be able to contribute to nationalist aspirations of industrialisation and economic development. The objectives of the Colombo Plan were not confined solely to support these development goals however, but were established too, as instruments for public diplomacy, to make it less likely that participating nations would fall into the communist block (Rizvi 2011).

However, by the mid-1980s certain assumptions underlying aid programmes were no longer popular, causing some to argue that development ideology represented a new form of colonial practice that institutionalised global inequalities of power. With these urgings came pressure

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[12] The Colombo Plan continues under the auspices of AusAID. This nationally funded programme offers scholarships to students from developing countries to study in Australia, just as domestic students are encouraged to study overseas.

from universities, who claimed they could no longer afford to financially support students, especially with a declining number of government-funded scholarships (Rizvi 2011). Significantly two major government reports were published around this time, one favouring the continuation of the education-as-aid, while the other advocated for a representation of international education as trade. Against this backdrop, in recognition of the potential for a new discourse around international student mobility, Australia took the decision to create a kind of hybrid brand of international education, which at once held on to the development aspirations of the Colombo Plan, but simultaneously moved towards revenue-generation that emphasised institutional profile, reputation, and diversification. The relationships that had been built up through the Colombo Plan and the positioning of some alumni as powerful elites in their countries of origin, set the context to forge new markets for this new style of entrepreneurism, whereby fee-paying students from developing countries such as Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong were encouraged to make Australia their overseas study destination. During the late 1980s, this hybrid model was cemented by the Dawkins reforms which not only introduced the Higher Education Contribution Scheme [HECS] for domestic students, but also allowed higher education institutions to charge international students full cost recovery tuition fees (Rizvi 2011). These shifts signalled the rise of neoliberal ideology within the sector, unleashing a previously inconceivable new culture of entrepreneurism.

Since that time there has been rapid growth in the number of privately funded, full-fee paying international students in Australian education institutions. Along with the expansion of trade in international education services has emerged opportunities for schools, colleges and universities to participate in a larger economic and social movement termed 'internationalisation' (Banks & Olsen 2011; Meadows 2011). Set within the dynamics of globalisation, internationalisation exemplifies the rapid flow of ideas, people and commodities around the world in ways that have the facility to foster and transform relations between individuals and build transnational connections (Rizvi 2011).

Internationally the number of mobile tertiary students is increasing at double the rate of growth of tertiary students as a whole (Marginson 2012). In 2015, enrolments of international students in on-shore undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in Australia were 272,095 (Australian Government Department of Education and Training 2015), whilst as an industry, international education delivered $19.7 billion[13] to the Australian economy (Australian Government Department of Education and Training 2015). These statistics consolidate the position of international education as one of the top two service exports for Australia (Australian Government Department of Education and Training 2016), as they buttress positive perceptions of Australia internationally in terms of intellectual capital and global positioning (Adams, Banks & Olsen 2011). Few would contest that international education delivers multiple benefits: from the enhancement of public diplomacy and trade to closer regional relationships; opportunities for collaborative research and student exchange; superior campus services and infrastructure; greater international awareness and understanding; and improved connectivity within Australia (Adams, Banks & Olsen 2011).

The attraction of an international education continues largely unabated, attributable in part to the potential it initiates for individuals to improve their economic and social status and fulfil desires for a cosmopolitan experience (Hellstén 2002; Koehne 2005; Mazzarol & Soutar 2002). Even without guarantees on return, international education continues to grow because it offers these *potential* benefits. In China anxiety about the future, due in part to rapid social stratification, urges prospective students to seek an international education in the hope that it will provide extra advantage in a fiercely competitive employment market and assist in securing more predictable and certain futures. Significantly however some graduates of overseas universities have returned to China to find that well-paid jobs have become scarce or even unattainable, raising questions about the value of a foreign degree. The failure to be able to convert social and cultural capital into economic capital is noteworthy, for without

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[13] An article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Singhal 2016) purported that international education delivered $21 billion to the Australian economy. However, the source of this estimate was not disclosed.

conversion, the value of an overseas qualification is considerably lessened (Marginson 2014; Xiang & Shen 2009).

The intersection of parallel paths

Growth in international education has not occurred however without challenges and the industry is now critiqued for its prolific, commercial expansion that shows potential to 'induce a race to the bottom' (Hatherell 2007, p.82). By privileging marketing activities and student recruitment over the quality of programmes and experiences they deliver (Rizvi 2011), educational institutions stand accused of choosing income flow over upholding standards and quality education. Connected to this is the visibility that now exists between financial contributions made by students for international education and the possibility of immigration (Betts 2010; Marginson 2007; Robertson 2015a).

The shaping of current circumstances began in the 1990s, a decade that witnessed the arrival of large numbers of international students, whose presence en masse not only transformed campus life, but also triggered complaints about levels of support and inadequacies in some students' English language proficiency. Intermittently, there were accounts of international students operating entirely in their home languages. Challenges surfaced too, in adapting teaching and learning styles to fit the experiences of students who had been educated largely in Asia. According to Birrell and Healy (2010) the image of the international education industry that emerged from these occurrences was one of selling education for visas; a representation damaging to its credibility. Moreover deals struck in the marketplace created circumstances for students to prioritise permanent entry to Australia over the skills that were attainable through education courses (Birrell, Healy & Kinnaird 2007), increasing frustrations and abuses (Marginson 2012). Indeed, Birrell (2006) argued that much of the expansion in international student enrolments in the higher education sector has been driven by students who seek permanent residency. Adding weight to this reasoning are data that show most of the growth in the sector stems from a high proportion of enrolments in business

administration and management courses (that potentially led to permanent residency within two years), by Chinese and Indian students, known for their propensity to seek residency (Birrell 2006)[14].

Yet, despite a consistent rise in concerns to do with quality of programmes and services, successive Australian governments have chosen to take very little action in case harm is done to the economic prospects and reputation of the industry internationally. Indeed, it was only after a series of attacks on Indian students in 2009 that the government moved to decouple education from migration selection, and closed 'loopholes' within the immigration system to prevent international students from obtaining permanent residency through vocational courses that did not contribute substantially to Australia's workforce. This change necessitated a refocus by education institutions and some international students. It also compelled selected organisations to redesign courses so that they were more useful in the students' countries of origin, and to make clear that qualifications obtained in Australia no longer represented an assured pathway to permanent residency. In the aftermath of these policy changes, large numbers of international students were caught 'in limbo', with some in the process of submitting applications under the former *General Skills Migration* programme; others on bridging visas; while a third group were committed to continuing their studies at tertiary institutions until they entered the employment market where they competed with domestic job seekers (Birrell & Healy 2010). Recent media reports have revealed offers of sponsorship in exchange for money (Ferguson & Christodoulou 2017a).

The inception of policy-switching[15] (Robertson 2011b) has thus created a distinct migration experience for international students. Comprised of three sequential steps towards membership (entrance as a transient student; the acquisition of residency; and the decision about citizenship), student-migration encompasses an important shift from temporary to permanent status. This staggered nature of entry distinguishes the experience of student-

[14] Note however that permanent residency does not always link to ideas of permanent settlement, so that individuals often leave Australia as they hold ambitions for more mobility within the Anglo/Euro sphere'.
[15] This refers to switching from education to immigration.

migration from settler-migration, while it produces circumstances that require prospective student-migrants to exist for extended periods of time with tenuous legal or social security. Furthermore despite the stated purpose of filling of skills shortages, this policy has been shown to deliver limited success, with many international students obtaining employment in fields unrelated to their qualifications. Numerous theories offer explanations for this, including discrimination, lack of English language proficiency, limited professional and social networks and little understanding of job-seeking practices and processes (Robertson & Runganakaloo 2014). Since 2013, as a consequence of the Knight review of the student visa programme, further changes have occurred to the post-study student visa programme. Under certain conditions (see Robertson 2014), international students are now eligible to apply for employment visas of between two and four years. Titled *Temporary Graduate Visas,* these differ from their predecessors the *Temporary Skilled Graduate Visas,* in that they limit direct pathways for students to permanent residency, while freeing-up access and duration to employment. Under these visas, post-study students do not require employer sponsorship, or specific skills, nor are limitations placed on their rights to work and study (Robertson 2014). As such post-study students can exist in Australia for considerable periods of time, seeking often low wage service economy employment. For those who are unsuccessful in their endeavours to attain work, the consequence is often corporeal or mental vulnerability; a situation that has considerable implications for local communities, as they attempt to comfort and sustain these individuals for indefinite periods of time.

The impact of policy-switching on the receiving society's perceptions

Policy changes have influenced how international students are perceived by the receiving society. Portrayed initially as desirable migrants, international students represented potential both as consumers and future employees. However, as a consequence of successive government policies that obscured the boundaries between established categories of *mobile populations:* student/migrant/worker; legal/illegal; and temporary/permanent (Robertson 2011a), doubts and uncertainties have arisen amongst the receiving society about the *real*

intentions of international students[16]. Policy shifts that opened up opportunities for different socioeconomic demographics of international students to enter Australia (Singh 2011), have also led to public backlash, repositioning some international students as deficient workers and manipulative peoples who use their student entry status to pursue Australian residency (Robertson 2011a). Student mobility has thus become a subject of fractious public debate and continuous interrogation (King & Raghuram 2013; Marginson 2012). Sayad (2004, p.289)[17] captured the spirit of questions that habitually surface in relation to these circumstances as:

> *We don't know* [emphasis in original] what they are like; *we don't know* what makes them tick; *we don't know* what they are thinking or how they think; *we don't know* what is going on inside their heads; *we don't know* how they might react*; we cannot* understand them; *you never know* with them.

The media also contribute to feeding public fears and concerns about the presence of international students. With the intermittent appearance of articles that contain alarming headlines such as, 'Terror touches down: visa fraud, migration crime 'rampant', Immigration Department files reveal' that appeared in *The Sydney Morning Herald* (McKenzie & Baker 2014), allegations link the presence of international students with matters such as visa fraud and migration crime. Such reports habitually include assertions that immigration fraudsters exploit weaknesses in visa programmes, including student visas, in order to live freely in Australia. Others describe how record numbers of student visas are issued to people who are not genuine students, or how permanent residency is conferred on applicants who do not possess the skills named in their documentation[18]. The skilled worker programme is regularly singled out for special mention in these circumstances, with emphasis placed on how thousands of visas are granted to 'foreign' cooks and accountants, despite an excess of local candidates.

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[16] Huang (2016), writing in *The Sydney Morning Herald* labelled degrees in accounting and information technology as 'immigration majors'; pathways to apply for jobs in Australia.

[17] Sayad (2004) refers here to migrant flows into Europe, but these sentiments also fit the views of some in the receiving society to international students in Australia.

[18] Examples of media articles: McKenzie and Baker (2015) 'Exploitation fears as students pay for 'fake skills' in *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

The reputation of Australian universities

In 2013, Universities Australia commissioned quantitative and qualitative research involving 1,000 participants from the Australian public and 300 business employers to learn more about their perceptions of Australian universities (Universities Australia 2013). The findings of this study were largely favourable, with comments such as, 'universities are held in high regard and are strongly valued for their contribution to the economy and society' (Universities Australia 2013, p.1). Significantly, 75% of informants held positive views of full fee-paying international students, while most were supportive of international students being able to remain in Australia after completing their qualifications, especially if they had obtained sponsorship. However, this approving feedback was somewhat tainted by alternate findings that indicated the broader society held low levels of understanding about the role universities play in contributing to 'the Australian way of life'. Unpacking further, what informants sought was greater collaboration and more meaningful interactions between universities and business communities; research with a more practical focus; and stronger ties with local neighbourhoods. Additional comments indicated that some informants held concerns too, about levels of student support (particularly around housing and English language skills) and the heavy reliance universities placed on income derived from international students' fees. Such concerns have been taken up intermittently by the media, through vigorous articles, opinion pieces and commentaries that describe various facets of university business. Contained within are regular contentions about the effects of market-driven practices on everyday life, universities' images and reputations. As examples, 'Students enlist MyMaster website to write essays, assignments' (McNeilage & Visentin 2014a, 2014b) and 'As the cost of education grows, so does the cheating' (Sheehan 2014) that appeared in *The Sydney Morning Herald,* undermine alternative discourses that urge publics nationally to possess favourable views about the purpose, quality and integrity of higher education in Australia. Furthered by claims that the Australian higher education sector has become tainted due to systemic and endemic financial pressures and that these pressures compromise standards,

governance and ethics, it is unexceptional to uncover readers' comments such as: 'it has been an open secret for years that universities protect struggling foreign students to protect the income stream they represent' and that the higher education sector 'milks[ing] foreign students', 'protects[ing] students with shoddy English skills', graduates[ing] unqualified students' and 'tolerates[ing] dubious diploma factories called colleges'[19]. Sensational as these claims might seem, there is widespread concurrence with these viewpoints. Additional accusations flow too about universities exploiting international students by accepting too many; enrolling students into courses they cannot manage; providing poor accommodation; and ignoring complaints about students engaging in illegal activities such as corruption, prostitution and employment in non-award workplaces. Moreover allegations of widespread cheating and plagiarism, poor levels of English language proficiency and falling standards are commonplace. Many complainants link disreputable behaviour to either greed on the part of universities, or to declining funding from government sources, while others blame the blurring of boundaries between migration and education policies. What becomes quickly apparent is that many people are galvanised in their opinions about the higher education sector in Australia. Either through past or present personal experience, views that suggest international education has in some way played a part in damaging the brand and reputation of higher education in Australia are unexceptional, to the extent that higher education is now regarded by many with disenchantment (Douglas 2012).

Hil (2012, p.199) argued:

> the promoters of today's higher education system – policy-makers, senior university managers and administrators…have created a mirage of universities that has led some sections of the public into believing such institutions are high-quality intellectual hot-houses.

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[19] These are representative of the 193 readers' comments to McNeilage and Visentin's (2014a) article.

Just as the popular press have been active in this area, so too senior scholars have argued that university freedoms have been challenged to a point where, driven by market forces, production of the most saleable goods is privileged over excellence (Marginson 2011b; Molony 2000). With increases in institutional complexity and size and the pressure to attract fee-paying students has come diminished university freedoms, including teachers' rights to determine standards and student grades (Coady 2000). Treating students as customers has led to the realisation (though seldom admitted openly), that 'academically inadequate students, especially those who pay fees, are too often graded above their merits, and those who fail such students will be subject to disapproval from above and below' (Coady 2000, p.xii). Given this context, it is perhaps unsurprising to learn that morale amongst academic staff has plummeted (Duke 2004). As argued by Coady (2000, p.xii) 'they [the wider society] find it hard to see in all the strutting, boasting, inflating, aggrandising and expanding any semblance of the ethos they had thought characteristic of universities'.

This poses a serious dilemma, for at stake are not only reputations, but also the commercial agendas that universities are so desirous of protecting, as these rely heavily on the good-will of the broader community. In their report, *Beyond rhetoric: university-community engagement in Victoria,* Winter, Wiseman and Muirhead (2005, p.3) argued:

> the educational, social and economic benefits to universities and to regional communities of strong university-community engagement partnerships are [however] at risk because of the deepening Commonwealth Government focus on competitiveness, commercialisation and funding cutbacks as the key drivers of Higher Education policy.

This milieu comes on top of a history of strained relations between universities and their communities, brought on partly by campus models that reflect self-sufficient 'cities', enclosed within invisible barriers that separate them from their local neighbourhoods (Bruning, McGrew & Cooper, 2006; Mayfield 2001). These obstructions to some extent have been

welcomed in the past as they reduce the need to manage relationships and eliminate the imperative to develop organisational and communication channels with the broader community. However the down-side is that by guarding the perimeters of university campuses and enforcing invisible barriers, considerable scepticism among the wider society grows about institutional motivation, commitment and capacity to function respectfully and with integrity. Feelings of alienation and distrust are often the result of previous experiences, and even though universities present engagement with communities as a strategic priority, the reality is often quite different. Albeit through the emerging power of technology, along with the immediacy of global media (Hannerz 1996), universities are nevertheless under more pressure than ever before to become more effectively embedded within locally-based corporations; to communicate more productively; and to form strategic alliances at the local level (Bromley 2006; Perry & Menendez 2011). The value of adopting such approaches is explicit: the achievement of more effectual communication; the identification and nurturing of opportunities for engagement; and the creation of reciprocal learning processes lead to more trusting relations (Hatherell 2007; Reardon 2006).

Macquarie University and its neighbourhood

Macquarie University is located in the suburb of Macquarie Park in the Local Government Area [LGA] and City of Ryde. Situated 12 kilometres from the Sydney Central Business District, Ryde covers approximately 40.7 square kilometres, and partially or fully includes 16 suburbs. Within Ryde there are four major health services, several educational facilities including TAFE [Technical and Further Education] NSW and CSIRO [Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation] along with the NSW Corrective Services Academy. Macquarie University's location in proximity to: technology industries clustered in North Ryde and Macquarie Park; business and commercial centres concentrated in the suburbs of Ryde, Gladesville, West Ryde and Eastwood; and the M2 Motorway (Centre for Social Impact for the City of Ryde 2012), mark out its position as a significant contributor to the local area. Moreover, this standing is likely to increase with the planned upgrade of the

Epping to Chatswood rail line to 'Metro' status as part of the Sydney Metro Northwest project (Transport for NSW 2016b). With 40, 209 enrolled students across four faculties (Macquarie University *Annual Report* 2015), the footprint of the University on the local area is considerable, and as I demonstrate in ensuing sections this imprint comes with both acceptance and opposition.

Figure 2: Map of the City of Ryde

Source: Google maps (2017).

A potted history of Ryde

Ryde is the third oldest centre in terms of European settlement in Australia after Sydney and Parramatta. It has been known successively as the Field of Mars, Eastern Farms and Kissing Point. The name 'Ryde' was given by the wife of the Reverend George Turner, incumbent of St Anne's Anglican Church owing to its similarity to Ryde in the Isle of Wight, the reverend's birthplace (Carmichael 1926).

From the early days of the colony, Ryde was an important supplier of food to the Sydney markets, producing maize, fruit, vegetables, pigs and poultry. Development of transport links such as the Gladesville Bridge in 1881, the construction of the Strathfield to Hornsby railway line in 1886 (known as the Northern line) and the opening of the tram track in 1910, acted as lures for new residents (Shaw 2002). However, the expanding population eventually squeezed out farming and fruit growing, replacing these with secondary industries including fertiliser and fat extraction along with boat building and engineering works (Giuliani 1988; Levy 1947).

Mostly white but a little bit diverse: an early picture of Ryde and cultural diversity

Chinese settlers in Ryde were first mentioned in the Sands Directory of the late 1880s. The 1891 Census recorded 20 Chinese residents and although this number declined by 1901 to 10, more Chinese residents gradually took up opportunities for market gardening (an occupation that distinguished them from Chinese in other areas of Sydney where they were involved in furniture-making or as shop keepers and merchants). Most Chinese market gardeners were single men, or lived as single men with their wives in China. Their living conditions were harsh; their housing was basic. Anglo-Australians rarely called them by their Chinese names, but rather referred to them as 'Charlie' or 'Johnnie' (McAndrew 2009). As their numbers ultimately declined in the 1930s, they were not replaced due to immigration policy restrictions that reflected the 'violent hostility and mounting fears' (Batrouney & Goldlust, 2005, p.10) of Anglo-Australians to the presence of Chinese settlers. This stance was significant not only in terms of policy implications, but for the profound resistance it showed to Asian people being able to secure a permanent standing in Australia. Significantly, the gardens the Chinese established in Ryde were ultimately closed (date unknown), transformed into parks, large-scale infrastructure, or housing developments, leaving few tangible reminders of their contributions to the area (McAndrew 2009; Royal Australian Historical Society 2013).

Just as the Chinese market gardeners etched a place in Ryde so too did the Italians, who were some of the first owners of the Field of Mars Common. The earliest land grants for this area date back to 1804. Like other farmers, the Italians' principal income was derived through the production of grapes, citrus fruits, apples and peaches. Relinquishing work on sugar plantations in Queensland, many Italians flowed to places such as Ryde throughout the 1900s, attracted by the cooler climate and rich farming lands (Batrouney & Goldlust 2005). Nevertheless, despite their financial and social contributions to community life and their relative longevity in the area, during World War II Italians were labelled 'enemy-aliens'[20] and interned in local camps. Such prejudice and animosity even continued after the war, but these sentiments did not stop the flow of migrants into the Marsfield and North Ryde areas to fulfil roles as labourers, concreters, bricklayers and farmers. As economic migrants, they, like many other migrants of this time[21] were driven by pecuniary circumstances and the imperative to financially support relatives in their countries of origin. Most lived parallel lives to the predominantly Anglo-Celtic community, with few examples of mixed marriages, especially across the Catholic / Protestant divide (McAndrew 2009). Nonetheless, today, the influence of the Italians remains within Ryde, not least through their architecture - houses and shops - that are dotted throughout the suburbs.

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[20] The term 'alien' first appeared in the *Commonwealth Nationality Act* (1920). Its purpose was to recognise people who were resident in Australia, but not 'members of the community' (Batrouney & Goldlust 2005).
[21] See Baldassar's (2011) and Colic-Peisker's (2008) representations of Italian and Croatian migrants in Australia.

Photo 4: Italian-style houses

Photo 5: Midway Shopping Centre, Denistone East

An explosion of activity

During the depression of the 1930s, in an effort to off-set unemployment, the Australian government funded substantial infrastructure projects to bolster the local economy. This led to the construction of roads, kerbing and guttering, drainage systems, wharves, bridges, bowling greens and even bandstands and grandstands. This period of massive development consolidated after World War II, with the construction of civic buildings such as concert halls, libraries, drama venues, baby health and community centres. During the 1950s, to attract new residents and to accommodate large numbers of returned soldiers and their families, Ryde Council launched a housing scheme which offered low interest and long repayment loans that required minimal deposits. The NSW Government Housing Commission was equally active, resuming land for market gardens and building more than 1,000 houses in Ryde and North Ryde areas. Indeed the 1950s was a decade characterised by mass consumer spending across Australia, with appliances such as washing machines, televisions, lawn mowers and cars becoming popular. With this national trend emerged regional shopping centres including Top Ryde, which replicated US American architectural designs and catered for large numbers of shoppers within one centre (McAndrew 2009).

Development in Ryde was restricted by its Green Belt[22] status however, which aimed to prevent urban sprawl by setting aside land for future development. So it was only on the release of 1,700 acres for re-zoning in late 1959 that the first battleground over land use emerged between local landowners, Ryde Council and the State Planning Authority. This dispute ultimately found resolution in 1963 with the decision to construct Sydney's third metropolitan university (Macquarie University) and a surrounding industrial estate (Macquarie Park) with the aim of encouraging interaction between the University and local industry. The final release of the Green Belt land occurred in 1969 for the purpose of building a shopping precinct to be known as the Macquarie Centre (Geeves 1970; Martin 1998). Yet

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[22] Green Belt is a strip of rural open space that encircles urban districts. It is reserved land to provide urban populations with access to countryside.

despite this seemingly progressive stance, the impact of such a significant development had repercussions for Eastwood, resulting in the demise of many small, privately owned businesses. It was not until Lebanese and later Chinese and Korean business people (in the 1980s and 1990s) set up as ethnic entrepreneurs (Collins & Kunz 2009) that Eastwood began to recover (McAndrew 2009). Today, it is difficult to imagine the 'old Ryde', but there are 'skeletons' that hint at a very different, yet recent past. A compilation of vignettes from field-notes that I made during visits to the suburbs of Denistone and Epping offer distinct, yet comparable snippets that provide clues to such 'old' ways of life.

> *Denistone: The train station is deserted. Everything is quiet. No shops, no traffic, no building works. I pass one young man walking his dog. I wander past federation houses set on substantial blocks of land. Interspersed with these are newer (1960s?) houses that I imagine once replaced older federation homes. Trees line the roadways. A park beckons. Denistone has a soft, suburban respectability about it (Field-note dated 23 July 2014).*

> *Epping: I leave the train station on the western approach and, as with many suburbs that sit along the railway line, I see a shopping strip of small, attached buildings, punctuated only by an arcade that joins two main streets together. At the end of the arcade I glimpse an upmarket RSL Club[23]. Two storeys high, with accommodation or storage above, small businesses along this busy main strip were probably once owned by prominent local identities. Today I note they are still small businesses; food outlets, florists, dress-making / alterations, smallgoods and newsagents, yet they look and feel so different (Field-note dated 12 October 2014).*

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[23] RSL Clubs were established as meeting places for returned service people. Today they are usually patronised by older residents; places where they can meet friends, eat and socialise. The Epping club is an upmarket version of many, with an in-house café, 'ballrooms' and a casino.

Visions for the future of Macquarie Park

Today, Macquarie Park is a business-base for global players such as Microsoft, Sony, Optus, Johnson and Johnson and Goodman Fielder. Additionally, the area is targeted for further substantial development. With strategies afoot to create more than 40,000 extra jobs by 2030, Macquarie Park is earmarked to become the fourth largest Central Business District in Australia behind Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. Embedded within other large-scale proposals[24], the Herring Road and North Ryde Urban Activation Precincts plan [the Herring Road proposal] that is concentrated around Macquarie Centre, Macquarie University and Ivanhoe Estate (one of the largest social and public housing holdings in NSW) aims to maximise the use of existing infrastructure to construct large-scale, high-rise housing developments, public spaces, new retail opportunities, improved connectivity to transport and employment opportunities (NSW Government Department of Planning and Environment 2013, 2014). The current suburban residential landscape of three-four storey apartment blocks and townhouses, built in 1970s – 1980s, will be demolished to make way for high-rise apartment complexes, of up to 23 storeys. The 'One Twenty Macquarie' development due for completion in 2018, is an example of these upscale constructions. Comprising 196 units, a gym, theatrette, landscaped gardens, barbeque facilities, on-site parking and retail opportunities at the ground level (Toga Sales and Leasing 2016) this construction will complement the major redevelopment of Macquarie [shopping] Centre that was completed in 2014, made possible through an investment of $840 million. Macquarie Centre is now the largest shopping centre in NSW, with new plans for further expansion, to combine commercial and residential uses (including retail, entertainment, lifestyle and leisure facilities), on exhibition for public comment (Macquarie Centre 2016).

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[24] Such as the North Ryde Urban Activation Precinct, a project based around the re-zoning of 12.5 hectares of land to deliver 3,000 new homes, public plazas and community facilities, 1,500 jobs, and $17 million in transport upgrades (NSW Government Department of Planning and Environment 2013, 2014).

Photo 6: Macquarie Centre

Photo 7: Macquarie Centre

Photo 8: Macquarie Centre

Yet, despite the benefits that have already spilled out and others that are likely to flow from these developments, many residents of Macquarie Park express uncertainty and anxiety about urban transformation. One such group are the residents of Ivanhoe Estate, a neighbourhood situated opposite Macquarie University that is comprised of 275 low-rise buildings (social and public housing units, townhouses and community centres) woven across a 'maze' of cul-de-sacs. Fronting Herring Road with one main access point, the Estate is surrounded by streets that contain a multitude of apartment blocks popular with students. At the back, is a pathway winding through green space that ultimately connects to a small park and Macquarie Centre. Over the past 27 years Ivanhoe Estate has evolved from a 'troubled' community to a neighbourhood where residents 'care for each other, check on each other and help each other'.

In this light, business plans to raze existing assets to make way for new large-scale developments pose threats that extend beyond the loss of existing material structures.

Since 2001, the Salvation Army has leased a three-bedroom townhouse on Ivanhoe Estate from Housing NSW. Their purpose, in the words of the Team Leader, Macquarie Park Salvation Army has been to:

> *Add value to the 'Estate' and to be part of seeing tenants' lives experiencing freedom and wholeness, connection, community, belonging… It is also where we open our doors up for regular weekly activities and programs such as café 47, after school-at-47 which is like a homework tutoring program that we partner with uni (which is great), a Sunday burgeoning faith community which meets around here, along with small groups, a bible study, and adventuring for teenage boys and teenage girls. A lot of the other times is just about being available, so it's about being a good neighbour – responding to phone calls, knocks at the door, visiting people at home, visiting at hospital, custody in Macquarie Hospital for mental health, helping to change a light bulb, you know, help people with advocating for maintenance issues with housing, or neighbourhood disputes, moving house – it's really that broad and diverse – it's really life…So my role is kind of to lead and facilitate and help to set culture and operate all of that stuff (Field-note from discussion dated 25 July 2014).*

In July 2014, I attended a meeting of the Ivanhoe Estate Community Reference Group to learn first-hand about the Herring Road proposal and its likely effect on residents. At that meeting redevelopment plans were confirmed, revealing the demolition of all current assets to make way for 2,000 high-rise units[25]; the majority of which would be offered for private ownership. Embedded within this proposal was a guarantee from the State Government of NSW that the existing number of social and public housing assets would remain unchanged[26]. Residents were also assured of accommodation throughout, and on completion of the redevelopment

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[25] Demolition of Ivanhoe Estate commenced in 2016.
[26] Social and public housing would represent less than 14% of total assets in the new structures.

process, although there was a likelihood that suitable accommodation would not exist for all in the new development, thus necessitating some residents to move on to other areas, potentially away from Ryde. Particularly the elderly, those afflicted by physical and mental disabilities, or lack proficiency in English, this prospect induced feelings of disquiet, as they foresaw both material and social displacement. Privately some residents expressed outrage that a large proportion of the apartments in the new development were to be given over to private ownership; perhaps purchased by the families of international students. (The source of these sentiments traceable to a statement made by a local politician.) Anger among residents at the proposed destruction of Ivanhoe Estate was about more than material obliteration. Their wrath was directed towards the government who acted in cooperation with big business (including Macquarie University), to force change on settled, less powerful collectives, in order to open up commercial opportunities that potentially linked to new, mobile populations.

Photo 9: Ivanhoe Estate today

Photo 10: Developments surrounding Ivanhoe Estate

Photo 11: Developments surrounding Ivanhoe Estate

On the occasion of the Estate's 25th birthday in 2015, the local *Northern District Times* newspaper (Cowper 2015) reported:

> It is amazing to contemplate the incredible transformation that the once-notorious Ivanhoe Estate in Macquarie Park has undergone since it was first built 25 years ago…Once overrun by gangs of young men who terrorised residents…lots of drugs,…lots of alcohol,…huge bikies. [It is now a place where] if there is a problem, we look after each other…People talk to each other. [In the words of one resident], here I can talk to people who help, who I trust.

Yet, this transformation has had little impact on influencing decision-making processes. Caught in a 'perfect storm' that has erupted through the confluence of meta and micro-forces to do with transnational flows of people to the area including international students; neoliberal ideologies embedded within government policies that favour market-driven activities (including partial privatisation of assets); the capacity of large corporations, including Macquarie University, to successfully lobby government authorities; the opening up of opportunities for foreign buyers to purchase properties; and government planning changes (post 2010) that allow the by-pass of Local Government planning along major transport corridors, the threat posed to Ivanhoe Estate is overwhelming. Symbolic of the consequences for everyday life when political and sociological contexts collide (and vaguely reminiscent of the changes that led to the demise of the specialty shops in Eastwood in 1970s), Ivanhoe Estate is in a process of transformation to reflect new priorities that support growth prospects for Macquarie Park.

A snap-shot and overview of the City of Ryde in 2012

In 2012, there were 110, 791 persons living in the City of Ryde. Of those persons, 42.2% were born overseas. Between 2006 and 2011, these persons increased by 7, 107 or 19.5%. The three largest ancestries (back three generations) are Australian, English and Chinese (Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Housing 2006, 2011). The Centre

for Social Impact for the City of Ryde (2012) predicts that the population of the Local Government Area will increase over the next two decades to 137, 310 persons. The number of people aged over 55 years and in particular those aged between 65 and 74 years, is expected to show the greatest increase. By 2019, the dominant housing type is expected to be lone-person households, in line with the ageing population. One parent families are also expected to increase by 20.5%, while the number of couples with dependents is predicted to increase by 1.1%.

Table 1: Birthplaces of residents of the City of Ryde (Census 2011)

China	9.5%	10,525 persons
South Korea	3.4%	3,766 persons
United Kingdom	2.9%	3,212 persons
Hong Kong	2.6%	2,880 persons
India	2.6%	2,880 persons
Italy	1.7%	1,883 persons

Note: From *Census of Population and Housing,* (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] 2011). Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id the population experts.

Table 2: Population changes between 2006 and 2011[27]

China	+3,166 persons
South Korea	+959 persons
India	+824 persons
Philippines	+432 persons

Note: From *Census of Population and Housing,* (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] 2006, 2011). Compiled and presented by in profile.id by .id the population experts.

The findings of the *City Vision 2022* community consultation facilitated by Ryde City Council (2005) showed that more than 80% of the 600 respondents to a telephone survey, ranked Ryde as either a 'good' or 'very good' place to live, in terms of community mix in relation to age, income and cultural diversity. The respondents identified the finest attributes of living in Ryde as transport, the environment, safety, a strong sense of neighbourliness, schools and access to higher education and amenities. These conclusions find validation in other national studies including Markus (2014), who maintained that Australia, along with Canada, ranked as the most receptive Western nations to immigration.

Published in the editor's column of the local *Northern District Times* newspaper - a convenient platform for residents to express their opinions about issues of everyday life - are letters from residents that uphold a range of views about living in the suburbs of Ryde. Many of these letters focus on the suburb of Eastwood, where opinions are split on the changes that have recently occurred (and continue to occur) within the suburb. Interestingly, the streetscape of this suburb represents division too, for the railway line traverses it, and in doing so creates a visual gulf between Chinese and Korean businesses. The visibility of this separation gives rise to habitual labelling of the suburb from the perspective of the 'Korean

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[27] Data from the Census (2016) was not released at the time of writing. Anecdotal information suggests however that the Chinese and Indian populations in particular, have increased significantly since 2011.

side' or the 'Chinese side' (reminiscent of Carruthers' (2011) representation of Cabramatta in Sydney); signalling some of the complexities and ambiguities that surround the spatial, corporeal and sensory separations of the area.

> I love the Asian shops and I have no objection to foreign language signage. Varied, vibrant, embrace all hues. It's a privilege to live in such a varied, vibrant, polyglot community (Summer 2007).

> The simple fact is that Eastwood is undergoing a renaissance after years of struggle. There is an outstanding public school, a vibrant, dynamic business community and a diverse range of cultural events across the calendar (Griblin 2007).

Juxtaposed with these letters are consistent alternate iterations from those who look to the past with a sense of melancholy and grief. Expressed as feelings of disappointment, loss and frustration, the authors associate the rapidity and scale of social change with decline in local prosperity, social harmony and sense of community. Olfactory recollections play a part here too, with the senses of smell, sight, sound and touch (Low 2005; Rhys-Taylor 2013; Wise 2010), turning out to be strong triggers for reflective memories, whilst simultaneously inciting anxieties around social change (Sandercock & Kliger 1998).

> This comment has nothing to do with racism. It has to do with remembering our past and what we have lost and the sub-standards we are forced to live with. Eastwood was a clean and safe environment, a pleasure to visit with quality shops selling quality products. I liken some of Eastwood to a third world slum, in particular the Blaxland Road side. Streets are offensive and smell. It's difficult to find signs in English. Respect and consideration are not returned (Muscat 2009).

On the first visit I made to Eastwood, my senses were awakened too, as I observed the convergence of the old with the new.

A strong smell of Asian food strikes, as I enter Rowe Street. Walking its entire length, I observe, smell, touch, hear and 'taste' every shop. I am astonished by the number selling food - mostly Korean, although there are also two Japanese sushi shops. Two 'traditional' coffee shops are brimming with Anglo-Australian customers. A cake shop sells brightly-coloured, profusely decorated cakes. There is also an ALDI supermarket. The green grocer catches my eye, with wares displayed in crates on the shop floor, making it difficult to navigate the narrow, dark corridor between these presentations. Handmade signs reveal the prices, and on the front windows of the shop, hand-written signs in various languages advertise other services and goods, as they block the inside view.

Leaving Rowe Street, I cross the railway line via the underpass and emerge near a garden centre and café. I walk up the Mall (the 'Chinese side') to the Woolworths Centre food-court, which is small, claustrophobic, windowless, and a bit depressing. It isn't crowded, but the Mall itself is busy. From the Mall I pass by Hillview Street, and its open-air food market. People are buying noodles, or dumplings as take-away lunches. There is a Vietnamese bakery and a couple of butchers at the end of the street. As I leave and head for Eastwood Library, I walk past a lovely park and sports ground. There are a few children playing on the swings. The oval looks almost as if it came from a time-past, and although it is well-cared for, it doesn't feel, at least on this occasion, to exhibit the vibrancy I experience elsewhere. Its prominent grandstand, evocative of Saturday afternoon cricket matches, touches upon another era (Field-note dated 7 January 2014).

Photo 12: Eastwood shopping centre

Photo 13: Eastwood shopping centre

Photo 14: Eastwood shopping centre

Eastwood is a suburb most visibly changed by the mobility of its population. Along with Marsfield and Macquarie Park, it is also the residential location most preferred by international students.

International students at Macquarie University

With a population of 8,572, international students comprised approximately 21% of the total student population of 40,209 at Macquarie University in 2015 (down slightly from the previous year). While they are representative of 120 countries (Macquarie University *Annual report* 2015), the vast majority come from the Asian continent, predominantly China (see Table 3). This factor is significant, for within the context of this study, informants invariably perceived and described international students as a homogeneous Chinese collective. This viewpoint overshadowed other variables pertaining to their super-diversity (Vertovec 2007)

while it simultaneously extinguished much of the dynamism and contradictions surrounding their everyday lives.

Table 3: Student enrolments by home countries in 2014

Africa and the Middle East	298
Americas	602
North-East Asia (largely China)	6,211
North and Western Europe	322
South and Central Asia	766
South-East Asia	1,041
Southern and Eastern Europe	128
TOTAL	9,165

Note: From Macquarie University *Annual Report* (2014).

The impact of international students on Ryde

As 'super tourists' (Adams, Banks & Olsen 2011, p.43), the contribution of international students to localities is routinely described through economic benefits (spending on food, accommodation, transport and entertainment) and for the potential their en masse presence creates for the revitalisation of run-down areas (Allinson 2006). Far less attention is characteristically paid to their involvement in the social and cultural fabric of the communities in which they reside. Albeit, programmes such as the University of Newcastle's *Community Connections* (Gresham & Clayton 2011) attest to the capacity of international students to negotiate differences and gently foster more cosmopolitan outlooks.

In the suburbs of the City of Ryde, international students create a sizeable footprint, representing 6,425 residents, or 5.8% of the total population of 110, 791 (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] Census of Population and Housing 2011; GML Social Research 2011). Most choose to live in proximity to Macquarie University, via accommodation options as varied as on-campus residential, *Homestay,* private rental and purpose-built apartments (Macquarie University 2016). In recent times, growth in the off-campus student-resident population has been reproached for placing strain on local infrastructure, services and social cohesion, especially affordable housing. As a consequence, private rental demand in Ryde now exceeds housing supply, rents have escalated, housing prices have risen and in some areas, illegal boarding houses have emerged. These factors have resulted in community backlash, with some local residents expressing concerns about housing affordability, deterioration in the appearance of the local area and apprehension for the health and safety of boarding house residents[28] (GML Social Research 2011). The NSW Government's proposals for Urban Activation Precincts, and plans for the construction of 12,000 dwellings – mostly apartments - within the area by 2031 (City of Ryde Local Planning Study 2004) come on top of these concerns.

Housing affordability, supply and density are thus inflammatory discussion points among local residents[29]. In 2010, a lobby group 'Marsfield against Residential Suffocation' [hereafter MARS] was formed to draw political attention (and action) to the flow-on effects of local business activities, including University business, on residents of Marsfield. Their specific concerns included: the rising numbers of students living in Marsfield in over-crowded boarding houses; the ostensible failure of Macquarie University to provide adequately and appropriately for students' accommodation needs; parking overflows into local streets; and the deterioration in appearance of local amenities. Hearing of these issues prompted me to visit Marsfield.

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[28] See Smith (2008) for a discussion on studentification of neighbourhoods in the United Kingdom.
[29] See Fincher (2011) for a discussion of the link between debates to do with immigration, population growth, international education policy and the effects of population on local infrastructure.

Just six lanes of Epping Road mark the boundary between the University campus and Marsfield. The light posts at the pedestrian crossing hint at the demographics of the area, for they are covered in posters typed in Chinese and Korean scripts that offer few clues to their content, although acronyms such as: SIBT, MQ, UNSW, UTS[30] hint at their intent. Across Epping Road is a late-opening (12midnight) Woolworths supermarket and a petrol station. Surrounding streets contain 'blocks' of residential care units for older people, interspersed with low-rise apartments, townhouses and detached houses. Marsfield presents a picture of 'sleepy' suburbia, a place peppered with properties that cater primarily to the elderly and the young. An older man points out for me the five houses in his cul-de-sac (of 12 properties) that are occupied by students. They are easy to spot: parched lawns dotted with weeds that are in the process of strangling 'tired' plants; peeling paintwork around windows and on fences; sheets strung lopsidedly as curtains; and shoes piled up on doorsteps. Set amongst these, his house looks 'picture perfect', perhaps a reminder of what used to be elsewhere. He says he doesn't mind the students as long as they are quiet, don't cause trouble, or drop rubbish on the street. I find it easy to imagine how the juxtaposition of the past and the present might have inspired the emergence of the MARS group (Field-notes dated 14 May 2014, 23 July 2014).

In 2011, the NSW Government released the report: *Inquiry into International Student Accommodation in NSW* (NSW Ombudsman 2011; Parliament of NSW 2011); a sequel to which was the *Boarding Houses Act* (Parliament of NSW 2012). This report represented a response to pressure brought by the Local State Member of Ryde, Mr Victor Dominello and MARS group. Its findings indicated that many international students across NSW were living in accommodation that was outside the mainstream rental sector in share housing, boarding houses, lodgements and private housing; situations that potentially increased their vulnerability to exploitation. In a statement extracted from the *Inquiry into International*

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[30] SIBT is an acronym for Sydney Institute of Business and Technology; MQ for Macquarie University; UNSW for University of New South Wales; and UTS for University Technology Sydney.

Student Accommodation in NSW (2011) Dr Chris Martin, Senior Policy Officer with the Tenants' Union of NSW, declared that international students experience some of the most unfair and abusive practices by landlords in the NSW rental housing system.

The findings of community consultations that were also published in this report, revealed outrage of local residents that Macquarie University consistently failed to provide sufficient, suitable accommodation for international students, whilst they encouraged students to live close to the campus. Multiple claims were made that ordinary three or four bedroom houses were routinely purchased by private developers for conversion into dwellings to accommodate 15 or 16 students; circumstances that led to fears for the safety of residents and the demise in the visual amenity of the streets exemplified by unkempt gardens, noise, vermin and smell. The State Member for Ryde, Mr Victor Dominello (2011, p.90) claimed, 'only two types of people are suffering under the current arrangements: local residents and international students. They did not plan to come to Australia to live in "shanty boxes"'. He drew attention to a single street in which 15 houses were set up as illegal boarding houses. Yet, the passing of subsequent legislation in the *Boarding Houses Act* (Parliament of NSW 2012) that was driven by recommendations from this report and set out to protect boarding house residents, has failed to eliminate large numbers of international students residing in overcrowded, sometimes illegal circumstances. In the course of this study I heard numerous reports of international students 'couch surfing', or sleeping on mattresses on the floors of overcrowded buildings. Six years after comments made as part of the *Inquiry into International Student Accommodation in NSW* (2011) by the Manager of Environmental and Planning Department at Ryde City Council, (Johnson 2011, p.88) that he 'doubted that the Ryde community would accept regularisation of boarding houses…and that [the community were] not supportive of the presence of international students'; volatility to do with the presence of international students still exists within the local landscape, establishing a rich platform on which to build this study.

Photo 15: Macquarie Park unit blocks

Photo 16: Macquarie Park unit blocks

Photo 17: Student housing in Marsfield

Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of national policies, historical events and local contexts that form focal underpinnings for this study. Opening with a summary of Australian Immigration policy since World War II, a consistent and salient theme of this thesis emerges; how the human, cultural and social capital of migrants have consistently been sought by successive governments to buttress Australia's economic objectives. Their capacity to contribute economically; fill skills shortages; and 'fit in', have indeed morphed into integral rationalities embedded within immigration policies. As such international students, imbued with knowledge capital are these days considered to be 'desirable' migrants. Yet they are also routinely caught up in shifting policy directions, through which the temporality, fluidity and ambiguity of their mobility is interrogated.

In this context, International Education policy plays a significant part, for it determines the way in which international students enter and exit Australia; how their lives are constructed and managed. Imbued with neoliberal ideology that privileges entrepreneurism, International Education policy has transformed from a stance that once privileged education-as-aid to a multi-billion dollar global industry. Moreover with the nexus of education and immigration has come opportunities for international students to pursue multiple pathways on graduation; a situation that gives rise to uncertainty among the receiving society about their 'real' intentions.

A substantial section of this chapter briefly explored a history of the City of Ryde to capture some of the more significant events that have shaped the local landscape. These events are not only important for what they reveal about the past, but also for what they divulge about the present. An area of prolonged Anglo-European settlement, it is only in the recent past that Ryde has experienced wide-scale super-diversity (Vertovec 2007), some of which is attributable to mobilities of international students. Targeted for its potential to transform into one of the largest business hubs in Australia, current plans for Ryde are viewed through multifarious lens at the community level; some long-term residents embracing proposed changes, as others attempt to hold fast to a rapidly disappearing past. A relatively small sector, the presence of international students is already causing friction, and with numbers predicted to grow, these sentiments are likely to escalate.

Chapter Two

A literature review: international education in Australia

The main purpose of this chapter is to theoretically foreground and sketch the forthcoming analysis of the study's findings. Canvasing the extensive body of literature that investigates the complex issues that surround international education today, this chapter opens by unpacking essential policies and frameworks that construct and regulate international education in Australia, just as they shape the standing of international students within local contexts. Successively, the chapter fleshes various theories that pertain to adjustment and encounter between international students and the receiving society. Finally, the chapter focuses on obstacles and barriers that separate and divide international students from longer-term residents.

The political, social and personal status of international students in Australia

The journey associated with international education today is one typified by sentiments of uncertainty and insecurity. The application of multifaceted national policies and associated regulations that specify the conditions under which international students are eligible to remain in Australia, differentiate the international student experience from other more certain, stable, permanent migrations (Fozdar, Wilding & Hawkins 2009; Sawir et al. 2009b). These policies also play a significant part in wider migration debates, for they construct international students through a lens of opportunity, mobility and flexibility; a reading that fails to grant due consideration to the precariousness, limitations and adversities that subvert the students' political, social and personal status in Australia.

Many international students envision either from the outset, or during the course of their sojourn, the possibility of converting their temporary status to permanency (Castles & Miller 2003; Robertson 2011b). The flexibility contained within their student visa conditions permits

them to do so, and as such they are able to 'taste' life; to live, learn and sometimes work in their destination country before attempting to acquire permanency. The potential to convert temporary status to permanency is a distinguishing feature of their visa category, one that separates them from other mobile populations, while signalling opportunities that others do not enjoy. Nonetheless, international students are required to possess skills in areas that fill employment needs and are frequently excluded from salient debates about migration (King & Raghuram 2013). Moreover, their oft portrayal as 'free agents' (Geddes 2013, p.205) who have the ability to respond with ease to changing residency conditions, misjudges the restrictions and complexity of their situation, as they seek to balance diverse transnational relationships with their careers and desires (of some) for permanency (Khoo, Hugo & McDonald 2008). Moreover, any decision they make about migration brings consequences not only for themselves, but also for those who remain in their countries of origin. Thus tensions exist in a range of areas including: relationships, financial obligations, career choices, responsibilities to ageing parents, child care issues, quality education for children, health and welfare provisions and finding a work – life balance (Geddes 2013).

Despite these inherent challenges, the aspiration of international students to use education as a step towards migration is strong, and attributable to drivers such as political and economic instability in their home countries, concerns about discrimination, or their desire to avoid military service. Migration also offers a means to address the imperative to financially support home-based relatives and to deliver individual professional status and advancement (Baldassar 2011; Colic-Peisker 2008; Collins 2013). With the hope of more cosmopolitan lifestyles made possible by the process of globalisation, and leveraged through improvements in transport, the immediacy of communications and the transmission of global cultural values (Castles & Miller 2003), international students are lured post-study too, by the potential that migration offers to strengthen their social capital and create effective migrant networks that form the basis for transnational communities. Regardless of the reason(s) for considering

migration, decisions to do so are usually predicated upon 'seizing an opening' that will potentially deliver higher standards of living and grander opportunities (Castles 2013).

Notwithstanding successive shifts in International Education and Immigration policies in Australia, international students have remained in a kind of policy 'no man's land'; their foothold likened to mobile persons such as short-term business people, labour entrants and refugees (Marginson 2012). This is despite many remaining in Australia for three or more years[31]. The conditions contained within their temporary visa status ensure that they accept nebulous political, social and personal standing that cast them often in precarious circumstances from which other migrant types are protected. Their visa status, underpinned by habitual shifts in Immigration policy that aim to either encourage or manage global people flows, has led to international students at various times being viewed as either a productive, positive group, or one that exemplifies risk. Intrinsically, their status is regulated through conflicting frameworks, one of which is constructive and supportive, while the other is negative and punitive (Marginson 2011a). As Benson (2006) argued, international students are at first 'invited' to come on-shore as 'guests' who pay for education, but once here, they are subject to government authority and regulation with few political rights, thus relegating them to the margins of society; their presence readily associated with problematic issues that threaten order and certainty around notions of cohesive communities.

The Education Services for Overseas Students [ESOS] (2000) regulates conditions that devolve various responsibilities for international students' security to educational institutions who then pass many of these on to the international students themselves. Under this Act there is no contract between international students and the government, no references to political rights, channels of representation and student safety measures (including anti-discrimination legislation). Education providers however, have written agreements with international

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[31] Student movement is termed as both 'migration' and 'mobility', although policy debates increasingly favour 'mobility'. Mobility emphasises movement. It also implies shorter timeframes for movement and the probability of return. Nonetheless, movements for an entire degree programme of three or four years fit conventional statistical definitions of international migration (King & Raghuram 2013).

students (unlike domestic students), which specify programmes of study, monies payable and information relating to course refunds. Compliance officers located within institutions also monitor the students' attendance, progression and completion (Marginson 2012). Through these processes and agreements, education institutions position international students as customers with consumer protection rights (Robertson 2015b). With this status comes neoliberal rationalities about how relations within institutions operate; a stance that privileges consumer choice and demands together with personal investment (Sidhu 2004). At the same time, this position strengthens the right of institutions to retreat from providing *comprehensive* support services to students and to side-step participation in the totality of the student experience, particularly in relation to students' off-campus encounters (Sawir et al. 2009a). Such limited knowledge of, and engagement with the students' often parlous situations, makes way for institutions to then 'talk up' the student experience and to focus on its more positive aspects (Ong 2011) in ways that privilege the commercial needs of the Australian government and individual institutions. Indeed, whilst recognising international education for its capacity to enrich the diversity of university campuses, and aid in building people-to-people links and friendships, *The Strategic Review of Student Visa Program* (Australian Government 2011, p.ix) states, 'in the end the biggest attraction is the financial benefit most university students bring; their fees and the broader economic stimulus that comes from the money they spend on food, accommodation, leisure, travel etc'. With 'global competition for quality international students [is] intensifying and almost certainly [will] continu[e]ing to intensify' (Australian Government 2011, p.viii), impetus to develop legislation to secure financial advantage (such as the two years of post-study work rights for those who graduate and are visa compliant), becomes elevated. As discussed in ensuing sections, the location of international education within a neoliberal discourse has other ramifications too, in that it charts a passage within universities for internationalisation agendas and in the definition of social and administrative relationships (Rizvi & Walsh 1998).

Other regulations also exist within visa conditions and apply to most international students. These include the purchase of Overseas Student Health Cover [OSHC] and the payment of school fees for children, even though international students are excluded from nearly all forms of public financial support, including welfare and housing and full access in some states to travel concessions (Marginson 2011a; Transport for NSW 2016a) and are conferred fewer work rights than their domestic colleagues (Nyland et al. 2009). Together these conditions act to limit, manage and exclude international students on the everyday level, while at the political level, peak bodies such as the Council of International Students Australia [CISA] that attempt to represent their interests, struggle to affect political will because the students they act for, unlike ethnic community organisations of past decades, are ineligible to vote (Paltridge, Mayson & Schapper 2012) and are unable to exercise voice and the rights that come with citizenship. In the present day world where citizenship is connected to nationality, and 'appears inseparable from belonging to a nation, whether through inheritance or naturalisation by descent or by "choice" ' (Balibar 1988, p.726), being of 'non-citizen' status can have dire consequences in crisis situations. What this means is that international students are not only excluded from depersonalised grounds of recognition and respect (Honneth 1995), but that they operate within a precarious personal, social and political milieu that has serious ramifications for personal safety and security, defined through two aspects: namely the protection of persons and their capacity to act (Marginson 2010). The poignancy of this situation is captured in the media article, 'Sydney restaurants seek workers for $10 an hour' (Han, Patty & Ting 2016), where it was alleged that international students were aware that they were working for less than award wages, but nevertheless held the view that 'it was an easier option to just accept things'[32]. A representative from the Union representing hospitality workers used this article to argue:

> the multi-billion dollar education industry [should] take responsibility for the
>
> "endemic" exploitation of foreign workers…Universities are culpable in taking money

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[32] See Velayutham (2013) on co-ethnic exploitation of workers on 457 visas. In this article workers faced similar problems in the workplace, but made the judgement to stay on the basis 'of better the devil you know'.

from students who come here and struggle with cost-of-living issues…The unis offer the world to them but don't care and don't look after their wellbeing after they get here.

The question of who is ultimately responsible for student security is thus noteworthy. In a recent study involving Chinese parents with children studying in Australia (Forbes-Mewett, Nyland & Shao 2010), the informants argued that accountability should be shared across four domains: the host government, the host institution, the students' families and the students, with the home government (by way of embassies and consulates, who too are guests in the receiving society) (Marginson 2011a), responsible to mediate in some matters. Within these deliberations, it was however the host government and the host institution that were considered to be the primary agents responsible for providing security for students, acting to reduce their exposure to danger and risk.

Such questions to do with responsibility for student security sit firmly within neoliberal rationality that dominates national government policies and university business nowadays. Privileging rankings and ratings, image, market-driven activity, income and 'high volume education' (Gribble & Blackmore 2012, p.350), neoliberal rationality willingly forfeits care and responsibility for students, replacing such attributes with apathy and unresponsiveness (Cohen & Kennedy 2013). Explored in-depth in ensuing sections, it is often only when incomes are threatened, or the competitiveness of the Australian international education sector is endangered that governments and education institutions respond to issues around student security.

Student security within education institutions

Policies within education institutions authorise units such as counselling, accommodation, welfare, financial advice and academic support (sometimes known as language and learning support), with primary responsibility for delivering services that contribute to the safety, security and well-being of an increasingly large and complex international and domestic

student cohort. Habitually acknowledged for their contribution to policy implementation in these key areas, 'the functional capacity of university support staff is continuously challenged by the need to compete for resources against university divisions that generate outcomes more highly prized by university managers' (Forbes-Mewett & Nyland 2013, p.182). Thus, with little capacity to earn or provide resources that are valued by institutions (such as external grants and high-status publications), or few opportunities to develop prestigious reputations for institutions, support services are habitually overlooked in the competition to secure the resources they need to buttress the complex needs of the ever-growing student population. Moreover, in the quest to compete for resources, they are often forced to rely on alliances forged with other areas of universities to represent their interests (Forbes-Mewett & Nyland 2013), with the result that support services are routinely inadequately funded. This is despite recurrent rhetoric that celebrates their function and the confidence that parents and students clearly place in them. With goodwill but limited assets, support services constantly struggle to provide effectively for the wide-ranging security needs of the heterogeneous student population, with the resultant consequence that international students are perceived as more vulnerable and at risk to hazards than their domestic colleagues. Additionally, this position differentiates Australia from the United Kingdom and US America where education institutions take more active and comprehensive responsibility for student security (Forbes-Mewett, McCulloch & Nyland 2015). In doing so, they deliver not only heightened levels of personal and social support for international students, but also open up opportunities for them to make greater functional and material contributions to the receiving society, ultimately creating a ripple effect in terms of their acceptance, security, inclusion and belonging.

Administrative sections within universities hold less front-line responsibility than support units for student security, but nonetheless share accountability, for 'administrative processes are a particular kind of social process. They are about the ways in which people are *dealt with*' [emphasis in original]…and 'impart significant information about *who we are* [emphasis in original] through how we are *treated* and *seen*' [emphasis in original]. As such,

administrative processes 'are not separate from, but interface with popular culture and locally produced ideas' about those who administer and those being administered to (Knowles 1999, p.120). In this light, administrative practices within universities that are often designed to smooth and streamline processes such as orientation, split off and differentiate international students from their domestic peers (Fincher & Shaw 2009). Reinforced by information routinely based on preconceptions about particular groups, international students are not only funnelled along separate orientation routes from their first few days after arrival at university, but also guided towards certain types of accommodation. Whilst it is reasonable to justify taking these actions, (and indeed there are benefits), the effects endure through mind-sets about imagined parallel trajectories between international and domestic students. As such, initial chasms about how international and domestic students perceive each other are effectively opened up in the first days after entrance to university, and while special programmes and mediated events later attempt to facilitate encounters among students in academic and social settings, attitudes and perceptions linger about separation and difference. These kinds of attitudes are not confined either to affiliations between students, but also underpin relations with some university staff. Symbolised through moments of 'culture clash' in which staff report heightened feelings of irritation, annoyance and frustration in response to what they consider to be persistent and bothersome behaviours of international students, cultural differences in cognition and expectations become reinforced by broader differences, breakdowns in communication and ongoing, negative stereotyping (Volet & Tan-Quigley 1999).

A complex journey of becoming

Since the 1950s international education in Australia has transformed and been transformed from a position linked to policies that espoused rationalities of education-as-aid to a vast export industry that is connected to transnational people flows and accelerated globalisation. Formerly conceptualised through a uni-dimensional lens, international students were once regarded as a homogeneous collective, regulated by temporary visa status that was both

precise and fixed. Today, the image of international education is one of considerable complexity, buttressed by the super-diversity (Vertovec 2007) of both receiving societies and the international student population; a position further compounded by the multifarious pathways open to international students post-study to extend their time in Australia (Robertson 2013). Predictably, traditional ways of conceptualising the distance between international students and the receiving society have become inconsequential (Keith 2013); a conundrum further intensified by the everyday fluidity, uncertainty and ambiguity of life in global cities.

Today's journey towards acquiring an international education inevitably involves rapid personal transformation, requiring international students to absorb knowledge as cultural capital; attain social capital through the establishment and development of social networks and relationships; and acquire more cosmopolitan outlooks via exposure to different values and beliefs. All of these contribute to the formation of new, plural identities, albeit through journeys that encompass multifarious challenges and countless moments and phases of disequilibria (Marginson 2014). At the same time, notions of potential or 'becoming' link with obtaining an international education (Hannerz 1996; Koehne 2005; Marginson 2014).

As 'strangers' inhabiting local spaces, international students are likely to be experienced by some as mysterious beings; a collective who symbolise infinite possibilities for adventure and the sharing of everyday life experiences (Marotta 2002). Alternatively, their visibility can intimate moral distance, menace and foreboding, especially for those who already feel discomfort with the 'spread, speed and scale' (Meissner & Vertovec 2015, p.546) of changes connected to super-diversity (Vertovec 2007). An embodiment of globalisation, international students will be reproved by some not only for the potential their en masse presence creates to destabilise insider identities, but also for the way in which they are perceived to contribute to the disintegration of the solidity of the local; diminish levels of safety, security, familiarity and comfort (Cohen & Kennedy 2013). Within this context, they are labelled the 'Other' - an out-group, or 'a problem' - excluded from 'fellow-feeling' (Bauman 1990a, p.40) that include

sentiments of empathy and commiseration. Bauman (1995a) further teases out these incongruent and inconsistent approaches as:

> The experiential ambiguity of the postmodern city rebounds in the postmodern ambivalence of the stranger. He has two faces. One is enticing because it is mysterious, inviting, promising joy to come while demanding no oath of loyalty; the face of infinite opportunity, yet untried pleasure and ever new adventure. The other face is also mysterious – but it is sinister, menacing and intimidating. Mystery is written all over it (Bauman 1995a, p.138).

The everyday experiences of international students

After arrival, international students begin to negotiate and adjust to their education institution, local neighbourhoods and the receiving society (Storti 1990). They manage social and religious differences, while some acquire new proficiencies in English language. As a collective group, international students undergo myriad negotiations which ultimately contribute to their academic, social and personal success and to the acquisition of comfort; an emotional state that embodies a broader sense of personal, social and financial security and certainty (Noble 2005). Within these circumstances, an exploration of the everyday experiences of international students provides a multi-layered account of both the ways in which the students manage countless challenges, and how the receiving society mediates and obstructs in their search for comfort and belonging.

Adjustment theories

Socio-psychological lens have often been applied to theory formation around cross-cultural adjustment. Some early explorations are attributable to Schutz (1944) who argued that adaptation was a process that required those 'crossing cultures' to make a step-by-step psychological journey from the margins to the centre of a foreign culture; Lysgaard (1955) and Oberg (1960) who proposed the theory of 'culture shock' and the 'recuperation model' of adjustment which used a 'U-shaped curve' to explain the transition process. Contained within

these theories was the perspective that as a consequence of cross-cultural transition, those who 'crossed cultures' were likely to experience serious disorientations, usually within the first couple of months after arrival which sometimes led to medical conditions such as anxiety, depression and physical illness. A period of recovery followed during which the person who was making the adjustment became better modified to the challenges of their new environment (demonstrated by the U-curve). Subsequent theorists argued that cross-cultural adaptation was an individualised process directed by cultural learning (Furnham & Bochner 1986); social learning (Triandis 1989); or tension reduction (Torbiorn, cited in Anderson 1994). Collectively these theories suggest significant differences in perspective on this topic, but actual variations are more applicable to emphasis than substance, as all uphold six common principles. Cross-cultural adjustment: implies learning; indicates a stranger-host relationship; is cyclical, unremitting and interactive; is relative; and implies personal development (Anderson 1994). Encompassed within, are notions that individuals are likely to experience cognitive, behavioural, emotional, social and psychological adjustment when they relocate to another country (Andrade 2006; Searle & Ward 1990).

These theories, developed years ago, offer important explanations of arrival experiences, but they are also limited by presuppositions that portray receiving societies as constant and static entities and institutions within them as stable (Marginson 2014). As such, they fail to recognise the super-diversity (Vertovec 2007) of global cities today and their composition as assemblages of individuals with multiple identities, diverse personal histories, varied educational attainments, assorted religions and degrees of financial capital. Hybrid and heterogeneous, societies and the institutions embedded within them, are in a constant state of flux, made more complex by constant transnational movements of people who too, are heterogeneous, bearing diverse legal, personal and social status. It is thus no longer adequate to describe adjustment in terms of distance between 'host' and 'sojourner'; to view 'successful' adjustment in terms of assimilation (Horgan 2012; Lee & Rice 2007); or to regard mobility as a 'harbinger of loss and displacement' (as is oft the situation in

descriptions of refugee trajectories) (Knowles 1999, p.126). In this light, transition becomes reframed as a more positive experience that recognises the ways in which newcomers bring with them not only multiple identities that have been built up over their lifetimes, but also the capacity to create new ones. Contained within, is recognition too of the potential that change offers for personal transformations (Marginson 2014) and the ways in which it opens up opportunities for newcomers to functionally contribute to the development of more cosmopolitan attitudes within receiving societies (Simmel 1971). From this perspective, arrival experiences are nowadays viewed more as compilations of ongoing cultural negotiations, rather than conversions to idealised stability, while mobility is regarded as a 'new start with [and] the prospect of new selves in the making' (Knowles 1999, p.126).

Experiences of hospitality, indifference, hostility and rejection

A stranger becomes enfolded in varied ways by the receiving society through the ethics of hospitality. Regardless of their presence being intuited as both unexpected and unpredictable, and often in spite of fears about where encounters might lead, hospitality demonstrates as a shared understanding of humanity and mutual acts of recognition (Rutherford 2007). It carries potential to facilitate positive experiences of strangerhood (Fincher & Iverson 2008; Lobo & Ghosh 2013; Rutherford 2007) that can merge into a soft solidarity (Horgan 2012). Some international students experience hospitality this way, built around individuals and collectives in the receiving society who mediate academic and professional aspirations, provide useful information and access to local knowledge and practices (Furnham & Bochner 1986; Hendrickson, Rosen & Aune 2011). Multicultural and co-national networks too, provide social and recreational fora to discuss unfamiliar environments, compare experiences and interpret new phenomena (Gomes 2015; Uslaner 2012). In some instances, co-nationals aid in the maintenance of heritage identities, language and familial relations, provide key support for social relations, religion, food, employment and economic security, while they offer protection in sustaining psychological security and promoting self-esteem by reducing anxiety, feelings of powerlessness and social stresses. Social networks, comprised of

international students from their home countries or region thus create an immediate 'community' that can contribute to building a sense of belonging, while the students share a unique understanding about what it means to be an international student (Gomes 2015). All these networks are important for they help international students to build social capital (Portes 1997; Velayutham 2013) that can be used in the development of new identities and new storylines of self (Kashima & Loh 2006; Koehne 2005).

Yet such positive experiences of hospitality do not apply to all, for many international students, along with other immigrants, experience indifference, hostility, or even rejection on arrival (Asquith & Poynting, 2011; Marotta, 2012); reactions that are routinely built on conceptions about race and anchored around the ability to 'fit' (Swanton 2010). Lacking social capital, some students gravitate towards co-nationals in the hope and belief that co-ethnicity will link to trustworthiness. This is often false hope (Li 2015; Portes 1997; Velayutham 2013). Central among studies that speak to such responses are those involving Indian students in Australia whose living, study and employment arrangements were described as being confined largely to other Indian students. With direct experiences of the receiving society often limited to encounters in Indian restaurants (that represented workplaces for some), or in religious institutions such as temples (occasionally churches), the students rarely established personal relations with the receiving society, and in particular with the established Indian community (Singh 2011). Moreover when contacts did take place, eminent Indian-Australians (many of whom migrated to Australia as professionals during 1970s to 1990s) described their encounters with the students as negative experiences. They ascribed such ill-feelings to class divisions and cultural differences, as recently arrived students were often young males who came from regional cities, small town or villages, in hope that education in Australia would deliver upward social mobility. As a consequence, personal encounters between the students and the Indian-Australian population habitually failed to bring about meaningful relationships, a situation that resulted in the students retreating to other students, more recent arrivals from India, and occasionally Anglo-

Australians for friendship and a sense of family in Australia (Singh, 2011). Even in the aftermath of a series of physical and verbal attacks on Indian international students that took place in Sydney and Melbourne in 2009, the established Indian community remained silent, dismissed or down-played these attacks (Bhasi 2013; Singh & Cabraal 2010), thus substantiating the notion that assistance based on shared ancestral identity, cannot always be relied upon (Erdsman 1995).

The assaults on Indian students in Australia were neither petty, nor isolated. Indeed, between 2003 and 2009, 32 Indian students died in Australia as a result of various causes, while in Victoria in 2008, a further 1,447 Indians became victims of reported crime (Singh & Cabraal, 2010). The initial response by the national and state governments was to deny racial motivation as the cause of these incidents, with police arguing the students were 'soft targets', vulnerable to 'opportunistic' acts (Mason 2012; Nyland, Forbes-Mewett & Marginson 2010). Some political leaders claimed that a level of violence was 'normal' across Australian cities. Indeed, authorities at first attempted to manage these incidents by suppressing their significance. In taking this course, what they failed to foresee was that the students would rise-up to rally, lobby and protest their situation on city streets, just as their families used their influence to engage the powerful Indian media to run daily news stories about international students being robbed, assaulted or killed in Australia (Singh & Cabraal 2010). As the situation escalated into a major moral panic, the Indian government demanded greater respect for its citizens in Australia. The Australian government became actively involved at this point in an effort to quell rising tensions. In the aftermath, the number of prospective Indian students looking to study in Australia fell dramatically. But the fall-out was not confined to India, for communication about what had occurred spread globally, damaging Australia's international education brand and its image as a multicultural society. As Singh (2011, p.687) explained, 'racism now has direct and indirect global economic implications'.

Loneliness

Out of these kinds of disheartening encounters between international students and the receiving society come well-recognised testimonies of loneliness. A significant issue for many international students, especially at times when they have unsuccessfully sought out additional support, loneliness is deemed to be most acute in the weeks following arrival, but persists too, as a pervasive undercurrent throughout the entire student sojourn for some (Gresham 2013). Emergent often within the context of other challenges such as language (Khawaja & Stallman 2011); unfamiliar academic environments (Zhang & Brunton 2007); the management of finances (Khawaja & Dempsey 2008; Sawir et al. 2009b); accommodation (Forbes-Mewett & Nyland 2008); and day to day living problems (Sawir et al. 2008), loneliness in all its forms[33] manifests as a longing for home or the urge to feel at home, through recognition within one's surroundings and feelings of belonging, expressed by Bauman (1996, p.30) as, 'a dream of belonging; to be, for once, *of* the place, not merely *in'*. Even though most international students eventually negotiate most of the corporeal challenges associated with adjustment and navigate their ways through many cultural and social differences, there remains in many, a deep melancholy that is attributable to loneliness. Reflected through descriptions of longing for both familial succour, intimate friendships and the sense of belonging that comes through familiar everyday sensory experiences of smell, sight, sound and feel, international students imagine personal comfort being intermingled with feelings of belonging and inclusion. For those who are able to establish affective ongoing connections, and enjoy these relations to reduce feelings of loneliness and exclusion, benefits emerge through greater participation in community-based cultural and religious organisations and verbal accounts that tell of attachment to place. Essential to these 'successful' relations are habitual interactions that are antithesis unresponsiveness and indifference; connections

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[33] Weiss (1973) described loneliness in terms of isolation from one's cultural and linguistic environment (*cultural loneliness*) and as anxiety and apprehension brought on by loss of intimate ties with family and friends (*emotional loneliness),* while Sawir et al. (2008) added a third kind of loneliness, characterised by feelings of exclusion and absence of an engaging social network *(social loneliness)*; feelings that were exacerbated by alienation, unfamiliar institutional rules and study environments.

embodied with deep personal interest and concern for the other's well-being. Many international students yearn for these kinds of connections for they symbolise family, affording them individuals in whom they can confide their problems and associations that grow into trusting relations. Feeling cared about, respected and personally known are underlying attributes of these relations (Blatterer 2015), which when maintained over time, also assist in identity-making (Marginson 2014). Nonetheless, students express constraint in initiating and maintaining these kinds of relations, attributable to their lack of confidence, self-esteem and proficiency in English. And for those who lack assurance in these areas, retreat into relations with other co-national students often represents a viable alternative, albeit an 'underperformance' of the kind of experience they imagined about their life in Australia (Rosenthal, Russell & Thomson 2007).

> Lost in the crowd, one feels abandoned to one's own resources; one feels unimportant, lonely and disposable. Security based on the protection of privacy against intrusion rebounds as *loneliness* [emphasis in original] (Bauman 1990a, p.68).[34]

Friendship patterns and social networks

While internationalisation of higher education in Australia is a significant and strategic objective and 'international and multicultural student campuses represent ideal social forums for promoting cultural understanding; fostering tolerance of diversity; discovering alternative ways of thinking and developing intercultural skills' (Volet & Ang 2012, p.22), exponential growth in international student numbers has failed to engender the far-reaching intercultural relations and cross-cultural friendships that are mooted within internationalisation plans. The initiation and maintenance of relations between students remain problematic in both academic and social settings (Butcher & McGrath 2004) despite mediation of relations by way of peer-pairing programmes (Westwood & Barker 1990), mentoring programmes[35] and cross-cultural friendship programmes (Gresham & Clayton 2011). Significantly, there is a dearth of studies

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[34] I use Bauman's (1990a) quote to reinforce how loneliness plays out for some international students in everyday life.
[35] See Macquarie University's LUCY programme.

that probe strategies to address these obstacles and barriers (Volet & Ang 2012), while this conundrum is made more complex by evidence that illustrates student groups habitually hold relatively favourable attitudes towards each other, although simultaneously demonstrate little interest in initiating or reciprocating contact. Perhaps, as Wise (2010) argued, circumvention lessens the possibility for embarrassment should attempts at opening moments of social ritual fail. But this is an important issue, for if it remains unattended, there is potential that internationalisation as an aspiration of higher education could be jeopardised (Volet & Ang 2012; Ward 2001). Moreover, benefits that flow to individuals when relations are successfully enacted are placed at risk, along with other measures that seep beyond the personal to build cohesiveness across student 'communities' (Church 1982; Sovic 2009; Volet & Ang 1998; Ward & Masgoret 2006).

With few studies that unpack relations between international and domestic students, a study by Bennett, Volet and Fozdar (2013) that elucidates the characteristics of 'friendship' between a first-year international student from Vietnam and a first-year domestic student, is noteworthy. Established through a university-mediated programme, the students' 'friendship' was symbiotic; developed and maintained for specific purposes that delivered the international student assistance with academic matters and her domestic counterpart, someone with whom to socialise on campus. Limited to the parameters of campus life, relations between these students fit within Neal and Vincent's (2013, p.918) description of a 'relationship[s] of convenience'; an association underpinned by proximity and regular interaction, but one that seemingly lacked assurances around trust, made visible by the point that neither student reported that they invited the other home (Neal & Vincent, 2013). This is not to downplay the significance of this relationship however, for despite its limitations, there were positive outcomes, not least of which was normalcy in the way the students viewed and interacted with difference (Wessendorf 2013). Indeed, in classroom settings on a daily basis, international and domestic students come together, expand and exchange knowledge, build social and cultural capital. Emergent from these exchanges is the construction of tentative

common interests and the cautious expansion of cross-cultural understandings, both of which signal 'possibilities' for deeper relations over time.

'Possibilities' are tempered here though by urgency, for without impetus, prejudice and antagonisms among students are likely to solidify (Wilson 2011) and education institutions will forgo the transformations they need to exhibit as truly internationalised environments. With international and domestic students alike showing consistent favour to those they consider similar to themselves as co-workers, due to the 'comfort' these relations represent ('comfort' expressed as cultural-emotional connectedness, common thought, ease of communication, pragmatism and sense of humour) - (Fozdar & Volet 2016; Volet & Ang 2012) - this matter is pressing. Within this context, language arises as an important consideration for it acts as both mediator and impediment to relation-building and self-determining agency (Marginson 2010). Language affects not only how personal relations are fashioned and upheld, but also how issues around health, housing, personal safety, safety at work, discrimination and abuse, financial viability, social networks and dealings with authorities (Sawir et al. 2012) are managed. Communicative competence is thus a skill which enables and mediates interactions as it builds self-confidence (Li & Kaye 1998). Through a self-perpetuating cycle, boosted by positive interactions and raised levels of confidence (Collins 2009a; Perrucci & Hu 1995), language competency becomes a contributor to the expansion of social networks and feelings of belonging. And just as this is so, lack of confidence in using language habitually leads to negative responses towards those who attempt to converse, a situation that eventually results in withdrawal and clustering in order to secure comfort and support (usually of co-nationals); a stance that ultimately compounds feelings of separation and isolation, while it reduces opportunities to interpret and express personal needs for inclusion (Collins 2009a). Essentially institutional, locational and social contexts, through racialised and racialising processes and practices, assume an important function here, for they influence and draft the way relations between disparate groups form and operate.

Contact zones: 'real' and virtual

In this section I consider the importance of four *contact zones* (Pratt 1991), in order to redirect focus from the practices of international students to how other urban actors, including long-term residents, employers, developers, university administrators and business people use contact zones to construct and limit the way international students become incorporated into urban life (Collins 2010). To give context to this discussion, I recognise today's cities as ever-evolving spaces (Massey 1994, 1995) that are habitually being restructured through globalising processes, including transnational mobilities. Following this line of reasoning, I acknowledge the interplay that exists between migration and urban transformation (Glick Schiller & Çağlar 2009) and the way in which cities represent a distinct mixture of the local and the global with the global found in, and as part of the local (Gielis 2009). Further, I acknowledge while cities assume similar size and significance[36], each one is unique, for they have their own social histories and social structures that give rise to particular forms of incorporation; built upon specific symbols, residues and beliefs (Glick Schiller & Çağlar 2009). It is thus within *contact zones* of cities - 'social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power' (Pratt 1991, p.34) – that potential disruption to time-honoured practices occur. For *contact zones* are not distinct, self-defined, consistent, nor homogeneous spaces, but rather unstructured areas where social differences, diverse classes or cultures 'collide', and where one group often assumes authority over others (Pratt 1991).

Housing

Housing is a site of lived social relationships, a place of emotional ties and memories from which to speak about oneself (Knowles 1999). It is a place where social networks come together, where seemingly disparate individuals might live as family and where geographically-distant relatives maintain presence through photos and technology platforms

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[36] Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2009) label this 'scalar positioning'.

such as television and the Internet. As avid consumers of global entertainment, international students, relaxing in lounge-rooms across Australia, access television programmes emanating from their home countries and places such as US America (Gomes 2015; Gomes & Alzougool 2013). Housing is where via technology, events that are occurring globally merge with everyday life (Appadurai 1996). It carries cultural, demographic and psychological meanings that usefully assist in the maintenance of existing national and cultural identities (Gomes & Alzougool 2013; Thomsen 2007) and considerable potential to engender feelings of security and comfort, a state that symbolises recognition, belonging and agency (Noble 2005). In the following sections, I consider the effects of various housing types on the student experience. Specifically, I weigh up how administrative and social practices around accommodation contribute to spatial marginalisation; how student presence intersects with urban change; and how receiving societies respond to the studentification (Hubbard 2008, 2009) of neighbourhoods, streets and buildings. I use Fincher and Shaw's (2009) study of purpose-built student accommodation in inner-city Melbourne as a departure point, to make comparisons with similar apartment blocks that are popping up across Sydney.

Built on inner city sites of empty shops, offices, or relocated university and hospital services, purpose-built student accommodation in Melbourne, has arisen over the past two decades. Posing little displacement threat to existing local housing, the rise of such complexes has met minimal resistance from local residents, while the location of these buildings, close to universities, the city centre and entertainment precincts, suggest endless possibilities for social mixing. Yet, the miniscule apartments that make up these fortified constructions barely provide sufficient space for students to eat, sleep and study, let alone engage in communal living. As a consequence, student-residents habitually spill out into city entertainment areas, some of which are renowned as rowdy, alcohol-fuelled precincts. The occupants of these purpose-built complexes are invariably international students, routinely from Asian countries, who, on advice from either agents in their home countries, or university administrators are actively guided into certain buildings. Such practices occur on the basis of stereotypical

assumptions about prospective student-tenants; their desire for high security and compact housing that resembles 'Asian-style' living.

Rapid rise in the numbers of these buildings in Melbourne (and Sydney) is attributable to a diversity of factors. First, the exponential growth in student numbers has impacted on demands for housing; secondly, the willingness of developers to respond to this crisis in a bid to make large profits; and thirdly, the inclination of developers to tailor housing to particular markets who are often unaware of alternatives, and willing to pay high prices. While universities are generally supportive of these developments, they have no say in care of student-residents or rent levels. Moreover, the speed with which such developments have occurred in Melbourne has caught planning authorities without thorough guiding policies (Fincher & Shaw 2009).

The newly-constructed 'Iglu' apartments located in Chatswood, adjacent to the train station and located within a two minute walk to large, temperature-controlled, clean, bright shopping malls, down-town cafés and myriad Asian restaurants, provide similar examples of this new-style accommodation in Sydney. Advertised as student-friendly and offering lifestyle opportunities, 'Iglu' and others of its ilk, are directed towards international students. With Chatswood, a suburb strongly associated with Asian settlement, clean, closed-off entertainments exist in the form of restaurants, food-courts, high-end, specialty shops and cinemas that open late for socialising with co-nationals or other international students. As such, interactions that take place within these spaces are designed to arouse collective memories and histories, just as they deepen understanding of what it means to be local and to belong (Collins 2004; Fincher & Iverson 2008). A fifteen minute train ride to Macquarie University, 'Iglu' demonstrates how housing and recreational spaces mediate particular kinds of contacts for student-residents. Just as these tailor-made complexes give rise to feelings of safety and security, comfort and familiarity, they also contribute to unintended separation of students. As noted by Fincher and Shaw (2009), these spaces are often rejected by local students, in part because of cost, but also social practices. Local students are more likely to

either live at home with their parents in outer, established suburbs, or cohabit with friends in shared houses that have easy access to beaches, pubs and bars[37]. Unlike their international counterparts, who potentially fear drunken, confrontational behaviours in public (Fincher & Shaw 2011), local students favour different, often 'shabby' areas to socialise, with the consequence that space becomes a marginalising factor that inhibits social mixing.

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[37] See Khawaja and Dempsey (2008) for a further perspective on the choices international and domestic students make in relation to accommodation.

Photo 18: Student housing 'Iglu' in Chatswood

Particular types of off-campus accommodation are well-known for exploitation of international students. Often at the hands of unscrupulous landlords who knowingly take advantage of international students' lesser political rights; limited knowledge about their consumer rights; lack of understanding about local customs and cultural practices; and

deficiencies in English language (Forbes-Mewett & Nyland 2008; Smith et al. 2007), these landlords purchase properties for subsequent conversion into boarding houses, many of which operate illegally. In 2011, the NSW Ombudsman in a special report to the NSW Parliament declared there were 455 boarding houses in NSW, housing 5,000 residents (including international students). Of these, just 31 were licensed, with the limited capacity to accommodate 687 residents. Using student visa and temporary resident status as weapons to incite fear, unprincipled, often 'co-ethnic' landlords habitually intimidate international students into accepting less than favourable, overcrowded residential conditions that would not be tolerated by others (Mowbray 2014). This type of 'co-ethnic exploitation' (Velayutham 2013, p.356) is commonplace within housing and employment sectors in Australia, with landlords aware of just how far they can go in exploiting the vulnerabilities of international students. They initially seek out tenants on the basis of trust and solidarity built around shared ethnicity, and then use fear as a mechanism of control over the students. Numerous media reports depict such conditions with one of the more serious, exposing a fire in an industrialised area in the Sydney suburb of Alexandria in 2014, where 15 Japanese and Korean nationals were found to be living in a 'squalid, illegal housing set-up'. There, the students paid up to $160 per week for accommodation in shipping containers, a graffiti-ridden bus with no wheels, or in decrepit caravans that were stacked on top of each other. Formerly advertised on Japanese websites, prospective students were urged to act quickly to secure this 'quiet and peaceful environment' that was 'perfect for students' (Olding 2014). The unprincipled within the receiving society thus willingly exploit the students' vulnerability[38], and this is made worse through inadequate state protections and the students' limited social networks (Misztal 2011). Enveloped by a political vacuum that regularly fails to acknowledge reticent student voices (Hubbard 2008; Iverson 2007), or to act on the legislation that purports

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[38] Miztal (2011) espoused three analytically separate layers and dimensions of vulnerability, namely: vulnerability grounded in 'fundamental dependency' of human beings on others; vulnerability connected to unpredictability of human action and the future; and vulnerability related to past action and experiences such as trauma and damage.

to protect tenants from exploitation, students are also, perhaps paradoxically, set at odds with long-term residents who blame them for unwanted and undesirable changes to local spaces.

In contrast to off-campus experiences that oscillate between states of exclusion and inclusion, on-campus accommodation is consistently shown to operate through carefully considered strategic measures to encourage interaction, inclusion and promote feelings of belonging among student residents. By way of interventions such as public lectures, buddy systems, mentoring, interest groups, formal dinners, sports and music rooms, collective cultures of learning emerge, within the context of personally supportive and non-threatening settings. Friendship among residents that is forged through gradual exposure, and made possible by way of activities and shared interests, acts as a cornerstone of residential life at most on-campus residences. Fulfilling the objective of on-campus housing as more than secure accommodation, on-campus residences offer assured care and personal support, accompanied by active social living that mediates contact among student residents and the receiving society (Parameswaran & Bowers 2014).

Photo 19: On-campus accommodation

Similarly, *Homestay* offers students the opportunity to enjoy hospitality through the security, warmth, informal friendships and support of a host-family network[39] (Campbell 2004; Zhang & Brunton, 2007). Through *Homestay* students live within a small, caring and protective family unit, who acts as an immediate portal into other cultural and linguistic environments, including multicultural networks (Schmidt-Rinehart & Knight 2004). While dependent upon the willingness of students and hosts alike, to exhibit warmth, kindness, curiosity, openness and flexibility, *Homestay* can be a successful, welcoming experience for students especially when they feel included as a family member, are able to practise English language and engage in diverse cultural experiences they would have been unable to undertake alone (Campbell 2004; Shackleford 2011)[40]. Nevertheless, *Homestay* is a highly subjective experience, as shown by Chinese international students living with host families in New Zealand, who reported numerous deficiencies in their *Homestay* experiences, including fit to family life. Arguing that language barriers and the 'busyness' of hosts' everyday lives limited opportunities for interactions, the students claimed negative relations affected their ability to feel 'at home'. These issues were regularly coupled with complaints about the quantity and quality of the food provided by hosts. Thus while *Homestay* offers many advantages, questions linger about how its benefits might outweigh the comfort of residing with co-nationals for some international students (Campbell 2004).

The urban street

Urban streets represent intrinsically significant contact zones (Collins 2009a; Wise 2005), for it is within these spaces that both welcome and hospitable acts can occur, along with unfamiliar and problematic situations that reinforce feelings of strangerhood. In the face of constant movement and intermixing, it is in settings like urban streets that some from the receiving society express their longing for a sense of local place; symbolised as coherence,

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[39] Some international students hold narrow, stereotypical views about *Homestay* hosts. In these circumstances, host identities are perceived to mediate or frustrate 'authentic' experiences.

[40] While *Homestay* offers for many, a supportive environment, there are reports that some students suffer episodes of homesickness; feelings of strangerhood; and disappointment both in terms of the standard of accommodation offered by host families and the lack of support provided by coordinators and agencies who organise *Homestay* placements (Campbell 2004).

homogeneity and fixity. This kind of heart-felt meditation is often accompanied by defensive and reactionary responses, expressed as antagonism towards newcomers and outsiders. Such circumstances occurred in Auckland, New Zealand, where a group of international students from Korea, Japan and China were habitually judged by the receiving society as 'collectively foreign'. In response, the students banded together to initiate a voluntary activity that involved cleaning the city streets on a weekly basis (Collins 2009a). Their decision to take up this volunteering opportunity and to do so within urban streets from which others might have withdrawn or segregated, sanctioned them to re-work the unfamiliar as a means to inhabit and claim belonging within this urban space. In doing so, they rejected what Pratt (1991) calls retreat into social and intellectual 'safe houses' that act as temporary shields from oppression, or spaces that reduce feelings of risk, powerlessness and vulnerability (Iverson 2007; Lentin 2008; Watson 2006). Emergent from this activity were accordingly numerous outcomes, not least of which were the interactions that built up among the students themselves, and also other encounters that led to affective and ongoing relations with the receiving society. In this way, volunteerism opened up opportunities for the students to demonstrate power in a social setting; to secure comfort and trust in the world around them (Noble 2005); and to lessen the physical and sociocultural distance between the students and the receiving society.

Workplaces

With few studies that positively describe workplace encounters between international students, employers and co-workers, it seems that international students cluster among a large number of competing job seekers, who are habitually willing to work in low status, poorly paid positions. International students fall into this category of workers largely due to the constraints contained within their student visas[41], the desperation they often feel to earn money to off-set the high cost of tuition fees and living expenses, and the possibility of political changes and fluctuations in the economic conditions in their home countries (Sawir

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[41] Forbes-Mewett, McCulloch & Nyland (2015) found that many students often exceeded the 20 hour work limits of their student visas.

et al. 2009b). Habitually coerced into working for illegal rates of pay and in the employ of friends, or permanent residents from their own national groups, many international students experience exploitation (Singh 2011) exacerbated through poor language skills, lack of local kin support and limited knowledge about labour rights and entitlements (Li 2015; Nyland et al. 2009). Furthermore, with limited access to bridging networks[42] (Putnam 2000) and weak ties[43] (Granovetter 1973) that could offer possibilities to gain better quality employment at appropriate wage levels, international students (along with other less advantaged workers), are easy targets for disreputable employers who wish to take advantage. Highlighted in programmes such as *ABC Four Corners*, '7- Eleven: The price of convenience' (Ferguson & Toft 2015), was the claim that most of the 620 *7-Eleven* stores across Australia failed to pay many of their 4,000 workers (mainly international students) award wages. The company business model maximised their profitability by targeting visa holding, cash-strapped students with the intention of under-paying and over-working these employees, while at the same time threatening to report the students to immigration authorities because they exceeded their legal 20 hours of paid employment per week. In another example of workplace exploitation, Nina Khairina from the Council of International Students Australia (Han, Patty & Ting 2016) claimed:

> some would even think that $10 per hour is a decent amount because the cost of living
> and studying in Australia is high…When they become concerned, they are really
> discouraged to report it in fear of many things, like losing their job for example. I
> believe underpayment is systemic.[44]

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[42] Bridging networks (Putnam 2000) are outward-looking ties that encompass people across diverse social groups.

[43] Weak ties (Granovetter 1973) link individuals to distant acquaintances who move within different networks.

[44] The conditions described here are not confined to Australia, for Banerjee (2006) reports similar occurring in US America. There, skilled foreign technology workers, largely from India, enter America under an employment-based visa; thus dependent upon their employers for continuation of their immigration status and livelihoods. Compulsion to remain employed and legal, means that they, like some international students in Australia, accept exploitative work conditions, including wage reductions, lack of benefits and deductions from hourly wages.

Denied access to social security benefits that underpin the financial security of domestic workers, international students are thus exposed to: heightened risks (such as late-night robberies); illegal working (safety) conditions and rates of payment; and threats of deportation. Perhaps ironically, these parlous conditions also position the students as threatening to other Australian workers (Baas 2009; Baker & Hawkins 2006; Singh & Cabraal, 2010). With newspaper articles such as, 'Dodgy visas could cost Australian jobs' (Howe & Reilly 2014), international students are collectively cast as cunning and scheming interlopers, portrayed paradoxically as both victims and as 'invaders' who surreptitiously enter Australia as 'students', only to take up opportunities for employment. Within this context their presence evokes conflict (Blokland 2003) and fear that is linked to disruption of what is known, recognised and accepted (Pain 2001; Phillips & Smith 2003) and to generalisations about those who are perceived ineligible to the jobs and benefits they take up (Gendera, Pe-Pua & Katz 2012; Lentin 2008). With appearances that mark out difference for others (Marotta 2011) and presence that symbolises a special kind of uncertainty (Bauman 1990b), international students in these *contact zones* (Pratt 1991) are thus perceived to ostensibly threaten limited resources to which others claim entitlement.

Technology

The arrival of complex, global mobility has given rise to new forms of mobile lives (Elliott & Urry 2010), reflected in the ways individuals construct everyday routines and how they interact socially with others. Within this context many schedules are maintained as usual, but embedded within these, are also habits to do with networking and being networked; logging on and off; connecting and disconnecting. For many, being 'connected' is now considered an essential support to personal well-being, albeit with the recognition that technology affords socialities of a 'disembodied' or 'dematerialised' kind (Elliott & Urry 2010, p.53), and can rule out some of the joys associated with face-to-face encounter. The use of 'miniaturised mobilities' (Elliott & Urry 2010, p.43), such as iPhones and Bluetooth, that are physically linked to the body, spontaneously connect individuals communicatively and virtually. As

such, Elliott and Urry (2010) argue that these devices, along with platforms such as *Facebook* and *Skype* are able to lessen and contain emotional anxieties, by instantaneously connecting the physical 'here' with the emotional 'there'. Such communication networks, inconceivable just a few of decades ago, reduce reliance on telephone calls and irregular visits for those who are spatially far from family and friends, allowing them to 'return home' on an immediate, regular, or daily (even hourly) basis. Assisted by technologically competitive market-places that have led to reduced costs in telecommunications, the significance of such technologies, extend beyond the personal, to create 'social glue' for advancing 'small-scale social formations across the globe' (Vertovec 2004, p.219). Spatial separation is thus no longer an explanation for emotional distance (Moores 2012). With 'virtual' relationships now overlapping with real-life encounters, people, especially techno-savvy students, chat face-to-face with friends in Sydney, as they '*Facebook'* and engage with events that are simultaneously occurring across the globe (Martin & Rizvi 2014).

Not confined to connections enacted across space, technology now also affects how students establish and build 'real' relationships in local spaces. Applying transnational networks and on-line platforms, students use technology as an alternative method to locate information that will connect them to others locally. For example, the *Weibo-Chinese* microblogging platform is capable of launching 'real' relationships by providing information about news, weather, shopping, food outlets, university and community-based social clubs and events within local environments. Simultaneously this platform has the capacity to extend the students' knowledge and familiarity too, with less known areas of Australia. Because *Weibo* is accessible by smart-phone, it falls into the category of 'miniaturised mobilities' (Elliott & Urry 2010, p.43), with the capability to mediate connections with China, Chinese residents in Sydney and individuals across the world, thus intermingling local information with global events as they unfold (Martin & Rizvi 2014). Tailored towards international students, who rely on tried and trusted sources often found in their home countries, these platforms are different to those used by domestic students (Gomes & Chang 2017).

Technologies such as chat forums, video-conferencing and *You-Tube* clips enable the construction of transnational networks and social capital (Collins 2009b), while personal homepages develop inter-personal networks that facilitate the sharing of knowledge and resources, linked to life in the students' city. In this light, Indian students in Australia have been shown to use technology to associate with diasporic websites, through which they connect to the trajectories of prominent Indians in other countries. One student described how it was possible to produce weekly video clips which he distributed to family members at home and to colleagues around the world. Via *You-Tube,* he created transnational networks through which he built social capital and promoted himself for career opportunities. For him and others like him, the international experience was no longer a binary experience between 'home' and 'abroad' but rather emerged as a complex, nuanced trajectory through which technology, along with face-to-face encounters entwined to construct social, knowledge and cultural capital (Martin & Rizvi 2014). Labelled by Massey (1994) as 'time-space compression', these kinds of movement and communication processes that occur across space, open up possibilities to geographically stretch social relations and experiences. They also raise questions about what is meant by 'places' and how we relate to them, disrupting ideas of communities as bounded, homogeneous and coherent.

Obstacles and barriers that divide

Numerous accounts of everyday racism (Essed 1991) against international students exist within the literature, enacted through a language of discomfort[45], verbal discrimination, direct confrontation and cultural hostility (Noble 2005). Often taking place in *contact zones* (Pratt 1991), such as streets, on public transport, in shops and workplaces (Lee & Rice, 2007; Marginson, 2012), international students are regular targets of social incivility that is expressed through name calling, jokes, discourtesy, gestures and unfriendliness (Noble 2005). Widespread and frequent, everyday racism is for many international students, expected and

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[45] This, Noble (2005) calls banal racism.

'normal'[46]. In 2012, the *Newcastle Herald* (Branley 2012) reported the findings of an investigation by the Newcastle University Student Association [NUSA] on incidents of verbal and physical abuse of international students between August 2011 and August 2012. In that 12 month period, 123 international students reported being the targets of verbal abuse, while 40 students were exposed to incidents of physical assault. Differences in appearances, dress and the ways the students traversed *contact zones* (Pratt 1991) were given as the reasons for their victimisation. Many of these assessments were accompanied by stereotyping; claims that their religions and cultures were foreign, threatening and incompatible with 'Australian' values and the cause of disruptions to comfort and security within local spaces. Thus, these incidents were primarily related to belonging, and who were considered to be the symbolic owners of urban space (Bloch & Dreher 2009; Kobayashi 2009). Fundamentally, it was the large numbers of international students that represented critical challenge to the dominant, long-settled population. As Blokland (2003) argued, groups can often co-exist peaceably until one poses threat to the Other's position, but once a challenge is registered, revelatory, specific and discriminatory responses that are based on grounds of cultural difference usually follow (Baas 2009). Underlying such challenges are views connected to beliefs about the Other's inferiority, and even though these attitudes might not be openly articulated, this form of old racism habitually pervades moments of incivility. Made worse by responses to racist incidents from government sources and other elites, who deliver their views from privileged positions that are protected from having to acknowledge cultural advantage (Essed 1991), the oft denial of racial causes in these circumstances (Dunn & Nelson 2011) exacerbates already testy situations.

While discrete incidents of everyday racism pass quickly, their effects linger. For racist acts can be inventive in nature, constantly emerging and mutating (Amin 2010; Swanton 2010), as they surface as suspicion, intolerance, or in relation to exotic adornments. Whatever their

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[46] Markus (2012) cautioned that some of the attacks on international students cannot be explained only in terms of racism. Data on the evidence of crime against international students is not of sufficient precision to argue that levels of assaults on international students are significantly higher than those experienced by other Australians.

configuration, loose racial viewpoints that are attached to race, become the basis for perceptions, judgements and actions (Swanton 2010). In the context of this study, student housing was often the ignition point for such racial tensions, with long-term residents citing unkempt properties rented by international students, as signifiers of differentiation and failure to fit. Dependent on sensory signals (such as visibility), suspicions arose to link difference with aversion, avoidance or condemnation (Amin 2010) that were based on long-term summaries of racial groupings (Amin 2010).

Physically close but socially distant

Close physical proximity and regular mixing do not necessarily translate into affective relations between heterogeneous groups, for discriminatory repertoires of indifference and apathy (Blokland 2003) are often simultaneously operational. Infused with actions that convey decency, courtesy, politeness and evenhandedness, indifferent and apathetic attitudes can be difficult to identify and address. Fuelled often by previous unpleasant contacts, feelings of uncertainty about how to interact, doubts about cross-cultural competency, and anxieties about acting in a discriminatory or offensive manner (Mak, Brown & Wadey 2012), individuals and collectives who might be physically close, are kept apart. When considered within wider issues of power relations to do with the politics of race, ethnicity, gender, class and social divisions (Neal & Vincent 2013) that are fuelled by micropolitical systems including schools, the media and policing (Swanton 2010) this positioning only strengthens. But for many international students (in particular) who arrive in Australia with expectations of constructing affective relations with the receiving society, routines of unresponsiveness and disinterest build into acute disappointment, loneliness and ultimately despair.[47]

On-campus clubs and societies should logically offer fertile grounds to address these issues for they provide students with the opportunity to make contact and develop relations across difference. With many of these groups promoting food, social events and fun times, it would

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[47] Gomes (2015) contended that international students have a distinct view of who constitutes an 'Australian', with many visualising the 'true' Australian as White or Caucasian.

seem that they represent a reasonable starting point for students to come together. As 'parochial spaces' (Wessendorf 2014), that foster restrictive avenues for differences to be explored, they potentially hold hope for reducing attitudes of apathy and indifference. Yet within this study, numerous stories were told to me by international and domestic students who felt 'locked out' of these collectives. Sometimes this reflected the activities of the clubs, for example some sports were of little interest, but more often it had to do with the consumption of alcohol and the way in which, international students in particular, felt uncomfortable in the (likely) presence of 'drunk people'. On other occasions, administrative practices of the university contributed to feelings of alienation. Several domestic students claimed they were desirous of joining ethnic student associations (for example the Chinese Students' Association), but they felt that their Anglo-Australian identities precluded them from doing so. As a consequence, seemingly minor administrative oversights, kept the students corporeally close but socially distant, regrettably thwarting possibilities to develop ongoing, affective relations.

The perceptions that domestic and international students hold about each other also tell a great deal about why they remain in relative isolation from each other. Domestic students describe international students as: study-oriented, hard-working, quiet, determined, disciplined, brave, interesting, adventurous and polite, as well as naive, confused, not fitting in and deficient in English language. While international students describe their domestic counterparts as: party-goers, loud and rude, lazy, laid-back, outgoing and good communicators (Spencer-Rodgers 2001). Essentially stereotypical perceptions, defined by Bauman (1990a, p.17) as 'one-sided, tendentious caricatures of the way people different from ourselves live' operate here, to delineate differences between 'us' and 'them'. In these circumstances, the categories of 'domestic' and 'international' differentiate 'community', replacing class as a basis for acceptance and inclusion (Blokland 2003).

How to redress such discriminatory perceptions is challenging, and although everyday micro-encounters surface as potential solutions, they are criticised because they do not 'equate with

an ethics of care and mutual respect for difference' (Valentine 2008, p.329) and are limited by their representation as symbols of public civility. In spite of these limitations, encounter concepts embedded within contact theory (Allport 1954) still offer potential however, for they take into account individual agency, the potential for small-scale encounters to be transformative and the capacity of individual relations to be scaled up (Neal & Vincent 2013). Moreover, such theoretical approaches assume relevance within today's super-diverse (Vertovec 2007) settings for they acknowledge that heterogeneous populations are likely to be in habitual contact (Blokland 2003; Neal & Vincent 2013) and that cultural knowledge is available to negotiate social and ethnic differences (Neal & Vincent 2013), especially through 'transversal enablers' (Wise 2009, p.24), who (aware of problems of uneven distribution of power in relationships), willingly apply their mediation skills. Nevertheless, 'successful negotiation of differences involves work, reflexivity and skill' (Neal & Vincent 2013, p.919), and as I note in previous sections, being around sameness is for some, potentially less arduous than negotiating difference.

Conclusion

Much of the literature around international education in Australia paints a bleak picture and it would be easy to surrender to the pervading sense of melancholy that surrounds much of what is known. With tenuous footholds in Australia linked to their temporary resident student visa status and frequent shifts in national policies that oscillate between expressions of welcome, authority and regulation, international students are simultaneously regarded as financial windfalls for cash-strapped universities, 'easily accessible' professional migrants and people whose presence invokes in some, feelings of uncertainty and risk. Excluded from 'good migrant' status on the basis that good migrants 'settle permanently in order to be intelligible, coherent, recognisable and tolerable' (Cover 2015, p.33), the presence of international students in large numbers produces disquiet over their authorisation to remain in Australia for considerable lengths of time without conversion to permanency. Although temporary resident status actually carries with it widespread limitations for participation in the public sphere and

privileges associated with citizenship, international students are perceived by some as 'invaders' and usurpers who access employment and housing at the sacrifice of others. For many the context of day-to-day living is characterised by exclusion, isolation and loneliness, with some the hapless victims of exploitation and everyday racism and discrimination. Despite their desires to form ongoing affective encounters with the receiving society, many international students struggle to do so, physical closeness providing no remedy for social and moral distance. Often clustering in supportive networks of co-nationals and other multiculturals, many international students separate themselves off, in ways that only serve to increase the impermeability of their circumstances, giving rise to excessive bonding capital in the context of insufficient bridging capital (Putnam 2000). In these social circumstances, their ability to participate in the public sphere lessens, and as this occurs, in-group trust rises at the expense of generalised trust, further challenging notions of integration and cohesion between them and the receiving society (Uslaner 2012), while lessening trust as a bond of security (Miztal 2011).

Yet, enmeshed within these significant challenges, are 'green shoots' of hope, for international students are also resilient, active agents (Marginson 2014) who manage myriad demanding circumstances. As 'abundant strangers' they bring significant human, cultural and knowledge capital, which although to some might represent a threat, for others their 'gifts' offer potential to deliver not only objectivity (Simmel 1971), but possibility for the expansion of understanding of what unites us through our common humanity. In circumstances mediated by porous social structures some establish intimate everyday connections (such as on-campus accommodation, specifically designed programmes and *Homestay*). They demonstrate resourcefulness through their active agency in managing challenges associated with adjustment, finances, personal security, English language acquisition, academic learning, accommodation and employment, often in circumstances in which they are denied opportunities to exercise ample political voice and the rights that come with depersonalised grounds of recognition and respect.

Taking into account the multiplicity, ambiguity and contradictions contained within these missives, the literature successfully validates the argument that the trajectories of international students are indeed complex and contingent. Although the literature to do with international students is comprehensive, some significant issues remain under-explored. Specifically, the literature describes relations with the receiving society as tentative, provisional and contingent *from the international student perspective*, but falls short in the identification of the processes behind these relations. Additionally, while there is broad acknowledgement of the heterogeneity of the international student population, much of the literature remains locked into exploration of the student experience through a lens typified by deficiency, negativity and problematisation. As such, there are few examples of studies to represent international students who live cosmopolitan lifestyles that include luxury cars, lavish apartments and designer clothes, and who use their wealth and personal status to carve out very different relationships with the receiving society.

These are two examples of the incomplete picture painted on this topic within the literature. Thus, like the pieces of a puzzle, some fragments of the literature sit comfortably together, while other parts remain bereft or scant of meaning. Within the context of this thesis, the most salient matter that remains underexplored is how the receiving society recognises, perceives and experiences international students in a distinct urban setting. For although there are numerous studies that examine relations in broad contexts, few focus on discrete geographic areas and take into account the meta-forces that surround and permeate these relations.

Chapter Three

Fuelling fires: media representations of international students

Aaron: So around the time of the boarding house issue, there was a lot of media coverage on the front page of the Northern District Times. They had huge pictures of how the students were being abused and ripped-off; some stories as well – front page. But it was not always in terms of overseas students being ripped-off – it was because they are around so we are having this scourge. So, we wouldn't have this scourge if there were no students about…Our housing standards have dropped because of this and because of that. Most of the articles talked about irresponsible landlords ripping off people – that was the focus, but there was still this mix…I clearly remember the insinuation that we are seeing our own standards drop because of so many students in the area – even though the fault is with the landlords.

Interviewer: Did the university respond at that time to those articles?

Aaron: Were there letters to the editor by the university? I don't know. I don't remember that. There were certainly a lot of letters by residents. There were some letters saying this is what you get when you have a lot of overseas students living in an area, they are going to bring down our standards. Things have changed since I was at school, our neighbours are probably foreign people as well. Suspicious. How they have changed the nature of the old neighbourhoods, by doing what they are doing. Some letters like that. There were other letters that addressed exploitation. There were some from [a local politician]. He kept putting in letters, responding to those press releases, saying this is an issue that we are very concerned about, something he wanted to do something about. It's not fair on the students and he was really

reminding us who the victims are (Aaron, former academic staff member and

currently a community researcher).

I offer five key imageries of international students in the ensuing sections of this chapter, established and constructed through the participants' recollections and interpretations of media essays. Flowing throughout these deliberations, I pay selected consideration to the symbiosis that exists between populist politics; the authority of elites; the distribution and maintenance of power in society; and the ways in which media discourses uphold and preserve prevailing ideologies. In the final section, I apply restricted attention to approaches that have the potential to override some of the negative effects of media discourses, a topic that is revisited in the final chapter of this thesis. To introduce the context in which this chapter is rooted, I begin with moral panic theory, on the basis that current circumstances in Ryde already 'rest[ing] on a seamless web of social anxieties' (Cohen 2002, p.xxix); ripe conditions for media discourses to fuel moral panics.

Oft directed towards soft targets with indistinguishable routines, moral panics express moods of hostility towards marginal groups and those perceived to be culturally different, charging them with the capability to produce 'corrosive communities' (Ungar 2001, p.299). Tapping into 'the global scope of the risk society' (Cohen 2002, p.xxvi) moral panics nowadays are habitually underpinned by values of negativity that are routinely expressed as 'growing problems', 'things getting worse if nothing is done' and break-downs in social order (Cohen 2002). As such, today's moral panics are more to do with fears and disquiet than associations with particular social types[48] (Cohen 2002). Acting as 'magnets' (Hier 2003), they nevertheless lure people together to construct an insular 'line between morality and immorality' (Goode & Ben-Yehuda 1994, p.52); and to establish positions from which to defend and safeguard localised individual and shared values, feelings of safety and security (Critcher 2006; Poynting et al. 2004). Within these circumstances media discourses perform

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[48] See Cohen's (1972, 2002) description of the Teddy Boys, the Mods and Rockers, Hells Angels, skinheads and hippies as recurrent types within moral panics in Britain since World War II.

an authoritative function to reproduce and sustain dominant ideologies (Cohen 2002) that they communicate via immediate, repetitious and temporal news cycles. Accordingly events that transpire in distant places mingle with the here and now, touching people as they go about their everyday lives and leave in their wake, residual effects that linger and endure (Pain & Smith 2008; Urry 2000). To explain further, I unpack the ways in which Muslims globally, since 9/11, have become a principal source for constant, escalating large-scale moral panics.

Carried out for the purpose of intensifying feelings of shock, alarm and anxiety (Poynting et al. 2004), discrete events occurring across the world are communicated through media discourses that opt to conflate all Muslims with acts of global terrorism; violence; 'home-grown' terror; conservatism; and oppressive regimes. Capitalising on attributes of immediacy, description and interpretation, the media not only report sensational and shocking events as they occur, but simultaneously provide interactive conduits that are instantaneously and widely accessible in multiple formats (Iveson 2007). Thus they open up scenarios for strangers to communicate with each other, discuss world-views, or share opinions about encounters with Muslims from private spaces. A consequence is that Muslims nowadays endure a heavy burden; their collective imagery one that is synonymous with incompatibility and difference (Ahmed 2000; Kabir 2006; Peucker & Akbarzadeh 2012). Accused of posing threat and risk to an idealised view of national identity (Ata 2012), the incitement of *Islamophobia* positions Muslims in Australia as quintessential outsiders - 'folk devils' - who personify evil (Cohen 1972, p.28), thus closing off their identities to other meanings (Hall 1997).

A content analysis of 149 stories involving Muslims in the Sydney-based newspapers the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Sydney Morning Herald* (focused on the suburb of Lakemba, a Sydney suburb associated with residents of Islamic faith), corroborates the utility of the media to reinforce an image of the extreme Muslim Other. Just 5% of the scrutinised articles reported the success of Muslims in business, education and other spheres of public life, whilst the remainder portrayed them as criminals, members of violent gangs, terrorists and

'disadvantaged' people (Dunn, Klocker & Salabay 2007). In truth, this exposition buttressed the views of Pietsch and Marotta (2009, p.195) that 'fear of the stranger intensifies and moral proximity is absent when strangeness manifests itself as the "Arab other"'. With little control over the content of such reporting, many Muslims retreat from public life (Jakubowicz, Collins & Chafic 2012; Poynting 2002), taking up positions which they anticipate will offer protection from the intensity of media scrutiny (Poynting et al. 2004). Nonetheless, 'protection' has given rise to exclusion, for in choosing to avoid media attention, opportunities to engage in political debates and influence social and political agendas are forfeited, whilst demonising messages that surround them continue, routinely coming to rest on a society that is both receptive and responsive to their content (Thompson 1998; Ungar 2001).

Issues that surround international students in Australia are not tantamount to the type of large-scale moral panics in which Muslims are currently embroiled. However, I use this example to support an argument that I pursue throughout this chapter: audiences are most receptive and responsive to media discourses when they fit with their lived realities. In this light, I propose that the following five qualitative representations of international students tell a structured story of how the receiving society perceives and experiences international students. Supporting these representations, are evocative reports drawn from varied media.

Representations of international students in the Australian media

Representation one: as targets of crime and violence

The foremost media image recalled by this study's participants of international students was both negative and alarming, for it contained a plethora of narratives that involved incidents of damage, death, injury, or disaster. Albeit couched within compassionate and empathetic viewpoints that conceptualised individual students as hapless targets who were habitually undermined by unfamiliar and menacing circumstances, the depiction of international students within this category nonetheless symbolised a collective who lacked agency in the

social setting. As targets of crime, abuse, harassment, physical and verbal attacks, this rendering fit with their status as a racialised group, detached and marginalised from mainstream society. And even though they were rarely recalled as *perpetrators* of crime within this type, their positioning as *targets* of bizarre and shocking incidents nevertheless affiliated them with criminal acts and accordingly linked them with a 'seedy' side of life. To deconstruct this claim, I return to Aaron's point that 'we wouldn't have this scourge if there were no students about'.

Buttressing the perception of international students as targets of crime, were multiple accounts that exposed a diverse range of incidents. However an event that linked an international student to an asylum seeker[49], drew particular attention from the participants.

Macquarie University attack asylum fears

Eighty asylum seekers will be questioned by police hunting a man over an alleged sexual assault on a female student at Macquarie University as concerns are raised over housing asylum seekers in student accommodation. Students were furious yesterday after the alleged early morning sexual assault on the student, 20, in the University's accommodation village, which has also been housing asylum seekers in adjacent units when student demand dries up…It emerged the village was a participant in the government's taxpayer funded, Red Cross-run program, housing asylum seekers for stays of up to six weeks under the bridging visa scheme…Students, including a friend of the victim, said they were afraid of the asylum seekers (Lentini & Lyon 2013).

This category of crime assured wide news coverage and local attention[50]. Expectedly, it lingered in the memories of several participants more than a year after the incident occurred.

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[49] Cohen (2002) argues that asylum seekers represent one of seven familiar clusters of social identity that are objects of moral panic.
[50] For additional examples of how the media reported this incident, see articles, 'Sex assault on campus: resident asylum seekers to be questioned' (Levy 2013). In the aftermath, an asylum seeker from Sri Lanka was found not guilty of indecent assault (Dale & Crawford 2016).

Red Cross who are a provider of community detention for the Federal Government, had an arrangement through the University's outsourcing of University Village…They outsourced accommodation…for about 200 asylum seekers…One of the male asylum seekers sexually assaulted an international student at the campus village. A media storm came and suddenly people were shocked, as there were all these asylum seekers living there. Nobody knew… and I guess there are some people who don't necessarily make the connection or separate international students from asylum seekers unfortunately (Nat, a local resident whose community development work involves youth, families and the elderly in Ryde).

And why did this particular incident have such lasting impact on the participants? First, the incident in itself was both remarkable and deleterious. Secondly, it took place in a local suburb, suggesting that 'trouble' had been brought close to home. Thirdly, it played into, and built on preconceived notions (Bell 1991; Munshi 1998) about asylum seekers and international students: asylum seekers represent potential 'risks' to the safety of receiving societies and international students embody 'problems' at the local level. More broadly, the incident signalled that the 'failed community' (Ahmed 2000, p.26) had arrived; a place where local residents are strangers to each other and where risk and danger lurk surreptitiously in places that were once considered safe. Unaware that asylum seekers were residing in local suburbs, this crime fuelled angst among local residents for it raised questions about placing trust in ostensibly honourable local instrumentalities. Equally, the incident drove unease about flows of strangers into local neighbourhoods and stimulated ideas about strangers being in opposition to conventional moral values. As an ultimate fall-out, this incident reverberated across the community to challenge notions of social cohesion.

The image of international students as victims of sexual crimes arises spasmodically within press media, with the students often singled out and categorised for their vulnerability[51].

> Australia's on-campus sexual assault problem acutely affects international students
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> NSW Rape Crisis Centre executive officer Karen Willis says her organisation frequently receives calls from female university students, many of whom are international students. "We always know when orientation week is happening because our calls go through the roof"…International Education Association of Australia executive director Phil Honeywood said, "many international students come from countries where respect for people older than you is a cultural requirement, where body language issues can be totally misinterpreted and where the level of sexual education in their home country is minimal. All of this makes for a potentially exploitative situation if the wrong people in Australia try to take advantage of their naivety and cultural differences" (Sullivan 2016).

Raising issues to do with the students' incompatibility with the receiving society, reporting of this incident accentuated a discordancy that reflected both marginalisation and power differentials (Hall 1997). Yet, it overlooked the way in which government instrumentalities and host education institutions carry responsibility for pastoral care and security of students, pushing back obligations in these areas to the students themselves[52]. A plethora of news items convey the image of international students as ill-fated targets of crime, yet there is a dearth of reporting that questions the accountability of governments and education institutions to deliver adequate security measures for students. Recalling other crimes against international students, the participants of this study spoke about 'a Korean student who was murdered', 'a

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[51] Sexual assaults on university campuses has become a big issue in 2017. This follows allegations by the advocacy group End Rape on Campus Australia who alleged that in the past five years there have been more than 500 official complaints, yet only 6 expulsions. Universities have been accused of actively covering up sexual assaults. This claim was made in a submission to the Australian Human Rights Commission (Bagshaw 2017).

[52] See Chapter Five, where I discuss self-reliance as a feature of the neoliberal university.

Chinese student who was beaten in the city', 'a Chinese student held for ransom', 'a student harassed on a bus', 'a fire in Alexandria [a suburb of Sydney] involving 18 students from Japan and Korea', 'the rape of a student [and] another killed'. Even though the participants expressed shock and dismay at the ferocity of these deliberate and serious attacks, their recall was limited, often expressed in short phrases that told of the victim's ethnicity, the type of incident, and sometimes where the incident had taken place. Thus media discourses that 'invested skin colour with meaning' (Ahmed 2002, p.46) made sure that international students were recognised and characterised through reading of their racial difference, just as they constructed 'a definition of what race is, what meaning the imagery of race carries, and what the "problem of race" is understood to be' (Hall, 1990, p.11). Essentially no-one from this study questioned why such treatment was so regularly metered out to international students. Nor did they question why governments, education institutions and local communities seemingly remain silent, or downplay their significance. In truth, my own investigation of this subject showed that it was often student associations who drew attention in press media to the plight of international students as victims of crime (Rigney 2012, 2013), while university administrators defended safety records and enumerated security measures that were already in place across campuses.

Assaults on Indian students

Attacks and assaults against Indian students during 2009 and 2010 in Australia were widely recalled by the participants. So familiar were reports pertaining to these crimes that many simply referred to them as 'the attacks on Indian students', upholding a view that everyone would be conversant with events that took place. Nonetheless, opinions were divided among the participants about these events, echoing divergent positions taken by media outlets. The following insights were qualitatively predominant and evocative of such standpoints.

> *Samirah: The Indian students. I was working at Harris Park at the time. There was a*
>
> *big Indian community. I knew that the students were actually getting targeted, picked*

on by another group because they were such studious, loving, dedicated, gentle people and they were really targeted as these victims of crime. That was really ugly. It happened in Sydney and I know it happened in Melbourne, but I actually witnessed that and it was quite horrendous.

Janice: The response from India too was quite dramatic. A lot of students were warned not to come.

Paul: Enrolments dropped off dramatically (Staff from Ryde City Council).

Certainly, the assaults were frequent and acute, with more than 100 reported, including the fatal stabbing of a 21 year old international student, Nitin Garg, as he walked one evening to his part-time job in a fast-food outlet in Melbourne (Astudillo 2010). Alarming and shocking, these incidents drew widespread attention, not only from diverse media outlets, but also from political elites who were at first reluctant to acknowledge that racism might have played a role in the attacks. Their concerns were linked to the effect that 'racist attacks' potentially would have on the international education industry (Singh & Cabraal 2010). (India is an important source country for international students to Australia.)

<center>Brutal truth about attacks</center>

Indian students are being attacked in Australia, with at least 100 incidents in Melbourne and Sydney during the past year. The violence is undeniable, the targeting of Indians is undeniable, and the problem is unacceptable and embarrassing…The police are telling the truth when they describe the attacks (on Indian students) as largely motivated by opportunism, because Indian students work late at night, live in lower-cost neighbourhoods, and are regarded as soft targets[53] (Sheehan 2009).

This article blamed the victims, arguing that the attacks were 'opportunistic', while the students were portrayed as passive subjects whose way of life was incompatible with the local

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[53] Sheehan argues that the attacks on Indian students were not perpetrated solely by 'white' Australians, but also by Indigenous Australians, Australians of 'Middle Eastern' appearance, Pacific Islanders and Asians. He uses these categorisations to argue that the attacks were not 'white racism'.

spaces they sought to occupy (Baas 2009). Essentially such articles problematised the students' lifestyles, through claims that holding jobs that required them to work late at night 'invited' trouble. Indeed, reverberations from such messaging can be long-lasting, as some participants of this study held similar, distinct views about likely causes of the attacks four years after they took place.

> *The Indian students being racially attacked. It's all bull****. That was just the media. The international news has screwed up a lot of everyone's perceptions of Australians. I go to a party with international people and they automatically think that we are racists. They go, 'you are f***ing racists'. Wow, you know. These are my friends and you go, 'wow'. They think all Aussies are racists… Those Indians they were from the poorer socio-economic backgrounds. They haven't got the education. If you go out in these shitty areas at 12 o'clock at night, you don't walk home. You get a lift in a car. A lot of these stories in the media were later judged to be false claims. Look there might have been a couple of students in trouble but that was only a very few isolated cases. The media made a big deal about it. Then the Indian media made a big deal about it. Look, I don't know whether the student issues [attacks] were racial or rather brought on by students working late at night, carrying cash and other valuables, in other words easy targets (Dave, an Anglo-Australian, former domestic student and on-campus resident of Macquarie University).*

Intermingled with Dave's rebuttal of the notion that the assaults on Indian students were racially motivated (at least by Anglo-Australians), were his allegations that class, along with lack of local knowledge played a role in what occurred. Equally, he accused the media of exaggerating and amplifying the events that took place. But his principal argument had relatively little to do with the impact of the assaults per se, for his overriding concern was about the way in which media reporting of these incidents steered others to categorise Anglo-Australians as racists. For Dave the upshot of the assaults was not so much about the effects on Indians students, nor the international education industry, but rather the image of Australia

and Anglo-Australians at home and overseas. Attached to his reasoning was a kind of victimhood that inferred the Indian students were in some way complicit in the damage that had occurred to Australia's reputation as a multicultural society.

At the height of the furore, media reports flew thick and fast. While some elected to portray the attacks as opportunistic, others took different stance.

Australian government in damage control after murder of Indian student

The fatal stabbing of 21-year-old Indian student Nitin Garg in Melbourne on January 2 has again focussed international attention on the appalling conditions endured by many overseas students in Australia. Demonstrating its contempt for the concerns and well-being of these students, the government of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has responded with a public relations campaign that has one central aim – ensuring that the multi-billion dollar tertiary education market is not adversely affected…[Nitin Garg] was stabbed in a park and later died in hospital…Garg was reportedly not robbed, adding to concerns that the attack may have been racially motivated (Astudillo 2010).

Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994) maintained that distinct cooperation exists between political and social elites (individuals, corporations, elites and social classes) and the media, in order to maintain power differentials, while Teo (2000, p.43) described the 'relationship between discourse and society as a dialectical one; a "top down" relation of dominance and a "bottom up" relation of compliance, acceptance and reproduction'. Such contentions, fit too, with the neoliberal university that protects reputation over fundamental care and responsibility for students. These notions offer plausible explanations why various news items offer different exposés of the incidents relating to the assaults on Indian students. Although news content might seem neutral, natural and 'factual' to respective audiences, in effect it contains carefully crafted, subtle messages that are routinely skewed or geared to: accommodate the views and programmes of social and political elites (Van Dijk 2000); sustain existing power relations;

appease respective audiences; and indubitably enhance ratings (Skrbis & Chiment 2012). Imbued with a reporter's voice and judgement, 'the news' is thus habitually presented from narrow viewpoints that dismiss or ignore alternative outlooks (Kabir 2006).

This phenomenon was picked up by Robyn, a tenancy advocate, who recalled an editorial about overcrowded accommodation in Sydney, where several international students shared make-shift, partitioned (illegal) rooms in a large apartment block. Although the students paid rent, they were asked to surrender security cards that provided access to the building. This caused considerable hardship for the students, yet some media outlets elected to present the students' lifestyles as disruptive, while they ignored the illegal conditions under which they resided. Others represented the students as victims of unscrupulous landlords. Robyn takes up the story.

> *In some of the reports they were being seen as victims, in other reports they were being seen as causing noise and nuisance for the other neighbours. So it kind of depended on the articles that were being quoted.*

Margaret too, noted self-contradictory stories about international students in overcrowded accommodation.

> *There have been horror stories in the local paper about accommodation where students have really been exploited with huge numbers crammed in to an apartment. But I think the message getting out was as much this is terrible for the neighbours, or even more terrible than for the students (Margaret, retired social worker and volunteer English teacher).*

Such examples point to the ways in which incidents told in different ways, function amidst a broader array of institutions who hold vested interests in defining social order and deviance (Poynting 2002). An important argument that I have attempted to weave throughout this section, is that a key social function of media is to protect the interests of political and social elites and to maintain power relationships and structure. As Cohen proposed (2002, p.xxix),

'the importance of the media lies not in their role as transmitters of moral panics nor as campaigners but in the way they reproduce and sustain the dominant ideology'. In this light media discourses transmit sobering messages about the ways in which international students are perceived and understood within the receiving society.

Representation two: as victims of exploitation

The housing sector

> #### Vulnerable international students become rental victims
>
> Residents around the University of Wollongong have long complained that dozens of students are being housed in single family homes, often unlawfully converted into multi-bedroom premises. Such homes are often unkempt, may not have lounge rooms or kitchens and can pose parking and fire safety issues. They often spring up around universities as rogue operators take advantage of low-cost accommodation shortage. …Some boarding houses have been associated with organised crime, including the sex trade and immigration rackets (Hasham 2011).

Fractious debates around housing are commonplace not only in the City of Ryde, but in other areas with large student populations. Feeding off these circumstances, the media function to amplify community concerns by producing regular reports and public commentary on social media. From my fieldwork, I propose four principal issues prime audiences to be receptive to negative media framings on this subject. First, suggestions that the numbers of international students will increase in the future; secondly, the proliferation of sub-standard, often illegal, boarding houses in local neighbourhoods as a direct response to student demands for housing; thirdly, the consequential deterioration of local amenities; and fourthly, the link between students and deviance, including exploitation by unscrupulous landlords. As a result, the presence of international students easily intermingles with fears of many longer established residents for the security and dignity of local neighbourhoods. A visit that I took through Macquarie Park, known as an international student enclave, provides both a snapshot of what

local 'studentification' (Hubbard 2008) looks like, and reasons some local residents might resent their presence.

> *I count 10 supermarket trolleys lying abandoned on the footpath. They are scattered within 300 metres. Discarded goods such as desks, television sets, shelving and general rubbish litter the roadsides. Three mattresses sit on either the footpath or on the balconies of units. The area is untidy and looks unkempt. To add to the general air of neglect, washing is hanging from almost every balcony and mail drips onto the wet concrete (Field-note dated 27 August 2014).*

This picture ties to descriptors of moral panics; 'increasing problems' and 'things getting worse' (Cohen 2002). It also situates the student residents as a collective in opposition to notions of community (Hier 2003). While several participants recalled stories in the media about horrible, exploitative conditions under which international students lived in 'unsafe and overcrowded boarding houses', 'shipping containers and caravans', or in 'apartments where smoke alarms were absent', their accounts reverberated with everyday observations of local suburbs, where neighbourhoods were occupied by countless numbers of transient students.[54] As a consequence, expressions of genuine concern for student safety and security, were tainted by other lamentations about how student presence forges a decline in neighbourhood standards.

> *I have nothing but sympathy for the students. Because I also know that a lot of the students are not that well-off. So they have to scrounge around to find money, take on loans, do whatever they can just so they can stay here…Knowing their situation, knowing the challenges they face, and on top of that, often being exploited especially often by their own, in terms of accommodation, that only ever inspires sympathy, and having read the articles, I think when I drive past those places that look as if they could be boarding houses. I get angry…I had a friend from Bangladesh doing his PhD*

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[54] See Hubbard (2008, 2009) for descriptions of studentification in the United Kingdom, where students are blamed for physical and moral decline of neighbourhoods.

and he was financially tight, but not poverty-stricken. His wife had to go overseas with his kids and so he was on his own. He didn't care where he lived – he just needed a bed. Where he was living was quite cramped and he didn't think it was all legal. He told me there were 3, 4, or 5 or something. It was just a small place, yeh. He wasn't sharing a bedroom, but the space was very tight. It couldn't be right, he said (Aaron, former academic staff member and currently a community researcher).

At the same time, Nat, a local resident whose community development work involves youth, families and the elderly in Ryde, tells a different story.

On one little section at the corner of Balaclava Road and Epping Road almost every fortnight there is a large selection of goods on the footpath. I do know that most of that stuff comes from international students who basically go home. I am sure a lot of them try to flick stuff to friends or mates but when push comes to shove and they have to get on an aeroplane they put stuff on the side of the road and hope that it goes to the right place. I think that this dumping could probably be a bit of a frustration.

Infused with an 'edge', these statements thus portray a collective image of international students as both hapless victims of organised and powerful landlords, and as 'unthinking', irresponsible neighbours.

The cul-de-sac of broken dreams

At first glance, Koorong Street Marsfield, is a classic piece of Australian suburbia, a quiet cul-de-sac of large brick houses with front lawns, backyards, garages and driveways, all under a canopy of trees. It looks sleepy. It is not. Signs of illegality are everywhere. Many lawns and gardens are unkempt. Many homes have shrouded windows in the middle of the day. Many main bedrooms are cut through the middle by a dividing wall. These houses are full of people, commonly eight per dwelling.

...Half the houses in this street are part of a huge black economy that has thrived under the State and Federal Labor governments…So much money is flowing through this underground economy that crime and systemic fraud have become part of the mix…I don't think many people have a real sense of this black economy, which exploits Asian students living in Australia, or even the scale of the overseas student population in Australia (Sheehan 2011).

Using multiple connections, this opinion piece described housing conditions in the local suburb of Marsfield. A medley of intriguing themes flow throughout: the students' need for accommodation which is met by unscrupulous, often co-ethnic landlords; the refusal of successive governments to acknowledge these practices; and broader political and legal debates around student mobility, policing and community safety. Using ominous, textured language, a menacing undertone emerges, one that recommends longer established residents maintain constant alertness in the face of mounting risk (Hopkins & Smith 2008). As Ahmed (2000, p.33) succinctly recounted, 'the stranger is always lurking as the threat of-that-which-might-yet-be'. With sentences such as, 'It looks sleepy. It is not. Signs of illegality are everywhere', the inference is made that unsavoury things might be happening literally on one's doorstep, thus raising questions about trust within neighbourhoods (Uslaner 2012), and linking risk to the Other, the stranger. Direct reference to 'Asians', who are described through collective static and less complex identities (Collins 2006; Teo 2000), represents an overtly political statement that connects to historic meanings in Australia about 'Asian threat' (Ang 2001, 2016; Collins 2006). Pointing to the failure of governments to intervene and curb the escalation of such scenarios, another political message is delivered on the basis that those in positions of power have little regard for local communities, and in truth are more concerned with the flow of money than in naming, tracking and disarming the organised syndicates who are behind many of the doings that upset local sensibilities.

Among the informants of this study who raised the issue of international students as victims of exploitation in the housing sector, opinions were divided about the integrity of

governments in acting to protect students from exploitation. On one hand, Andrew a youth advocate, argued that in deploying the media to shed light on the activities of illegal boarding houses across NSW, and in Ryde particularly, the recent passing of the *Boarding Houses Act* (2012), showed the NSW Government 'recognised the importance of international students in the area'. While Vincent a local business person, claimed that in making issues to do with the proliferation of boarding houses public via the media, the Government had acted for political purposes, exacerbating the exploitation of international students in the process, 'by embarrass[ing] the international students and our standing in the international scene…It was a plan and propaganda of a particular person'. These opposing viewpoints thus raised questions about the integrity of political elites, whom Vincent argued use their power with the media (Hall et al. 1978) to produce stories to suit their own purposes (Goode & Ben-Yehuda 1994). Indeed, situations[55] that provide the powerful with both an ideal deviant Other (Pietsch & Marotta 2009), and a context ripe for the emergence of 'moral entrepreneurs' (Becker, cited in Ben-Yehuda 1994) become 'rich pickings' in these circumstances, enabling the media to make comparisons between 'social practices, conventions, customs, values and beliefs' (Poynting et al. 2004, p.35), and judgements about who 'fits' or belongs within local spaces. The way in which the exploitation of international students in the housing sector plays out in the media is complex and multifaceted, for not only is it about power differentials between landlords and the student-tenants, it also has to do with broader social and political debates.

Workplaces

In 2015, the airing of the ABC *Four Corners* programme '*7-Eleven: the price of convenience*' (Ferguson & Toft 2015) exposed widespread exploitation of workers, many of whom were international students casually employed by franchised 7-Eleven convenience stores across Australia. In the aftermath of the initial exposé, the print media continued to run follow-up stories, some of which pointed to serious underpayment of employees who were required to work long hours and to threats of deportation at the hands of their employers.

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[55] See Li (2007) for a similar perspective that arises out of the New Zealand media.

The federal government will not cancel the visas of 7-Eleven staff who breached their working conditions in Australia while being exploited and underpaid by the convenience store chain…Employment law principal, Giri Sivaraman said, "Many of these workers are on student visas."…"Many have been forced to work a lot more hours than their visas allowed and were threatened that if they did not do so, on less pay than they were entitled, they would be reported to immigration authorities for breaking their work conditions and be deported" (Mason 2015).

Far from spotlighting an isolated circumstance, other stories followed. In November 2016, Caltex service stations were accused of underpaying employees, many of whom were Indian and Pakistani students (Ferguson & Christodoulou 2016), while in 2017 a new scandal erupted in relation to Domino's Pizza[56] (Ferguson & Christodoulou 2017a, 2017b). Not only underpaid and over-worked, some of the student-employees involved in this outrage were offered sponsorships for visas by co-ethnic franchisees, at a price. Campbell, Boese and Tham (2016) underscore the involvement of co-ethnic employers in the exploitation of international students in workplaces, particularly the food industry. Recruited on the basis of shared ethnicity, Chinese, Japanese, Indian and Thai students in particular, are often denied proper wages and conditions.

Domino's scandal: franchisee selling visas

"I will say straight that we want to sell this sponsorship", a Domino's Pizza franchisee blurts down the line in Mandarin. "But you need to pay some money", he says before stating the price. "We might need you to pay $100,000- $150,000". What the franchisee didn't know was that the caller, Jon, a Chinese student on a visa, was working undercover for Fairfax Media…Jon tells Fairfax Media it is not unusual for franchisees to offer sponsorship for a bonus or payment. "It's all about money", he

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[56] Domino's Pizza is a large company in Australia, with more than 600 stores, 14,000 workers, selling one million pizzas nationally each week.

says. "They know international students want a visa and many families in China will put together money to pay for the sponsorship for their children[57]" (Ferguson & Christodoulou 2017a).

Media exposure of three significant employment scandals involving international students within the past two years in Australia, attests to the likelihood that illegal practices within workplaces are widespread. These major exposures occurred after my fieldwork was completed, but nevertheless numerous participants recalled earlier, localised instances of exploitation of working students; knowledge that they acquired either through their own experiences, or by way of intermittent media reports. Many participants recalled editorials that described students working excessive hours (beyond the conditions of their student visas), in illegal set-ups and for below-award wages.

> *I was talking with a friend I had known from school as an international student. We were sharing a story about work and he was telling us about his work. The whole table was pretty sure that it was illegal. It was below minimum wages and illegal hours and we kind of laughed about it and we kind of didn't. I don't think that is isolated (Brett, an arts/ law domestic student who formerly studied business).*

Jeremy a domestic student, argued that the 'service industry, usually restaurants, exploits them most', whilst others recalled incidents of vulnerable, female students who were exploited in the sex industry:

> *One of them [report] actually involved Macquarie University. There was a lot of illegal brothels in the area and there was a lot of international students, like females who were being coerced or forced into prostitution as a way to pay exorbitant bills, or someone had taken their passport and didn't give it back, or they'd been threatened to*

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be shamed to their family if they didn't do certain things (Brett, an arts/ law domestic student who formerly studied business).

In terms of female Asian students, who are financially poor, they are part of the sex trade, different kinds legal and illegal. I am hearing it's quite widespread. There are always these stories about. Brothels being busted by police and finding overseas people without visas, or with student visas working illegally in those places. I don't know, but it seems to be not just a rare phenomenon (Aaron, former academic member of staff, now Community researcher).

Common to these accounts was imagery of international students as a deficient collective who endured financial pressures and hence resorted to desperate measures to remain in Australia. Essentially, it was co-ethnics who supplied housing and employment for the students, and then deliberately and purposefully exploited their vulnerabilities. These circumstances did not always build outrage (see Li 2015), however, either in the media, or in the meditations of the participants, but rather merely created a new image, one that linked the precariousness of the student situation to opportunism.

Representation three: as an opportunistic population

Cheating scandals

Articles to do with a major cheating scandal, first appeared in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on November 11, 2014 and two days later in the *Newcastle Herald.* The front-page headline, 'Students enlist MyMaster website to write essays, assignments' (McNeilage & Visentin 2014a, 2014b) and 'The cheating scandal that rocked our university' (Kelly 2014), were followed by several full page articles about the actions of international students from universities across NSW. Drawn to my attention by five participants[58], these articles alleged that MyMaster, a company operating from Chinatown in Sydney, provided more than 900

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[58] Note: This scandal erupted towards the end of the data collection period, hence the number of participants referring to it was likely fewer than if it had occurred earlier in 2014.

assignments to students from almost every university in NSW, turning over at least $160,000 in 2014. Included were claims that the 'University of Newcastle students spent the highest amount ($27,490) of all NSW universities on pre-paid assignments from MyMaster', followed by Macquarie University whose students spent $25,815. Macquarie University topped the list in requests (131) for help from MyMaster, representing 20.8% of all applications. Across NSW, Business, Accounting, Management, Marketing and Arts / Social Science students made up 70% of all applications to the site. On the morning that this story broke, I was with Margaret and Michael, a retired couple from Eastwood.

> *Michael: There's an article in today's paper. It's about a Chinese woman who is running a …*
>
> *Margaret: Yes, it's about getting your essays done on-line.*
>
> *Michael: Overseas students paying $1,000 to have their essays done…She has recruited quite a lot of people as essay writers. Yes, it's a business. And a very quickly growing business.*

The use of headlines, numbers, facts and 'transparent' claims about the 'activities' of international students acted to increase credibility of these articles, yet whilst the numbers and percentages of students suggested widespread impropriety, the *actual* number of students were relatively few. Thompson (1998, p.33) argued that during moral panics 'there is often an exaggerating of the seriousness of events in terms of the number taking part, the number involved…the amount and effects' and this is accompanied by 'sensational headlines, melodramatic vocabulary and deliberate heightening of those events considered to be news'. The language used in the headline of one of these articles, 'The cheating scandal that rocked our university' (Kelly 2014) invites further scrutiny. For out of this piece arose categories of 'us' and 'them'; indicating inclusion of those who shared fundamental aspirations of what the student aspiration meant, just as it excluded others who were perceived to have challenged communal measures of success in higher education institutions (Bennett et al. 2016). Indeed,

this discourse essentialised the students' difference, just as it gave rise to notions of distance between the international students and the dominant population. It created impetus for others to draw together to defend and safeguard 'their' university against those whose lack of trustworthiness, threatened local values and moral standards. A stereotyped group, international students were thus labelled 'underhand' and opportunistic; their ambiguity and detachment representing challenge to moral boundaries that the receiving society took for granted (Pietsch & Marotta 2009). In truth the tone of the article was hostile, as it urged others to unite in rejecting international students. In the aftermath of the small-scale moral panic sparked by the MyMaster editorials, new allegations continued to emerge, accompanied by a plentiful range of comments on social media, many of which attested to falling standards within the higher education sector and to personal experiences that described how large numbers of international students habitually 'cheated'. Academic staff joined these 'conversations', some alleging that they had been forced to alter marks, pass incomprehensible English and ignore plagiarism.

Higher education caught between integrity and fees

Following the MyMaster revelations, scores of similar websites have come to light, revealing a burgeoning online black market. More than 20 disgruntled academics contacted Fairfax Media on Wednesday expressing frustration at the widespread problem they say has been undermining the integrity of the institutions (McNeilage & Visentin 2014b).

Since completing my fieldwork, the ABC *Four Corners* programme, '*Degrees of Deception*' (Besser & Cronau 2015) aired. Continuing to expose international students as fraudsters, this programme focused on the way in which many students had enlisted the help of unscrupulous agents, tutors and business people to falsify documents, complete assignments and examinations. Follow-up articles emerged in the tabloid press, drawing attention to new allegations.

> Cheating at major Australian universities may be easier than many realise
>
> Senior academics have raised concerns cheating at major Australian universities may be easier than many realise. The concerns come as the Australian National University continues to investigate an essay farm selling completed assignments to Chinese students in Canberra. The service, Assignment King, advertises its services in Mandarin on a community website and promises to deliver original assignments that cannot be detected by anti-plagiarism software (Belot 2016).

Flowing throughout these discourses, was a theme of 'Asianisation' of the international education industry, with terms such as 'international', 'foreign', 'Asian', and 'Chinese' routinely interchanged. And while some of the implications were subtle, what ultimately emerged from editorials and follow-up commentary on social media, was an image of the international education industry as 'Asian', and the representation of the 'international student' as also 'Asian'; a depiction that served to underscore the social differences between the single category 'Asian Other' and the receiving society (Ang 2001; Collins 2006).

Property acquisition

The desire and ability of international students and their families to acquire residential property in Australia is in part associated with government policies that under specified circumstances, allow temporary residents such as international students to do so. The government welcomes this kind of foreign investment for its capacity to deliver economic growth and prosperity, whilst also acknowledging community concerns about the extent of foreign ownership in Australia and the purchase of certain assets. Acting on community unease around this issue, in 2015 the Australian government proposed the introduction of a $5,000 fee to apply to foreign nationals buying properties in Australia. This prompted the *Australian Financial Review* to respond in an article that drew connections between foreign ownership of properties, international students (or their families) as potential purchasers, and the intensifying 'squeeze' on rental properties.

Foreign Investment Review Board new fee regime

threaten lucrative overseas student market

Some overseas students, often possibly with financial help from their parents, buy residential property in Australia. However, the government's move in February to introduce that minimum fee [$5,000] for foreign nationals to have their applications to buy property assessed by the Foreign Investment Review Board, could harm the education sector…Senior economist at Fairfax-owned Domain Group, Andrew Wilson said, "Surely education services is a sector that should go well. But xenophobia is alive and well in certain sections of the community, and certain sections of the media want to stir it up. And yet there are so many positives about overseas students on temporary visas buying property in Australia. If they don't buy property here and only rent, it pushes rents up"….Wilson says foreign student buyers of property are providing substantial stamp duty revenue for state governments (Tolhurst 2015).

Whilst purporting to defend the right of international students to purchase properties in Australia, and challenging the Government's proposal to charge a fee to have purchase applications assessed, this article fuelled community unrest. It did so in two ways. First, it linked the purchase of properties and overseas buyers with xenophobia, and secondly, it underscored the intent of 'foreigners' (including international students) to make claims to property in Australia, either by way of purchase or leasing agreements. Both these viewpoints carry an inference of threat, along with the implication, that even though they were acting within the law, international students are people who will 'take advantage'. Numerous participants recalled multifarious newspaper articles in this vein, describing how international students were 'buying up properties in Sydney as investments', causing 'house prices to rise', 'squeezing out other home buyers' and 'exerting pressure on tight rental markets'.

A few months ago, there was a big furore in the media about international students –

although it was more related to international investment – the property prices in

Sydney and how the Chinese buyers were coming in, and that they had spent $4 billion or something like that. They put a lot of that on international students buying apartments (Brett, an arts/ law domestic student who formerly studied business).

With housing already a contested issue in Ryde, media reports that suggest the possibility of further material and social displacement due to increasing numbers of 'Others' who desire to purchase properties, tap fears and incite anger and resentments (Unger 2001). Spurred on by competition among media outlets, populist moral campaigning on such issues, routinely capitalises on widespread fears to do with globalisation and the transnational people flows that are embedded within it. As such property acquisition in Australia has become linked to population growth and immigration debates. Deploying racialised jargon such as 'flooding', 'invading' and 'taking up', media discourses thus purposefully play on audience anxieties around these issues, intensifying concerns about trust in others; the significance of everyday life; and how individuals can hope to retain agency in a fast-paced, globalised world (Thompson 1998). Many of these editorials contribute to images of 'the threadbare city' where,

> feelings about difference are permeated by a sense of loss and lack, where crumbling public infrastructure, spaces and utilities form the material base where a sense of competition over scarce resources creates an affective register, or "urban subconsciousness" permeated by mistrust, suspicion and competition[59] (Wise 2011, p.97).

Visas and jobs

A consequence of successive government policies, the boundaries between established categories of *populations:* student/migrant/worker; legal/illegal; and temporary/permanent (Robertson 2011a), have become less distinct. This situation has created doubts and

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[59] The description of the 'threadbare city' referred to by Wise (2011) draws on a seminar entitled, '*Cities and the Ethic of Care among Strangers'* that was presented by Ash Amin in 2010 to the Centre for Research and Social Inclusion at Macquarie University.

uncertainties amongst some of the receiving society about the *real* intentions of international students in coming to Australia, as it has contributed to perceptions of ambiguous identities (Raghuram, 2013). As policy shifts have opened up opportunities for different socioeconomic demographics of international students to enter Australia (Singh 2011), public backlash has intensified to heighten perceptions of international students as deficient workers and manipulative peoples who routinely use their student entry status to pursue permanent residency (Robertson 2011a). The *Skilled Worker* programme is regularly scrutinised for illegalities and underhand practices.

<div align="center">Dodgy visas could cost Australian jobs</div>

Recent leaks from the Department of Immigration have revealed Australia's 457 visa scheme is riddled with visa fraud and rorts. These show that many workers in Australia's dedicated skilled migration scheme received their 457 visa under false pretences…International student and holiday working visas, in particular, allow entry to the Australian labour market, without a requirement that the job they perform be experiencing a domestic skill shortage (Howe & Reilly 2014).

<div align="center">Thousands of foreign students in visa fraud racket</div>

Tens of thousands of foreign students ha[d]ve become permanent residents in Australia as a likely result of widespread fraud and corruption within and outside the federal Immigration Department (Maslen 2014).

Allegations routinely aired in the media thus link the presence of international students with visa fraud and migration crime, made possible by fraudsters exploiting weaknesses in visa programmes. Social media routinely swarms with comments that indicate the receiving society's unease and displeasure at the prospect of international students being granted permanency – whether obtained through legal or illegal means. Charged with 'milking the system' and 'taking advantage', the image of international students in this circumstance is one of opportunism at the receiving society's 'expense'.

> To the average citizen like me, a foreign student is a bit like a multinational company. You end up taking far more than you give, because your country of origin gets the long term benefit of your stay in Australia. Of course, most overseas students want to stay once they have been here a few years. Some get money from their parents and buy a house in Sydney. Many get a job and displace a local graduate from the workplace. So overall, it's really a win-win for you, and a lose-lose for us (Comment: 'Good with a shovel').

This comment[60] came in response to an article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Huang 2016) about the journalist's grief and genuine struggle, as a former international student, to remain in Australia.

Representation four: as economic commodities

A global growth phenomenon, the number of tertiary international students is increasing at double the rate of tertiary students as a whole (Marginson 2012). In 2015, enrolments of tertiary international students in on-shore undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in Australia were 272,095 (Australian Government Department of Education and Training 2015), whilst as an industry, international education delivers annually between $19.7 billion and $21 billion to the Australian economy (Australian Government Department of Education and Training 2015; Singhal 2016[61]). These statistics consolidate the position of international education as one of the top two service exports for Australia (Australian Government Department of Education and Training 2016), as they connect it with the supply of significant incomes for government coffers and educational institutions.

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[60] Gomes (2014), in a study of on-line xenophobia in Singapore argued that on-line platforms allow people to express their views prolifically and vociferously. Opinion pieces and commentaries are these days used as platforms for people to share grievances from private spaces.

[61] The report of these student numbers by Singhal (2016) did not provide the source from which this information was taken. As a consequence, I have tabled two sets of numbers.

International students help the economy

The recent study by Access Economics detailing the vital importance of international students to the viability of tertiary institutions and the broader economy confirms what anyone working in this country's education institutions knows well: international students make an enormous contribution (Robinson 2009).

International education in NSW grows to $7 billion

International education surged ahead of tourism to become NSW's highest service export industry by nearly $2 billion, and the number of overseas students at the State's universities has grown by more than 30,000 over two years…The state is now drawing about a third of Australia's total international education earnings, estimated at $21 billion a year. International student numbers in NSW have increased by 22.4 per cent since 2013, growing from 140,000 to 171,000 in 2015…Attracting international students is a crucial driver to the NSW economy and education is our State's largest services export," NSW Minister for Trade Stuart Ayres said (Singhal 2016).

These editorials attest to the importance of the economic value of international education to Australia's national and state economies, yet they overlook the extreme financial circumstances of Australia's universities that requires them to rely on revenues from international student fees.

International student fees keeping universities afloat

Australian universities are so chronically under-funded in their teaching activities that every domestic undergraduate is effectively subsidised to the tune of $1,200 by international student fees…An analysis of fees conducted by the University of Melbourne found that the total subsidy to domestic students from international students was $500 million a year… "We have built an extreme reliance. It would be unlikely we would find a similar system anywhere in the world that would require

exposure to and reliance on international students to directly underpin basic quality",

Mr Beaton-Wells, lead author of the review conducted by the University of Melbourne

(Trounson & Hare 2011).

Articles in the tabloid press tend to oscillate between extolling the value of international education to the economy, or bewailing the dependence of education institutions and the broader economy on the fees that international students pay. In truth, substantial deregulation and partial privatisation of higher education in Australia since 1989, has meant that the level of public funds to Australian higher education institutions has dropped in absolute terms, as a proportion of national revenue and grant per student, making income generation by individual institutions critical to their survival (Duke 2004). The substantial fees paid by international students in exchange for education have to some extent off-set this financial dilemma, but in the process international education has come to be viewed as a global commodity, set within an export industry. The imagery of relations between international students and the receiving society has been affected too, now viewed as transactional, and measured in similar ways to outputs from investment, marketing, or consumption (Collins 2006). As a consequence, discourses to do with relations between international education and international students are often constructed using economic language of 'markets', 'economy', 'drivers', 'exports' and 'earnings'. The contribution of international students to the receiving society is habitually framed within economic jargon and by an imagery of 'Asianisation'. Even though international students are drawn from across the globe, Asian countries are still major sources of student recruitment for Australia (Marginson 2011b). Consequently, government and education authorities in Australia are constantly vigilant to threats that could harm the reputation of Australian education in Asia. In this light, the shift towards the One Nation party (noted for its anti-immigration, anti-Asian stance) in the Australian federal election in 2016, not only raised concerns among political and education elites, but also led to opinion pieces in the national media that connected the rising popularity of this party with potential decline in international students numbers.

The $19.5 billion international education sector could suffer an immediate and dramatic shock, with the impact of Pauline Hanson and One Nation driving students from overseas to more welcoming markets…"That will have a devastating impact on international education. The sector is in for a massive shock…Canada, Britain and the US will all benefit" [Sharon Bell, an honorary professor at the Australian National University (Hare 2016).

Expectedly, the use of economic language in media discourses to describe the contribution of international students to the receiving society was noted by many participants, most of whom recalled editorials that linked student presence with the rise and fall of the Australian economy. Often remembered through terms such as, 'boom' or 'bust', the participants interpreted these discourses as depersonalising the students; down-playing their human-side, while accentuating their status as commodities, whose value was coupled with the 'consumption' of education.

The only thing you hear is economic analysis. You hear when there is concern about the drop in 2009 from however many billions to say $17 billion for the contribution of Australian exports (Andrew, Chinese-Australian, youth worker with a local church and former student).

I never hear about the students' [personal or social] value in those ways to Australia. You don't hear anything about that (Greg, Anglo-Australian, local pastor of a Macquarie Park church).

Gaby Ramia from the University of Sydney, contributor to numerous publications to do with the well-being of international students in Australia argued, 'we need government to view international students less as a financial boon and more as humans. We owe them that' (Ramia, cited in Hil 2015, p.119). Many of the participants shared such views as they lamented the narrow economic lens through which many discourses to do with international

students are played out in the media. Some argued that this characterisation ignored the super-diversity (Vertovec 2007) of the population, as others bemoaned the ways in which these representations restricted understanding of the students' ability to contribute socially and culturally to the receiving society. A few contended that such labelling potentially affected their capacity to integrate, while one participant, Kate, raised concerns about the impact that economic emphasis had on the direction of higher education and society more broadly.

> *International students have become a cash cow…I think this emphasis on money is actually going to undermine society in a way that we haven't seen yet…Are institutions of higher education earning money to survive? Are they creating a society that is built on some sort of grounding? Or is it just about courses that churn out people?...It's not the fault of the people themselves (Kate, a mother, play-group organiser and former postgraduate student).*

Kate's musings called for commensurate recognition of the human-side of education with the economic, a kind of re-drawing and re-focusing on the commonalities that make us human. Rejecting the neoliberal focus of higher education today that privileges the marketplace, the concept of student as consumer or customer, and 'high volume education' (Gribble & Blackmore 2012, p.350), Kate interrogates the social consequences if important values that lie outside financial growth and profit are ignored. Yet while the media might be reproached for repeatedly reinforcing a single-dimensional argument to do with the economic contributions that students make, political and education elites who are in a position to broaden dialogue in this area, habitually forgo opportunities to do so.

Representation five: as success stories and achievers

Media editorials in which international students were featured as success stories and achievers were few, and confined to the local, free press publication, the *Northern District Times.* Localised media might be considered the most likely opening for the publication of such content, but given the number and super-diversity (Vertovec 2007) of the international student

population, there is an argument for regional and national media to place greater emphasis on the personal achievements of international students as individuals and as a collective. In truth, the students featured in articles of local newspapers were largely 'exceptional' individuals; people who distinguished themselves above conventional expectations. Often featured for their sporting prowess, their success was celebrated for the cosmopolitan 'flavour' their presence brought to campus and suburban life and for the ways in which they deepened cultural pleasures, and created more exciting urban experiences. At the same time their ethnicity remained objectified; a fixed imagery of culture that had been successfully 'relocated' to Australia. Essentially their presence induced a 'touristic gaze' (Collins 2006); their social contributions to the receiving society appreciated, but only from a position through which control and domination were maintained.

Really hot for kumdo

Siohyang Tan keeps warm on a wintery day with a session of kumdo. When she arrived from Malaysia as an international student in 2002, she found she was cold for many months of the year and needed a sport. After a long search, she chose kumdo, a modern martial art descended from kendo and most popular in Korea…Ms Tan has attained the third level of kumdo but is working towards going to next years' world championships (Sun 2011).

HK lifesaver wins award

…The awards were established to recognise international students and the contribution they make to NSW. Mr Yip is a volunteer life saver at Coogee Surf Life Saving Club and is in his third year of a Bachelor of Arts – Media degree…"I started out as a life saver in Hong Kong. You feel really proud of yourself because your job is to save people's lives," he said (Howlett 2012).

Just one participant recalled a media piece that described the *Homestay* experiences of an international student.

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Betty Connors has welcomed more than 100 Macquarie University students into her Epping home over the past decade…Faza Wulandari, 18, is studying medical sciences at Macquarie University and has moved from Armidale in the state's north. "It feels like a home away from home. It is a quiet environment and Betty is very welcoming", she said (Cheng 2011).

Although this article acknowledged the academic aptitude of international student, Faza, and the part she played in building an affective relationship with *Homestay* host, Betty, the focus of this piece was essentially about the attributes of the *Homestay* programme, and the long-standing contribution of one local resident to making it a success. While the article had a 'feel good' quality about it, an opportunity was disregarded to talk about the rich diversity found within international student populations; the contributions that international students make to enriching the lives of *Homestay* hosts (and the receiving society); and the social and cultural influence that *Homestay* programmes can have on communities.

Making meaning out of the five representations

The relationship between one's perception of a social object and one's attitudes towards it is a complex one. In simplest terms, at least two sequences occur: one perceives and selects according to certain orientations already in existence and then, what is perceived is shaped and absorbed into more enduring clusters of attitudes (Cohen 2002, p.35).

In this light, I consider how the images or representations presented within this section come together as structured opinions and attitudes about international students. Essentially, I attempt to make sense of what has been said. To do this I look to Cohen (2002) who contended that themes emerge within moral panics. Within themes are the categories of *images* (along with *orientation* and *causation*). A type of labelling process, images habitually involve emotive symbols that join together to form a composite position to describe particular individuals or groups. Within this categorisation, Cohen (2002, p.40) argued that composites

are composed of both a 'hard core of stable attributes' that are 'surrounded by fringe attributes'.

Thus I consider both descriptive labels and expressive traits that emerged within this section to represent international students. Essentially, I propose the categories of *target, victim, threat, cheat, student, worker, property-owner, tenant, quasi –citizen* and *commodity* as 'hard core labels', whilst characteristics of: *vulnerable, detached, racialised, opportunistic, ill-fated, deficient, underhand, Asian, deviant, untrustworthy, successful and disruptive,* encircle as 'fringe attributes'. Certainly, most of these categories reflect media values of negativity; position international students in opposition to prevailing ideologies; and construct their image through lens of contradictions and ambiguities[62]. My central argument is that many of the images ascribed to international students piece together with conceptions of moral panics: moods of hostility; heightened anxieties; fears about growing problems; concerns for breakdowns in social order; intensified risk and unease. With few counter-weights, or alternative narratives to challenge routine discourses, international students remain an ambiguous 'commodity'. This summation gives urgency to find ways to challenge such labelling, for it has potential to sway opinions and attitudes especially among those who neither seek out nor construct affective face-to-face relations with international students.

Challenging familiar discourses

The effusive power of the media as a medium that penetrates everyday life is acknowledged throughout preceding sections. Imbued with negativity, media discourses play on feelings of uncertainty and threat that are part of life in a fast-paced, globalised world. By way of relentless cycles that describe alarming and sensational global occurrences, the media capitalise on the immediacy of technological facilities to effectively bring trouble close to home, principally for the purpose of reproducing and sustaining dominant ideologies that

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[62] See Paltridge, Mayson and Schapper (2014) for an analysis of newspaper articles in *The Australian* featuring international students. The findings of this analysis pointed to the paradoxical construction of welcome and exclusion of international students.

include polarising positions of 'us' and 'them'. Yet, in a world that is fast becoming 'smaller'; where super-diverse (Vertovec 2007) populations peaceably cohabit urban spaces and interact on a quotidian basis and where diversity and difference are no longer remarkable, opportunities open up for the media to engage in more transparent and constructive discourses. With multiple situations in which individuals negotiate difference on a quotidian basis, the 'ordinariness' of these interfaces have potential to affect relations, and indeed create openings to invest in alternative descriptions of being together. This is not to suggest that the media should dismiss reporting the challenges that are associated with negotiating differences, but rather that focus shifts to make way for questions about existing power relations and alternative viewpoints that might dampen the potential for increasing tensions, clashes and extremist views (Cantle 2008). The New Zealand media have recently taken substantial steps to modify the ways in which they represent diversity. Attributable to education[63], along with everyday interactions that are more intense than connections traditionally made through the 'tasting' of cultural difference in public spaces (Collins 2006), more positive attitudes towards diversity in media reporting are now evident (Spoonley & Butcher 2009). Although quotidian encounters might be to some extent ritualised, and based on assumptions that habitual interactions will 'loosen identities' (Wise 2011, p.83), regular face-to-face encounters *do* open up opportunities for individuals to connect and exchange ideas, out of which new attitudes and identities emerge (Amin 2002). Margaret, a long-term resident of Eastwood explained:

> *We are influenced by what we see and read. But if it is an area where we have our own personal knowledge…what's in the media is only one thing that goes into the mix.*

Creating opportunities for individuals to tell their own stories in the media, and for others to hear divergent cultural experiences, is an approach that can aid in the renegotiation of relationships and in the formation of new understandings about the Other. Making time

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[63] Also see Forrest and Dunn (2010) who argue that greater exposure to difference, educational opportunities, and higher socio-economic status impact on how individuals perceive and negotiate difference.

available for people to present aspects of their personal biographies and to exhibit their human-side, as others listen, observe and reflect on their own and others' experiences, allows practices and skills to soften, and bring about new systems of personal meanings (Noble 2013). With sensitive mediation, such 'biography-sharing' occasions also act as circumstances for grievances to be shared, questions addressed, myths dispelled, or discussions fostered with live studio audiences (Enus 2011). The upshot extends however beyond the immediate effect of hearing someone's story, for such occasions carry potential to assist individuals to make sense of, and come to terms with change (Cantle 2012). With acknowledgement that the circumvention of media control and influence is most effectively accomplished through direct lateral communications (Cohen & Kennedy 2013), mediated, face-to-face encounters between those who are different offer possibilities to gently challenge media discourses that are dominated and manipulated by social and political elites who hold positions of power (Poynting 2002). Growing sensitivity to others, recognition of the importance of connections, interdependency and commonality become conditions that create possibilities for further transformation (Jacobs 2011).

> *I'd love them to do a story on how international students have become successful in Australia for example. Let's say an ABC programme doing an Australian Story talking about how international students come to Australia, study their butt off and work their way up in the community (Edith, a bank executive and former international student).*

Indeed, the negative images that currently prevail in the media representations of international students in Australia are short-sighted, for they not only fail to capture the complexity and heterogeneity of the student cohort, but more significantly fail to acknowledge their potential; a point not lost on some of the participants of this study.

> *A good half of all students stay here, so we should invest in them. If we are expecting them to contribute later as professionals who are employed by us in careers like*

accounting, medicine, finance etc. So why wouldn't we invest in them? (Aaron, former academic staff member and currently a community researcher).

With significant numbers of international students continuing on to become permanent Australian residents who work, vote and participate in public life (Benson 2006), or relocating countries where they assume positions of influence and enjoy cosmopolitan, transnational lifestyles (Rizvi 2011), the period in which they reside in Australia as students, embodies a unique opportunity to form relationships and to gain understandings of them at the personal and ideological level. The media have the facility and capacity to spear-head new discourses around international students; to represent diversity as neither a burden, nor a problem to be fixed (Simmel 1971), but rather as a resource for constructing more civilised outlooks.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated that media representations of international students and the meanings attributed to these images, are inordinately negative, albeit simultaneously full of paradoxes and contradictions. Emergent from the analyses that transpired in preceding sections were numerous inconsistencies, whereby international students were at once imagined in the media through lens of: promise and threat; prey and transgressor; investor and consumer. These imageries oscillated, as media discourses manipulated and exploited local fears around everyday life. Often playing on anxieties that many people experience nowadays in response to the effects of globalisation (including transnational people flows), and the powerlessness they feel in the face of global forces, the media acted purposefully to intensify, invigorate and spread such concerns, just as they exploited these insecurities to create imagery of international students as a collective Other. Even in the relatively few instances that described the constructive contributions of international students to the receiving society, many examples were tainted; framed through lens of disapproval and unconstructiveness that alluded to intrinsic threat, or from a viewpoint that confirmed predetermined and prejudiced notions about them.

Chapter Four

Everyday encounters: international students and the receiving society

I walk towards the river where several large, new apartment blocks have recently been constructed. Offering a total 'lifestyle' option for residents, these unit blocks contain temperature-controlled, comprehensive retail experiences that include doctors' and dentists' surgeries, supermarkets and smaller speciality shops such as a hairdresser, butcher, perfumery, cafés and fast-food shops. An Asian grocery shop takes my eye, for it has boxes of fruit and vegetables spilling out on to the walkway, fusing displays of fresh produce with other presentations made up of colourful, miscellaneous everyday appliances. Signs are in multiple languages that advertise among other things, cheap international phone cards. Such goods and services, and the ways in which they are presented, give rise to musings about whom the mainstream customer base of this Centre might be.

As I wander back, I observe evidence of the past; engineering and fabrication plants and an 'UGG' boot factory. All seem to be in operation, but the shabby appearance of the buildings' facades; the lack of extensive activity and the encroachment of up-market apartment blocks a few hundred metres away, suggest that these workplaces are likely, as others have already done, to soon give way to new developments.

I walk towards the ferry terminal through a lovely park bordered by units of 1960s appearance; low-rise, built in the ubiquitous cream and red bricks that suggest Italian heritage. Back at the station, I stop, stunned by the sound of passionate singing in Italian as the barista of a small café creates an 'Italian experience' for her largely Anglo-Australian customer base, drawn primarily from the TAFE College situated just across the road (Field-note dated 14 July 2014).

Photo 20: Meadowbank old and new

Photo 21: New developments in Meadowbank

Photo 22: New housing developments in Meadowbank

Photo 23: The Italian influence in Meadowbank architecture

This is Meadowbank, a suburb located nine kilometres from Macquarie University within the City of Ryde. Situated alongside Parramatta River, Meadowbank is a suburb with an industrial past that was once characterised by boat-building and engineering. In recent times heavy industries have given way to gentrification of the suburb, evidenced by the establishment of a substantial technical college [TAFE]; the construction of numerous, large-scale apartment blocks; shops and services that reflect new lifestyles, interests and tastes. Essentially, Meadowbank is an example of how cultural diversity makes a significant difference and becomes a sustained feature of suburban landscapes (Jacobs & Fincher 1998). Habitually emphasis is placed on the effects of *recent* changes to suburbs like Meadowbank, but Massey (1995) contended that geographical spaces have always been embroiled in a process of change, albeit less hurried. Comprised of influences, contacts and connections that gradually fuse and form together, urban spaces represent a hybrid mix of what is recognised and time-honoured, along with newer, wider contacts that are drawn from outside the geographical locale (Alexander 2011). Even those qualities thought to embody the 'soul' or essence of a place were once incursions derived from somewhere else, challenging notions of the past as untainted and unsullied, just as they interweave geography with history (Alexander 2011). Geographical spaces can thus be imagined as both temporal and spatial; bound together through narratives that are told in particular ways and with distinct moral perspectives. As such, the interpretation of place is not only about current characteristics, but rather reflects an understanding of evolving social relations (Massey 1995).

Applying this conceptualisation, the constant arrival of newcomers is not only consistent with the spatial restructuring of place, but also with potential for the emergence of more cosmopolitan outlooks; the destabilisation of existing and accepted social orders; and the materialisation of exclusionary practices (Marotta 2002). As such, the multicultural suburb represents a continual 'site of struggle' (Sandercock & Kliger 1998), where both longer-established residents and newcomers alike grapple for recognition amidst cross-cultural

encounters that have the potential to result in both hope and possibilities as well as misunderstandings, disappointments and despair (Wise 2010).

In this chapter I explore how urban spaces underlie and contribute to the ways in which encounters between international students and local residents of Ryde emerge and transpire. I follow in-part an argument put forward by Alexander and Knowles (2005, pp.4-5) that 'space is not a "thing" but [rather] the outcome of past and present activities and social relationships'. In this light, I concur that space comprises diverse temporalities, while it 'sustains multiple and contradictory uses, meanings and associations with different kinds of people' (Alexander & Knowles 2005, pp.4-5). It reflects social priorities and creates a 'story' of what matters. This chapter foreshadows both a story of indifference and antagonism by some residents towards international students, as well as a pervasive counter-narrative, described through moments of conviviality and sociality, which give hope for the emergence of new and affective relations.

Living with strangers

'The way it used to be is over'

> All the neighbours around us, seven or eight houses, were built in the 1950s as war veterans' homes. They all knew each other from that time. Their kids grew up together. All of them were from the country – very friendly country-types. They belonged to the church that was across the road. This is how it was. Things have changed in 10 years. People have passed away, moved on, gone to retirement villages and really there are only two households remaining from the original. One is the lady across the road who has lost her husband and her son…She has got a daughter who helps out, but she lives alone and she has lost all her neighbours…Her church was next door. It was her church for 65 or 70 years. The Uniting church pulled out due to dwindling numbers, and now there is only a Korean congregation (Aaron, former academic staff member and currently a community researcher).

Earmarked as a zone for large-scale business and housing ventures, massive redevelopments are in progress across Ryde. Existing infrastructure is being reconfigured to make way for these developments, which come on top of recent transformations of suburbs like Eastwood, where an influx of Chinese and Korean ethnic entrepreneurs (Collins & Kunz 2009) have made-over the suburb's largely Anglo-Celtic appearance to become one that is essentially Asian. Perceived by some longer-established residents as contributors to this rapidly changing landscape, international students are thus routinely reflected upon and spoken about in this study through a language of discomfort. Articulated through concerns about the way in which proposed high-rise developments are likely to swell traffic congestion; planned infrastructure (such as recreational facilities and green spaces) will be insufficient to cope with population growth; and the likelihood of increased transience among future populations that will intensify isolation, several participants linked tangible changes to local landscapes with escalating diversity and social loss. Nestled within these meditations was a pervading sense of fear that robust neighbourhoods would suffer or 'fail' (Ahmed 2000); a situation made visible through weakened connections between neighbours until everyone had become a stranger to the other (Hudson et al. 2007). And out of this situation the 'neighbour who is also a stranger' (Ahmed 2000, p.26) would arise to symbolise both anxieties about the future and threat from within.

> *Elderly people who are still here, they have a real sense of place. West Ryde for instance and for some people, Ryde, people who have long family connections to the area, they aren't complaining about things. They complain to me that their neighbours have gone…Yes, but it's over, the way it used to be is over…They had a sense of camaraderie, talking over the fence…Now everybody's isolated…Canyons. There could be more community spirit if they built in some sense of community within these high-rise buildings maybe. As for the future, I don't know what it will be like in these high-rise blocks in Ryde (Catherine, an older, long-term resident of Ryde).*

They just go from here to the church. Sometimes they go to Chinatown. They stick with Chinese food and I know that because I have a boy in my class and his favourite food is dumplings, and that is all he can talk about as far as food is concerned…He is going to be typical of so many who will live in this area where there will be 22 storeys [apartments] (Rachel, Anglo-Australian, retired, volunteer English teacher with a local church).

The musings of Catherine and Rachel suggest that the arrival of large numbers of strangers has already kindled a process of destruction in Ryde; disrupting and challenging feelings of certainty and belonging. The likelihood that new, large-scale apartment blocks will be occupied by additional influxes of strangers exacerbates these fears, just as these incursions signal an acceleration in the pace of change. Although it is unlikely that international students will be the principal occupants of these new developments, merely the probability that their numbers will increase in the future sets them at odds with some long-term residents who already associate their presence with threat, based on the demands they make for resources, such as rental housing. So sensitive is this subject that one-off comments can enflame this situation, as illustrated by reactions to the statements of a local political leader who announced there was need for accommodation for international students, and that plans were afoot for the expansion of Macquarie University.

The uni has huge plans. Directly across the road from the Macquarie Centre, they basically are going to get approval to build a 37 storey tower which could house, I mean 1,000 people, so the uni has plans to accommodate its own people… Some people in our community felt almost as if those students potentially pose a threat to us because of the demand they create…When you actually analyse it, it is completely false, but because the [local politician] came out and made this really unhelpful statement, people put two and two together and unfortunately, there are some elements – I wouldn't say a majority – but some elements here in our community who see international students negatively – not personally, but just the concept of them,

creating a demand that threatens our lifestyle (Nat, a local resident whose community development work involves youth, families and the elderly in Ryde).

Some local residents fear super-diverse (Vertovec 2007) populations for the potential threat they pose to sentiments of familiarity and comfort that are embodied within local neighbourhoods. Bound to this thinking is collective memory of the logic and order of an idealised past (Sandercock 2000), now seemingly challenged by strangers who hold the potential to wipe away recognised boundaries and dissolve secure identities. Low (2005) argued that such feelings are made more perverse on a day-to-day basis by the sensory displays of others' *enjoyment* (also see Žižek 2007), encountered through the smell of others' food, the sounds of their music, the 'touch' of their foreign customs and behaviours, their personal appearance and the reach they make into streetscapes as proprietors of shops and businesses. I too heard how these kinds of quotidian, sensory experiences affect long-term residents.

Many older members of the community resent the influx of groups from other cultures. In particular the Chinese, Korean and to a lesser extent, those from the Indian sub-continent. What has changed [in the past 15 years] is that these groups, especially the Chinese and Korean communities, have become the prominent providers of services and control many of the retail outlets. Even banks now maintain a predominance of Asian employees (anonymous questionnaire).

This meditation was reflective of many that described how: ethnic precincts had erupted replacing 'quality' shops with others selling cheaper goods; signage was now in languages other than English (with few translations); rarely one heard English spoken in shopping malls; different food smells permeated suburban streets; and an atmosphere of 'strangeness' infiltrated once familiar settings. While symbols of ethnic presence stake positive claims for some (Alexander 2011), longer-term residents and the elderly often hold different expectations about how local settings should look and feel (Wise 2005, 2010). In these

circumstances it is the 'little things' that ignite 'clashes of culture', and while each 'little thing' might be relatively insignificant in itself, when combined and set within other large-scale processes, their effects magnify.

> *They all try to enter the train while other people are exiting. It's common courtesy, in Australia, we know this. We let people off the train and then we enter…This is something they should respect. I mean, take the footpaths for example, generally in Australia, we walk on the left hand side, not on the right hand side. But these Asians, they seem to walk all over the footpath, especially on the wrong side of the footpath. They walk into you as well…They hold the phone and they walk along the footpath, zigzagging and looking at their phone. It's so annoying (Dave, an Anglo-Australian, former domestic student and on-campus resident of Macquarie University).*

This vignette speaks to 'emotions of indignation and irritation' that occur as a consequence of failed social rituals (Wise 2010, p.924). As Wise (2010) argued, everyone is inscribed with repertoires of etiquette; expected displays of behaviour that if missed, or misread, result in disjuncture and breakdowns that produce discomfort and unease. And when such instances arise, stereotypical messages reverberate, expressed through everyday frustrations of living with difference, and in competitive claims for habitation rights (Wilson 2011). Ultimately these reactions legitimise standpoints around the defence of place (Alexander & Knowles 2005), whilst they demonstrate that power is not the property of the individual but rather belongs to the group, as long as the members remain together (Essed 1991). Operating out of the racist domain to do with norms and values, these conditions ultimately perpetuate the marginalisation of others, problematise their behaviours within *contact zones* (Pratt 1991) just as they reproduce wider discourses and processes of belonging and differentiation (Wilson 2011).

Two sides of the same coin

'It kind of puts them in a position of being not quite sure'

> *When I was a child, Eastwood was known as a place that had nice dress shops...There is nothing of that left now. So you will see letters in the paper, people complaining that there's signs on the shop windows just in Chinese or Korean without any English translations. I look around and I mainly see there is an English translation, but sometimes there might be a whole page of Chinese characters and one line in English. I think there are people who are not of Chinese or Korean background who would be interested in finding out what those shops sell and buying from them. But when it's not in English, it kind of puts them in a position of being not quite sure (Margaret, volunteer English teacher, long-term resident of Eastwood and retired social worker).*

Eastwood that Margaret remembers with fondness was comprised of small, independently owned shops, probably strung out in linear fashion along the main street. Opposite were likely positioned other shops; a mirror image of those they looked on to, owned by local families, many for more than one generation. Hall (2011) in her study of shops in Walworth Road London observed a similar main street, describing it as the embodiment of collective social liveliness, made so by shops whose longevity was linked to uniqueness of product and personal service. Underpinning the physical character of these small businesses were quotidian relations between customers and shop owners that transpired across class, race and ethnicity. Hence the importance of these small shops extended beyond utility and function, for they were sites of interaction; places for sharing and learning between individuals; and spaces where sociality could be practised (unlike larger, less personal shops, such as supermarkets) (Hall 2011; Wise 2010; Wood & Landry 2008). Essentially each shop was significant and emblematic of what local life meant, while the precinct spawned feelings of comfort and belonging. The loss of a single shop in these circumstances was thus grave, for its closure symbolised the tenuousness of local life. And if a new type of business (that included ethnic

iconographies) arose in its place, then feelings of loss and discomfort magnified (Hall 2012), giving rise to wariness about engagement, or even retreat. Dashed expectations and hopes of what 'community' should mean, become interwoven with feelings of resentment in these circumstances, just as the prospect of an ever-shrinking day-to-day world emerges. And for the elderly and less mobile, who routinely cling to local life to create feelings of belonging and systems of support to off-set loneliness and need, any such change is particularly disturbing (Wise 2005).

'Eastwood at night, it really rocks and rolls'

Although Margaret's recollections were shared by other participants and there was unanimous agreement that streetscapes within Ryde had changed noticeably as a consequence of recent super-diversity (Vertovec 2007), opinions were divided about whether these changes were undesirable or progressive, especially in Eastwood.

> *I have lived in Eastwood for the last decade and a half. Eastwood has changed a lot because of an influx of mainland Chinese particularly international students who have made a 'delicious' contribution. You can see it. It is quite evident. There was a time when it was quite Italian when I first moved in and then it became very Cantonese because of the Chinese immigration. Now it's becoming much more mainland Chinese. You can smell and taste the differences there…One of the great things is that I feel it rubs the edges off our nationalism and it creates a much more international community; a high awareness of Australian values. Internationally, we're exporting Australian values in some ways while at the same time importing international values into Australia. I think that is healthy, specifically considering that Australians pride ourselves on being a multicultural nation (Eric, Chinese-Australian, former domestic student, now a youth worker with a local church group).*

> *I think they [international students] sometimes come here to study, they go back home and they end up coming back to Australia to live here. Further down the line they*

marry, open up shops and restaurants. If you go to Eastwood at night, it really rock

and rolls…it is a great nightlife. It's a bit like Hong Kong and Asian cities that are

open late at night. There are so many people out and about it is really great to see…

The shops are staying open later – even little grocery stores, food stores as well as

restaurants on a Friday night or Saturday night. If you go to Eastwood you can't get

your car in, as there are so many people out and about until 10-11pm. It's fantastic.

So their contribution is in lifestyle, improving the lifestyle. They have different tastes

and we are starting to acquire and understand their tastes (Vincent, Anglo-Australian

and well-known local businessperson).

Eric and Vincent attribute many of the changes that have taken place in recent years within the streetscapes of Eastwood to the expansion in numbers and contribution of international students, particularly those from mainland China[64]. The multicultural trade that now occurs within Eastwood has neither disrupted nor displaced their sense of belonging, but rather has added vitality and interest to their lives and they believe to the lives of others. Through co-presence and intercultural encounter in public spaces they have learned, and indeed are still learning, to live with diversity[65]. Their lives have been opened up to the 'gifts' that strangers bring (Simmel 1971), so that they speak of the global community from a perspective of personal gratification, rather than through a lens clouded by fear and anxiety around issues of integration, citizenship and nation-building. Nonetheless, engagement with the exotic allure of difference through curiosity, entertainment or excursion, does not inevitably transform into affective encounters between individuals, nor does it necessarily give rise to socialisation in other intimate settings. As Molotch's (1972) study of social integration between racial and ethnic groups demonstrated, there are numerous examples of inquisitive outsiders who enter another's space, sample it and then leave it behind. Others use diversity largely for personal benefit at the expense of common good, patronising bars, cafés and restaurants, as well as

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[64] These positive views are likely to reflect an economic perspective of international students' contribution.
[65] Where individuals seek out spaces for cultural exchanges to take place, and show a willingness to embrace the Other, Malpas and Jacobs (2011) argue their behaviour reflects a cosmopolitan stance.

local green spaces, without tapping into these spaces in ways that develop heterogeneous social networks (Blokland & Van Eijk 2010; Hage 1997).

Conviviality: it's the little things

'They gave us some cake'

Michael, and his wife Margaret have lived in the same house in Eastwood for 40 years. Recently properties in their street were sold, with several purchased by investors who subsequently rented out these premises, occasionally to students. As a consequence, the couple acquired new neighbours and their lives became 'involuntarily' connected to others through the 'symbolic mobility' of strangership[66] (Horgan 2012).

> *I bumped into a lady; they had sold their family home where they brought up their children, and where her husband had been a very keen gardener. They had a lovely front garden. I happened to run into her some time later and she said they were very sad because their house had been bought and was now being used for student accommodation. The garden was just overgrown and you can have a look. It's the house next door, you'll see that the landlords and certainly the tenants don't do anything. So I think there's some disappointment when that happens (Margaret, volunteer English teacher, long-term resident of Eastwood and retired social worker).*

Embedded within this recollection were Margaret's heart-felt memories. These acted as assessment tools for the present (Low 2013) and reflected feelings of resentment towards those who were reputedly the cause of change (Berg & Sigona 2013). Michael's 'take' on the situation was quite different however, for he responded to the arrival of newcomers with 'joyful hope' (Wise 2005) that signalled new possibilities for inclusion of these strangers.

> *Well, yes the house next door was sold a few years ago and it was in fairly poor condition. The new owners renovated it, but he has not moved in personally and it has*

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[66] Symbolic mobility of strangership occurs when people come into contact, not as a consequence of seeking out the Other, but rather by staying in a 'fixed' space or position (Horgan 2012).

been occupied by a number of different people. It changes from time to time. We know

that some of them have been students…Our contact with the people next door is that

we invited them in for a supper before Christmas a year or so ago. We occasionally

see them in the street. Margaret recognises them better than I do. They are very

friendly. They gave us some cake or something they made, just a few weeks back

(Michael, long-term resident of Eastwood, retired solicitor and volunteer English

teacher).

The issuing and acceptance of an invitation to share a Christmas supper, whilst seemingly a small gesture, ignited social hope for the 'regluing' and remaking of a neighbourhood (Ahmed 2007-8) that had been rendered fragile through the sale of properties and moving away of long-term neighbours. It also generated a 'ripple effect', revealed later as moments of recognition and on-going reciprocity in the offering of home-baked cakes and sporadic conversations that increased levels of available trust (Onyx et al. 2011). Thus, small acts of reciprocity assumed significance in these circumstances for they symbolised possibility for the emergence of a sense of conviviality (Wise & Velayutham 2014) and the making of new, tentative relations with those who were 'different'. As Wise (2013, p.39) argued, it is often small acts that give rise to 'shifts in identity, the acquisition of accommodative forms of everyday practice, and more inclusive ideas of nation, community and belonging', and hence 'everyday encounter should be understood critically as always extending beyond the immediately observable'. This comes with acknowledgement that although living with difference can be made doable through practice and everyday negotiation (Wise 2010), it is not always easy (as Margaret's story illustrated), but nevertheless constructive, for it is ultimately habitual encounter that begins the reverberation of notions of security, certainty and hope.

Conviviality was not confined to local streets and private homes in the course of this study, but arose too in communal meeting places of Ryde such as churches, where warm greetings and gestures of hospitality were habitually modelled by church leaders towards all members

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of their congregations. Complemented with deliberately designed 'social instruments' (Sennett 2003, p.52), including ice-breaker activities that necessitated eye contact, body language and 'speed' conversations, strangers were gradually introduced to each other, and became not only emotionally involved through organised events, but also over time enfolded by the institution. In these instances, conviviality offered individuals the chance to construct temporary identifications with others alongside their fixed identities and in doing so, gently challenged notions of racism (Amin 2002). In one local Catholic Church where parishioners had been previously ethnically segregated: international students clustered towards the back of the building, Anglo-Australian and Asian worshippers separated on either side of the centre aisle, these kinds of activities ultimately gave rise to a form of cosmopolitanism[67] demonstrated through new ways of sharing space and being together (Onyx et al. 2011). Nonetheless, mediation to encourage others to adopt change was often a slow process that took commitment, patience and understanding, along with high levels of bridging capital by those who drove the process, just as it involved acknowledging and working sensitively with other peoples' fears and anxieties about the Other.

> *We are always working with people's preconceived ideas about the 'Other' so to some extent there will be prejudices. I don't mean that in a darkly sinister way, just people presuming perhaps, rather than finding out. I don't think it was that long ago that this area here was not so receptive to multiculturalism. Maybe those barriers are still there for some people (Greg, Anglo-Australian, local pastor of a Macquarie Park church).*

As religious institutions provide settings that are a mix of formality and informality, parishioners can find themselves habitually in situations that are either determined by ritual, tradition and social habit, or part of spontaneous, intense and intimate interactions. Capitalising on the latter, many of the religious leaders I spoke with, both Christian and non-

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[67] I use a sociological employment of cosmopolitanism here to refer to the ways in which individuals and groups use everyday happenings to make sense of cultural differences (Jacobs & Malpas 2011).

Christian, adopted a cosmopolitan view of the role of religious institutions in developing intercultural conviviality amongst the members of their respective congregations. Offering welcome, hospitality and a sense of belonging, word-of-mouth recommendations from other students quickly drew newcomers who might have been lonely or seeking a secure place within local neighbourhoods. Others sought out local religious organisations soon after arrival to take up religious practices that they brought with them from home.

> *I think a key part that we play is helping others to be welcoming as well. In my mind I think a key way that I can help to serve and bless these visitors is by helping my fellow Australians to know how to serve and bless these visitors too. So to realise the extent to which we sometimes need to take a lead in helping other people to develop new ways of welcoming. Part of that is how we speak about visitors from overseas and in training behaviours. In our church we work hard on teaching people hospitality, the importance of hospitality and of welcoming people who are different to us (Greg, Anglo-Australian, local pastor of a Macquarie Park church).*

The salience of hospitality and the feelings of inclusiveness that ensue from being welcomed, were not confined to religious organisations, but were similarly visible across other social settings. During my time 'in the field' I spent a very pleasant evening with some students at an on-campus residence at Macquarie University. An urban space in its own right (Bennett et al. 2016), this residential college fostered social interactions and relations among student residents that extended beyond, to wider networks and sets of connections across the globe.

> *The dining room is noisy. There is a very positive 'buzz'; a hum of conversation among students and staff. At every table I notice a 'mix' of students. No-one is alone. I remark upon this. The students tell me that when they first arrived they were nervous that no-one would come to sit with them – a fear that did not materialise. They draw my attention to the national flags that are displayed on the walls of the dining room,*

pointing with pride to their own. They tell me that seeing their flag everyday makes

them feel good. They feel welcome. They belong (Field-note dated 6 May 2014).

Common to these narratives was motivation and commitment of those in positions of influence to act as 'transversal enablers' (Wise 2009, p.24); individuals who help others to embody a shared understanding of humanity that overrides fears around diversity, while simultaneously facilitating positive experiences of strangerhood (Fincher & Iveson 2008). In these circumstances, it was 'the little things' in the form of the visual display of a national flag, the invitation to share a supper, or the facilitation of a conversation between strangers that became powerful connectors that symbolised inclusiveness and belonging, so salient to creating notions of comfort and fit. And although the sharing of food was integral to many of these narratives, it was not the food or its consumption per se that gave meaning in these contexts, but rather it was the 'sense of we-ness in difference' (Wise 2011, p.102) that arose through the exploration of the social spaces in conjunction with the food.

'Rubbing along' in social spaces: cafés, workplaces, English classes and playgroups

Homer's Café

Since the 18th century, cafés have offered opportunities for the consumption of food to play an important role in mediating commensalities in everyday life, encouraging patrons to share experiences of time and space, meet, relax, drink together, exchange information and talk freely (Jones et al. 2015; Laurier & Philo 2007). As such, cafés have contributed to the development of local traditions and customs, while they evoke sensory experiences which culminate in a kind of cultural resonance for regular patrons. Taking one away from the pressures of everyday life, they allow one to remain nevertheless 'surrounded by life, even if detached from it' (Sennett 1994, p.347).

Homer's Café is small, dark and 'pokey'. The laminex tables are situated in close

proximity to each other and show signs of wear, while the bench seating around the

perimeter is shabby, cracked fake leather. On the top of cupboards are cardboard

boxes, a 'fly zapper' and an old (ineffective), air conditioner. The origins of the café's

owners are revealed through tattered remnants of wallpaper that show traditional

Greek scenes. The front cabinet overflows with macaroons in a multitude of colours

that attract the attention of patrons. By any stretch of imagination, one could not

describe Homer's Café as 'flash', yet it is popular with young and old alike. I search

for reasons. Could this space hold attraction because of the 'fusion-food' such as

Peking duck pizzas? Could the shabbiness of its décor symbolise a homely sense of

belonging for some? Could the wallpaper remnants carry some away to another place

and time? (Field-note dated 14 August 2014).

I come to Homer's Café on the advice of students who tell me that 'this is the place to be'. On

my first visit, I can't find it and return home to ask if I have the wrong address. I am assured

that Homer's Café is located within the Eastwood mall and on my second visit, I locate it,

wedged between other small businesses. The café has little street presence, just a few tables

jutting out into the mall (reserved for 'smokers') and a dark, narrow entrance that leads inside.

The appearance of the café, so different to other social sites within the Eastwood mall, lead

me to conclude that Homer's Café could be an example of 'communitarian valorisation'

(Wood & Landry 2008), a kind of familial or cult place that links like-minded people together

through bonding social capital (Putnam 2000). Its 'shabby' character also clearly works as a

culture or taste marker that sifts populations, just as it embeds localism (Jones et al. 2015).

Acting as an important site for the kinds of casual exchanges that mediate social tolerance

through rendering ethnic diversity unremarkable (Onyx et al. 2011), Homer's Café mediates a

relaxed sharing of public space, wherein people of multiple ethnicities and migratory histories

linger (Jones et al. 2015) over food, drinks and prolonged conversations.

Today I sit outside among several groups of young people, some of whom are

smoking. There is a constant stream of people coming and going. Sometimes it is

difficult to distinguish who is an employee and who is a patron. Whenever they are not

busy, the wait-staff (two females and one male, all of Chinese appearance), stand

leaning against the front door of the café watching the passing parade. Few people around me speak in English, and although I can only guess, I assume that they are speaking in Mandarin. Hence I am stunned to hear a loud voice (Australian accent) as one of the patrons calls out to her friend, Cheryl. They speak for a few minutes. I look around and see that both Cheryl and her friend have Chinese ancestry…I see the chef who comes to greet and chat with a patron. Elsewhere, there is an ongoing hum of conversation with most patrons chatting and lingering over coffees (Field-note dated 4 November 2014).

Over three ethnographic observations at the café I noted the way in which Homer's represented a social space for practical participation in local life for some (Hall 2012). Such observations led me to imagine how repetitive familiarity, might give rise to one of the small worlds that Hall (2012) argues combine together in the context of multicultural cities to produce a 'multitude of locals'. Working in unison, Hall (2012) contends these small world relationships and understandings (that have a strong emotional content), establish and build to eventually produce a sense of belonging. Although it was impossible on my visits to Homer's to distinguish amongst the clientele who might be an international student, I became quickly aware that people of many diverse persuasions favoured Homer's as a place to create 'one of their small local worlds', and that they did so probably for a range of reasons. I suggest that one of these might be the pervasiveness of a lightly fragranced cultural odour (Wise 2011) through which difference is recognised, but remains reassuring. And while the 'Other' is visibly present, either in the form of patrons or staff, there is a casual ambiance that allows everyone to remain within their comfort zones. The late-night opening hours; the 'fusion-food' menu that offers among a multitude of choices, Peking duck pizzas, Korean burgers and prawn spaghetti; English and Chinese language newspapers; and a 'shabby' vibe that speaks to chic European cafés, work together to create a sense of comfort. Likewise, sensual displays create the kind of space in which everyone is just different enough to feel excitement, without feeling exposed. Although I did not witness the initiation of conversations between strangers

during any of my visits, I did sense a mundane 'rubbing along' (Watson 2006; Wise 2011) that was made easier by the character of place and in the offering of foods that bridged cultures in unexpected and amusing ways. As Watson (2009) found during an exploration of marketplaces across the United Kingdom, I too found at Homer's, that even partial encounters between strangers, where recognition was established through a glimpse, a tentative smile, or just the sharing of embodied space, had the potential to militate against withdrawal into private spaces, to counter the urges of some to become invisible (Hopkins and Smith 2008) and to build a tentative sociality and conditional social glue[68].

Workplaces

The vulnerability of international students in workplaces is well-known (Baas 2009; Campbell et al. 2016; Singh & Cabraal 2010), but there are fewer examples of studies that explore places of work that contribute supportively to the students' experiences. During the course of this study, participants described a range of circumstances in which international students were engaged as employees. Some of these were of the type that obliged students to work for less than award wages; to exceed the conditions of their student visas; and to experience a variety of conditions that suggested exploitation, often at the hands of resident - employers who were of similar ethnic backgrounds to the students[69].

> *Some of them worked more than 20 hours. They were really tired and it was really sad to see that. When I talked to them about their situation, it was just their financial situation. It was hard for them to concentrate on their studies because they had to wait for their parents to send the money. They couldn't ask for more money because they felt guilty. It was hard enough for them to send them money, so they were working more than 20 hours which meant they were sick and they were living in these overcrowded houses (Maree, former TAFE teacher, currently Council employee).*

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[68] On a recent visit to Eastwood, I found that Homer's had been transformed into a Singaporean noodle bar.
[69] Also see Velayutham (2013) for an account of Indian 457 visa holders in Australia. This study identified various 'levels' of exploitation, largely at the hands of employers who shared a common ancestry with the workers.

Yet, during this study I heard too about other kinds of workplaces that provided employment for students. Jackson, the Manager of a local Woolworths store explained that he regularly employed international students as shelf-packers and trolley collectors. The students were provided with training and at times, were offered greater responsibilities and more opportunities in line with their abilities, resourcefulness and commitment. And while the positions the students habitually held were of lowly-ranked status, they were paid legal wages and the conditions of their student visas were respected. Work in these circumstances also potentially provided a helpful solution to financial pressures that might arise from the costs associated with being an international student. Moreover, student-workers were offered training and support to develop skills and knowledge of how a workplace in Australia operates, just as they were sensitively exposed to local residents. Whilst they might not have made deep affiliations with strangers during working hours, employment opened up opportunities to create social bonds across ethnicities in ways that dissipated tensions and mediated differences. The students' politeness and helpfulness to the elderly and the 'time-poor' for example, softened 'hard' hearts, prompting one participant to remark, 'I wish young Australians were a bit more like them'. Thus these conditions offer new perspectives on workplaces, as potentially inclusive social environments, where mutual recognition can lead to tentative trust between the students and others. This is significant, not only because of its capacity to diminish fear and anxiety about the stranger, or the 'Other'(Pain & Smith 2008), but also for the potential challenge it mounts to past negative experiences, so that these become viewed more as exceptions, than conventional practice (Hardin 1993; Putnam 2002; Uslaner 2012). At another large business, I was told:

> *We have had a bit of a tradition of trying to see students as people who want to*
> *explore and want to learn, so maybe on the weekend once in a while, we take them out*
> *to dinner. And I go dancing, so in the past five years they all sort of are invited, not*
> *forced, [Int: encouraged?] [laughs] encouraged to come and see the shows that we do*

[laughs] (Kim, Anglo-Australian, researcher in a large corporation situated in North Ryde).

At Kim's workplace, students were perceived in the same way as other workers. They were part of the team and as such, they not only received the same worker entitlements as others, they were included socially in activities that occurred outside of work-time. This represented a very different image of international students in the workplace, one in which not only their rights and entitlements were respected, but their gifts as individuals were accepted and enfolded within the organisations.

English classes and playgroups

> *It's surprising, because even at the play-group, a large proportion of the ladies are Indian or Chinese and they live in the flats over the road but they hadn't met each other until play-group happened. It's striking that they might live next door to each other but unless something like this happens, they just don't meet. You wouldn't expect people who are the same nationality…I mean sometimes when you are in an apartment it can be a bit more awkward...yeh (Kate, mother, play-group organiser and former postgraduate student).*

Church organisations facilitated English language classes for adults and playgroups for young children. These brought many international students or the partners of international students into contact with each other and some longer-term residents for the first time. Held weekly, these programmes were open to people of all faiths, and whilst they were established to achieve specific objectives, they shared other common ambitions that demonstrated welcome, hospitality and practices of care. With more formality than random, 'over the fence' encounters, these programmes fostered trusting relations and mutual support, just as they retained a kind of neighbourliness, a lived cosmopolitanism, that reached across difference without attempting to erase it. Significantly, they also reduced feelings of alienation and loneliness, for weekly routines ensured habitual encounter amongst the participants and this

founded feelings of belonging not only to the group, but also to the locale. And with encouragement, some of the participants gained confidence over time to take on other roles, to stretch themselves mentally, emotionally and socially in ways that scaled up outcomes beyond the original context.

> *A lot of the students and the wives of the students that I have got to know, really want to get involved…So they make a contribution. Like the Pakistani lady who wanted to be involved in the English classes, and then she was too good, so she decided to get trained to be a teacher…At church we have a lot of international students who come to the kids' clubs – even if they are not Christian they want to be around children…They want to come and they really want to be involved. Certainly the ones who want to get out really want to be involved and they want to get to know people (Kate, mother, play-group organiser and former postgraduate student).*

Wise (2009, p.28) identified 'islands of care' within neighbourhoods; places where people were known as individuals, addressed by name, and treated with benevolence. Many of these spaces were small, individually-owned shops, but in this study, I found that churches and other religious organisations by way of the programmes they offered to local residents, became 'islands of care'. Out of these programmes gains flowed back and forth, producing communal transformations that could never have been anticipated, planned for, or constructed, but rather came about as a result of habitual encounters built on care and respect.

> *I can remember very distinctly before I even started this work, I was in a big department store and there was a group of Asian women talking in Chinese. I remember thinking that I felt so outside this group of women. I didn't know what they are like, I didn't understand them and yet there are more and more of them in our society. I didn't know how to feel about that. Perhaps now after being involved in this group for three years now or more, it's amazing. After every Tuesday night we all gather everything up, the students go reasonably quickly, so it's just the teachers who*

are left and we are all on a 'high'. Everyone discusses what happened in class and we are all having a laugh and everyone has developed such a love for the people who are there (Rachel, Anglo-Australian, retired, volunteer English teacher with a local church).

The journey that Rachel describes is one of personal transformation that began within a paradigm of fear that interrogated the intentions of the Other:

we don't know [emphasis in original] what they are like; *we don't know* what makes them tick; *we don't know* what they are thinking or how they think; *we don't know* what is going on inside their heads; *we don't know* how they might react; *we cannot* understand them; *you never know* with them (Sayad 2004, p.289).

The journey continues to unfold for Rachel, but already it has delivered much. The fears she once held about the Other have disintegrated, while she has been opened up to a more cosmopolitan disposition – to 'joyful hope' (Wise 2005) – and a willingness to engage with divergent cultural experiences that go beyond dabbling in moments of cultural exotica. Through listening, observing, sensing and reflecting (Noble 2013), Rachel has in a way surrendered to the unfamiliar, and in doing so has developed skills to guide her through the transverse of difference. Home for her, and indeed her colleagues, is not quite the same as it used to be.

Student lives and the university campus

'Most of the Aussies, they live up the coast'

Widely observed as people who cluster and cloister not only in public spaces, but also in residential locations, questions were raised among the participants about the motivations of international students for doing so. Even though the word 'assimilation' remained unspoken, there were undercurrents that implied international students possessed both the adaptability and the human and social capital to integrate more 'successfully' with the receiving society.

Underlying these meditations was the judgement that international students should speak English in public spaces.

Clustering and cloistering are common historical practices among new arrivals, for migration is a social process, whereby newcomers from the same family or neighbourhood follow each other to a particular suburb or street to leverage trusting relationships for both practical and personal support (Collins 2010) and to recreate small versions of home. Proximity to religious organisations, shops, cafés and markets, from which emanate sensory experiences reminiscent of their countries of origin are important in these circumstances too (Collins 2004), for they represent possibilities to create feelings of comfort and belonging. Furthermore clustering reduces the likelihood that newcomers will experience exclusion and disconnection in public spaces (Sayad 2004) whilst they attain a state of 'invisibility', safe among others who look and behave similarly (Hopkins & Smith 2008). It was beyond the scope of this study to inquire into the precise reasons why some international students might choose to cluster residentially and socially in Ryde, but it is probable that any or all of these theories find a place within this context. Amongst the participants were some who attempted to provide their own explanations for why international students might cluster and try to find 'fit' with those they shared a common language, history and national identity.

> *I wonder to what extent sometimes the students might be tempted to cloister in their comfortable language groups because they are dealing with such an overwhelming array of logistical problems from accommodation to visas to just daily living. It's easy to find share houses with like-minded people, people in a similar situation and I guess it is probably possible to live much of their life in a fairly cloistered kind of way. I don't know if that is a barrier as such. It is just part of the terrain (Greg, Anglo-Australian, local pastor of a Macquarie Park church).*

Rick and Jane are a young couple who share a townhouse with other Chinese international students in Eastwood. They have lived in Australia for two years. This is their story.

We socialise at home with our Chinese friends. We cook and eat together as our main form of socialising. We rarely go out for coffee or for dinner. We miss the food from home, and although we could eat out here, we also miss the meeting places and the feel of home, so we don't go out much…Language is the greatest barrier we and our friends have to making friends in Australia. We lack confidence in using English…Neither of us belong to any clubs or societies on campus. There are too many Chinese students and so those kinds of associations don't bring us into contact with people who are different. We don't play sport, so clubs that involve sports are not of interest to us…We have no contact with Australian people in our street. When we meet people on the street, we don't say anything or talk to our neighbours (Field-note from a discussion with Rick and Jane dated 16 May 2014).

This narrative alludes to experiences of cultural, personal and social loneliness and although Rick and Jane have evidently negotiated many of the challenges associated with adjustment to unfamiliar local environments and navigated their ways through cultural and social differences, within their narrative persists a deep melancholy. Clustering with other Chinese students for social contact, 'home' provides some sense of power and 'fit' (Noble 2005), whilst offering a level of security on which they have built new identities, relationships and a sense of belonging. Nevertheless their melancholic expressions of day-to-day life seem far from inclusive, dynamic experiences they perhaps dreamt about before arrival in Australia[70]. Absent are descriptions of 'friendship, belongingness, attachment, meaningful conversation, passion, curiosity, critical reflection, debate, joy and risk-taking [that] are, or should be, the hallmarks of a "rounded education"' (Hil 2015, p.10). Paradoxically the residential clusters that offer Jane and Rick a sense of belonging, foreshadow the arrival of the 'failed community' (Ahmed 2000, p.26) for many longer-term residents; a place where individuals are cast adrift from each other. A contributing factor is the way in which domestic students habitually reside with their parents, or in 'lifestyle' suburbs located in proximity to beaches,

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[70] Rick and Jane's descriptions of disappointment with their everyday lives in Australia reverberated with many stories of other international students, told to me as a practitioner and throughout the course of this research.

or the city. As such, the suburbs of Eastwood, Macquarie Park and Marsfield in particular, are associated with the presence of large numbers of Asian international students, a situation that reinforces and exacerbates perceptions to do with their clustering and cloistering, as it pinpoints separations between international and domestic students' lives (Cantle 2006, 2008).

> *Most of the Aussies, they live up the coast [Int: You mean the Central Coast?] Yeh. So I mean these kinds of areas like Eastwood, there are no Aussies around, even around the campus there are no Aussies as well. It's all Asian accommodation. The accommodation has lots of Asians in it and it is a different type of accommodation (Dave, an Anglo-Australian, former domestic student and on-campus resident of Macquarie University).*

The living conditions that some Asian students tolerate also carves out a gap between them and other international students.

> *There are a group of eight Indonesian students who share a small house near Macquarie University. In some rooms there are no beds or even mattresses. The students sleep on the floor. Although my European colleagues rarely share such spaces, it is common among Asian students (Mai, an international postgraduate student from Europe, studying business).*

These accounts suggest the prevalence of studentification (Hubbard 2008) in suburbs that surround the University. A term coined by Hubbard (2008) to describe student housing in some areas of the United Kingdom, studentification involves the specific conversion of houses and buildings for student occupancy. Such transfigurations have both environmental and social effects, as they allegedly alter 'pristine' neighbourhoods into 'polluted' settings that reflect neglect and disregard for street appearances and local amenities. Labelled as 'demographically unbalanced', such neighbourhoods come to be essentially viewed over time as unpalatable and at odds with stability, while they are increasingly associated with the young, seasonal and transient (Bromley 2006; Hubbard 2009). Clustering together as separate,

homogenous communities whose mobility precludes meaningful integration, student residents living in these situations, are regarded as consumers of local services, but not perceived as part of the community. With few counter-narratives to demonstrate the positive effects of their presence on localities - such as improved revenues for shops, pubs and other services; rising house prices which benefit home-owners; and the contribution they make to revitalising neighbourhoods (Allinson 2006) - student presence in these circumstances is overwhelmingly associated with decline and disruption. Even though en masse the students might be a large and permanent influence within these designated areas, their presence is linked to notions of transience and mobility (Munro & Livingston 2012) which further reinforces their difference, while it challenges others' sense of security and comfort - 'moving on' being associated with notions of deviousness and untrustworthiness (Bauman 1990a). Albeit associated with shiftiness, 'moving on' was shown to have alternative meanings within this study, for the participants drew association between transience and vulnerability; a situation exacerbated by the willingness of others to exploit the students' insecurities and lack of knowledge about their consumer rights.

> *I know about nine students who shared a house and a garage that had partitions. They removed these partitions for Council inspections and the students changed their address at the request of the landlord every few months (Jim, Anglo-Australian, local resident of Macquarie Park and former mentor to international students).*

> *International students are visible to some people – accommodation providers see them as an easy mark…part of that is what the proprietors of these informal boarding houses do and that is, they systematically rip these people off. They exploit them…The sort of things we found in [tenancy] agreements were things that other landlords don't try to get away with, like really excessive charges for telephone and internet; additional charges for the use of heaters; fines for people who had parties…There were rip-offs that were perpetuated on international students that we tend not to see in other parts of the sector…Others should be embarrassed by the aggression towards*

international students by our society (Charles, senior policy officer with the Tenants'

Union of NSW).

That such willingness to exploit exists, often by co-ethnic landlords, suggests that the visibility of international students as clusters or groups, provides legitimacy for some to treat them 'in a certain way'. Marotta (2012) contended that differences are exacerbated when common connections with strangers are overlooked or dismissed; thus turning relationships from positive to negative, and ultimately killing off those ties that bind through shared humanity. Protected through the knowledge they hold about the students' lesser legal status than other migrant categories (Marginson 2012) only adds to the dominance of those who seek to exploit their vulnerability, just as it confirms the students' alien status as people who do not belong in a legal sense in the nation space (Ahmed 2000). Indeed, just as Velayutham's (2013) study of Indian 457 visa holders in Australia showed how employers (many of whom were co-nationals), silenced their workers through fear and threat of deportation, international students also remained silent about appalling housing conditions that were habitually crafted by unprincipled, savvy, organised and increasingly sophisticated landlord operators.

Stories of exploitation of international students are not ad hoc, and whether they appear in media publications (see Chapter Three), scholarly literature (see Chapter Two), or are told through personal observations and experiences, they are based on rational inferences that speak to knowledge about rules and norms of acceptable behaviours; acceptable reasons for unacceptable behaviour; and structures and processes of racial and ethnic dominance in society (Noble & Poynting 2008; Werbner 1997). This study exposes local knowledge of numerous exploitative situations that are buttressed by media reports and investigations by authorities such as the Tenants' Union of NSW, yet this state of affairs persists without questions being raised, or outrage being widely expressed by elites and the community at large.

'A very self-contained social space'

Just as Horgan (2012) described strangership through temporal and spatial moments of contact characterised by ambivalence, ambiguity and contingency that enable a soft solidarity and democratic co-existence in public life, I too heard of wary, cautious, sometimes awkward attempts by local residents to bridge cultural distance.

> *I can always tell whether I am around students or non-students, simply because the students are in groups or pairs, doing stuff together. So you don't really penetrate their space. I mean they are polite and everything, if they accidentally bump into you they say they are sorry and if you are looking to try to get something on a shelf, they will talk, but other than that, you can see that they are in a very self-contained social space (Aaron, former academic, currently community researcher).*

During my observations at the entrance to the University library I too, discerned a similar kind of 'self-contained social space' among students. Set within a distinct temporal rhythm of activity that changed slightly according to dates in the semester calendar, days of the week and times of the day, I witnessed a restricted sociality among students, whereby conversations took place in low voices; bodies clustered together or traversed open spaces alone and in small groups. Common to my observations, was the pervasiveness of electronic media that the students used to buttress their control of space.

> *Gripped firmly in their hands, the students show readiness to respond to incoming communications…they text or listen to music as they walk. Their eyes are either fixed to their phones or stare ahead…Around me others sit alone or in small groups of two or three. All are engaged with their phones. Their eyes rarely leave the screens, and even those talking with friends, punctuate their conversations to stare at their phone tablets. Seated nearby is a person watching a movie; his eyes never leave the screen. He sits immobile for 30 minutes (Field-note dated 27 May 2014).*

Writing in 1963, Erving Goffman labelled media (such as newspapers, books and magazines), 'involvement shields' (pp.38-42); light-weight, portable accessories employed by people who wanted to show they were not available for interaction because they were visibly busy. Since 1963, changes to technology have been immense and hence, the kinds of media Goffman wrote about have largely given way to electronic media (Ayaß 2014), but nonetheless, their purpose as mechanisms for removing oneself from the physical world, or allowing one to become 'one step removed from the physical world' (Bull 2000, p.207) remain. Indeed, as Miller (2016) argued, social media today is used both to 'befriend' people and to keep people at a distance; to keep in touch without the requirement of face-to-face encounters. With a range of new media available (what Miller terms 'polymedia'), people use different platforms to scale up or scale down relations. As examples, media sites such as *Facebook* scale down from public broadcasts, while *Snapchat* scales up to communicate with groups of 20 or 30 trusted 'friends', and *You-tube* adds visual dimensions to the oral and the textual. In this light, social media create a 'scalable sociality' (Miller 2016) that allows individuals to consign the potential for encounter to moments that are chosen and deliberate. And in settings where circumvention of contact is preferred, side-stepping devices such as ear-plugs and sun glasses (that aid in the projection of a steady, often intense, non-penetrative gaze), are used in combination with social media to permit recognition, while emitting messages of involvement elsewhere (Bull 2000), thus denying direct eye-to-eye access, 'the most complete mutuality in the whole realm of human relations' (Simmel 2009, p.571).

'Everyone is on a journey of their own'

> *Well it is very interesting because white, single guys it's just a general fact that there is some intermingling but when it comes to push and shove like generally, 'like stick with like'. You know when I was doing my degree it seemed like the international students that got along together had the same language. They liked to sit together. The Aussies sort of stick together too. You know, it just happens that way. It just naturally happens that way…There is nothing to bring us together. There are a lot of barriers*

like language barriers, and unless you are around each other, you don't really make friends. I mean there might be shared accommodation that you can make friends but I don't know (Dave, an Anglo-Australian, former domestic student and on-campus resident of Macquarie University).

Dave's reflections of co-existence between international and domestic students on the university campus, reminded me of Sennett's (1994, p.357) contention that difference and indifference may co-exist but, 'the sheer fact of diversity does not prompt people to interact'. At the same time I recalled too, Simmel's (1971) representation of the stranger as a physical presence that is both near and far, and Goffman's (1959, 1971) descriptions of the stranger as a presence that habitually fails to lessen social distance, despite ambiguous demands for the exchange of courtesy rituals in the negotiation of everyday cultural differences.

Thus the temporal and spatial propinquity of international students as strangers ensured they were seen, heard and recognised (Ahmed, 2000); their presence impossible to disregard, as it raised questions about appropriate responses. Indeed, as Bauman (1990a, p.54) observed:

> the remarkable feature of the strangers is that they are to a large extent *familiar* [emphasis in original]; to conceive of a person as a stranger, I must first know quite a few things about him or her. Above all, they are bound to come time and again, uninvited, into my field of vision – so that I must watch them at close quarters; whether I want it or not, they sit firmly inside the world which I occupy and in which I act and do not show signs of leaving.

Thus the stranger demands a form of association, which Horgan (2012) labels strangership. This is a connection borne out of recognition of the other as stranger and couched within the society and culture in which the relationship is enmeshed. Certainly the ways in which domestic students conceptualised international students as 'strangers' within this study oscillated between *occasional* descriptions of symbolic ideals associated with in-group relations, such as mutual help, protection and emotionally warm friendships (Bauman 1990a),

and *majority* accounts of cursory encounters that routinely embodied emotions of frustration, disappointment and resentment.

> *I don't get along well with international students as they keep to themselves. I understand that language can be difficult for them, but I think international students could make more effort to integrate. In class groups, international students often don't pull their weight and so domestic students do the majority of the work, while international students benefit from our efforts (Ewen, Chinese-Australian, undergraduate domestic student studying business).*

Even other international students (largely non-Asian), expressed concerns and disappointment at the ways in which sheer numbers primarily from mainland China, impacted on their capacity to attain the kind of fulfilling experience they anticipated and hoped for prior to arrival in Australia. For them significant numbers of Chinese students, especially in the Faculty of Business and Economics, inhibited mutual recognition, deterred feelings of gratitude for potential contributions, and gave rise to negative collective assessments of the Other.

> *In my opinion, there is an imbalance of cultures on the University campus…There is almost too much diversity…Over the past nine months, I have met just two or three people whom I call 'Australian' – one of them was born in Hong Kong[71]. She came to Australia early in her life, and even though she is now Australian, she still finds that her Asian appearance is a barrier to entering a 'white' group (Mai, an international postgraduate student from Europe, studying business).*

Indeed, administrative processes within universities, routinely designed to smooth operations (such as orientation), potentially contribute to some of the disconnections that exist between international and domestic students. The decision to split off students in the first few days after entering university (for orientations), while administratively successful and

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[71] Numerous participants held conventional stereotypical images of Australians as 'Anglo'.

representative of only a fleeting moment in time within the context of a full degree, is nevertheless influential in opening up mindsets of differentiation and separation between international and domestic students. Moreover, the sense of being on distinct journeys becomes further exacerbated by the participation of some international students in 'pathway' programmes (such as English language). And despite a plethora of spaces within the campus that offer potential for interactions between groups to occur, for example cafés, foodcourts, sports centres and green spaces, contacts are often confined to classrooms that do not always address the complexities associated with language variance, learning styles and power differentials. Student clubs and societies act as connecting points, but their titles (for example the Chinese Students' Association) and modes of operation, emit messages that create feelings of exclusion and keep students apart.

> *Clubs, societies are connecting points, but it takes confidence to join these and sometimes clubs, by their names make me feel like I can't join in (Susan, an Anglo-Australian, fourth year domestic student studying early childhood).*

> *I go to a church with a lot of South-East Asian international students. They don't actually know a local student and yes, on that point I think it is fantastic that there are groups where they can meet with others from their own country, where they feel safe and they don't have to worry about the language barrier, but at the same time, it makes it really difficult to branch out (Barry, Anglo-Australian, undergraduate domestic student).*

Apathy and the challenge experienced by all students 'to find their own feet' are additional barriers to establishing meaningful contacts. Yet, in spite of myriad of examples that speak to closure, difference and Othering, there were some instances that told an alternate story within this study too, centred on loose affiliations between international and domestic students. Often by way of small gestures – a greeting, a smile, or a thank-you, communication opened up between individuals and groups, and although these could not claim to constitute warm

relations (developed by Bauman in Marotta 2002), they did create mutual recognition and paradigms that signalled care and benevolence (Wise 2011). My field-notes from an hour I spent on campus with the 'Student Life' group, an initiative of the University's Campus Life, describes how the offering of free chai was demonstrative of such moments.

> *The students sit together on rugs, spread out on the grass near a main walk-way. It is lunchtime and as one of the students plays a guitar, others eat and chat. Every now and again, one of the students spots someone who sits alone or appears 'disconnected' from others. They take a cup of chai to them and invite them to join the group (Field-note dated 27 May 2014).*

Regrettably it was commonplace to hear of interactions that excluded, and attitudes of widespread indifference towards international students, but amongst these there were also a few illustrations that signalled affiliation and friendship. Since her first year at university, Susan has been friendly with a Korean student, Ye-Jeong. They regularly go to: Max Brenner cafés, conferences, birthday parties, 'Student Life' (a student association) social events and on-campus happenings. For more than four years, they have met face-to-face at least once per month and when they have not been able to meet, they *Skype* and send texts each other.

Dave too, had many international students as friends**.** He enjoyed their company and the way in which cross-cultural intermingling opened up opportunities for him to 'explore the world'.

> *I never really had a good curry before. And there are so many dishes of curry. The Indonesian guy he cooked some Indonesian food and I thought 'wow'…There's the Korean hot-pot, the Korean BBQ. Korean BBQs are awesome, right? There's Chinese BBQ…Japanese BBQ; they're all different. There's the Chinese hot-pot. It's very sociable and the food is amazing. It's like travelling out of Australia in your own*

country (Dave, an Anglo-Australian, former domestic student and on-campus resident

of Macquarie University).[72]

While Susan's connectedness with Ye-Jeong suggested intimacy central to a deep and intimate friendship (Blatterer 2015), Dave's interactions with international students were more about the way in which gifts extend and reproduce particular relationships, just as they open up opportunities for reciprocity built around intimacy. Voluntarily given, gifts indicate both 'community' membership and expressions of emotion towards others (Cheal 1988). Through the sensuous enjoyment of sampling different foods and the sociality that accompanied its sharing, individuals like Dave are able to convert to a more cosmopolitan disposition, one which gives value to learning from other cultures (Colic-Peisker 2008). This flows out to influence how he sees and establishes his place in a globalised world.

Encounters that occur on the site of the university campus reflect the paradoxical and contradictory ways that the concept of stranger acts as 'an object of fear and hope, derision and respect, indifference and confidence' (Horgan 2012, p.609). There was potential for encounter among students in classrooms, social clubs, cafés, sports fields and on-campus accommodation but physical proximity did not always stimulate constructive contact between divergent individuals and groups. In truth, at times it engendered feelings of irritation, frustration and annoyance. Nevertheless, hope for peaceful, respectful co-existence was intermittently visible within this context; set alongside incongruities, conflicts and sentiments of Otherness.

Conclusion

In this chapter I explored how history and identity with place can become disrupted by the materialisation of those who are perceived to be different. Bringing with them notions of what home means, their presence (particularly in numbers), has the potential to hasten the transformation of urban spaces through the visibility of sensuous quotidian rituals. In these

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[72] While Dave interpreted sharing food as a means to advance relations, bell hooks (1992) argues that white racism, imperialism and gender domination can also exist through 'bold' consumption.

circumstances, the salience of place in influencing how everyday interface and encounter is enacted between those who attempt to claim habitation rights, increases. The City of Ryde represents an urban context in which challenges are currently being exchanged over occupancy entitlements, and while international students embody only a relatively small proportion of newcomers to the area[73], their presence is sensed particularly within the housing, education and business sectors. This has led to some local residents expressing feelings of physical and emotional displacement as they encounter everyday irritations of living with difference.

The findings of this chapter are however not clear-cut, for although there was some evidence to demonstrate heightened feelings of testiness and indifference towards newcomers, including international students, there was also substantiation of rejoicing in the changes that diversity has already brought to the area, and its potential for further transformations. Indeed, the findings of this chapter largely identify a passive co-existence among residents in Ryde; a 'rubbing along' (Watson 2006; Wise 2011), that acknowledges the way in which connections can be both inconsistent and paradoxical; tenuous, uncertain, promising and strong.

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[73] According to GML Social Research (2011), international students comprise 5.8% of the population in Ryde.

Chapter Five

The global force of neoliberalism and its effects on everyday relations

My father came to Australia in 1952 from Indonesia under the Colombo Plan as an overseas student…It [the Colombo Plan] was about engaging with overseas students, giving them a really good experience of Australian culture, structured interaction with people. The idea was that they were not always going to be students, they would go back as ambassadors for Australia… It was very positive and as they went up through the layers of bureaucracy, commerce etc., those good foundational relationships that were created at a student level [continued]. So this is almost like a utopian thing compared to now, where it is such an opposite experience [for international students] (Paul, Council employee, former TAFE teacher and multicultural coordinator).

These sentiments expressed by Paul synchronised with the meditations of other informants who probed for justifications to explain such scenarios whilst they petitioned for international students to have a 'different kind of experience' in Australia. This is a conundrum that I attempt to unpack in this chapter. Central to this process, is the consideration I give to neoliberalism as a prominent structuring force and a rising influence in international education for several decades. Throughout this chapter I link particular neoliberal rationalities which privilege market-driven ideas and endeavours, with distinct national policies and the quotidian operations of higher educational institutions. In concert, I consider the ways in which neoliberal processes are sifted and interpreted within everyday life. Thus I consider neoliberalism through various textures and in nuanced and sometimes contradictory ways, just as I point to other interacting forces that overlap these situations. In the closing section, I

introduce some localised possibilities for the emergence of social resilience to the negative effects of neoliberal forces; a theme that I pick up again in the final chapter of this thesis.

Over the past three decades neoliberalism has gradually emerged as a global meta-force to influence profound global economic, political and cultural changes. Neoliberalism is attributed with contributing to wide-ranging shifts in ideas and social relationships that arise in response to intense market competition, reduced state intervention and strengthened entrepreneurial endeavour. Even though such phenomena are not entirely new, it is the prominence and intensity of these trends, buttressed by particular logic and discourses that are rooted within their operations that draw considerable attention (Hall & Lamont 2013). Not confined to international education, an extensive range of developments can be grouped under the rubric of neoliberalism, yet for the purpose of this discussion I limit attention to the effects of neoliberalism on this specific industry.

Since 1989, substantial deregulation and the partial privatisation of higher education in Australia has meant that the level of public funds to Australian higher education institutions has dropped in absolute terms, as a proportion of national revenue and grant per student, making income generation by individual institutions critical to their survival (Duke 2004). The opening up of opportunities to charge international students substantial fees in exchange for education, has to some extent supplied this need, just as it has positioned international education as a global commodity. Conducting education in this way has delivered mixed consequences. Broadly, international education is perceived these days as an export industry embedded within concepts of trade and globalisation and expressed through market discourses that refer to revenue streams, returns on investments, 'booms', shortfalls and 'busts', whilst students are positioned as customers, clients, or consumers. Predictably the competitive global marketplace in which education institutions emerge as active facilitators for neoliberal projects, in a bid to entice prospective international students, has given rise to the dominance of recruitment strategies within and across institutions, buttressed by administrative expertise, and highly specialised units with functions geared towards global

operations. Indeed student numbers have become emblematic of success (Rizvi 2011); the up-shot of ardent marketing interventions among education institutions at the macro-level (Kwak 2013). At the same time, student attitudes to learning have shifted (Brady 2012), with students now considered customers and consumers of the commodity of education, just as the reproduction of inequalities related to how institutions obtain funds has intensified (Madge, Raghuram & Noxolo 2009). Together, such factors have given rise to considerable scrutiny from a range of sources, including eminent scholars.

> Education institutions – and this include universities, who are supposed to be beacons of truth and critical thinking – [have] become purveyors of spin, image-making, manipulative marketing, organised boasting and sometimes more toxic forms of deceit. The education system as a whole [has] come[s] to stand, not for common interest and self-knowledge of the society, but for ways to extract private advantage at the expense of others (Connell, 2013, p.106).

The context in which international education currently operates globally and locally is thus replete with tensions and pressures; a setting that has wide-ranging and profound ramifications.

A local response to universities' marketing 'successes'

In 2015 enrolment numbers of international students (on-shore) in Australian universities totalled 272,095 (Australian Government Department of Education and Training 2015), and despite some fluctuations over the past decade, steady growth continues. As a consequence, international students nowadays comprise more than 25% of total student on-campus populations in many universities (Australian Education Network [AEN] 2014). The *Annual Report* (Macquarie University 2015) confirmed international students represented around 21% of the total student population (numbers having fallen slightly, down 563 from the previous year). These figures attest to numerous noteworthy successes such as promotion by Australian universities overseas and marketing interventions directed towards prospective

international students. Yet despite expansive numbers of international students who nowadays populate university campuses and local neighbourhoods, a key objective of international education to internationalise campus and community life remains piecemeal, just as little has been achieved in engendering breadth and quality to intercultural relations (Butcher & McGrath 2004; Volet & Ang 2012). Some of the participants of this study alleged that a 'tipping point' exists; a fine balance between international and domestic student ratios that if surpassed, reduces the potential for the construction of affective relations.

> *When the international student population is almost a third of the university[74], I do think it's too high. I think the problem...I don't really know what the balance should be, but it does seem like it's too high. I think what happens with that volume you really start to lose the humanity…They are a commodity, they are not people (Patricia, local resident and mature-age, postgraduate domestic student).*

Hence the 'the will to internationalise', that has been erroneously interpreted by many Australian universities to mean 'recruit lots of full-fee paying students' (Sidhu 2004, p.47), clearly affects how others respond to their presence. For some, proximity to large numbers of international students, rather than giving rise to affective intercultural relations, or even approaches that suggest 'civility towards to diversity' (Lofland 1989, p.464), in truth engenders undercurrents of frustration and feelings to do with being overwhelmed, inundated and beset[75]. Wilson (2014) argued that acceptance and tolerance have limitations, and when dominant groups perceive they have reached these confines they often claim marginalisation, a rhetoric that reverberates with sentiments of victimhood. Numerous informants expressed such feelings on this subject, with some venting apprehension not only about current numbers, but more so University plans for future expansion and growth.

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[74] Interestingly while the actual ratio of international to domestic students is around 1:5, the perception held by informants was that their numbers were much higher.
[75] Lewis (2005) argues that marginalised groups test the limits of tolerance and welcome. In doing so, questions arise as to how much difference can be respected and tolerated and to what extent newcomers are subject to practices of assimilation.

The reality is that there is a very clear vision / direction from the university to want to double the numbers [of international students] in the next 20 years…But when will people start to get really angry, or frustrated, or upset, or students become more isolated? (Nat, a local resident whose community development work involves youth, families and the elderly in Ryde).

So in 10 or 15 years, it's going to be the norm to have a large number of overseas students. We won't batter an eyelid when we realise that between Agincourt Road and Epping Road is Chinese and occasionally Indian, occasionally Saudi, whatever we see. But what happens in the process of getting to that? (Aaron, former academic staff member and currently a community researcher).

These viewpoints acknowledge upfront the unease that exists in the receiving society about the possibility of increasing numbers of international students. But these statements contain other, more nuanced meanings too, for what they point to is a belief that universities hold (or at least share in), ultimate responsibility[76] for those they encourage on-shore. With marketing rhetoric spouting social inclusion as a drawcard of international education in Australia, it would seem universities *do* need to acknowledge the contribution of local residents and organisations in the delivery of this undertaking, for the social inclusion of students is contingent upon their cooperation and support. With most international students living off-campus, socialising and recreating in local spaces, emphasis that was formerly placed on integration to campus life no longer reflects the student experience. Discrete local spaces are these days habitually transformed through the ebb and flow of international students, and as a consequence universities share accountability for those changes to local neighbourhoods that are a direct result of their marketing policies. When such assertions are considered in a context that presupposes 'most universities have only passing acquaintance with the local citizenry' (Hil 2012, p.48), and are perceived as self-sufficient sites that are enclosed within

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[76] This view, discussed in Chapter Two, is echoed by the parents of international Chinese students (Forbes-Mewett, Nyland & Shao 2010).

invisible barricades that split them off from their immediate surroundings (Bruning, McGrew & Cooper 2006; Mayfield 2001), such meditations contribute to broader perceptions and appraisals of universities that include increasing doubts about institutional purpose, commitment, and ability to act civilly and with uprightness (Hatherell 2007; Reardon 2006), especially towards those communities that endure some of the most significant effects of their interventions. Whilst anxieties about the possibility of social and material displacement due to increasing student numbers surfaced within this study, such concerns were embedded within a broader mood of angst and foreboding about the possibilities that universities would apportion greater responsibilities for social inclusion and security of international students to local residents and authorities in the future, a view that surfaced largely as a corollary of prior experiences.

> *To an extent universities have not done enough – they may at least feel some embarrassment, but I wonder. Possibly more embarrassed than some of the smaller colleges. This isn't a very positive thing to say but I do think it is appropriate for embarrassment and shame to be felt in relation to the treatment of international students and particularly in reference to what accommodation providers do…When they go home and they talk about how they have lived in horrible places, where the government and the universities don't care. Nothing ever gets done about it (Charles, senior policy advisor Tenants' Union of NSW).*

Hence, while some participants expressed feelings of disquiet about the 'massification'[77] (Hil 2012, p.18), and the commodification of education, it was the *effects* of policies pertaining to global 'selling' of education[78] that incensed them most. At the forefront of such anxieties were feelings of powerlessness about their ability to maintain agency when confronted with the uneven outcomes of such policies that in their view, delivered few advantages or benefits (McGhee 2006). Essentially, the process of globalisation and the types and numbers of

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[77] Hil (2012, p.18) defines 'massification' as 'increasingly large droves of student-shoppers'.
[78] See Marginson (2011b) who also discusses ramifications of 'selling' education.

international students within local neighbourhoods raised anxieties in some, but ultimately it was the effects that 'selling' education had on the transformation of local neighbourhoods and the consistent, transnational flows of international students that the participants recognised, but did not relate to that created greatest concerns. In truth what many participants desired, was for universities to better recognise and acknowledge the effects of their policies on local neighbourhoods; to accept reciprocal responsibility for the security of the students they enticed on-shore; and to extend welcome, privileges, and a sense of place (Wise & Velayutham 2014) to those who resided in proximity to university campuses.

> *If you are not in proximity to the uni, you are never going to get proximity to the uni. I guess that reflects the past, the history of the uni when it used to be a gated community. You would drive your car up, and there would be a big boom-gate with security who would ask what are you doing here, or what is your business and if you weren't [pause] and even though that is long gone, culturally it still lingers in peoples' minds, it still lingers…Yes, they have lived through that where they have really not been part of the uni, or welcome at the uni…and yet we certainly brush shoulders a lot with their international students. We see them. They might see us. We are aware of them, but in terms of meaningful interactions, they are few and far between (Nat, a local resident whose community development work involves youth, families and the elderly in Ryde).*

'I don't think I have ever met an international student that has not been of Asian race'

Even though higher education institutions routinely point to statistics that demonstrate ethnic heterogeneity amongst student populations, Marginson (2011b) argued that Asian countries are still the major sources of full fee-paying international students for Australian education institutions. Explained in-part by burgeoning student markets in China and India[79] that link with post-study programmes and possibilities for permanent residency (Birrell 2006), the

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[79] Data from Australian Education International [AEI] (2015) confirmed that China, followed by India, Malaysia, Vietnam and Nepal were the top 5 source countries for international students to Australia. The number of Chinese students surpass Indian students by almost a ratio of 3:1, in real terms 97,050: 35,362.

privileging of Asian countries as bases for recruiting international students also embodies lingering attitudes to do with 'West is best' (Marginson 2011b, p.27). Regardless of the reasons, Asian countries evidently supply significant numbers of international students to Australian universities. This conception is supported by data from Macquarie University *Annual report* (2014) that demonstrated whilst international students were drawn from 116 countries, 88% of the total on-shore international student population (9,165) originated in either North-East Asia (6,211), South and Central Asia (766), or South-East Asia (1,041)[80]. Such data also led to particular observations.

> *I don't think I have ever met an international student that has not been of Asian race. Like I've met American exchange students, but not international students, not that I know of (Susan, an Anglo-Australian, fourth year domestic student studying early childhood).*

With deep-rooted feelings in Australia towards Asia, symbolised through historical fears to do with 'yellowness' and 'invasion' (Ang 2001; Collins 2006), old concerns resurfaced within this context too, as some informants reproached the international education industry for acting as a conduit that eased pathways for opportunistic Asians to come to Australia.

> *I think the Chinese don't have to invade this country militarily. I think they are doing a very successful job of doing it real estate-wise and in terms of education. So they are doing it in a more subtle way, but having said that, I think they bring a great deal of cultural value to this country (William, former primary school principal, now retired).*

This viewpoint acknowledges the Asian stranger as 'trader' (Simmel 1971), who brings 'gifts' to be shared with the receiving society, but it also likens the seemingly endless flow of Asian students with immersion in a viscosity of 'sliminess', an 'enveloping, suffocating, sucking in, formless substance' which fuses feelings of inescapable risk and resentment (Bauman 1995b, p.10); sentiments that infer powerlessness over control of their own lives and life-founding

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[80] This breakdown of numbers was not available from Macquarie University's *Annual report* (2015).

identities. Such sentiments were often expressed in the private realm (Blokland 2003) throughout this study, arising as part of one-on-one conversations in which informants lamented that there were 'too many Asian international students', or 'too many Chinese students'. Such comments not only signalled feelings of victimhood (Wilson 2014), along with powerlessness in the face of the flow of newcomers into local spaces, but also suggested knowledge based on conventional stereotypes about student populations. Ethnicity was an overriding form of differentiation of the student body in the participants' meditations, for very few invested sufficiently in relations to open up possibilities to explore other aspects of the students' identities. Not confined to comments by local residents, Mai an international student from Europe, expressed disappointment that she had been unable to meet many Australian students[81], which she attributed to 80-90% of her classmates being international students, mainly Chinese. Similarly international students from China, Rick and Jane, lamented too many Chinese students on campus hindered their attempts to diversify friendships.

Routinely expressed through concerns to do with belonging, and who were the symbolic owners of urban space (Bloch & Dreher 2009; Kobayashi 2009), longer-term residents identified large numbers of international students who were Asian, as challenging their dominant, long-settled position. Moreover plans by the University to increase international student numbers, interpreted by local residents to mean 'more Asian students', exacerbated existing feelings of resentment and discomfort. Although international students represented only 5.8% of the local population (GML Social Research 2011), and indeed symbolised only a fraction of the flow of newcomers to the area, many longer-term residents censured the university for its 'successful' marketing policies that they experienced as flows of transient students who they (paradoxically) claimed remained aloof from 'community', just as their presence disrupted and threatened stable ways of life.

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[81] Like Gomes (2015), I too found that international students held a distinct view of Australians as white or Caucasian.

'It's a business and the university seems to want to have more students to make more money'

The shaping of international education as it exists today began in the 1990s, a decade that witnessed the arrival of large numbers of fee-paying of international students and the shift to a hybrid model of international education that included the concepts of international education as both aid and trade (Rizvi 2011). The business model that emerged from the combination of these factors has continued to expand, nowadays producing a standardised production of 'high volume medium quality low unit cost programmes in areas such as business education' (Marginson 2011b, p.25), whilst at the same time creating 'a path dependent approach designed to keep the money flowing' (Marginson 2011b, p.25); an assertion that was picked up by some participants.

> *Like at Macquarie University, it's a business and the university seems to want to have more students to make more money. All the Asians talk about it. They go they just want to take our money. It is so hard to get permanent residency, we have to give them money and stuff…They expect it. They say we have come here and we have spent all this money and we want something out of it (Dave, an Anglo-Australian, former domestic student and on-campus resident of Macquarie University).*

Central to this rationality is the representation of human beings as economic commodities who exist to serve marketplaces (Isquith 2015). Those individuals who exemplify skills and attitudes demanded by wide-ranging workplaces (Connell 2013) are considered most desirable, as is the capacity of educational institutions to constantly keep up supply of this anticipated resource. With business exerting seemingly insatiable demands for significant numbers of fitting graduates, relations between students and their educational institutions operate within a framework of competitiveness, outlay and yield on speculation (Connell 2013). Privilege is shown towards speculatively determined value - ratings and rankings – in order for institutions to both self-invest and to attract others as investors (Brown, in Shenk

2015), whilst the hallmarks of educational quality are symbolised through positioning, reputation, and the protection of brands. Ironically however in recent times, universities have been denounced by employer groups for producing students who fall short of their expectations. With many identified as lacking English language proficiency; wanting in understanding of workplace practices; and deficient in non-specific employment attributes (Blackmore & Gribble 2012; Universities Australia 2013), universities are now under sustained pressure to produce better quality student outcomes.

An up-shot of entrepreneurially focused policies is that international education has morphed into a 'creative process oriented towards the future' (Connell 2013, p.104), with students re-framed as consumers or 'shoppers' (Hil 2012, p.17) who expect a product in the form of a qualification that they can use to compete for jobs in the market-place[82], and as a form of 'passport' to extend their time in Australia. Birrell and Healy (2010) argued that the image of the international education industry has become synonymous with selling education for visas, a representation that might be damaging to its credibility, but one that arises from one-sided emphasis on revenue-generation and disregard for global public good (Marginson 2011b). The nexus of education and immigration policies has further stimulated business opportunities for government and education institutions so that many international students nowadays pursue options to remain in Australia after completing their studies. Being allowed to do so opens up myriad possibilities, but at the same time gives rise to uncertainties among the receiving society and interrogations about the students' authenticity as 'pure knowledge-seeking migrants' (Raghuram 2013). Even though uncertainty demonstrates a desire to learn versus moral superiority (Wilson 2014), in a globalised world in which newcomers are typecast as dysfunctional, and immigration is regarded as a problem to be 'fixed', the instability and seeming opportunism that is part of the commodification of migration and education processes (Raghuram 2013), intensifies anxieties among the receiving society.

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[82] This position was supported in a statement by Indonesian academic Sangkot Marzuki (2011), printed in *The Australian* that Indonesians 'see Australia as a shop to buy a degree and to earn the opportunity to get a good job'. Education as such, has become a commodity 'rather than as a bridge between cultures'.

I think the whole immigration system is a big mystery. There seems to be a thousand kinds of visas. I mean those that I am involved with, I don't understand at all. I don't know how students are allowed to stay, how they decide who can stay. I don't know what gives them permission to be looking for work. The vast number seem to be in the 'IT' [information technology] area. They are always looking for work. One young woman who actually comes to our church, did a course in 'IT' and then she decided that she didn't want to do that and now she is doing a childcare course. People wonder what the rules are and who supports them, where does the money come from? Are they very rich people? And so I think there are a whole lot of questions that people have and a lot of not understanding (Margaret, volunteer English teacher, long-term resident of Eastwood and retired social worker).

Thus 'temporary' these days sits uncomfortably with concepts of integration and multiculturalism (Krase 2012), its multifarious meanings embedded with doubts and contradictions. The 'good migrant' has traditionally been one who settles permanently in order to be 'intelligible, coherent, recognisable and tolerable' (Cover 2015, p.33). Even though international student graduates fit the neoliberal model of a desirable migrant: one who is young; able to fit in; knowledgeable; skills-oriented; and unlikely to burden society (Raghuram 2013; Robertson & Runganaikaloo 2014) their lack of fixity, seeming flexibility, and super-diversity (Vertovec 2007) raise doubts and disquiets about their authenticity. Moreover the financial burdens associated with international education, necessitate many to take up employment opportunities during their time as students, a situation that creates another blurring of boundaries between study and work[83], whilst such conduct consolidates perceptions of equivocal identities (Raghuram 2013). And even though,

> the lives of temporary migrants are not simply of fleeting relevance to our
>
> understanding of cities but rather are part of the constitution of urban life: the ongoing

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[83] These positions are often in low status jobs where they work excessive hours for non-award wages.

transformations of inner-city areas, the movement from here to there, and the social

life that erupts in certain public spaces at certain times (Collins 2012b, p.332),

indistinct identities as neither citizens nor sojourners, cast international students as a

potentially problematic collective, whose en masse presence raises suspicion and feelings of

insecurity about their place within society.

'Hope deferred makes the heart grow sick': Desperation and the pragmatic stance

During the course of my field-work, a serendipitous encounter with the partner of a former

international student occurred.

> *I met Huma for the first time at the Epping Road crossing. She had been to the*
>
> *opening of the new Macquarie Centre shopping precinct and had bought a self-*
>
> *portrait. As we waited for the lights to change, she asked me if I liked it. We began to*
>
> *talk. I walked a short distance with her and we arranged to meet up again. It was*
>
> *during our second meeting that I learned she was a Pakistani woman, living in*
>
> *accommodation near to the university with her husband who had been an accounting*
>
> *student. He was now employed by 'X' (a multinational accounting firm) and they were*
>
> *waiting (hoping) for permanent residency. In Pakistan she had been a radio*
>
> *announcer. Upfront she told me that they had come to Australia specifically for*
>
> *permanent residency. The university degree that her husband had undertaken had*
>
> *been purely to obtain the points they required to secure this goal (Field-notes from*
>
> *personal discussion dated 23 July 2014).*

Huma's story of coming to Australia as the spouse of an international student, primarily to

attain permanent residency tweaked my interest, for whilst I was aware of multifarious

explanations for student mobility[84], the pragmatic, predetermined stance adopted by Huma

and her husband was unexpected. Yet, as I became conversant with longer-term residents who

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[84] Raghuram (2013) recounted that students make comparisons between places when making decisions about migration that include work and career; learning English; adventure and excitement; gaining transferable skills along with knowledge, social and cultural capital.

had affective relations with international students, they told me similar stories. My assessment of this situation was that while particular international students might hold hopes around permanent residency, they were selective to whom they disclosed these aspirations.

> *I think most of them (students) would like to stay here. Most of them see that there is an opportunity to help their families as well. Mostly they are doing degrees that will give them the right points to try to get residency. I've met so many people who are doing accountancy and not accountants at all. Once you get to know them, you find out, but that's the way they can get the points (Kate, mother, play-group organiser and former postgraduate student).*

> *They want to stay here. But there is often no way they can stay here. Often they are not eligible – and we joke about it – why don't you get married? But they know that it is not the right way to do (Janice, Chinese-Australian, local resident and Council employee).*

Stratton (2011) contended that neoliberal enterprises incorporate a two-step process. First comes the opening up of markets to the impact of global economic flows which affects lived experiences, but not necessarily everyday lives. This is followed by arrangements that set out state responsibilities to those who live within its borders. Within such milieus, relationships are built upon market principles and based on economic contracts, whilst limited responsibility is shown towards individuals and a reciprocal, pragmatic stance is demonstrated by individuals towards the state. The journey taken by international students in a bid to secure permanency in Australia was unquestionably 'pragmatic' in this study. Underpinned by significant financial and personal investments, international students were immersed in high-risk stakes, a situation that gave rise at times to desperation. Yet despite widespread recognition that the dream of converting their knowledge, cultural and social capital into economic capital and upward social positioning was precarious, a seemingly relentless transnational flow of students continue to pursue this nebulous journey. For countries like

China still regard an international education as a sturdy buffer to the consequences of rapid social stratification (Xiang & Shen 2009), just as it symbolises potential and hope. Although some graduated international students encounter futures that hold few prospects beyond low-wage employment, long-term joblessness (Xiang & Shen 2009) in their home countries, or perilous legal and social suspension in Australia, international education remains alluring for the potential mobility offers for a 'better' life.

Since 2013 with the implementation of *Temporary Graduate Visas* (Robertson 2014), international students no longer require employer sponsorship, or specific skills related to identified skill shortages to remain in Australia post-study (Robertson 2014). These changes have created new opportunities for international students, but at the same time have delivered highly tenuous circumstances that require post-study students to exist often for considerable periods of time with unprecedented levels of insecurity. With formal ties to education institutions severed post-graduation, many former international students look to individuals and organisations such as churches, for comfort and support as they linger strategically 'invisible' within local communities. Legal as residents but not as migrants, these former international students at once attempt to build networks, friendships, relationships, obtain work and make a home, just as they live with insecurities that impact on their practices and identities (Robertson & Runganaikaloo 2014). Subject to political policies, legitimating discourses and quotidian practices, their lives are shaped and regulated through lens of uncertainty and angst; their mobility controlled and reinforced through relations of power.

> *We have been finding some international students, especially once they cross the one year – one and a half year mark, either the financial stress or the mental health stress is becoming quite a significant issue, so much so that I've even encouraged some to seriously consider not staying in Australia. I've felt that the toll on both their finances and the nature of where they [pause]. It would be easier in certain circumstances if they either knew if they had work, or they knew they didn't have work. But constantly wanting to find work and that being forever delayed...There is a proverb, 'hope*

deferred makes the heart grow sick' and I think that captures a lot generally of what

people in unemployment feel, but once you place language, and then sponsorship on

top of that, it becomes even that much more difficult (Andrew, Chinese-Australian,

youth worker with a local church and former student).

Hage (2003) differentiates between symbolic upward mobility and physical mobility. Arguing

that the desire for symbolic upward mobility is an intrinsic human condition that has to do

with the desire to acquire commodities, and to 'feel as if one is going places', symbolic

upward mobility does not necessitate physical movement, although for some migrants,

physical mobility can stand-in for symbolic upward mobility. But for those who elect (or are

forced) to embark on a journey of physical mobility, many moments of feeling 'symbolically

stuck', 'going nowhere', or 'moving too slowly' are seemingly inherent. At these times, the

dream of upward social mobility, symbolised as 'hope' seems far away, just as feelings of

exclusion persist as part of everyday life. The students that Andrew refers to indeed fit within

this conception. Already heavily invested in physical mobility, they linger, desperate for

offers of employment that will allow them to continue the process towards social upward

mobility in Australia. At the same time, cut off from wide-ranging health, welfare and support

services that are linked to citizenship, or conditions that fit within temporary student visas, it

is individuals and local organisations that form a front-line of comfort and care for these

individuals. Caught in an indeterminate state, as they await governmental decisions about

whether they are able to remain in Australia, many international students oscillate emotionally

between fear and hope; a condition that Spinoza (2001, p.113) describes as:

hope is nothing but unsteady joy, arising from the image of a future or a past thing

about whose issue we are in doubt. Fear, on the other hand, is an unsteady sorrow,

arising from the image of a thing for which we hoped or which we have feared.

Care and responsibility for student well-being

The following section is directed primarily to exploring concepts of care and responsibility for students. Upfront I acknowledge the influence and power of neoliberal rationality to inform policies and practices of education institutions in relation to their obligations towards students. In concert, I argue that it is not the only factor shaping social life and change, for a multiplicity of power relations and practices exist, out of which a wealth of subjectivities form in response (Brady 2014). Still neoliberal rationality contributes significantly, a key determinant of the ways in which student well-being has become progressively reliant upon individual capacity to manage global insecurities (Ong 2006) just as emphasis is placed on individualisation of risk, responsibility and reward (Hall & Lamont 2013). Ideology of self-regulation within neoliberalism privileges apathy and unresponsiveness over care and responsibility for well-being (Cohen & Kennedy 2013). At once exhorted to be resourceful, international students live contradictorily too, under conditions that intervene to restrict and manage their participation in everyday life, as I discussed in Chapter Two. Labelled by Collins (2012b, p.322) conditions of 'differential exclusion', the lives of international students are thus managed through the implementation of policing, marginalisation, limitation and control measures that position them as consumer citizens rather than human beings (Robertson 2011a).

> *The way overseas students are sort of seen and perceived – even how they are treated. It is a sort of self-fulfilling prophesy that people don't fit in…Systemically overseas students are barred really from mixing and engaging from the start (Paul, Council employee, former TAFE teacher and multicultural coordinator).*

In response, universities are urged to become more responsible and involved in the student experience and to move beyond the pedagogic to embrace a social rejoinder through which recognition is given to broader discourses, power hierarchies and social relations (Gribble & Blackmore 2012). Prevailed upon to move away from attitudes that convey indifference

(Spoonley et al. 2005), educational institutions are pressed to recognise protection and nurture of students as critical rudiments of connections that denote respect, reciprocity and mutual engagement, and the association of these with beliefs about equality, inclusion and citizenship (Connell 2013). This is a matter of urgency, as many participants of this study reflected disappointment about their *own* recent experiences of university life.

> *You're not a person, you're not even someone they [the institution] have much regard or obligation for…I'm not saying everybody. I have had a couple of good experiences…but I think it is like, we as students are a nuisance (Patricia, local resident and mature-age, postgraduate domestic student).*

Absent from the circumstances Patricia describes are approaches that would have occasioned her to feel personally known, recognised and appreciated – cared about – attitudes that she could have then used to extend and upscale into feelings of well-being, belonging and fit (Rosenthal, Russell & Thomson 2007). Whilst feeling cared about is important to all students, and there are limitations on obligations associated with support services (Madge, Raghuram & Noxolo 2009), feeling cared about holds particular significance for international students, as they confront additional challenges associated with language (Khawaja & Stallman 2011); unfamiliar academic environments (Zhang & Brunton 2007); the management of finances (Sawir et al. 2009b); accommodation (Forbes-Mewett & Nyland 2008); and day to day living problems (Sawir et al. 2008).

> *They are being brought in, like they are being farmed for their money, yeh, which is okay, but then you have to provide a service, and it is those levels of support services that are not there…Systemically the amount of support that is provided to international students has been dwindling and dwindling quickly ((Paul, Council employee, former TAFE teacher and multicultural coordinator).*

As I examined in Chapter Two, there are specialised units within universities that hold key responsibilities for services to address the safety, security and well-being of international and

domestic student cohorts. Whilst these areas are widely acknowledged for the salient

functions they perform, they nevertheless constantly compete for resources, alongside other

divisions and units within universities that 'generate outcomes more highly prized by

university managers' (Forbes-Mewett & Nyland 2013, p.182). The up-shot is that these areas

habitually struggle to secure funding to provide adequate levels of clinical services for

increasingly large and complex student cohorts, let alone secure resources to develop

additional functions. Yet it is important to briefly consider how such additional functions,

linked to social inclusion agendas might improve the quality of experience for international

students. Such strategies have the capacity to lift issues of care for international students

beyond recognition of their rights as consumers of education, into a sphere that acknowledges

their rights as members of a civil society and as global citizens (Robertson 2011a). In truth

such interventions already exist in some places, but too often their survival is contingent upon

how they are seen to support marketing policies within universities, rather than being

recognised for the important roles they perform in taking care and responsibility for student

well-being. As I illustrate in the following descriptive narratives, absence of care is

consequential, for it engenders feelings of loneliness and isolation in individuals, just as it

speaks to disengagement and exclusion from local life. Ultimately, (perhaps ironically), these

factors affect not only individual students, and the regard local citizenry has for universities,

but the reputations, standings and statuses that universities are so keen to promote and

preserve.

With no one to turn to: Ghani's story of loneliness and disappointment

> *Ghani came to Australia as a higher degree research student. Prior to arrival he and*
>
> *his wife Maymuna, lived in US America, where he undertook postgraduate studies.*
>
> *Originally from Bangladesh, they quickly found support after arrival in Australia from*
>
> *Bangla populations and took up residence in a western suburb of Sydney. I met Ghani*
>
> *soon after he arrived. He was excited at being in Australia and revelled in the*
>
> *prospect that he and his wife might be able to convert their temporary resident status*

to permanency at some point in the future. I met Ghani a few times. We talked together; he asked me questions about life in Australia, just as I asked him about Bangladesh. Occasionally, I inquired how his wife was getting along, in the knowledge they had no children, that she was not able to work in her profession as a dentist, and that she was alone every day in their small apartment. In truth, I was worried about her. Over several months, I witnessed changes in Ghani. One day he told me his wife wanted to go home and that she didn't want him to go to uni anymore, but to stay with her during the day. They had made no Australian friends, and although they expected to make friends when they came, their hopes had not eventuated. Ghani blamed his shyness and lack of English language for not meeting people, but at the same time, he alleged that Australians were not as friendly as US Americans. The last time I saw Ghani, he and his wife had decided not to apply for permanent residency (Field-notes from personal discussions with Ghani dated 8 May 2014; 15 August 2014).

Ghani's story is one imbued with sentiments of loneliness and disappointment, and although no individual, group, or function is exclusively responsible for Ghani and his wife's dashed hopes, his story raises questions about how universities operate in a context of ever-diminishing revenues from government, and a highly competitive global marketplace. As Marginson (2011b) argued, in the process of being required to produce mass international education to cover funding decreases and supply the seemingly insatiable appetites of employer groups, downward pressures are exerted across areas, indubitably including individualised support services. As a consequence of less support, especially backing that might exist outside the clinical and pathological, many students fail to secure intimate relational qualities of attentiveness, responsibility, competence and responsiveness (Madge, Raghuram & Noxolo 2009). At the same time, confronted by the knowledge that problems are damaging to business, and idyllic images are critical to selling international education to prospective students (Marginson 2011b), inopportune realities are habitually 'papered over'.

Tumbling out of the conversations I had with Ghani, were descriptions of multifarious images of Australia that had been presented to him, depicting an ideal setting in which he and his wife would find inclusion in multicultural campuses and communities; imaginings that quickly came to be at odds with the way everyday reality unfolded. As Sidhu (2004) alleged, to purposefully attract and recruit prospective students, idyllic pictures are regularly fabricated about how dimensions associated with the East and West meet and fuse on university campuses and in broader settings.

> *While universities obsess with all matters of teaching and learning, it is the wider challenges facing international students that shape their experience of university. The hugely expensive and often hollow reality of this experience is a far cry from all those archetypes depicted on websites and in glossy brochures (Hil, 2015, p.137).*

'Like 'wow', back in China: ten rice cookers in a row'

Throughout this study, stories of isolation and loneliness were routinely told to me by international students and those who tried to help them. Acting as 'transversal enablers' (Wise 2009, p.24) who reached out to particular students to bridge differences, these individuals invariably described how international students clustered together, strategically 'invisible', as they surrounded themselves with those who looked and behaved similarly (Hopkins & Smith 2008). Whilst clustering can aid in securing trusting relationships for both practical and personal support (Collins 2010; Gomes 2015) and in the recreation of small versions of home that ultimately deliver a sense of comfort and fit, clustering summons images that are connected with exclusion and disconnection (Sayad 2004). It also reverberates with notions of voicelessness (Hsieh 2007), a condition opposed to notions of access, opportunity, ability and power (Noble & Poynting 2008).

> *From the people that I have met I think they [international students] seem really lonely. They are often come here by themselves, not really knowing anyone. They don't often get the chance to meet other people…She was really so excited [that I*

wanted to talk with her]. I think especially the Chinese students, and she's from China, they just really want to practise their English, talk to Australian people and get to know more about the Australian culture. She has come here by herself and she is okay. But she lives in an international house with just other international Chinese students. I went to her house and like I had been to China before and I just felt like I had stepped into a Chinese house. They had their table with 10 rice cookers set up [laughs]. It was a little bit of culture shock, like 'wow', back in China, and the people she talks to are all Chinese (Susan, Anglo-Australian, fourth year domestic student in early childhood studies).

Seemingly the Chinese students Susan knows cluster together, detached and disaffected from mainstream life. Socially and culturally separated from a geographically close receiving society, clustering reinforces the students' status as a distinct collective, devoid of internal differentiations, multicultural and hybrid identities; a situation that raises possibilities for some among the receiving society to register increased anxieties, and even hostilities around their difference (Forrest & Dunn 2010). With few ideas about how to participate and become enmeshed in community life, their distinctiveness provides additional reasons for others to treat them differently and to exploit their political, social and personal vulnerability (Marginson 2012). With already fragile identities that hold barely tenuous associations to local landmarks and neighbourhoods as home, these students as individuals can be easily harmed. The antithesis of comfort and fit that arises out of everyday interactions, their quotidian experiences of Australia are likely characterised by disorder, feelings of exclusion and marginalisation (Forrest & Kearns 2001). In truth what is needed is care. Seen as a broader social response, 'politicised structures, institutional cultures and policies, and the people that police these, must be challenged to care, to be politicised to be responsible for the inequitable implications of their regulatory and marketing policies' (Madge, Raghuram & Noxolo 2009, p.43). Not confined to individual academic and classroom pedagogical strategies, care of students should be viewed through the lens of a broader social response that

is shared by community leaders, university administrators, senior executives, marketing managers and so on. These students are worthy of acts that express welcome and hospitality, not merely tenure that is contingent upon compliance and ongoing financial commitment, embedded in a 'gifted', tenuous kind of tolerance, endurance and forbearance (Hage 1998).

Bodies that represent deficit, limitation and burden

Scholarly publications, media discourses and employer groups alike have been highly critical in recent times of falling academic standards within Australian universities (Coady 2000; Gribble & Blackmore 2012; Hil 2012; Marginson 2011b). Some of these criticisms are traceable to issues outlined in preceding sections, but central to this discussion are other matters too; scenarios that pertain to pressures exerted on academic staff. Routinely compelled to secure financial advantages for their faculties that are linked to the fees paid by international students, reports that allege academic staff are coerced into relinquishing their roles as enforcers of academic standards have become commonplace. Moreover, with large class sizes, institutional pressures, key performance indicators and ever-increasing administrative tasks, additional pressures are placed on already time-poor academics, who, in many cases express a desire to have more 'relational' quality teaching and care for students.

In 2015, the Independent Commission against Corruption in NSW [hereafter ICAC] released a paper[85] in which it not only acknowledged the likelihood that corrupt activities exist, but also provided strategies for universities to avoid such practices in the future. Essentially this report drew attention to pitfalls associated with universities (in their urgency to recruit significant numbers of international students), entering markets where fraud and cheating on English language testing are known to operate. Reliant on a multitude of local intermediaries (agents who depend on per capita commissions) to market for students, many universities neither carry out appropriate levels of due diligence, nor exercise sufficient control over recruitment and admissions processes. As a consequence, some students arrive on-shore

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[85] This paper was entitled, '*Learning the hard way: Managing Corruption Risks associated with International Students at Universities in NSW*'.

without the necessary capabilities to meet academic standards. Ultimately this delivers situations in which, students strive to succeed and universities need them to do so (Independent Commission against Corruption in NSW 2015). In light of this situation, ICAC called for the separation of incentive marketing functions of universities from academic compliance. In making this call, a number of issues raised by this study's participants were exposed. Drawn from their experiences as students, or former academics, widespread unease exists about the ways in which market-driven policies impact not only on academic standards, but also on relations within classroom settings.

> *In terms of the laxity with which the universities allow overseas students to come in, simply because they are cash cows, frustrates me…I think that it is unfair on everybody. It is unfair on the university, on the other students who are having to work hard. Some feel for the overseas students too, because they come in and they have to make up for that gap [English, knowledge and cultural capital] somehow, or keep using those means to get through, which everyone knows won't work all the time. It may in some contexts, if there is a lenient teacher, or a corrupt teacher, or if there is a subject that is just easier to fudge than others. And then they go into the workforce and they are resented by employers, which they already are (Aaron, a former academic staff member, currently a community researcher).*

Despite the super-diversity (Vertovec 2007) produced by the dynamics of international student flows and the potential that mobilities offer to transform the lives of transitioning individuals and the receiving society (Marginson 2014), the picture provided by Aaron depicts international students through a collective lens of deficit, limitation and burden. This construct is in part attributable to conventional stereotyping, but nonetheless, it also speaks to structural breakdowns. First encouraged on-shore, the essential support that is required by many international students to construct new identities that will allow them to contribute, flourish and ultimately succeed in new environments is regularly overlooked. Aaron's meditations echo many of the allegations contained in the ICAC (2015) paper, but

significantly they shed light too, on explanations why international and domestic students elect to remain apart, especially in academic settings. Fundamental to his argument are claims that classrooms are spaces where the papering over of problems is exposed, where lack of knowledge capital and essential competencies that are required to advance and achieve quality results are revealed, as international students struggle, and regularly seek out alternative means for academic survival. With learning support services restricted in their capacity (Forbes-Mewett & Nyland 2013) to address multifarious skill deficits (indeed one might question how much support is appropriate), those shortfalls existent on arrival, continue to unfold and in effect, deepen. A quotidian *contact zone* (Pratt 1991), university classrooms thus oft emerge as a 'site of struggle' (Sandercock & Kliger 1998) in which international and domestic students alike, positioned as consumers or customers, grapple for recognition amidst shifting contexts in which everyone is driven to operate amidst new opportunities and constraints.

> *It was so clear that international students didn't get it. I don't know if they passed that subject or not. I know there was a lot of sharing of information which, when I look back, I can only assume that was because they felt so desperate (Patricia, local resident and mature-age, postgraduate domestic student).*

In the following sections I unpack and tease out the imagery of international students as deficient, limited and burdensome bodies, in order to illustrate how this particular metaphor represents the ultimate fall-out of macro and meso-level neoliberal processes; in truth where and how such filtering finally comes to rest. Inspired by Hage (2000) who argued that the foundation of all ethical practices is relating to the presence of the other as a gift, I illustrate how neoliberalism through its many nuanced and textured expressions inhibits international students from delivering the gift of their humanity; a positioning that is in the end damaging to us all.

Why is the other's presence a gift? Because the other through my desire to interact with him or her offers me, by making it visible, my own humanity. When I interact with others and when I fail to receive from them the gift of common humanity that we share, I fail to see them as offering such a gift, it means that I consider such others as less than human (Hage 2000, p.36).[86]

'I learned very quickly that if I wanted to achieve… I had to seek non-international students'

Whilst some scholarly works (Fozdar & Volet 2016; Gomes 2015; Volet & Ang 2012) attest to students self-selecting to work with those they perceive to be most alike, as they represent 'comfort', expressed as cultural-emotional connectedness; common thought; ease of communication; and sense of humour, this study revealed far more pragmatic approaches also contribute to keeping international and domestic students apart. Within a neoliberal context, a person's individuality and productivity – their potential to prosper – is validated by the market and thus has bearing on the terms under which social recognition is granted (Hall & Lamont 2013).

> *I've just had lots of experiences in group contexts. It can be very hard to communicate and keep tabs on the work that some students do. I've had a lot of students do minimal work, including a lot of copying and pasting from the websites that I've already read and submitted as work in a group context. That has made my experiences in a group context quite difficult…I remember when I first started in business [studies] and we were doing a whole lot about projects and so forth. Initially, it was very easy for me to get put into a group with a lot of international students. Because subjects like accounting have so many international students in them, and so I think this is a little bit bad to admit, but at the beginning like I was grouped with a lot of international students. I learned very quickly that if I wanted to achieve in my accounting subjects, I*

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[86] My interpretation of Hage (2000) is that individuals need to first put aside superficial differences, to open up to deeper qualities that unite people as equals.

had to seek non international students as part of my group and umm... that is really

bad to vocalise and admit (Eric, Chinese-Australian, former domestic student, now a

youth worker with a local church group).

Eric's decision to dissociate from international students in academic settings, due to a perception that many lacked knowledge capital and other essential competencies, was a stance shared by others. Whilst some were reticent to acknowledge their actions, and keenly pointed out that they held no animosity towards international students per se, they were pragmatic in their views.

The Chinese students' approach to learning is completely different to how I have been

taught. Group work is a major problem. Some students simply aim to pass. But I am

keen to have high grades on my transcript that I will take way from Australia, but as

grades are given on a –'group-basis', I am disappointed that my hard work and

capability will not show through. Group assessments are an issue too, as my group is

assessed and judged by others groups. This can account for up to 40% of my final

mark... Often my peers do not put in the amount of effort that is required to do well...I

am amazed at the poor level of communication that some students display. I work with

others when I can (Mai, an international postgraduate student from Europe, studying

business).

Concerns to do with the capacities of international students (particularly English proficiency), are not new (Birrell & Healy 2010; Coady 2000; Universities Australia 2013), with eminent scholars having sounded warning signals for more than two decades on this issue. Yet such claims retain significance, for they extend beyond pedagogy, to challenge fundamental aspirations and communal measures of what success means in higher education institutions. With pathways orientated towards graduations; adornments associated with graduations; testamurs; and prized assessment scores, students are imagined as a collective who share understanding of what the 'student aspiration' means (Bennett et al. 2016). When this

aspiration is disrupted, classrooms as places where boundaries of membership are constructed and reinforced, become racialised into categories of 'us' and 'them'(Wilson 2014); a situation that potentially jettisons the construction of critical scaffolding that might be used by all students to build affective relations in other spaces.

Uslaner (2012) proposed that educational institutions represent supportive institutional and cultural sites that have the capacity to foster equal status and cooperation between groups; to establish common goals among diverse contacts; and to produce a sense of cooperation through the common purpose of study. Amin (2002) similarly argued that spaces such as schools and colleges represent ideal sites for individuals to be assisted to come to terms with difference, made possible through commonplace, habitual micro-encounters. While contact hypothesis developed six decades ago by Allport (1954), attested to classroom contexts as places of promise for constructing affective relations, providing conditions of: equal group status; common goals; intergroup cooperation; and the support of authorities, law, or custom were met. Conversely, this theory maintains that when such conditions are absent or lacking, stereotyping and prejudices are likely to rise. Pettigrew (1998) added 'friendship potential' to the conditions set out in contact hypothesis. Arguing that optimal intergroup contact requires time and 'appropriate' social contexts (at both micro and macro levels), prior attitudes and experiences were thought to affect the quality of intergroup contact.

The common ground of these theories is that educational settings hold promise as sites for individuals and groups to negotiate differences, when particular conditions are present. I argue that many of these conditions are lacking within educational settings today. I attribute this largely to how neoliberal rationalities play out in classrooms on a quotidian basis. For today, education institutions allow international students to enter academic environments without due consideration to the knowledge capital, skills and resources that they require to participate as equals. And as their 'deficiencies' become more exposed and indeed intensify, international students emerge as lacking, limited and burdensome bodies; people at odds with the 'student aspiration' and as bodies that others elect to avoid.

'I really don't have much contact with international students'

The ability to communicate effectively in English can be fundamental to the expansion of social networks and feelings of belonging, just as lack of confidence in communicating in English often gives rise to negative responses towards those who attempt to converse. Thus language is an important competency, for it affects not only how personal relations are fashioned and upheld, but also how everyday issues such as health, housing, personal safety, safety at work, discrimination and abuse, financial viability, social networks and dealings with authorities (Sawir et al. 2012) are managed.

> *I really don't have much contact with international students…When you do see them they are mostly with their own groups, talking in their native language, whatever that is. So it can be kind of hard to come in to that conversation because there is that language barrier (Jake, an Anglo-Australian, domestic student studying chemistry).*

Jake's observations speak to a kind of civil inattention (Goffman 1963) that acknowledges awareness of those who are different, just as it recognises that tensions and awkwardness exist in negotiating and managing relations with them. Even though Jake seems open to building connections with international students, he needs gestures or signs that demonstrate the Other is willing to mix (McGhee 2006; Wessendorf 2013) too; assurances that his openness will be reciprocated. A fleeting glance, a smile, a nod of recognition, can soften the 'sharp edges' of difference, but when these are seemingly absent, 'emotions of indignation and irritation' (Wise 2010, p.924) arise, brought on often by recollections of other failed social rituals. As Wise (2010) argued, everyone is inscribed with repertoires of etiquette; expected displays of behaviour that if missed, or misread, result in disjuncture and breakdowns that produce discomfort and unease. In the aftermath of such occurrences, stereotypical messages reverberate, expressed through everyday frustrations of living with difference. Such reflections explain how the sense of self is tied to encounters with others and how these become embodied in habits of perception (Wilson 2014).

Whilst English was identified in this study as a corporeal obstacle to negotiating differences, Clayton (2009) argued that language is also essentially a marker of social alignment that reaches beyond the written and the verbal to enable social mobility. As such language smooths relations as it extends beyond co-existence to shared linguistic abilities that demonstrate desires to know and connect with others (Sidhu et al. 2016). Thus in circumstances where domestic students describe international students as routinely speaking languages other than English, the many small worlds that hold potential to diminish barriers on the campus (food-courts, classrooms, cafés, green spaces, libraries and so on), largely remain places of disconnect and detachment. When these circumstances are coupled with busy lives that regularly involve part-time employment, off-campus socialising, and recalls of less than positive experiences in other settings, trajectories remain largely parallel, with little effort directed by either group to seek out junctures or cross-over points.

> *In a way, you are an unusual person if you make the effort [to get to know international students] because most people just come to class and go, or they hang around with people they know (Patricia, local resident, mature-age, postgraduate domestic student).*

> *Apathy prevents many domestic students from making the connections I have [with international students]. Many domestic students simply don't care, as they are trying to find their own feet. I believe that domestic students need to take the initiative to get to know international students, but it is hard for anyone on campus to get to know anyone else (Susan, an Anglo-Australian, fourth year domestic student studying early childhood).*

In truth discriminatory repertoires of indifference and apathy (Blokland 2003) were commonplace within this study. Expressed through language of 'we' or 'they', international and domestic students deployed this axis of difference to pull together (Blokland 2003), just as they used it to stereotype others. Different locations on campus evidently buttressed the

sifting of student populations, so that particular spaces represented familiarity and confidence for some, as they simultaneously symbolised exclusion and discomfort for others (Jones et al. 2015). This filtering of students was significant, for it extended beyond immediate corporeal disconnect, to position ethnicity as a discriminatory measure that differentiated student 'communities' (Blokland 2003). Moreover, when feelings of uncertainty about how to interact, doubts about cross-cultural competency, and anxieties about acting in a discriminatory or offensive manner (Mak, Brown & Wadey 2012) were added to this mix, divisions between groups and individuals became a sustained feature of relations (Stone & Hughes 2002). While such disconnections might have occurred under varied circumstances, I propose that neoliberalism has assumed considerable influence within the university setting. This has occurred as a consequence of governments and education institutions operating as active mediators for neoliberal projects that include international education. As a result of such endeavours, 'neoliberal ideas promote particular frames used by people to define how they should live their lives, what they are capable of, and for what they can hope' (Hall & Lamont, 2013, p.18).

Reworking local spaces

So what can be done to counter the deleterious effects of neoliberalism on everyday relations? Responses to this question are hard to find, for neoliberalism is an insidious, structured, measured meta-force that stems from global policies and interventions. As this chapter demonstrated, particularly over the past three decades, its influence has extended, gradually creeping to penetrate practices and everyday relations in numerous and varied ways. The 'local' has become the domain in which the effects of neoliberalism are primarily filtered and absorbed. Yet, contradictorily, it is also the space from which possibilities of counter-responses emerge[87]. In the ensuing section I introduce some of these, initiated by local individuals and organisations, who, in recognising multifarious issues and problems exist, are

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[87] 'Grassroot' responses to issues of social cohesion were also identified by Hudson et al. (2007) study in the United Kingdom.

reworking social spaces. At the core of their endeavours lie concepts of care and responsibility for individuals and aspirations for more socially cohesive, ethical communities. While they seemingly offer limited scope to address deeper systemic problems uncovered in this chapter, they nevertheless demonstrate Hage's (2000, p.32) contention that 'an ethical community [occurs] only by continually offering to its people the very ethical conditions it wants them to be 'obligated' to reproduce'.

> *My general experience is that international students can be quite shy, so I think the onus tends to be on locals in Australia to initiate conversations. But I guess after initiating conversations, I have found that international students are very keen to engage with the local community. In a way though they feel they need permission to engage, so just making that very deliberate… (Andrew, Chinese-Australian, youth worker with a local church and former student).*

Andrew is speaking about the monthly dinners that local residents host, to which international students are invited. These occasions are routine nowadays, but their 'success' is largely traceable to Andrew's role as a 'transversal enabler' (Wise 2009, p.24); an individual who works creatively to bridge differences. During my time in the field, I met numerous individuals and groups who acted in similar roles. Janice, a local resident described how she invited international students to be part of her gardening club. Working in groups of 10, the students not only developed practical skills, but also used gardening time to practise English, forge friendships with each other as well as long-term residents who were also participants. Innovative individuals and groups across the university campus initiate myriad projects for the purpose of creating a more inclusive on-campus community.

> *There are a lot of little things happening. I think the way we do those cross cultural, diverse lunches in the atrium and so forth, have been motivated out of a desire for the university to see international students as more integrated. Ping pong tables on*

campus, basketball courts and so forth also reflect that desire (Eric, Chinese-Australian, former domestic student, now a youth worker with a local church group).

These initiatives represent models of what Amin (2010, p.14) calls 'everyday mixity'; mediated encounters that are deliberately enacted to resist the emergence or solidification of perceptions that some bodies are inferior, threatening, or out of place. Enacted through quotidian endeavours which offer no guarantees for reducing group animosities, these endeavours nevertheless represent logical starting points for 'moments of cultural destabilisation' (Amin 2002, p.970), as they assist individuals to break out of fixed relations and challenge ideas about the Other. Habitually repeated, such endeavours create potential for anxieties to dissipate, just as they encourage practices of care to gradually emerge. Lobo (2013, p.463) labelled such occurrences 'habits of touch' through which bodies become opened up to touch and being touched; thus transforming not only relations between individuals, but also public spaces into sites of belonging and ethical engagement.

Along with stories of mediated projects, I uncovered how serendipitous encounters can also enable feelings of welcome and inclusion. Me-Jeong, a student from South Korea, who arrived in Australia in 2009, told me her story.

> *One day I was travelling on a train and I met a Korean man. We talked for a while and he offered me a job. This job was in a sushi shop. From that time, I have worked hard. After the sushi shop, I work at a café at the university. I like it at the university. The people are kind and friendly. They help me with English and are patient when I can't understand (Field-note dated 21 November 2014).*

Indira, the spouse of an Indian student told me about the solid network of friends who surround and support her.

> *Most are of our friends are Indian, but as they marry, that circle is changing and expanding. We meet regularly with 10 other couples…My first job gave me contacts with 'Anglo-Australians'. Without having a job, I would have just been home by*

myself...My husband's friends helped too. They invited me to trips to the parks and the

beach. They invited me to movie nights and the women included me in some of the

'girls' nights out' (Field-note dated 22 October 2014).

These vignettes show how invitations to outings, offers of employment, kind words and friendly dispositions – seemingly small acts – can contribute significantly to feelings of inclusion and wellbeing. Although major transformations at the local level are unlikely to result from these as discrete interventions (given they are time-limited, speculative and contingent on the continuing motivation of key individuals or collectives), they, along with mediated enterprises, nevertheless erect tentative scaffolding that support feelings of welcome and comfort, counter loneliness, isolation and withdrawal into private spaces. As such, they offer resistance to apathy and unresponsiveness (Cohen & Kennedy 2013); characteristics of neoliberal reasoning. This is a position I unpack further in the next chapter, where I outline a framework for localised projects respond to large-scale meta-forces, such as neoliberalism.

Conclusion

This chapter focused on the ways in which the operations and functions of international education as a global phenomenon filter down to affect not only everyday practices and routines, but also the construction of relations, perceptions and attitudes towards international students. Applying multifarious lens to this discussion, I first considered how policies delivered under the rubric of global international education both mediate mobilities as they amass pressures within communities, higher education institutions, and indeed student lives. Within this context I drilled down to reflect on power relations; paying particular, but not exclusive attention to neoliberal rationalities that are associated with globalisation. My specific interest for doing this was to examine how power relations create conditions that exhort international students to act resourceful agents, whilst they simultaneously restrict and manage their participation in everyday life. Permeating this discussion were considerations to do with international students as both temporary residents and permanent migrants. A

significant proportion of the chapter was given over however, to shedding new light on the conundrum as to why affective relations have largely failed to emerge between international students, domestic students and the receiving society, despite close physical proximity in both formal and informal settings. The contribution this chapter makes to unravel this dilemma is the link it proposes between global forces, policies, rationalities and quotidian experiences. Although this link was not essentially obvious to the participants as they went about their everyday lives, it was reflected in the ways they spoke about their experiences with international students. In the final section of the chapter I introduced the idea that small pockets of opposition exist within local spaces, routinely activated by individuals or groups who are motivated to assist others to effectively negotiate difference. This foreshadows a more in-depth discussion that I pick up in the following chapter.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

It was made clear to me by Pop and his Thai friend, and the Mexican couple, Henry and his wife Magda, that some of the very practical, real things that you would ask your family to help with, things that you would ask your friend to help with [are hard to find]. If you don't have family, if you don't have friends, if you are isolated, if you're not connected, it just increases your vulnerability. I guess I would love to see ways that address this – whether it is space, like a central meeting place (Nat, a local resident whose community development work involves youth, families and the elderly in Ryde).

Participants, colleagues, indeed family and friends have habitually asked what I hope to achieve in undertaking this research. In truth, I have found this a difficult question to answer, for I am neither keeper, driver, nor controller of what might happen to this study in the future. Nevertheless the regularity with which this question has been posed has inspired considerable pondering, from which I have drawn the conclusion that others hold hope that something will happen, that things will somehow change as a result of what now exists in words on paper. This realisation carries with it a heavy weight of expectation. Even though I articulated early on in this project that my aspiration was to provide stimulus for discussions (and potential action) among practitioners and policy-makers, as well as communicate with academic audiences, what I have learned along the way is that this study resonates personally with some, in ways I never conceived likely in the beginning. Seemingly it has given time and occasion for 'everyday' people to tell their stories; to be listened to and heard – circumstances that are allusive in a rapidly changing globalised world. In light of this disclosure, my

conclusive chapter is highly significant, for it is where I present not only a synopsis of my key findings, but also the implications of this research for future inquiry and action.

In undertaking this study I have opened up a previously overlooked aspect of international education; how relations form and operate between international students and the receiving society *from the receiving society's perspective*. In taking this approach, I have attempted to draw a more complex picture, to fashion a multilayered slant to understanding social interactions. As a consequence, I regard my principal contribution to the field as: first, offering a new take on the significant body of literature that examines various aspects of the lived experiences of international students in Australia; and secondly, an elucidation of the particular ways in which global meta-forces nowadays infiltrate, trickle down and affect relations at the local level between international students and the receiving society. My central argument is that in order to exhaustively explore the international student experience, it is critical to attend to forces, often opaque, that nevertheless affect perceptions and encounters at the everyday level. As I have demonstrated throughout this thesis, the local and the global have become entwined, linked through boundless, contingent intersections that influence not only how people perceive and conceptualise their place in the world, but also how they form relations and interact with others. To explain further, I return briefly to the broad research questions that shaped the original conception and progression of my work. I ask again: What knowledge, perceptions and attitudes do the receiving society hold about international students? What is the physical and emotional barometer towards international students in Ryde? Where and how do interactions between international students and the receiving society take place? What do these interactions look like? My work specifically identifies and expounds the ambiguities, complexities, contradictions and instabilities that are nowadays embedded within everyday relations and routines. Expressed often by participants as 'unease', 'uncertainty', 'anxiety', or 'concern', the findings of this study signal both fluidity and lack of fixity in relations between the receiving society and international students in Ryde; a position reflective of today's risk society. In this light, using barometric terminology, I consider

relations could be labelled as 'fair'. I make this claim on the basis that a majority of longer-term residents described few affective relations with international students, just as a relatively small number described deep, personal connections with them. Others recognised international students, rubbed along (Watson 2006) with them in multifarious social spaces, but rarely pronounced relations as meaningful.

The literature buttresses the view that not everyone is open to the effects of globalisation, with some perceived to benefit, just as others register sentiments of exclusion and marginalisation (Cohen & Kennedy 2013). This was a position echoed in the findings of this study that showed many longer-term residents held tight to constructs that represented the solidity of the local - the more forthright taking up positions that denounced transnational people flows - just as others embraced localised changes to grow more cosmopolitan outlooks. As exemplars of globalisation, international students were regarded by some as welcome subjects whose presence opened up new opportunities to explore and negotiate differences, and by others as a homogenous collective whose presence gave rise to disruption, material and social displacement, feelings of disorder and loss. In truth, some of the awkwardness and unease that surrounded the presence of international students at the local level was intensified by Immigration and Education policies that allow international students to assume ambiguous identities as 'student-workers', and in the opportunities they create for post-study conversion to pathways linked to permanency. As a consequence, although many of this study's participants demonstrated open and hospitable attitudes towards international students per se, they probed for clarity to better understand the students' seemingly ambiguous legal circumstances. A function of mobilities, the indistinct boundaries that surrounded the students' authorisation to remain in Australia, thus emerged as a constant and indeed perplexing issue that was influential in the way the receiving society recognised and responded to international students. However, the effects of national policies both past and current on how the receiving society perceived international students, were not confined to debates about mobilities, but rather spread to include neoliberal rationality, a logic, which

over the past three decades has gradually surfaced as a global meta-force to influence profound economic, political and cultural changes, in a multitude of policy areas including higher education. Attributed with aiding wide-ranging shifts in ideas and social relationships in response to intense market competition, reduced state interventions and strengthened entrepreneurial endeavours, neoliberal rationality was experienced within this study primarily as a negative potency that infiltrated and affected the way in which relations were (de)constructed and enacted, especially but not exclusively, on the university campus.

And so, what were the key meta-forces at play? There were a compilation of escalating factors. Already I have mentioned some effects of globalisation and neoliberal rationalities embedded within policies pertaining to immigration and education. But there others too. Snowballing people flows into the already super-diverse (Vertovec 2007) suburbs of Ryde, in a 'spread, speed and scale' (Meissner & Vertovec 2015, p.546) previously unknown; accompanied by unprecedented large-scale residential and commercial developments were also significant issues. Essentially, it was the gathering of these coalescing forces that shook many longer-term residents and gave cause for them to question how they would be able to maintain agency into the future; while media discourses intensified these anxieties, sometimes giving rise to small-scale moral panics.

Finally, I asked: to what extent do meta-forces influence perceptions and attitudes? How do they contribute to feelings of inclusion and exclusion at the local level? The myriad intersections that link global and local processes, are now part of everyday life in Ryde. They produced varied, ambiguous and often contradictory responses among longer-term residents. On one hand, they disturbed what was established, long-standing and recognisable, with the resultant consequence that heightened feelings of insecurity, discomfort and risk arose; feelings associated with exclusion. Conversely, the effects of global forces, particularly flows of new people, assisted others to acquire new knowledge, social and cultural capital, along with identities that reflected more cosmopolitan outlooks; thus assuming a more inclusive stance. Hence people responded in multifarious and indeed sometimes self-contradictory

ways to changes in their daily lives that were at least in part, attributable to processes of globalisation. Nonetheless, regardless of the responses people made, everyone was propelled to some extent towards more dynamic, indistinct and uncertain footings; a space from which they were unable to completely dissociate.

In the ensuing section I briefly revisit each of the study's three findings chapters to reemphasise significant discussion points. As I progress this review I build on the analyses, to specifically consider how each of these arguments addresses the key research questions. Later, I consider the study's findings in terms of their implications for theoretical debates and the potential they offer for applied actions in the future.

Fuelling the fire: media representations of international students in Australia

In Chapter Three I painted the media as a conduit for discourses that have the potential to intensify existing sentiments around impending risk of the Other. Exposing incidents as they occur across the world and in local neighbourhoods, I revealed the media as embedded within larger systems or meta-forces that deploy the immediacy of technological advancements to bring negative, habitually shocking images close; thus reinforcing a nexus between macro and micro dynamisms and global concepts of the risk society. Oft expressed as small-scale moral panics (Cohen 1972, 2002) that focus on the everyday practices of hapless and vilified individuals or collectives, who symbolise problems, moral decline and threat, media discourses thus exploit telling particular incidents in specific ways, in order to fuel and amplify prevailing viewpoints about certain Others. In this light media discourses reproduce societal positions, just as they replicate and sustain dominant ideology. Hence media representations of international students are highly significant, for they reveal much about relations, existing attitudes and perceptions of the receiving society towards them.

This study identified five principal images of international students in the media. Developed through the recollections of this study's participants and buttressed by distinct articles from diverse media sources, international students were categorised as a deficient collective, whose

status as the 'Other' in varying degrees, set them outside the nation. Depicted as: targets of crime; victims of exploitation; an opportunistic population; economic commodities; and as localised 'success stories', media images of international students largely ignored their super-diversity (Vertovec 2007), just as they reinforced differences between them and the receiving society. Igniting constant and purposeful discourses, the media advanced reasoning that self-contradictorily positioned international students as a vulnerable, homogeneous collective, and as a 'problematic' group who routinely stood in opposition to 'community'. Whilst physical distinctions of race and ethnicity were not essentialised within this context, they were nonetheless extant; the international education industry described through racialised jargon and international students categorised as Asian, foreign, and often specifically Chinese. With historic meanings of the Asian Other in Australia (reinforced by policy-settings), tied to notions of invasion and impending threat, this image of the international education industry and by inference many of the students who comprise it, took advantage of old fears, and used populist discourses to incite others to draw together in defence of 'their communities'. Poignantly, even in situations where the image of international students was linked with victimhood as targets of crime or exploitation, media discourses reinforced the perception of international students as the Other; a risky collective that was likely to cause problems. Moreover, media discourses exposed international students as opportunistic, individuals who freely exploit their student status to acquire property, jobs and leverage for citizenship. Even localised news items in which international students were depicted as 'success stories', presented their achievements through a lens of passivity (Van Dijk 2000); their opinions sought largely in order to confirm what was already thought about them. Together these images reinforced differences, just as they fell short in challenging racial categorisations. The ultimate effects were narrow, limited images of international students that ignored their super-diversity (Vertovec 2007); just as they regulated and restricted their capacity to contribute socially and culturally to the receiving society.

Everyday encounters between international students and the receiving society

In Chapter Four I examined where and how routine encounters occur between international students and the receiving society. First I explored theories around the construction of urban spaces; the ways in which places are built by deposits of local and global influences melding together over time. Specifically I looked to Alexander (2011) and Massey (1994, 1995) for inspiration, both of whom recognised place as a hybrid mix of known and time-honoured effects, intermingled with newer, wider contacts drawn from outside the geographical locale. The significance of this subject was to illustrate that even those qualities that are attributed with embodying the 'soul' or essence of a place were once incursions derived from somewhere else. I was drawn to this idea, for it challenges notions of the past as untainted and unsullied, just as it opens up opportunities to create new narratives and moral perspectives that reflect understandings of the nexus between places and evolving networks of social relations (Massey 1994, 1995). Keeping with this theoretical concept I considered the City of Ryde and the multifarious ways its suburbs are currently undergoing significant transformations. Partly attributable to massive residential and commercial building projects and the expansion of existing transport hubs, the increasing ebb and flow of transnational and translocal residents is routinely tied up with such developments.

Much of this chapter reflected the perspectives and attitudes of longer-term residents towards these changes, whose 'spread, speed and scale' (Meissner & Vertovec 2015, p.546) were unprecedented. Expressed through language that signalled feelings of discomfort and fears of material and social displacement, many informants as long-term residents, linked corporeal transformations of local landscapes with escalating diversity and social loss. In truth, sensory displays of difference in public spaces (such as distinctive smells, sounds, visual features) added to an expanding atmosphere of strangeness for these residents, a situation that ultimately was threatening to their sense of what local life should mean. As a consequence, some expressed fears that as an upshot of too much change, 'the failed community' was imminent, a place where everyone would be a stranger to each other (Ahmed 2000, p.26). Yet

alternative perspectives coexisted too, held by those who considered change and the influx of diverse populations had opened up new opportunities to reimagine and reinvent local spaces. Oscillating between these polarised perspectives were a range of views that were at once open to new influences and apprehensive of change. Set within these viewpoints was talk of a relatively small super-diverse (Vertovec 2007) population of international students whose en masse presence was attributed with the studentification (Hubbard 2008) of local neighbourhoods; increasing mobility; intensified local instability; along with positive and negative effects on the housing and business sectors.

Thus this setting was volatile and set within a state of high flux. Some evidence pointed to heightened feelings of testiness and indifference towards most newcomers, including international students, just as other perspectives rejoiced in the changes that diverse populations had brought to the area. Indeed, the single most significant finding of this chapter was what it said about relations between the receiving society and international students; reflected as inconsistency and paradox; steadfastness and flexibility; uncertainty and hopefulness; strength and frailty. By unpacking everyday relations using this lens, I was able to consider the key research questions from varied perspectives to deliver distinctive, complex and nuanced accounts of the effects of place on the negotiation of relations across differences.

The global force of neoliberalism and its effects on everyday relations

Chapter Five recognised international education as a global growth phenomenon, an industry built around desire and capacity of international students to acquire an education overseas that can be used post-study for physical and social mobility. Government policies and specific interventions by universities, along with networks of family, colleagues and friends work in concert to transform student aspirations around mobility into probable and feasible pathways (Collins 2013; Conradson & Latham 2005). Consequently, the number of mobile tertiary students internationally has increased at double the rate of growth of tertiary students as a whole (Marginson 2012). New opportunities that have opened up for international students

post-study nevertheless place them at odds with traditional concepts of the 'good migrant' (Cover 2015) whose one-way, stable and permanent trajectories conflict with the blurred boundaries and the ambiguities of today's students. Central to these transformations of the industry is neoliberal rationality, a particular kind of reasoning that privileges market-driven enterprises over protection and nurture of individuals, while spurring attitudes of apathy and indifference. This complex situation has wide-ranging implications for how relations between international students and the receiving society are constructed and enacted, and how the receiving society views educational institutions' interventions. In this chapter, I pointed to numerous ways in which policies, conditions, and particular rationalities merge to not only exclude, restrict, manage and control the students' participation in everyday life (Collins 2012b), but also to influence attitudes and perceptions that reinforce conventional stereotypes pertaining to international students. Out of the three findings chapters of this study, I consider this chapter most amply reveals the physical and emotional barometer in Ryde towards international students. For it is in this chapter that the participants were most forthright about the impact of the global meta-force of international education on their everyday lives. In particular, they talked about the ways in which specific policies and interventions of universities intensify and accelerate their concerns about the future. Fundamental to this unease were viewpoints that universities will continue to increase the numbers of international students into local areas without due consideration to the impact such activities have on local neighbourhoods, and that onus for the social inclusion of students (enacted as care and responsibility) will increasingly fall to individuals and local organisations. In truth, it was the seeming lack of care for students by government instrumentalities and host institutions that ignited most emotion within this chapter, with policies, interventions and support of students falling short in academic and social settings. There was little evidence to suggest that the receiving society held the students responsible for their apparent inability to participate in everyday life and to form more affective relations.

In terms of what this chapter contributed to understanding of relations between international students and the receiving society, I consider it shed light on the conditions that are required for international students (and indeed other newcomers) to contribute the gifts they bring as strangers and to effectively participate in local life. This chapter raises interesting questions for those involved in international education, for it highlights the important role communities can (and do) play in the social inclusion agenda; a contribution that is worthy of far greater recognition and backing. Indeed, this chapter suggests that improving relations between the receiving society and international students is at least in part, contingent upon advancing relations between universities and local communities through a combination of strategic and less formal interventions.

Implications for theoretical debates

The significant theoretical contribution of this research is that it threads together theorisations of neoliberalism in distinct ways. Not only does it connect (separately) to diversity, urban and international education literatures, it locates these writings within marketised higher education, superdiversity and mobility. As such, its theoretical contribution is not only to do with extant literatures, but rather the way in which, when interwoven, these literatures advance new light on the multi/inter-scalar dynamics of international students in a localised receiving setting, in this instance the City of Ryde. Essentially, my argument, and the theoretical implications of this research, is that to rightly explore the topic under investigation, it is critical to intersect, merge and blend a range of literatures from distinct areas, and to reflect on how this function enables a more distinct, complex and intricate account. While this proposition might seem rudimentary, in truth it marks out new territory, for the relatively few existent studies that explore relations between international students and the receiving society (usually from the student perspective), fall short in the consideration they give to this proposition. Essentially few attend to: the ways in which large-scale forces affect relations; the manner in which distinct literatures explicate and interpret these forces; and the implications for bringing depth and meaning to this subject when disparate literatures

coalesce. A principal outcome of this study is thus to make a theoretical contribution using this approach.

Issues raised for further research

As a qualitative project focused on the City of Ryde, the findings of this study are limited to this geographic area. As such, they offer restricted scope for formulating generalisations that pertain to other spatial and temporal situations. An optimistic view of this position however, is that this study opens up possibilities for replication and for succeeding studies to elicit contrasting findings. The dearth of research that currently explores aspects of the international student experience from the receiving society's perspective, offers myriad possibilities for others to bring new perspectives, ideas and appraisals to this topic. Unexpectedly overlooked, given the significant, long-term contributions receiving societies make to the lives of international students, this study lays a foundation for others to scope multifarious alternative research projects. With numerous past studies focused on discrete aspects related to student integration, this study opens up potential to consider the social inclusion of international students through different lens; standpoints drawn from broader, more nuanced viewpoints, including the effects of meta- and meso-forces on everyday relations. This multilayered approach, thus opens up wide scope for future investigations.

Specifically, this study gives rise to several questions for future research: how might relations between the receiving society and international students differ in smaller, less diverse, rural settings? In what ways do regional disparities exist? Does the heterogeneity of the international student population affect the ways in which the receiving society responds to their presence? What would sizeable quantitative, or mixed method studies be able to contribute to current knowledge on this topic? In what ways do the attitudes and perspectives held by receiving societies towards international students reflect or contrast with other migrant groups?

Signposts: towards a finer future

I turn now to the second line of inquiry that was set out in the introductory chapter. I asked previously: What ideas exist to improve relations between international students and the receiving society? How can these ideas translate into actions? Which individuals or organisations might carry responsibility for change? What are the input and resource implications for doing so? Throughout previous chapters I have given less regard to these questions, as my analysis focused principally on other key issues under investigation. Nevertheless I remained mindful throughout of their significance (and provided brief mention of possibilities in discrete areas), for the answers to these questions represent signposts; markers that reflect both existing circumstances and possibilities for future deliberations and proceedings. In this light, I premise the following discussion on several salient suppositions. First that the answers to top-down, large-scale challenges and tensions lie within the local sphere, and that the complexity and super-diversity (Vertovec 2007) that is embedded within these spaces, can be mobilising forces for change. Secondly, individuals and small-scale projects have agency to reply to, resist and respond to seemingly impenetrable meta-forces. Thirdly, that by re-imagining and remodelling the relationship between macro and micro forces, large-scale pressures become less prominent, just as possibilities for change become conceptually visible. Hence I consider that small-scale principles offer hope not only within the scope of everyday materialities of local geographies, but also potential for scaling up into broader political debates that can translate into new policy directions. For just as meta-forces filter down to affect everyday lives and relations, I argue that it is possible to create new circuits in which micro-forces rise up to disturb seemingly immutable meta-forces.

Much of my inspiration for this section comes from Ash Amin's (2006) article 'The good city', which recognises the ways in which:

urbanism highlights the challenges of negotiating class, gender and ethnic or racial differences, placed in close proximity, with the spatiality of the city playing a distinctive role in the negotiation of multiplicity and difference (p.1012).

Within this context Amin imagines elements of 'the good city' from the perspective of 'an ever-widening habit of solidarity built around different dimensions of the urban common weal' (p.1012). He argues that practices have the capacity to prod and jolt individuals and institutions such as government, media, opinion-makers, social and political elites, national, state and municipal organisations, communities and citizens, to give due consideration to measures that inspire both rights to difference and effects that are more evenly shared. The result? An urban space 'that learns to live with, perhaps even value, difference, publicise the commons, and crowd out the violence of an urbanism of exclusionary and privatised interest' (Amin 2006, p.1012). Centrepieces of this new condition are expressions of care and regard (Hage 2003) towards those who are different, embraced and actioned in multifarious ways. In truth such a position is far from easy to deliver, for as I have elaborated in previous sections, today's meta-forces deliver impetus and momentum that erupts as apathy, anxiety, and unease towards the 'Other'. Yet if we choose to do nothing, if we elect to live without negotiating those influences that keep us apart, then we deny ourselves the chance to re-invent a localised ideal, one that recognises what we have in common as human beings; an assemblage that can act as a counterbalance to negative meta-forces whose effects will otherwise simply continue unabated.

Based loosely on Amin's (2006) deliberations, I outline four fitting enterprises that when translated into a cohesive plan, begins a process to transform local settings.

Working towards more equitable rights for international students

> *If we look at visibility of place, okay, they [international students] are everywhere,*
> *obviously, but again they don't seem to have a stamp…They are visible but they're*
> *invisible and they don't have much of a voice. That voice could be enabled by the*

teachers here in particular. It could be maybe enabled more through spaces, through just recognition that, you know that these are valued people. That's what I don't get a sense of, 'you are a valued people'. I do get a sense of you as a valued commodity. But I don't get a sense that you are a valued person, yeh (Patricia, local resident and mature-age, postgraduate domestic student).

The nebulous conditions contained within international students' temporary visa status has been well-documented throughout preceding chapters. Marginson (2012) likened their foothold within Australia to short-term business people, labour entrants and refugees. As such, international students are compelled to accept tenuous political, social and personal standing within Australian society, with the resultant consequence that they are often cast into precarious circumstances from which other migrant types are protected. Moreover, their visa status that is underpinned by habitual shifts in Immigration policy that aim to either encourage or manage global people flows, ensures that their collective image continually vacillates between productivity and heightened risk. Hence, their status is regulated through conflicting frameworks, one of which is constructive and supportive, while the other is negative and punitive (Marginson 2011a). This standing ultimately relegates them to the margins of society; individuals with few political rights whose claim to remain in Australia is dependent upon government authority (Benson 2006) and continuing community patronage. Political debates that might ultimately challenge these policy positions are an aspiration tied to this research, but within the context of the current discussion I consider how smaller, localised responses might begin a process to reverse some of these inequalities, as they work to enhance feelings of belonging and inclusion for international students at the local level. What I propose is a vision for localised citizenship. Linked to the social inclusion agenda, interventions that flow from such a vision would lift issues of care for international students beyond recognition of their rights as consumers of education, into a sphere that acknowledges their rights as members of a civil society (Robertson 2011a). In the next section, I offer three distinct areas, arising from this study, to begin a process towards this end.

Engaging with media discourses

In 2011, one in 20 local residents of Ryde was an international student (GML Social Research 2011). Six years on this number has likely grown[88]. International students thus make up a significant, constant proportion of the local population. Yet, despite these numbers, participants of this study constantly referred to their 'invisibility' and lack of presence in Ryde. Several potential informants declined the invitation to participate in this study on the basis that they 'knew nothing about international students'. This situation needs to change if international students are to take their place as authentic local citizens. One approach to address this issue is media discourses, for they have the capacity to communicate instantaneously with wide-ranging audiences; to enlighten and soften hard-line attitudes. Special responsibility lies with political elites and senior university administrators, for they have ready access to the media to explain policy positions (particularly the nexus between education and immigration), correct misinformation and dispel myths that surround international students. They also have the capacity to ensure media discourses reflect more comprehensive images of international students. This is particularly important, given the narrow lens through which international students are currently represented in the media. When international students come under attack, political elites and educational leaders have a responsibility to defend, argue and advocate – stand up - for them. For negative images linger, and in the absence of positive everyday interactions to counter their effects, ideas about separation and difference intensify. Having international students recount aspects of their personal biographies in the media is another way to broaden understanding of their identities. I acknowledge such an approach requires careful mediation, but, programmes such as *Insight* on SBS, or *Australian Story* on ABC offer possibilities. Regular, short articles to do with international education in local press media also offer scope. At 'quiet' times of the year, especially in January, press media are often looking for 'feel good' stories. A small-scale project initiated by the University of Newcastle in collaboration with the *Newcastle Herald*

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[88] Census (2016) results were unavailable at the time of writing.

produced a series of interviews with some international students in this vein. Published over several weeks, these stories highlighted the diversity of the student population in Newcastle, as they told snippets of the students' personal biographies and aspirations that were tied to international education. The students were proud to be involved in this project, while staff from the *Herald* reported that positive comments about international students had flowed from their readership. In truth, if international students are to become authentic local citizens, they need to be understood as people, as human beings, not only as commodities that supply government and education institution coffers, or as 'problems'.

The issue of housing

Throughout the course of my fieldwork I heard multiple stories about problems of student housing. Participants routinely told about large numbers of international students crammed into local houses, some sleeping on mattresses on floors and others 'couch surfing'. Stories of student exploitation in the housing sector were widespread. Studentification (Hubbard 2008) has taken over some of the suburbs of Ryde, with many properties transformed into boarding houses. Living in proximity to these boarding houses is not easy for many longer-term residents, who, in many situations miss the connections they once had with old neighbours. Pristine neighbourhoods are no longer immaculate. A walk on any day around the streets of Macquarie Park or Marsfield (known student enclaves) reveal unkempt houses and unit blocks, surrounded by uncollected mail, rubbish on the footpaths and abandoned shopping trolleys. Particularly for older residents, such sights bring heart-felt grief. Expectedly, this situation also gives rise in some to anger, resentment and despair. There is no easy fix to this problem for it is layered and complex. The legislation in the *Boarding Houses Act* (2012) has, in truth, failed to eliminate large numbers of international students residing in overcrowded, sometimes illegal circumstances. This is a matter that requires attention from responsible authorities, but for the purpose of this discussion, I argue for small steps to address this issue. This is important, for out of many small scale 'clashes of culture' that I heard about during my fieldwork, housing was a particular flashpoint. A two pronged approach is required. First,

students need to have better understanding of their rights as tenants. Upfront I acknowledge that support services within universities regularly provide this information to students, but problems persist, indicating further action is required. I propose an interdisciplinary approach involving university accommodation services, tenancy organisations, real estate agents and accommodation providers, who working together, have a better chance to ensure students understand their rights. During my time in the field, I met representatives from varied accommodation services who were willing to work towards this end. Secondly, students need to understand their responsibilities as 'good neighbours'. Discarding furniture on street corners; abandoning properties in the middle of the night while owing rent; parking cars across driveways; and littering, are unacceptable behaviours that raise tensions in neighbourhoods. These behaviours, are not only illegal in some cases, they position international students outside accepted moral values of the community. This has ramifications when petitioning long-term residents to embrace them as authentic local citizens.

University administrative practices

Popping up throughout my fieldwork were references to the ways in which administrative practices contribute to segregation among students, and the bearing this has on feelings of belonging and inclusion. I noted how Orientation programmes and Student Associations unintentionally separate international and domestic students from each other. And while I acknowledge there are some sound reasons that these endeavours function in these ways, I argue that doing so, spurs ideas of separation and difference that can be difficult to modify in other spaces. Today, with environments of super-diverse (Vertovec 2007) populations, I question whether there are better, alternate ways to organise student activities.

I emphasise that these three distinct areas represent *beginnings* for creating conditions to advance authentic local citizenship for international students. Moving towards this goal is a process that requires constant attention, assessment and appraisal. As the findings of this study show, other areas fit within this register. For example, employment is a critical issue,

with recent media scandals pointing to widespread exploitation of student workers. While this is a matter primarily for responsible authorities, I suggest that from the local level, pressure could be applied to these authorities to ensure ongoing attention and action to this matter. In the university context, I argue that levels of due diligence and control over recruitment and admissions processes necessitate attention, while learning support units require additional funding if international students are to take their place in classrooms as equals.

Creating a more welcoming and hospitable local environment

> *I was with someone the other day and we were talking about coming to another country and the longing you have to be around your own people, the longing and the grief about people. Someone in class last year had left her kids in another country…(Patricia, local resident and mature-age, postgraduate domestic student).*

Welcome implies recognition of newcomers as human beings who belong socially. A welcoming and hospitable local environment holds potential to disrupt the sentiments of longing and grief that Patricia describes; to upset impending feelings of loneliness from developing. Cheal (1988) described welcome and hospitality as public statements that express emotions of community membership. Often reliant on leadership from 'transversal enablers' - individuals who are willing and able to help others bridge differences - (Wise 2009, p.24), practices associated with welcome and hospitality open up opportunities for newcomers to build an ethos of relatedness in urban life. Received emotionally, welcome is experienced through the senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. It is something one feels. To elucidate, I return to a story I presented in Chapter Four, of international students living in an on-campus residence who told me about the first time they saw their country's flag displayed on the dining room wall. It was soon after their arrival in Australia, when they were uneasy about how they might fit campus life, but when they saw their flag, they told me their confidence soared. In truth, the visual display of this flag was a small act, but its impact was significant, for it symbolised to these students 'welcome', as it delivered an instinctive

message about 'inclusion'. I give this illustration to show how small public gestures can make big statements that say 'welcome'.

Andrew, a local youth worker and his wife organise welcome dinners for international students. On these occasions, easy, light-touch conversations flow; biographies are shared; time-honoured family recipes are exchanged; and cultural practices are gradually revealed. Greg, a local pastor of a Macquarie Park church, who attends these dinners, takes up the story.

> *We find that many of the students from overseas are really hungry to find out about Western culture, have a go at eating with a fork and knife and, asking what's this for? And how do I pick this up? So I guess a willingness to have some fun with that and to be interested in their background, but also to give them an opportunity to explore this setting here.*

Food gives people a reason to come together, while the effects of sharing food extend beyond the corporeal to create a sense of 'we-ness' (Wise 2011) that symbolises welcome.

> *When we first started the dinners we used to have them at our house, but afterwards we asked people within the community whether they wanted to have them at their houses…So what we have found is that there are people within the community who were really wonderful at sharing hospitality and opening up their house…Just giving them some guidelines in arranging for the practical nature of what that would involve, in a sense - scaffolding – helping people to do it in a way that was easy (Andrew, Chinese-Australian, youth worker with a local church and former student).*

The success of these occasions show that scaffolding is in place should other local wish to replicate this idea. Additionally, I propose a large-scale, annual dinner to welcome international students, involving a diverse range of local organisations and longer-term residents. Set up in a public space, those attending could contribute food to share. Political and civic leaders could use this opportunity to officially welcome international students to Ryde. While packages that contain information about local services, events and volunteering

opportunities could be distributed, ensuring international students are informed early on as to what the community has to offer them, and how they might become socially involved. Taking place soon after the students' arrival, such an occasion brings new students into contact with longer-term residents, as it links them in to community life. Importantly, it also delivers a public statement that recognises them as authentic local citizens.

Expanding and consolidating affective relations

Look I think they [international students] probably could make more contribution. If they are making a social contribution, I am not really aware of it, and I am sure they are, it's just that sadly we don't really meaningfully interact, so I don't know. But I really think they could, and I am sure they are, but we have to get to know them to know that. Purely on economics of course they contribute. They contribute to the system and the local economy – shops, food – yeh, there is no question about that. Ryde will only increasingly become a culturally diverse city, more and more into the future and I think they can help us to think about and be forced to consider how we can be a more tolerant city (Nat, a local resident whose community development work involves youth, families and the elderly in Ryde).

The rise in super-diverse (Vertovec 2007) cities contributes to new scales of disconnection that affect relatedness in everyday life (Amin 2006). Initiatives that strengthen local affiliations are thus important. Even though frequency of contact offers no certainty that affective relations will be built across difference, and performances of civility do not inevitably translate into respect for the Other (Valentine 2008), creating a sense of ease around unassimilated strangers, grows hope for diminishing sentiments of indifference, disquiet and angst. Throughout this thesis, I identified many instances where affective relations have grown between international students and longer-term residents. Neighbours share home-cooked foods and conversations; students 'hang out' together on the University campus; volunteer English teachers assist individuals to improve their language skills;

workers socialise; and mothers participate in playgroups. These are reminders of 'good things' that are already happening in Ryde. Yet, memories of my time in the field, urge me to argue for more to be done. Loneliness was a constant shadow that pervaded narratives to do with international students in this study. Observed to cluster together in residential and social enclaves, with few friends other than co-nationals or other international students, the experience of living and studying in Australia fell short of the expectations held by many. With limited knowledge about how to become involved in local life, international students were viewed (perhaps ironically) as cut off from the mainstream; strangers amongst crowds of longer-term residents, including domestic students. Mediated friendship programmes (Gresham & Clayton 2011) and peer-pairing programmes (Westwood & Barker 1990) offer potential to address this issue, and indeed are routinely judged successful by student participants, but they are resource intensive and limited in scope to reach large numbers of students. Evaluations of these programmes nevertheless provide useful pointers for what it takes to head-off loneliness and isolation. Essentially people need to feel appreciated, personally known and cared about. They also need to have opportunities to offer the gifts of self that they bring. Well-managed *Homestay* programmes offer possibilities to achieve these ends, for *Homestay* brings international students into contact with Australian families often on arrival in Australia. Through *Homestay,* students are not only provided with accommodation, but can receive a 'gentle' orientation to local life. Undeniably *Homestay* is a subjective experience that is contingent upon the willingness of student and host alike to make it work, but limitations aside, *Homestay* can offer students a 'safe landing', and the possibility to build affective, long-term relations with hosts. Jiang, a postgraduate research student from China, has continued a relationship with her *Homestay* family for several years.

> *Jiang has been in Australia for more than six years. When she first came, she was less than 18 years old and so she lived with an Australian family through Homestay. Her Homestay parents are very important to her and even after so many years, she still keeps in regular contact with them. She says that they taught her many things and they*

gave her a great start to living in Australia. Now a permanent resident, Jiang lives in her own apartment with her partner in Homebush Bay (Field-note from a discussion dated 14 May 2014).

Additionally, bold, multidirectional projects that create a hybridised form of local culture, through culinary, musical, artistic, business, sport and health pursuits are worthy of consideration. Sporadic examples of these kinds of projects emerged throughout this study. In one instance, I heard how a Chinese translation student had facilitated Mandarin classes for a group of local residents, who, several years later still recalled distinct words and phrases, as they remembered the impact of how it felt to try to converse in a foreign language. In another example, Anglo-Australians joined Chinese-student church members to make dumplings for the Moon Cake festival, which they later ate together. I also heard about the inclusion of international students in local ethnic organisations. These approaches, centred on shared interests bring strangers together to explore mutual pursuits. How can we make this happen more often?

As time goes on, they get more and more involved in the local Chinese, Korean or Indian communities…It works through the families that host them, or sometimes through being in Eastwood, seeing what is going on, churches. When they graduate they are linked in already. It will be through those groups that I would say they contribute culturally (Aaron, a former academic staff member, currently a community researcher).

But for those students who have neither the capacity nor know-how to forge relations in these ways, different approaches are required.

I think a large part of it has to do with awareness, because anywhere in the Ryde area there are international students…There are hundreds or even thousands of international students and so usually, my general experience is that international students can be quite shy. I think the onus tends to be on locals in Australia to initiate

conversations… I guess the other thing is everybody tends to be specialists in where they are from and if any Australian has a genuine interest in finding out about them as individuals, not just China as a whole, but which province they are from, why they are here, and what are their aspirations, international students are very willing to share and engage with people. I think because English is generally their second language, speaking slowly [yeh] and speaking well and being gracious is going to be a challenge for them to be confident in the conversation. So I think just being gracious and being interested in international students – that intentionality. It opens up (Andrew, Chinese-Australian, youth worker with a local church and former student).

Andrew suggests that the receiving society has a special responsibility to welcome and enfold international students into local life. During my fieldwork I met several long-term residents, like Andrew, who deliberately initiated contact with international students. They found it easy to do so, and as they befriended more and more international students, their confidence soared. Having people with high levels of enthusiasm and skills in negotiating differences, is a valuable resource, for they can assist others to develop similar skills. Labelled by Wise (2009, p.24) 'transversal enablers', Andrew and others like him, offer hope for transforming relations in local settings, for they are good at setting up new projects, bringing disparate groups together and making sure newcomers are recognised, personally known and cared about.

Preserving and reimagining local spaces

Rapid transformations of urban spaces within Ryde was a central and important theme within this study. Construction of high-rise residential apartment blocks, large-scale commercial premises and comprehensive transport hubs were visible manifestations of these changes that foreshadowed the arrival of additional translocal and transnational populations. For some, these changes represented heightened risk, not only to the physical landscape, but also to how individuals recognise and relate to each other in the future. In short, some considered local

life to be 'at risk'. Expressed through fears around worsening traffic congestion, loss of green areas and forfeiture of social spaces for participation in local life, at the heart of these concerns were fears that a reduction in public space, would contribute to neighbours becoming strangers to each other. Such imaginings urge appraisals to be made of local spaces and for deep consideration to be given to how futuristic projects will ensure the inclusion of communal spaces. Within the context of this discussion, special consideration needs to be given to new housing developments in Ryde, earmarked specifically for international students. Lessons can be learned from Fincher and Shaw's (2009) study of student housing in Melbourne where high-rise apartment blocks, purpose-built to accommodate students, particularly Asian international students, contained miniscule apartments in buildings with few communal spaces. Often channelled by education agents and university administrators into these housing options, on the basis of stereotypical views about 'Asian' lifestyles, international student tenants spill out into city precincts to socialise. Separated from domestic students who preferred cheaper housing in different locations, international students living in these developments were limited in their capacity to develop friendships and connect with local life. Consequently this study showed how important it is for governments, developers, universities and planning authorities to work closely together. New developments need to include spaces where people can become friends; spaces that entice and lure different populations to sit, watch and perhaps chat. Time-limited encounters that take place in such social settings are not simply 'nice things to do', but in truth, militate against withdrawal into private spaces (Hopkins & Smith 2008); heighten feelings of attachment and belonging over time (Alexander 2011; and decrease the likelihood of loneliness and isolation among residents.

Unquestionably this study identified that physical proximity provides no guarantee for meaningful social interactions between strangers, but considerable evidence exists that sharing public spaces increases the likelihood of interdependence through social interactions – however fleeting. As Neal et al. (2015) argued, social spaces such as parks offer opportunities

for strangers to initiate informal everyday social practices. With acknowledgement that such public spaces need to be safe, maintained and comfortable[89] (Iveson 2007), parks and bushlands, along with municipal spaces such as libraries can mediate small-scale exchanges between strangers. As Neal et al. (2015) observed, in parks serendipitous conversations are frequently inspired by incidents that involve everyday activities such as children playing on swings, or people waiting in queues for ice-creams; each scenario offering different possibilities for the sharing of personal stories. Regularity of going to, and being in such spaces increases the likelihood of familiarity – a special seat, a favourite garden, or a particular walk together help to build feelings of belonging, just as such spaces create one of the small worlds that ultimately make up a multiple of locals (Hall 2012). Colin Jerolmack (2013) argued that even when people feel they are alone in public spaces, they often are not. Unexpectedly, Jerolmack (2013) demonstrates the way in which pigeons – ubiquitous urban dwellers – can underpin the facilitation of interactions between strangers. For feeding pigeons grants strangers reasons to interact with each other, as they talk about a shared experience.

Sites across Ryde, including the University campus are peppered with cafés, food-courts, libraries, green spaces, sports centres and areas for socialising and recreating; all ideal sites for bringing people together. Yet, as this study has shown, aesthetically pleasing sites are often not enough in themselves to break down feelings of apathy and indifference. An audit of how the physical spaces of the campus and community currently work and 'don't work' might be a starting point to address this issue. Reconfiguring spaces so that people want to linger – maybe chat briefly with someone they don't know - stretches them emotionally and socially, without intensifying tensions and anxieties that occur when they are in proximity to those who are different (Wood & Landry 2008). Events and activities that draw disparate groups hold possibility too: pop-up music and dance performances, pavement art, lunch-time speakers,

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[89] I refer to Noble (2005) for the interpretation of 'comfort' I apply here; a feeling of being at ease, having an attachment to a particular place or context that enables one to act in that particular setting.

markets, large screens featuring international cricket and soccer matches, give-away food vans, non-competitive, impromptu soccer games bring liveliness and a sense of 'we-ness' (Wise 2011) to local life. Chess and draught 'boards' painted on large concrete squares invite those who share an interest in games to participate or watch others play. Mediated cooking, gardening[90] and art groups, women's evenings, spouses and mothers' groups appeal to discrete collectives. These are a few suggestions of 'micro-publics' (Amin 2002); places where individuals can come together as equals and work through differences.

The annual Granny Smith festival in Ryde, one of Sydney's largest street festivals, attracts 80,000 people to the Eastwood shopping precinct for a day of street parades, stalls, competitions and entertainments. A demonstration of 'the various ways in which increasingly complicated difference – and sameness – play out in a variety of permutations of cultural complexity which define 'multicultural' Australia' (Noble 2011, p.829), the Granny Smith festival demonstrates both a tentative willingness to coexist (Ho 2011) and articulation of collective belonging (Quinn 2005). Watson (2009) underscored the ways in which markets, community events and festivals through their informality, openness of space and proximity of stalls, encourage easy interactions. Relaxed and casual, surrounded by colour and movement, the proximity and variety of stalls in such spaces mediate brief acts of reciprocity between stall holders and patrons, locals and strangers, just as these acts dissipate tensions and mediate differences (Watson 2009). The Granny Smith festival provides an ideal opportunity for students to become involved as authentic local citizens.

> *So why doesn't the Granny Smith committee say to the university – get a group of your*
>
> *students to come and…I don't know…run a stall, prepare a float, be part of a float. I*
>
> *mean a stall run by international students of all different cultures, particularly in light*
>
> *of the problems that we have, of integration and the media coverage about boarding*
>
> *houses, and cheating and so on, you would have thought it would have been a*

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[90] See Morgan, Rocha and Poynting (2005) for a descriptive account of how gardens act as cultural symbols of identity; conversation starters; learning amongst neighbours; mechanisms for reciprocity; and as places for nostalgic displays, as well as engagement with the present.

strategic move by Council – by the organising committee – to call on the University to
have a greater international presence. Even the university doesn't have a presence.
They don't (Aaron, former academic staff member and currently a community
researcher).

Bringing it all together

A rubric for future proceedings, these four registers offer potential to shape greater civility in a local urban setting; to bring focus to issues of rights and recognition (Hage 2003), as well as what it means to 'be a good neighbour'. I have used the vignettes attached to each register to show some of the 'good things' that are happening in Ryde, but these need to be added to, and formulated into a cohesive, strategic plan, set within an equity framework.

To summarise my key arguments I propose first: that localised responses have the capacity to reverse some of the inequalities that are part of the broader international student experience. The principal purpose of such comebacks is to address issues of marginalisation, by enhancing feelings of belonging and inclusion at the local level. Localised citizenship, linked to the social inclusion agenda, offers potential for international students to be experienced not just as consumers of education in a neoliberal environment, but as people with fundamental rights to recognition as citizens. My second and third points are around attitudes towards the stranger; how local settings offer welcome, hospitality and build relations with international students. Recognising the existing good works of many local residents and organisations in this area, my appeal is to consider additional, new, bold projects for building a deeper ethos of relatedness in urban life. These new projects need to be underpinned by a culture of care and regard that defies self-interest and impetus to disregard the Other (Hage 2003). Finally, I argue the importance of urban spaces for assisting people to become friends.

Putting a workable structure around these measures

I think we need to be creative and it needs to be in consultation with the uni but
community-driven. That's where things fall down. When it is not community-driven, it

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just gets attached to one body of an organisation and becomes their thing. Generally I just don't buy into it. It's really coming from the community…I think it is so much more useful and so much more meaningful and you get better outcomes so... (Nat, a local resident whose community development work involves youth, families and the elderly in Ryde).

To progress these measures, a formalised arrangement is required. I propose a working group including, but not be limited to, the Council, localised government and non-government services, ethnic associations, religious organisations, property developers, police, accommodation providers, business people, the University, students and concerned individuals. Best coordinated through the local Council, effective action will be dependent on leadership, the ability to access resources, and capacity to embed discrete strategies into cohesive plans. The role of this group, which would meet three or four times per year, is to map existing 'good works', share information, exchange ideas, collaborate to solve problems, propose and deliver new projects across the community. Additionally, students might use this assembly as a feedback loop on their experiences of living in Ryde (raising possibilities for future projects), while the University could utilise this forum to present plans and initiatives; thus countering the claims of some local residents that 'we never know what is going on'. (Initiatives pertaining specifically to the university would sit outside this group, under direction of University administration.) Similar in organisation and function to an interagency committee, and with a clear agenda for change, this multi-disciplinary approach requires long-term, broad commitment from people with wide-ranging views, who share an aspiration for evolving neighbourhoods that will assist the social inclusion of international students.

I acknowledge the register of proceedings that I outline above, will likely elicit disagreements and dissent, as individuals grapple with questions that are difficult and complex. But 'the policy of brushing potential conflicts under the carpet has surely now been discredited and the time has come to recognise that only through active debate, disagreement, mediation and

resolution can we truly become citizens in a democratic public space' (Wood & Landry, 2008, p.215).

Concluding statements

This thesis has argued for greater attention to be focused on the experiences, attitudes and perceptions of the receiving society towards international students. It highlights a gap that currently exists in knowledge about the capacity of neighbourhoods to welcome, interact and relate to international students. It contributes insights not only about relations between international students and the receiving society, but also draws attention more generally to interactions between strangers in urban locales. As such, it has explored a critical aspect of everyday life; challenging some long-held positions, while offering hope about new ways of living together. Drawing energy from and reappraising critical literatures around this topic, to combine with the opinions of longer-term residents of the City of Ryde NSW, a central argument that runs throughout is that in order to deeply explore intercultural relations in our time, consideration needs to be shown, not only to corporeal and proximate micro-forces, but also to the dynamic meta-forces that nowadays surround and infiltrate everyday life.

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Appendix A

Details of participants

Quoted participants drawn from focus groups, interviews and discussions

Aaron was born in Sydney and has lived in the suburb of Eastwood since 2004. His parents came as migrants from Armenia several decades ago. They have experienced many changes in their lives since moving in to Eastwood. Aaron currently works as a community researcher. Before this career change, he held an academic position.

Andrew is a youth worker, attached to a local church. He lives in Macquarie Park with his wife and young children. He calls many international students his friends, and is especially drawn to Chinese international students, perhaps reflecting his Anglo-Chinese background.

Barry is an Anglo-Australian under-graduate domestic student. He attends church and notices international students when he is there. An international student from Korea lived with his family when he was in Year 10. He says he learned a lot from that experience.

Brett is an Anglo-Australian, undergraduate, arts/law student. Formerly, he was enrolled in business studies. The private school he attended had several international students, so when he came to university, he thought he would make friends easily. He has found it quite difficult to do so, although he is open to the idea of having international friends. Most of his friends are either from his classes or from on-campus groups. He has visited China.

Catherine resides in West Ryde. Her Anglo-Australian family have lived in the same house for more than six decades. An older lady, she lives with her mother who is now in her 90s. Over the years, she has seen many changes in the local area. Some of these changes make her feel disappointed and resentful. Her passion is local history.

Charles is a young professional who works as a senior policy advisor with the Tenants' Union of NSW. He has a strong commitment to the well-being of international students, especially in regards to their rights in boarding houses.

Dave is a former undergraduate, domestic student from Macquarie University. He came to Macquarie University from Western Australia. He has many international friends, some of whom he met while living on-campus. He works locally and socialises frequently with 'mates' he made at university. His family still lives interstate, so the connections he has in Ryde are very important to him. An Anglo-Australian, Dave says that he used to be 'a bit racist'.

Edith is a former international student who attended the University of Sydney. Of Chinese origin, Edith grew up in Fiji. She was awarded an AusAID scholarship to study in Australia, and now is a permanent resident. She works in an executive position in a bank and lives with her husband and young daughter.

Eric is a Chinese-Australian, who grew up here. He lives in Eastwood. He is a young, recent graduate of Macquarie University. He currently occupies a pastoral role at the University that is funded through a local church. He is has many international students, from diverse backgrounds as friends.

Ewen is a second year undergraduate, domestic student. Australian-born, he has Chinese ancestry. He studies business at Macquarie University.

Greg is the pastor of a local church. He is married with a family. Widely travelled, he is very committed to providing welcome to international students and in assisting other people to do so too. His work with a local church places him in a very good position to influence others.

Jake is a young, Anglo-Australian domestic student studying chemistry. He has few international friends. He is an active member of the Student Life group on campus.

Janice is a Chinese-Australian, married with children. Through her local church and other community involvements, she meets regularly with international students. She and her husband are very committed to ensuring international students are welcomed and cared for by local communities. Janice currently works for Ryde City Council.

Jeremy is an Anglo-Australian third year, undergraduate domestic student. He is interested in politics and international issues.

Jiang is a postgraduate research student who has been in Australia for more than six years. She came to Australia as a teenager from China. A permanent resident, Jiang lives with her partner in a fashionable Sydney suburb. She travels back to China regularly to visit her parents.

Jim is an Anglo-Australian, local resident who once was involved in a mentoring programme for international students. He has many contacts with international students and sometimes sees them at social occasions. They often talk to him about their lives in Australia.

Kate is Anglo-Australian. A wife, mother and former postgraduate student, she facilitates a local play-group and is very interested in 'caring' for the partners of international students, especially the Chinese and Indian women who live close-by. She has two young children. Recently, she and her family moved to US America.

Kim is a postdoctoral researcher with a large company situated in North Ryde. Devoted to her career, she is keen to support and foster good experiences in the workplace for international students. She has a young son.

Mai is an international student from Europe. She is a postgraduate who is studying in the Faculty of Business. She settled well into life in Australia; loves the climate and way of life. She has been less satisfied with her experience at university. She has no intention of remaining in Australia after she completes her studies.

Maree is a former TAFE teacher and Migrant Resource Centre worker with Indian-Australian connections. She is employed by Ryde City Council. She is concerned about international students in Ryde and would like to see more inclusive activities for them.

Margaret is married to Michael. They are a retired, Anglo-Australian couple who have lived in Eastwood for 40 years in the same house. Margaret and Michael teach English voluntarily and undertake international volunteer projects from time to time. Margaret was formerly a social worker.

Michael is a retired solicitor. He is married to Margaret.

Nat is an Anglo-Australian, married with children. He lives close to Macquarie University and works as a community development worker. His job brings him into regular contact with young people, families and the elderly. Nat takes his young son to the University pool every week and he uses this opportunity to find out what is happening at the university.

Patricia is a mature-age, Anglo-Australian postgraduate student at Macquarie University. She is also a local resident. Patricia has had a long career as a social worker.

Paul is a former TAFE teacher and multicultural coordinator. Currently, he works for Ryde City Council. He has a deep interest in international education as his father was an AusAID student from Indonesia many years ago.

Rachel is an Anglo-Australian, retired primary school teacher. Her love of teaching led her to volunteer post-retirement to assist newcomers with English. She loves this work and the collegiality she enjoys on a weekly basis with other teachers and her students. Her classes are delivered in Epping, although she lives outside the area.

Robyn works in Chatswood as a Coordinator for a government tenancy service. She has recently come into this role in Chatswood, although she has been involved in assisting tenants with accommodation issues for many years.

Susan is an Anglo-Australian, undergraduate, domestic student who is in her fourth year of early childhood studies. Through her involvement with on-campus student clubs, she has made friends with many international students. She has visited China and has a long-term friend from Korea.

Samantha is a domestic student. She is of mixed Syrian and Armenian background, although she was born in Australia. She is the final year of undergraduate study at Macquarie University. She lives in the northern suburbs of Sydney, but is on campus a few days per week. She has lots of friends and loves university life.

Samirah is an Indian-Australian who was working in Harris Park when there were many attacks on Indian students. She spends a lot of time in Ryde, however, as she is an employee of Ryde City Council. She has a background in community development and a strong interest in international politics.

Vincent is Anglo-Australian and a well-known local business person. He has a strong commitment to Ryde, particularly Eastwood. He is interested in invigorating local business opportunities.

William is a retired primary school principal. He and his wife Julie, who are both Anglo-Australian, live in one of the retirement villages in Marsfield, located near to the University. They love to travel and when they are at home, they volunteer as English teachers with a local church group.

Table 4: Details of 'unquoted' participants

Categories	Numbers	Details
Students	26	International and domestic students, spouses of international students
Staff from governments agencies	14	Police, tenancy groups, neighbourhood centres, council staff
Owners and staff of small and large businesses	9	Macquarie Centre shops, Eastwood shops, Epping shops, Marsfield shops
Religious organisations	8	Uniting, Baptist, Catholic Anglican churches, Tzu-Chi Buddhist Centre
Businesses and staff connected to accommodation services	7	Real estate agents, *Homestay* providers, on-campus accommodation staff, private developers
Community leaders (political and social)	2	Politicians, business leaders
People from social groups	34	Historical societies, knitters' groups, playgroups, English classes, library groups
Local residents	24	Anonymous questionnaires, residents of Ivanhoe Estate, a local historian

Appendix B

Human ethics approval

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

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23 December 2013

Associate Professor Amanda Wise
Department of Sociology
Faculty of Arts
Macquarie University

Dear Associate Professor Wise

RE: *Knowledge, experiences, perceptions and attitudes of the receiving community to international students*

Thank you for the email dated 20 December 2013 responding to the issues raised by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC (Human Sciences and Humanities)).

The HREC (Human Sciences and Humanities) delegated review of your response to the Ethics Secretariat. The Ethics Secretariat considered your correspondence and approved your application, effective 23 December 2013. This research meets the requirements set out in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (2007).

Details of this approval are as follows:

Reference No: 5201300768

Approval Date: 23 December 2013

This letter constitutes ethical approval only.

The following documentation has been reviewed and approved by the HREC (Human Sciences and Humanities):

Documents reviewed	Version no.	Date
Macquarie University (MQ) HREC Application Form	2.3	July 2013
Correspondence from Ms Ruth Gresham addressing the HREC's feedback	No Version	20/12/2013
MQ Participant Information and Consent Form (PICF)	1	01/10/2013
MQ PICF – Individual Interviews	1	01/10/2013
MQ PICF – Focus Groups	1	01/10/2013
Email to Accompany Information Statement for Students	No Version	undated
Cover Letter for Community Groups	No Version	undated
Advertisement for Potential Participants	No Version	undated
Questions for Individual and Group Interviews	1	01/10/2013

1

Appendix C

The receiving society's perceptions, attitudes and experiences with international students

Key research questions

My key research question was to explore mediated and serendipitous interactions between international students and the receiving society *from the receiving society perspective.*

Background to the study

➤ This study is set within the City of Ryde NSW. This Local Government Area comprises 16 suburbs (fully or partially).

➤ Approximately 5.8% of the population are international students and most of them cluster within the suburbs of Macquarie Park, Marsfield and Eastwood.

➤ The City of Ryde is undergoing massive transformations that will increase both residential accommodation (high-rise) and commercial opportunities.

➤ The international education industry is one of Australia's top exports, delivering an annual income of between $19 billion - $21 billion to the Australian economy.

➤ Around 21% of all enrolled students at Macquarie University are international students. This translates into around 9,000 students in any one year. Although university data indicate that international students are drawn from 120 countries, 88% originate in North-East Asia, South-Central Asia and South-East Asia.

The participants

Participants were required to be older than 18 years and to live within the Local Government Area, or spend considerable time there as domestic students might do.

I used both purposive and snowball sampling to recruit participants.

The participants 'fell' into seven principal groups: domestic students, large and small business people, community leaders, employees of government and non-government organisations, community-based social groups, religious organisations and housing providers.

The methodology

My data was generated from focus groups, individual interviews, anonymous questionnaires, concentrated ethnographic observations, opportunistic discussions and field-notes. I also attended a range of community events throughout the data collection period.

My data was collected between January 2014 and March 2015.

Key findings

- Global meta-forces surround everyday life. These filter down to affect how people view the world and how they build relations with others, even if they are unaware of the presence of these forces on their everyday lives. Thus the local and the global nowadays intersect in a myriad of intricate ways. The international education industry, recognised through the ebb and flow of international students across the world is an exemplar of such global forces.

- The intermingling of the local and the global create uncertainty for some. In response some people attempt to resist changes brought on by global forces by holding tight to what they know. Other people willingly embrace opportunities that occur as a consequence of globalisation. Many position themselves somewhere between these polarising states. As bodily representations of global forces, international students in

Ryde are thus regarded and experienced at the local level in a multitude of complex and ambiguous ways.

This study comprised three main findings chapters. The first of these centred on the ways in which the media discourses represent international students. The second explored everyday relations between international students and the receiving society. The third findings chapter examined neoliberalism, international education and international students as mobile subjects.

➢ Media discourses reflect societal views on particular subjects. In this light, the five principal images of international students as: targets of crime; victims of exploitation; an opportunistic collective; an economic commodity; and a source for local good news stories convey important messages about how international students are perceived and understood by the receiving society.

➢ Everyday interactions between international students and the receiving society are complex; sometimes inconsistent and contradictory. Some longer-term residents regard international students as part of the global flow of people who contribute to disruption and unwanted changes to the local area. Others recognise the students' diversity as opening up opportunities for the development of more cosmopolitan outlooks. A significant number express ambivalence and uncertainty about their status as temporary residents; their mobility associated (paradoxically) with vulnerability and deviousness.

➢ The international education industry came under close scrutiny in this study for its reliance on the fees paid by international students to prop up cash-strapped higher education institutions. Numerous participants referred to international students as 'cash cows'. Linked to such meditations were concerns to do with the effects of neoliberalism on levels of support provided by institutions for international students; the commodification of higher education; the nexus between international education

and immigration; and the consequences of these issues on relations between education institutions, international students and local communities.

Conclusion

While there were many inconsistencies exposed by the findings of this study, there were also some relatively clear-cut outcomes. At the forefront of these was acknowledgement by the receiving society of the normality of living among people who are different and the demonstration of civility towards diversity, at least in the public sphere. Convivial moments were commonly discussed by the participants; even if many of these were fleeting, one-off occasions. Nevertheless tensions exist too, often expressed through concerns about the future and how local spaces will be transformed by planned developments and subsequent newcomers. Overall in a barometric sense, I consider the mood within Ryde to be 'fair'. As a consequence of this assessment, in the final chapter of my thesis I set out four key areas to stimulate discussion and potential future action. These are: working towards more equitable rights for international students; creating a more welcoming and hospitable local environment; building and consolidating affective relations between international students and the receiving society; and reimagining and reinventing local neighbourhoods.