Social media among African students: Recentring typologies of non-use

Markus Roos Breines [a,*], Clare Madge [b], Mwazvita Tapiwa Beatrice Dalu [c]

[a] *London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, UK*
[b] *University of Leicester, UK*
[c] *University of South Africa, South Africa*

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Scholars are increasingly starting to engage in analysing non-use of social media among higher education students, but to date there lacks a framework within which to do so. Toward this end, this article identifies four key themes associated with *not* using social media to develop a typology of social media non-use. The themes are: 1) exclusion which may be owing to access problems or the social environment on social media; 2) distrust owing to difficulties surrounding authenticity, security and online collaboration; 3) distraction as a result of overwhelming or irrelevant information or communication; and 4) online discrimination. However, rather than claiming to set up a universal typology of non-use that applies to all higher education settings, we are promoting a new agenda for thinking about non-use of social media which is attentive to specific educational contexts. Basing our argument on research on international distance education students at the University of South Africa, we argue that any analysis should take a reflective and evolving stance which considers the multi-dimensional, temporally modulating nature of non-use that is sensitive to both student agency and the significance of the specific educational and geographic context. Moreover, the attention to African international distance education students is an important relocation, as thus far, typologies of social media have predominantly been based on empirical case studies from 'Western' centres and imperatives. Placing African students centre stage realigns typologies of social media, illustrating and legitimizing the many centres from which social media non-use may be analysed and understood.

1. Introduction

Over the past decade, there has been a growing focus on how higher education students use social media (Alt, 2018; Hawi & Samaha, 2017; Zhao, 2017). There have been numerous studies exploring such use, demonstrating how social media use impact the ways in which students perform in their studies (Arif & Kanwal, 2016), how they interact with other students (Martin & Rizvi, 2014), and how international students use social media to maintain connections with family and friends at 'home' (van der Horst, Shadymanova, & Sato, 2019). There has also been a focus on social media addiction among students (Gazi, Çetin, & Çakı, 2017). While these studies have highlighted important trends, there is often an underlying assumption that *all* university students *everywhere* use social media. It assumes that students have ubiquitous internet access and overlooks the inequalities and tensions that unfold on social media. This paper shifts the focus from what is often portrayed as the centres of international higher education (US, UK, Australia) to international distance education students in Africa.

International distance education students' relationship to social media may differ from other students because they do not move to other countries to study. For them, the emphasis on connecting with family and friends 'left

behind' is not significant as they will in most cases be living in the same place as before starting their higher education studies. However, because the education is in itself international, the international dimension appears through their digital connections with the institution, teachers and other students. These are mediated through a range of technologies and infrastructures (Breines et al. 2019), but increasingly through social media, especially for the communication with other students and for pedagogical reasons (Madge et al., 2019). As such, social media can play an important role for international distance education students.

Amidst a broader digital turn in geography (Ash, Kitchin, & Leszczynski, 2018), there is recognition that there are spatial differences in social media use (Li, Zhou, & Fan, 2013) and a growing body of literature taking more critical approaches to how people actually use the internet (Graham & Dutton, 2014; Hunsinger, Allen, & Klastrup, 2020). Contextual uses of social media point to the ways in which platforms are not merely taken to be used as objective entities, but are turned into cultural artefacts where people make such tools meaningful through practices. In addition, people's capacities to use social media differ depending on context-based digital divides (Lembani et al., 2019). It follows that there are therefore important geographical and social variations in social media use that need to be taken into consideration.

---

* Corresponding author.
  E-mail address: markus.breines@lshtm.ac.uk (M.R. Breines).

While there is now a rich body of work examining the social and spatial diversity of people's use of social media, there has more recently been a growing recognition in the literature that not everyone uses social media. There is therefore only a smaller body of work examining social media *non-use*, but there are authors who have distinguished different types of non-use. For example, Baumer (2018) has investigated the demographic and socioeconomic differences among Facebook non-users, and found that their classification as current; deactivated; considering deactivating; and never used, intersected their socioeconomic status. This study and much of the work on social media non-use to date draw on large scale quantitative studies, often of Facebook, that focus on distinguishing the user i.e. *who* does not use social media. Much less is known about the reasons for non-use, or *why* this might be the case. Indeed, Baumer (2018) notes that future work should examine relationships between different forms of technology non/use as well as the factors shaping types of non/use on different social media sites.

To this end, this paper will take a qualitative methodology to focus on reasons *why* international distance education students choose *not to* use social media. The paper is based on the International Distance Education and African Students (IDEAS) project. This transnational research project examined international distance education provided by the University of South Africa (UNISA) to students located throughout the African continent (for more details on students in different countries and their experiences, see Lembani et al., 2019, Breines et al. 2019, Raghuram et al. 2020, Gunter et al. 2020). The research project employed in-depth qualitative Skype interviewing to understand the varying experiences of international distance education students studying with UNISA. International distance education is a form of higher education where social media is particularly relevant because it offers students who are apart from each other in terms of location opportunities to connect with each other and support their studies (Madge et al. 2019). In our research, WhatsApp and Facebook were the most popular tools among the majority of our informants, but some chose not to use them.

Even though social media had a large appeal to many of these students, we are here concerned about why some find that it is better to avoid using social media completely or occasionally. Arising from interviews with students at UNISA, thematic analysis enabled us to identify four themes regarding their social media non-use: 1) exclusion which may be owing to access problems or the social environment on social media; 2) distrust owing to difficulties surrounding trust, security and online collaboration; 3) distraction as a result of overwhelming or irrelevant information or communication; and 4) online discrimination. In this paper we explore these novel findings and develop a typology of non-use that complements current typologies that focus on social media use (see e.g. Blank & Groselj, 2014; Brandtzaeg & Heim, 2011; Krairit, 2018). Ultimately our focus on African international distance education students shines a light on the many centres from which global education emanates, and social media non/use can be understood, contributing to an understanding of how social inequalities are reproduced through social media use and non-use.

2. Situating non-use of social media

2.1. Social media typologies

Social media extends the social sphere beyond its usual boundaries but remains embedded in the material and symbolic context where its users live. While it matters where people live and what place-based identifications, values and expectations they bring with themselves online, this also intersects with others who may bring different material and symbolic content with them, resulting in more hybrid interactions online, where users navigate between place-based and translocal social media values. The recognition of these trends have led to focus on use, rather than non-use, of social media. This is manifested in the large number of studies as well as attempts to generate typologies of social media users. For example, Brandtzaeg and Heim (2011) identify five categories of users (sporadics, lurkers, socialisers, debaters, actives) that they consider distinct. Also

Eynon and Malmberg (2011) have developed a similar typology of young people's internet use outside of formal education settings that include 'peripherals, normatives, all-rounders and active participators'. Yet another typology of internet users has been provided by Borg and Smith (2018) who classify people as 'Non-Users, Sporadic Users, Social Media & Entertainment Users, Instrumental Users, and Advanced Users'. Other typologies of internet user typologies have also been developed (see e.g. Krairit, 2018).

There are also typologies based on the activities the users engage in. Blank and Groselj (2014) suggest that 'internet use' cannot be discussed as a general phenomenon, but that research into use needs to be specified according to the kind of use researchers are exploring. This leads them to provide an overview of internet users' activities that includes; Entertainment, Commerce, Information seeking, Socialising, Email, Blogging, and several other activities. Another approach to categorising users has been developed by Hargittai and Hsieh (2010) who develop a typology where they refer to users as 'Dabbler', 'Devotee', 'Sampler', and 'Omnivore' based on their frequency of use as well as engagement with one or more social media. These classifications show a broader tendency to make sense of different forms of use, but often in ways that reduce their activities to fixed categories.

However, there are a range of temporal differences in how people use social media (Li et al., 2013). For example, there are people who start using new social media technologies very quickly whereas others pick it up at a slower pace. Still, Still, having started to use social media does not necessarily mean that someone will continue to do so. Some use it for a while and then leave platforms, either to join and use other platforms or to not use social media at all (Baumer et al., 2013). There are also rhythms of social media use that illustrate the variations between users, as some will use it a lot whereas others use it minimally. Some switch off notifications use it minimally and check it when convenient, others use it regularly (e.g. once a day), whereas yet others use it more frequently and instantly check their device as soon as notifications inform them about new activity (Johannes, Veling, Verwijmeren, & Buijzen, 2019). These variations in people's use and non-use of social media are important factors as they illustrate both contextual and individual differences (Nielsen, 2006), which also applies to higher education contexts (Cilliers, Chinyamurindi, & Viljoen, 2017).

2.2. Social media in higher education

Social media is becoming increasingly important in higher education and for international students. Currently, there is often a focus on how students are using social media to connect with friends and family while abroad (see e.g. van der Horst et al., 2019), and how they use it to develop new connections with other international students or local communities (Martin & Rizvi, 2014; Zhao, 2017). Such studies have demonstrated that social media plays an important role for international students' social relations.

It has also been argued that social media can have several benefits to education, such as increased interaction between teachers and students and active engagement with educational material (Tur & Marin, 2014). Universities are using social media for different purposes. The most common use of social media by universities is as an interactive public relations platform. Universities use social media to reach out to students and staff, parents and potential students. Some of the platforms used are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, blogs and Flickr (Al-Khalifa & Garcia, 2013). Educational institutions want to harness the power of social media, and Rambe and Nel (2015), for example, show that social media is being used by educators in South African institutions of higher learning. The use varies, but social media is used for collaboration and idea sharing, to facilitate learning (virtual classrooms, chat rooms and video chats; access to recorded lectures, and allowing online access to posts) and reaching out to students so as to form a better understanding of students by the institution. Although social media is being used increasingly to connect students to their institution, the effects on interactivity and collaboration are not always clear (Bonzo &

Parchoma, 2010) because of the wide variety of use and the meanings students attribute to the value of social media for their learning.

Social media is also used by students to connect with teachers. For example, in some contexts Facebook group forums and Twitter serve as convenient meeting points between students and teachers, which affords a platform to present information to students in a familiar format as well as quick mode communication and feedback of teacher to student, and hence bridging the social distance between teachers and their students (Rambe & Nel, 2015). In other studies, it has been pointed out that social media was mostly used or tutorial support and consultation, for discussion forums, to share and stream videos, for networking, dissemination and research, and to provide awareness of current topics and recent literature and subject specific material (Keenan, Slater, & Matthan, 2018). In South Africa, Gachango and Ivala (2012) found that university educators were using Facebook and classroom blogs to supplement teaching, for example to motivate, encourage dialogue, share information and to improve writing by students contributing to a blog topic online. Ng'ambi, Brown, Bozalek, Gachago, and Wood (2016) review South African higher education pedagogy over a twenty year period and state that even though social media are more evident now than ever before, teaching and learning practice in South African higher education remains largely unchanged. While social media is becoming increasingly normal in communication between teachers and students, it often remains used informally rather than as part of formal pedagogy.

Moreover, students also frequently use social media to connect with other students. In general, it seems that students are more inclined to use social media on more unofficial platforms versus more official platforms attached to the university (Sheeran & Cummings, 2018). For example, in a study conducted at a university in Zimbabwe, Dlamini, Ncube, and Muchemwa (2015) found that most students were using Facebook and Myspace to send and receive assignments, making inquiries, finding social contacts, for university communication and online registrations and networking with friends. In Pakistan, Arif and Kanwal (2016) found that Facebook, YouTube and WhatsApp were the most commonly used applications but also that students' academic performance increased with the use of social media. However, others have made the case that students who are 'maladjusted' use social media excessively (Alt, 2018; Hawi & Samaha, 2017), indicating that there is an ideal balance between use and non-use.

2.3. Non-use of social media

Despite the many possibilities social media are affording people, there are still many who do not use social media. While the digital divide and limited access are factors influencing people's use of social media (Sobaih, Moustafa, Ghandforoush, & Khan, 2016; Ng'ambi et al., 2016; Lembani et al. 2019; Lembani; Graham & Dutton, 2014), non-use of social media also needs to be understood in relation to two broad approaches: those who do not use social media because they have never used it but are potential future users and those who have experience of it but choose to not use it for various reasons (Baumer et al., 2013). Other studies have identified 'lack of motivation, poor use of time, preference for other forms of communication, preference for other activities, cybersafety concerns, and a dislike of self-presentation online' to explain why teenagers, in this case, did not use social media (Baker & White, 2011, 396). More recent studies, such as Lynch (2020), also suggest that gendered and racialized hierarchies of expertise shape subjects' engagements with digital technologies. While there are many studies of teenagers' use and non-use, there are also studies of social media use and non-use among politicians (Larsson & Kalsnes, 2014) and elders (van Deursen & Helsper, 2015). However, it is not always just a matter of use versus non-use. Baumer, Guha, Quan, Mimno, and Gay (2015) demonstrate that some people intentionally stop using social media for a while only to return at a later point and resume their use of social media. Non-use can also be impacted by geopolitical, cultural and other contextual constraints.

Although there is research on social media non-use more broadly, there is less knowledge of social media non-use in the context of higher education. There are some exceptions, such as Turan, Tinmaz, and Goktas (2013) who found in the Turkish context that the reasons for students' non-use of social media were related to them being seen as a waste of time, risking addiction, and concerns over privacy. Chawinga (2017) has considered some aspects of non-use among students in Malawi, but primarily related this to limitations to internet access. Still, most studies of social media non-use in higher education focus on 'Western' contexts, engage with non-use secondary to use or, in some cases, focus on teachers (rather than students) (see e.g. Owen, Fox, & Bird, 2016). None of these provide a typology of non-use. In this paper, we therefore focus on why students prefer to not use social media and develop a typology of non-use. We do so through the lens of African student experience, showing that there are many centres of global education from which we can try and understand non-use of social media.

3. Methodology

This study took an in-depth qualitative approach to explore non-use of social media among international distance education students. Qualitative research is important in understanding non-use of social media because it enables deep and detailed insight into social phenomena that defy simple quantification. In addition, it offers the ability to document attitudes and feelings, resulting in rich explanations underlying the reasons and motivations of non-use of social media. Specific to this research, the qualitative methodology of the IDEAS project was focused on 165 one-to-one online Skype-to-phone interviews with students at UNISA between 2017 and 2019. The advantages of Skype online interviewing for 'facilitating access to global research participants' has been noted by (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014), while Johnson (2013) views the relative increase in mobile phone usage as having a positive influence on researchers' ability to contact participants and conduct research in the African context. That said, in our project issues did arise with the use of online interviewing surrounding the complexities of gaining consent given new European General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), the tricky and sensitive nature of inter-cultural understanding, particularly when conducted through computer-mediated communication and basic technological problems owing to difficulties in broadband access and connectivity. All interviewees have been given pseudonyms in this paper.

The interviews were of a semi-structured nature and students were encouraged to reflect deeply on the diverse ways in which social media were mobilised, or not, to aid their learning journey while at UNISA. The student interviews we are focusing on in this paper are based on students from Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia, which hold large UNISA student populations. Questions moved from general questions trying to ascertain how the students used social media as part of their everyday life, to more specific questions teasing out issues with respect to adjusting and integrating into university life whilst studying from UNISA, the roles of social media in (in)formal learning, social and emotional support and, finally, any restrictions/issues preventing students' from using social media, most relevant for this paper. The interviews lasted between 30 and 90 minutes and a key tenet of the interviews was to recognize the various ways in which students were using or not using social media in an active way to shape their learning experience at UNISA and to listen out for, and follow, any unexpected and interesting 'stories' with respect to social media.

The qualitative interview data were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and coded in NVivo. Overall five key themes were identified, followed by 23 sub-nodes. The unit of analysis was a group of meaningful sentences with relevant context included (which might include interviewer question) and coding was completed at the sub-node category. Responses could be coded multiple times. The coding system reliability was validated in two stages. First, a general deductive coding schedule was developed by the researchers and secondly, this schedule was tested by three researchers independently for reliability by coding the same interviews while also developing inductive codes and gradually making revisions and expanding the coding system. This enabled the

identification of the key general concepts embedded in the data, out of which non-use of social media emerged.

Considering that the interviews constitute the bases of our data, we are mapping our analysis of social media non-use based on what our interviewees said about their practices – rather than analysing their lived experiences first-hand. Still, the qualitative method is most appropriate approach to shift the focus from *who* is not using social media to the question of *why not*, and to tease out the complex array of decisions framing such non-use. In this way, interviewers could acquire insight into the experiences of social media of the participants and subsequently use this insight to better contextualise attitudes and behaviours of non-use. Next, we explore non-use in relation to issues of exclusion.

4. Exclusion: Access and social environment

4.1. Access

Social media use was restricted for some students. The reasons varied, but some lacked technical equipment such as laptops and many had no internet access at home and were reliant on purchasing data for their smart phones. The cost of this data for accessing the internet was thus prohibitive for many. A Zimbabwean student highlighted how financial constraints made it impossible to coherently follow the fast pace of numerous social media threads:

> Here in Zimbabwe the economy is hard so even if you want to be in a WhatsApp group it's 1 dollar for 250 MB for one day. If I start using my dollar today at 3 pm, tomorrow at 3 pm it will be finished. I have to get another dollar, so it means I have to use 7 dollars every week. I wasn't on WhatsApp for two weeks, and when I go on WhatsApp all the messages for the past two weeks are coming. I'm doing five modules, so I've got five different groups and all the money is gone because there will be a hundred messages coming in [Tatenda, male, Zimbabwe].

In addition to the financial dimension, time was also a key issue relating to access. The majority of the students were studying part-time while working full-time, which restricted their access to social media during work hours:

> The whole day I am at workand I don't have time to be on the net. With our jobs, we are not allowed even phones, we are not allowed laptops. But I can carry my module, my book with me to work. If I find any extra time, I sit there, I start reading my book, especially when I'm on the night shift it's quiet and everything, I can just take out my book and start studying. But with the laptop and everything it will raise eyebrows, I can't really work with it when I'm at work. [Bronwyn, female, Zimbabwe]

Thus, access was not only related to having money to cover the expenses of data, but also to students finding themselves in circumstances that would allow them to use laptops to study. When this was not possible, students relied on more 'traditional' forms of studying such as study packs and books.

Access to social media was not just restricted by issues of access to equipment, cost of internet, time and finding convenient study spaces, but also by wider political, economic, social and even environmental situations and failures of infrastructure (Breines et al. 2019). For example, in 2016, Facebook was temporarily suspected in Zimbabwe following political upheaval, while in South Africa in 2019 social media (and other internet services) was restricted during the power shortages following cyclone Idai.

4.2. Social environment

In addition to issues of access, there were social aspects that influenced students use and non-use of social media. The lack of moderation and impolite exchanges made some students feel unwelcome and contributed to turn some students away from social media groups:

> Sometimes you do get people that are rude and arrogant. If someone sends a message that is a bit rude or insulting, it's best to ignore that. Although, there are some people that actually take it up and they start fighting with that person, and then, in turn, everybody is just watching them, you know, mud-slinging each other. You do get the loudmouths that don't keep quiet. You just stay out of their lives as much as you can and then remind yourself why you're in the group because we're all different, we have different views and perspectives, and that counts [Rudo, female, Zimbabwe].

The limited netiquette was not the only reason for making people feeling excluded, but the diversity of the students was also an important issue. In most of the courses, there was an overwhelming majority of South African students and the languages chosen to communicate on social media also acted to exclude, as explained by one Zimbabwean student:

> The thing with South Africa is that they have all the 14 languages as being equal. Meaning that if I am not so conversant in English, I'm free to speak Zulu extensively, to an extent that you'd have people communicating – when you see those conversations between a Xhosa and Zulu person, one is communicating in Xhosa, the other one is communicating in Zulu. Because you can maybe hear what the other person is saying but you can't express yourself fully in Xhosa if you communicate in Zulu and listen in Xhosa. So, whenever you have maybe that one comment and you don't know what it means. Already that's where you lose focus, because if I'm going to ask you what it means, then it means we are no longer communicating about school [Tendai, male, Zimbabwe].

Of course, for the South Africans who were fluent in the most commonly spoken languages this was not an issue. However, for international students this constituted an issue that made it difficult for them to engage with other students and in some cases made them feel excluded.

In addition, there were issues with issues associated with gender, age and disability were also mentioned as shaping the vectors of non-use. These applied to students regardless of nationality, and this male student from Zimbabwe noted how gender played a role in the interaction between students on social media groups:

> If you are engaging with males only there isn't any problems. Females, usually I find them hard to engage. They are usually closed up, they don't want to open up, especially when they discover that whoever they are speaking to is a male. I think it's a factor of our own culture here. Here in this part of Africa where engagement between males and females, and married men and married women, any engagement is usually not tolerated according to our own African values. So women tend to want to stay away, they prefer to speak to other women of course, not to men. They will strategically retreat into a cocoon, saying 'No, no it's OK, I'll see you, I think I have to go, I think I have to go', something like that [Tawanda, male, Zimbabwe].

Exclusions associated with age and disability were mentioned less frequently, but still played a role in some students non-use of social media. In relation to age, for example, one student from South Africa, Jessica [female] who was living overseas noted the difficulties they had with social media: 'I think because of my age, my go to thing is email, so that I can refer to it later as well, you know? If you're using flash social media you quite often lose the thread of what you're talking about'. In relation to a broad understanding of disability, one student [Jeff, male, South Africa] noted that ADHD restricted his ability to join social media as 'it's a thing which makes my studying a bit difficult for me. I tried to get someone to study with [online], but I never met anyone to study with, so I managed

to cope on my own.' This issue of students adapting their behaviour to enable their study was a constant reframe of the interviews, and non-use of social media was a strategy to avoid some of the issues that could emerge in the encounters with other students.

Despite various aspects of social identity and power relations operating online to shape the non-use of social media, it is important not to overplay issues of online exclusion as this was certainly not experienced by all students. However, it was not only these issues of poor access and adverse social environment that led to non-use of social media. In the following, we explore how distrust impacted students' reduction or avoidance of social media.

5. Distrust: Authenticity, security and non-collaboration

A key issue shaping non-use of social media surrounds distrust. In the case of international distance education students studying at UNISA, distrust mainly revolved around authenticity, security and non-collaboration. Evidently, many of the students had used social media, but changed their practices in response to the online environments.

5.1. Authenticity

The main concerns students had about authenticity was in relation to the use of information found online and the people they encountered on social media. For example, some individuals were concerned that using information from other students' posts to write their own essays was not using their own authentic 'voice' and might be seen as a form of plagiarism. Another common concern among the students was the quality of information they were receiving through social media, expressing that it might be misleading, inaccurate or irrelevant for their studies:

It's not really run by a tutor or a lecturer so you don't know if what people are saying is true. If someone says something you can't say 'oh well that's not true' and then have a whole argument on social media you kind of just have to take everything with a pinch of salt, but I also think it's a problem because if I post an opinion on there some students might take it as fact, not everyone can discern the difference [Marissa, female, South Africa].

Marissa had a good sense of understanding of the problems of relying on information on social media, and that it could be an issue especially because there was no university representative in charge of the discussions who had the authority to dismiss problematic claims and information. As such, the challenges of distinguishing authentic statements from incorrect and misleading information was one issue that played a role for some students' decisions to reduce or not use social media.

In addition to concerns about the information that was being circulated, some students were uneasy about the authenticity of people on social media groups. Several informants mentioned the risk of being scammed by people posting as tutors that could aid academic study, as explained by a Zimbabwean student:

Some are going to these groups to look for clients. They are not students themselves. If someone just comes in, you assume they are, but some are not, they are in there just to get numbers, to solicit for business. I remember last semester there was a lady who seemingly was duped. Someone came in, they said they were going to quote them tutorials for their exams. And, they then paid money, but the material didn't come through. So, this lady then posted on the group telling us, 'Be careful of this number, this number is a crook' [Demand, male].

While the majority of the students on the social media groups did not encounter such challenges, the impossibility of knowing for sure who the other participants were contributed to making these spaces feel somewhat unsafe. The challenges associated with verifying the authenticity of fellow students and the risks of other people using the groups for other purposes,

together with the potentially misleading information, made some students prefer to communicate directly with students or tutors via the less user-friendly, but more formal my.unisa portal, which was the official UNISA teaching website.

5.2. Privacy/security

Distrust of social media was also framed through concerns about privacy, which were closely linked to security. A few students were concerned that communication via social media was 'too public':

I try and avoid the whole politics, especially on social media because you just don't know where it will end up. The person that you are chatting with, in terms of in the group, we don't know who they are, or where they come from. [Rudo, female, Zimbabwe].

Such concerns were well-founded in certain cases. Several students, especially from Zimbabwe, mentioned that they took great care not to express political opinions or share any personal information on groups that could be used against them. One Zimbabwean man, Wallace, stated he was very careful in what he posted based on past negative experiences. He was very concerned about how he used social media as 'you may at any given time be called into account for what you have said […] so we tend to steer clear of that, in fear of possible victimisation'. Rather than using social media, he relied on email to communicate with lecturers and students. This indicates how non-use of social media is closely related to the geopolitical specificities of the student's locality, and therefore not always a matter of choice.

Other students expressed some concern about privacy issues and their strategy tended to be focused on behaving properly on social media in general by only posting things that were not contentious or would not offend anyone on the groups. When asked if they were concerned before posting, many pointed out that they read their messages several times before clicking 'send' to make sure it was not problematic in any way. However, some women explained that they had received messages of a sexual nature because of their gender and that such interactions had made them feel uncomfortable about participating in the social media groups.

5.3. Non-collaboration

A final issue with respect to distrust interestingly revolved around the issue of *non-collaboration*. In contrast to the widespread view that social media is the 'great communicator', problems surrounding collaboration framed non-use of social media for many. Several students noted that they no longer used social media because other students were using their knowledge to get 'free' assignment solutions:

Not really, I did initially join the Facebook groups but I find, to be quite honest, a lot of people are just looking for cheap, quick answers, so instead of interacting quality, they'll say, 'Guys, how do you answer question number one?' or, 'What did you put for question number two?' It's not sort of structured, it's just very I wanna say self-serving [David, male, Zimbabwe].

This was a common concern, also among students who used WhatsApp, as Tatenda, a male student from Zimbabwe explained:

Some students feel as if other students are using them because if somebody does research maybe for one, two hours, and now another person did not even research come on WhatsApp and get all the answers. So I think that's what made other students not to want to participate. You did not research nothing, you just come on WhatsApp, you find the answers that are already there. And that guy he says he's got 93% but he never even participated on this group discussion. So it means he just came and took our ideas and he built on them and instead of correcting us where we are wrong, he just kept quiet. So then now what was the

reason for the group?

On the other hand, students who struggled to find time for their studies and did not have time to spend hours doing detailed research into each subject found these groups very useful as they could easily access useful information that would help them with their assignments. These opposing positions and very different circumstances of international distance education students led to tension between the group participants and some to stop using social media for study purposes.

In addition to the competition for marks on assignments, another reason for students to avoid collaboration with other students was that they would be in competition with fellow social media group members for jobs post-studies. This was particularly the case in Namibia because it is a small country and people studying on the same course would in some specialised fields apply for the same jobs, as noted by Luluzeko, a female Namibian student: 'The Namibian group, at the end of the day we all know we're doing LLB [Bachelor of Laws] and we all know that when we're done we'll be competing for the same positions and that's why I think I've seen that the Namibian group is not really active.' While there may well be other reasons for why the group was not so active, the students weighed up the advantages versus the disadvantages of collaboration on social media. In many cases, students found it to be a useful tool to help the in their studies (Madge et al. 2019), but the various forms of distrust emerge as a key issue that explains active non-use of social media. Another factor was considering social media as a distraction because it was seen as overwhelming or irrelevant, as we discuss next.

6. Distraction: Overwhelming or irrelevant

6.1. Overwhelming

Students' social media practices were also influenced by the flows of information they became entangled in. While this did not always result absolute non-use, among the students who suggested that social media could be overwhelming, it was common to develop strategies for selective or temporally restricted use. This occurred especially in relation to data overload, whereby too much information was constantly posted by large groups. For some, the irregular data flow of social media made it impossible to follow. Marissa [female, South Africa] mentioned that social media was:

> […] just annoying. I have to work during the day and have so much else going on so that I can't pick my phone up every five minutes to read group messages and chats. If I want to catch up in the evenings, I will go on the discussion tools, read through the discussions, you know catch up like that. It's a bit overwhelming having all the social media things going on throughout your day - you constantly have to pick up your phone to see who this message is from.

In response, some students switched off their notifications on WhatsApp so that they did not get distracted every time a message came in. Some did it while they were at work and others did it when they were busy or preparing for exams. As such, social media was seen as a 'time-waster', especially in relation to paid work. Some students pointed out that social media had little relevance to their academic studies and had little to offer in aiding successful study outcomes: 'it wasn't working for me. It is a lot of irrelevant things being fed onto the group and it doesn't contribute anyhow' [Bandile, male, South Africa].

Only a few students mentioned that social media was a distraction in terms of it becoming addictive. This may be due to the nature of the students in our study, for whom carving out time and money to use social media was a relative luxury for many and whom were very dedicated and focussed on successful study outcomes. Not using social media owing to its overwhelming distractive nature was thus a proactive decision:

> If I start entertaining like every social media, Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, email and what have you, it's gonna take up attention that

I could put on my studies. I know about them, but it is my choice to stay away. I think that works better for me [Bronwyn, female, Zimbabwe].

This was a choice that enabled the student to focus their attention on their studies.

6.2. Irrelevant

Social media was thus sometimes seen as irrelevant for academic studies, and some students had correspondingly left their social media groups. This was commonly explained as a result of the discussions based on individual complaints that overshadowed constructive academic discussions about study materials or assignments, as revealed by this student: 'The problem is that the students are fighting the lecturers and they're fighting the university. Now they use Facebook to argue with the lecturers, so, it's not really a nice place to be' [Tatenda, male, Zimbabwe]. Another aspect relating to irrelevance was discussion that revolved around everyday social or political issues that were country-specific and so deemed uninteresting or beyond personal experience:

> The other challenge is at times you join a group, it's supposed to be an academic group where people discuss maybe a certain module or a certain project, but then it becomes a social hub where people are talking about politics, things like that. I do avoid them because at times people are talking about things that they see daily in their country [Farai, male, Zimbabwe].

However, this attitude of 'the irrelevance' of social media was certainly not the case for everyone. Some students had initially thought social media was irrelevant, did not use it the first year, struggled to pass exams and after being advised to use social media by their lecturers, had experienced a huge change in their study experience and progress, finding social media most useful (Madge et al. 2019). The decision to use, or not use, social media varied between different students, and shifted over time as their studies progressed. It emerges that social media use and non-use are not always separate, but that some people change their practices over time and in response to their assessment of the usefulness of the flows of information. Thus far, we have focussed on issues revolving around individualistic concerns, but there are also wider structural features that impact non-use of social media, which we examine in the following section.

7. Online discrimination

7.1. Nationality

Various aspect of social identity and power relations operated online to shape the non-use of social media, and a final issue explaining to the non-use of social media related to discrimination online. Discrimination was not experienced by all students, as one Zimbabwean student noted: 'there might be some discrimination in terms of race, and gender, and actually your nationality, yeah. But I haven't really like come across serious issues on the UNISA groups' [Ngoni, male] This student made a seemingly contradictory statement in that he recognized various forms of discrimination, but it was not considered too serious, illustrating that to him verbal discrimination on social media groups was relatively unproblematic in comparison with, for example, on-the-ground issues some Zimbabweans faced in South Africa. This approach did not necessarily reflect the sentiments of other individuals in the group of similar backgrounds.

For other students such discrimination which took place during social media interactions, sometimes subtly, sometimes overtly, made several students feel uncomfortable owing to their social identity. Most frequently mentioned were issues associated with nationality, as Tendai from Zimbabwe [male] explained:

> When you start off, you're not so comfortable because we have issues to do with not being South African. You look at everyone else who is asking to join a group being South African and you are sort of not sure if

you are going to be welcomed as a foreign student on a WhatsApp platform.

This trepidation of using such groups as 'foreigners' were not unfounded. Several had experienced challenging group dynamics on social media groups for students. This particularly revolved around xenophobia experienced by Zimbabweans. When asked if they had received any comments based on their nationality, there were many who had experienced this, such as Blessed [male, Zimbabwe]:

> I think there is a tendency of some people to sort of bully others. What I mean is some people from countries that are better economically they tend to see themselves as a bit superior, they are more imposing at times.

Such exclusionary practices, whether deliberate or a result of omission, served to alienate some of the Zimbabwean students in some of the social media groups. The responses to these feelings of alienation were not always representative of a group but were in some cases individual. There were also random and isolated incidences.

These online practices reflected the everyday political situation in Southern Africa at that time, as one Zimbabwean student noted:

> That was on Facebook so I just had to keep quiet and forget about it, but it gave me a real piece of what is actually happening on the ground. I understand that there's an issue between South Africans and the white farmers, they just want to grab farms the way we did it in Zimbabwe. At one point actually I saw a message from one of our EFF [Economic Freedom Fighters] supporters in the group. They were saying, 'Guys, we need to go out there and grab our farms!' <Chuckles> [Lovemore, male].

Clearly, such perspectives do not arise merely online, but are situated in a broader geopolitical context where difference based on nationality holds particular meanings.

7.2. Race

Thus clearly in addition to nationality, vectors of race were operating in the social media groups, which has a long and troubled history in the South African context. The most commonly mentioned issue surrounded relations between white and black groups in South Africa. One Namibian student noted:

> Sometimes other people in the group, non-white people attack each other. They actually go to the extent of really using vulgar language. We all know what is happening in South Africa, and it feels like sometimes when people attack each other in the group it's based on racism. Most of the time it's usually black against white people and it's mostly national issues like land issues. There are vulgar words that you're called by other black students, by other students because you are white. And then the white people often retaliate. And it goes on and on and there isn't really much you can do. We are foreign students, so we stay out of the arguments, we don't involve ourselves [Luluzeko, female].

Online interactions on social media were thus shaped by student offline identities and social power relations in relation to race and nation. A related issue emerged when South African students were using local languages, which could result in students sometimes requesting their social media group to communicate in English. International students would hesitate to make such requests as they could be met with resistance: 'some people could react to that and don't take politely to such, you know, and they end up kicking out the group member who asked for English or they leave the group and form their own group. You know at times still there's discriminatory behaviour' [Farai, male, Zimbabwe].

While there was discrimination among black students from different backgrounds, the most significant inequality and tension between people on the social media groups emerged in the interviews was between white and black students. White students would generally feel more at ease calling out students speaking other local languages, whereas black students would hesitate to demand that the white students who spoke Afrikaans change to English. This is representative of the broader and longstanding inequalities that the region continues to grapple despite the end of colonialism and apartheid. Indeed, resonances of the apartheid regime in pre-1994 South Africa, which was explicitly developed on the basis of race, was observable in the use of social media by UNISA students. Evidence from the interviews showed that very little mixing in the social media groups between South Africans of differing races occurred. Most groups, particularly on the WhatsApp platform, were composed of black South African nationals, and other foreign nationals, most of who were black African. This finding may suggest that the social hierarchies of apartheid still influence socialisation in South Africa, even if that socialisation is occurring behind a screen.

Negative perceptions on the use of social media groups were mentioned by white South Africans, who were sometimes victims of the historical frustrations of the black South Africans students, expressed as negative and sometimes abusive comments. Although some black South African students and students of other nationalities shared such experiences, this rarely resulted in their total disengagement with the social media group, as was the case with white South African students. Whereas white South African students would opt out of the group completely, should they not find it useful, black Africans would rather stay in the group and only actively participate in discussions that they deemed useful. This suggests that for most black Africans, it was important to maintain the social networks forged on social media, as investing in these social relations could be valuable in ensuring study success. This was not the case for white South Africans, who often had access to other forms of support, such as private tutors. While the digital tools and social media provide new ways for producing divides, stereotypes and exclusion (Elwood & Leszczynski, 2018; Morrow, Hawkins, & Kern, 2015), non-use of social media also reflected differences in wealth and opportunity between different social groups that have emerged out of the historical racial inequalities of apartheid.

8. Conclusions: Toward a typology of non-use?

The findings in this paper can be synthesized into a typology of non-use (see Table 1). This typology reveals that non-use of social media in the everyday lives of UNISA students is *multi-dimensional*. There are pedagogic, social and emotional, economic and political reasons for why students do not use social media, and, consequently, any typology must involve political, economic and cultural realms to grasp non-use of social media. Any typology non-use also needs to capture a *differentiated* view of social media non-users. For example, how (and why) does social usage vary according to race, gender, ethnicity, language, age, socio-economic group, place of residence, home/international student status, personal circumstance, histories of learning, and so on. Recognizing this multi-dimensional nature enable us to gain a more nuanced understanding and focus on the specificities of why some people do not use social media.

However, any typology of non-use must not simply focus on individualistic concerns which assume ubiquitous access to social media. Our paper has shown the importance of *context* shaping non-use of social media. Since to date much of the literature on non-use tends to be of privileged students at institutions in Europe and the US predominately, places with presumed ubiquitous access, typologies have thus far often focused on individual choice not to use social media. However, our typology of non-use also illustrates that exclusions matter (see also Reddick, Enriquez, Harris, & Sharma, 2020 for an example from the US where exclusion is primarily an issue for minorities) and this paper shows the importance of avoiding 'ahistorical and depoliticized tropes that presume flattened geographies' (Stein & de Oliveira Andreotti, 2017, 135) with respect to international students and social media. Non-use is, just like social media use, entangled in broader state politics and identity politics of international students. That said, the qualitative data shows us that exclusions are not

Table 1
Typology of non-use of social media.

Theme	Examples
Exclusion- Access	No smart phone/relevant equipment/No internet access at home
	Lack of money- cost of data prohibitive
	No time to do so- other priorities e.g. work, children
	Not easy to connect with other students on same course, asked to join group but was not joined
	Wider political/economic/environmental situation restricted entry
Exclusion- Social environment	Poor/rude netiquette- lack of moderation in groups
	Language
	Age, Gender, Disability
Distrust- Authenticity	Trust issues surrounding information/data
	Issues of trust surrounding people. Fake people, scams
	Prefers/chooses to communicate with students/lecturers ftf/in class or via more formal MyUnisa
Distrust-Security/privacy	Privacy issues. This form of communication is too public
	Avoid political discussions online.
	Worried about government response to posts
	Worried about sexual nature of some posts/gender issues
Distrust- Non-Collaboration issues	Some students use SM to get 'free' assignment solutions
	Cannot collaborate as will be in competition with people for jobs post-studies
Distraction-overwhelming	Social media result in data overload
	Social media are a time-waster- especially no time with regards to paid work
	Social media distract from academic work/studies
	Social media can be addictive
Distraction- Irrelevant	No benefit to studies
	Too social, based on individual complaints/circumstances
	Too place-based
Online discrimination online	Nationality. Xenophobia online.
	Race/racism

absolute, and the typology illustrates how students continuously use their *agency* to shape non-use. As such, the typology can capture some of the complexity of non-use of social media, highlighting that both constraints and choices are operating simultaneously.

It is important to recognize that any typology of non-use is not fixed but there are changing *temporal modulations* with regards to international distance education and social media. Not only may people of different ages may have different relationships to social media, which is then mediating their experience of education, but it is also about how their access and relationship to digital media change over an individual student's life course as well. Thus, analyses of social media non-use need to be sensitive to both student agency and context, and this paper has demonstrated that the value of a *reflective and evolving stance* to understand the broader significance of non-use of social media.

Any typology cannot fully capture the 'flickering' in and out of use/non-use. In reality, it is never a simple binary dichotomy. A typology is only a first step in systematic recognition that non-use goes beyond technological inabilities or addiction issues. This paper therefore calls to problematize the

quantitative typologies of social media users and forms of use by arguing that while typologies are useful to identify broad patterns, such approaches simultaneously oversimplify lived realities by neglecting temporalities, contextual specificities and subtle nuances of shifting non-use (and use). In response, this paper makes a case for a *qualitative* approach to place contextual sociocultural circumstances of social media non-use at the forefront of any analysis.

By focusing our case study on the African international distance education student perspectives, we relocate the focus, as thus far, typologies of social media have predominantly been based on the empirical case studies from 'Western' centres and imperatives. Placing African students centre stage realigns typologies of social media, illustrating and *legitimizing the many centres from which social media non-use* may be analysed. Given the relative paucity of literature on non-use of social media in the African context, social media may sometimes have different roles to elsewhere (and sometimes remain the same). However, this does not mean that African students are playing 'technological catch up', but rather that we have to recognize the multiple forefronts of globalising modernity in relation to higher education and the significance of a geographical sensitivity to context.

However, it is clear that while the broad themes of our typology of non-use (exclusion, distrust, distraction, discrimination) may be applicable to many other social groups in many places and situations, the details of some of the examples are specific to the context of African international students (such as non-collaboration owing to a restricted job market or choosing not to engage in social media as it distracts from studies or time constraints owing to working full-time while studying). Thus, we have attempted to develop a formwork for the typology that can both accommodate general features, while simultaneously being *sensitive to geographic context* (in its entire manifestations- place-based, virtual, economic, social, political, cultural, etc.).

References

Al-Khalifa, H. S., & Garcia, R. A. (2013). The state of social media in Saudi Arabia's higher education. *International Journal of Technology and Educational Marketing, 3*(1), 65–76. https://doi.org/10.4018/ijtem.2013010105.

Alt, D. (2018). Students' wellbeing, fear of missing out, and social media engagement for leisure in higher education learning environments. *Current Psychology, 37*(1), 128–138. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-016-9496-1.

Arif, M., & Kanwal, S. (2016). Adoption of social media technologies and their impact on students' academic performance: The only way for future survival of distance education students in Pakistan. *Pakistan Journal of Information Management and Libraries, 18*(1), 25–36.

Ash, J., Kitchin, R., & Leszczynski, A. (2018). Digital turn, digital geographies? *Progress in Human Geography, 42*(1), 25–43. https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132516664800.

Baker, R. K., & White, K. M. (2011). In their own words: Why teenagers don't use social networking sites. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior and Social Networking, 14*(6), 395–398. https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2010.0016.

Baumer, E. P. S. (2018). Socioeconomic inequalities in the non use of facebook. *Proceedings of the 2018 CHI conference on human factors in computing systems - CHI '18* (pp. 1–14). Montreal QC, Canada: ACM Press. https://doi.org/10.1145/3173574.3174190.

Baumer, E. P. S., Adams, P., Khovanskaya, V. D., Liao, T. C., Smith, M. E., Sosik, V. S., & Williams, K. (2013). *Limiting, leaving, and (Re)Lapsing: An exploration of facebook non-use practices and experiences, 10.*

Baumer, E. P. S., Guha, S., Quan, E., Mimno, D., & Gay, G. K. (2015). Missing photos, suffering withdrawal, or finding freedom? How experiences of social media non-use influence the likelihood of reversion. *Social Media + Society*, *1*(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305115614851 205630511561485.

Blank, G., & Groselj, D. (2014). Dimensions of internet use: Amount, variety, and types. *Information, Communication & Society*, *17*(4), 417–435. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2014.889189.

Bonzo, J., & Parchoma, G. (2010). The paradox of social media and higher education institutions. *Proceedings of the 7th International Conference on Networked Learning* (pp. 917).

Borg, K., & Smith, L. (2018). Digital inclusion and online behaviour: Five typologies of Australian internet users. *Behaviour & Information Technology*, *37*(4), 367–380.

Brandtzaeg, P. B., & Heim, J. (2011). A typology of social networking sites users. *International Journal of Web Based Communities*, *7*(1), 28–51.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101.

Chawinga, W. D. (2017). Taking social media to a university classroom: Teaching and learning using twitter and blogs. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, *14*(1), 3. https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-017-0041-6.

Cilliers, L., Chinyamurindi, W. T., & Viljoen, K. (2017). Factors influencing the intention to use social media for work-related purposes at a south African higher education institution. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, *1*(2). https://doi.org/10.4102/sajhrm.v15i0.859.

Deakin, H., & Wakefield, K. (2014). Skype interviewing: reflections of two PhD researchers. *Qualitative Research*, *14*(5), 603–616.

van Deursen, A. J. A. M., & Helsper, E. J. (2015). A nuanced understanding of internet use and non-use among the elderly. *European Journal of Communication*, *30*(2), 171–187. https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323115578059.

Dlamini, C., Ncube, F., & Muchemwa, S. (2015). The use of social media technology in Universities: A case of Solusi university, Zimbabwe. *Journal of Media and Communication Studies*, *7*(5), 101–111.

Elwood, S., & Leszczynski, A. (2018). Feminist digital geographies. *Gender, Place and Culture*, *25*(5), 629–644. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2018.1465396.

Eynon, R., & Malmberg, L. -E. (2011). A typology of young People's internet use: Implications for education. *Computers & Education*, *56*(3), 585–595.

Gazi, M. A., Çetin, M., & Çakı, C. (2017). The research of the level of social media addiction of University Students. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Education Research*, *3*(2). https://doi.org/10.24289/ijsser.279705 (549–549).

Graham, M., & Dutton, W. H. (2014). *Society and the internet: How networks of information and communication are changing our lives*. Oxford University Press.

Gunter, A., Raghuram, P., Breines, M. R., & Prinsloo, P. (2020). Distance education as sociomaterial assemblage: Place, distribution, and aggregation. *Population, Space and Place*, *26*(3) p.e2320.

Hargittai, E., & Hsieh, Y. -l. P. (2010). From dabblers to omnivores: A typology of social network site usage. *A networked self* (pp. 154–176). Routledge.

Hawi, N. S., & Samaha, M. (2017). The relations among social media addiction, self-esteem, and life satisfaction in university students. *Social Science Computer Review*, *35*(5), 576–586. https://doi.org/10.1177/0894439316660340.

van der Horst, H., Shadymanova, J., & Sato, C. (2019). Educational migrants, ICTs and sociospatial relationships: Establishing presence from a distance. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*. https://doi.org/10.1177/0021909618825277 February, 002190961882527.

Hunsinger, J., Allen, M. M., & Klastrup, L. (Eds.). (2020). *Second international handbook of internet research*. Springer Netherlands. https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9789402415537.

Gachago, D., & Ivala, E. (2012). Social media for enhancing student engagement: the use of Facebook and blogs at a university of technology. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, *26*(1), 152–167.

Johannes, N., Veling, H., Verwijmeren, T., & Buijzen, M. (2019). Hard to resist?: The effect of smartphone visibility and notifications on response inhibition. *Journal of Media Psychology*, *31*(4), 214–225. https://doi.org/10.1027/1864-1105/a000248.

Johnson, A. T. (2013). Exploring the use of mobile technology in qualitative inquiry in Africa. *The Qualitative Report*, *18*(22), 1.

Keenan, I. D., Slater, J. D., & Matthan, J. (2018). Social media: Insights for medical education from instructor perceptions and usage. *MedEdPublish*, *7*(January). https://doi.org/10.15694/mep.2018.0000027.1.

Krairit, D. (2018). The new face of internet user typology: The case of Thailand. *Journal of Theoretical and Applied Electronic Commerce Research*, *13*(2), 58–79.

Larsson, A. O., & Kalsnes, B. (2014). "Of course we are on facebook": Use and non-use of social media among Swedish and Norwegian politicians. *European Journal of Communication*, *29*(6), 653–667. https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323114531383.

Lembani, Reuben, Gunter, Ashley, Breines, Markus, & Dalu, Mwazvita Tapiwa Beatrice (2020). The same course, different access: the digital divide between urban and rural distance education students in South Africa. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, *44*(1), 70–84. https://doi.org/10.1080/03098265.2019.1694876.

Li, F., Zhou, M., & Fan, B. (2013). Can distance education increase educational equality? Evidence from the expansion of Chinese higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, *39*(10), 1811–1822. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2013.806462.

Lynch, C. R. (2020). Unruly digital subjects: Social entanglements, identity, and the politics of technological expertise. *Digital Geography and Society*, *1*(January), 100001. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.diggeo.2020.100001.

Breines, Markus Roos, Raghuram, Parvati, & Gunter, Ashley (2019). Infrastructures of immobility: enabling international distance education students in Africa to not move. *Mobilities*, *14*(4), 484–499. https://doi.org/10.1080/17450101.2019.1618565.

Madge, Clare, Breines, Markus Roos, Dalu, Mwazvita Tapiwa Beatrice, Gunter, Ashley, Mittelmeier, Jenna, Prinsloo, Paul, & Raghuram, Parvati (2019). WhatsApp use among African international distance education (IDE) students: transferring, translating and transforming educational experiences, Learning. *Media and Technology*, *44*(3), 267–282. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439884.2019.1628048.

Martin, F., & Rizvi, F. (2014). Making Melbourne: Digital connectivity and international students' experience of locality. *Media, Culture and Society*, *36*(7), 1016–1031.

Morrow, O., Hawkins, R., & Kern, L. (2015). Feminist research in online spaces. *Gender, Place and Culture*, *22*(4), 526–543. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2013.879108.

Ng'ambi, D., Brown, C., Bozalek, V., Gachago, D., & Wood, D. (2016). Technology enhanced teaching and learning in south African higher education - a rearview of a 20 year journey: 20 years reflection on technology enhanced learning. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, *47*(5), 843–858. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.12485.

Nielsen, J. (2006). Participation inequality: The 90-9-1 rule for social features. *Nielsen Norman Group.*, *2006*. https://www.nngroup.com/articles/participation-inequality/.

Owen, N., Fox, A., & Bird, T. (2016). The development of a small-scale survey instrument of UK teachers to study professional use (and non-use) of and attitudes to social media. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, *39*(2), 170–193. https://doi.org/10.1080/1743727X.2015.1041491.

Raghuram, P., Breines, M. R., & Gunter, A. (2020). Beyond# FeesMustFall: International students, fees and everyday agency in the era of decolonisation. *Geoforum*, *109*, 95–105.

Rambe, P., & Nel, L. (2015). Technological utopia, dystopia and ambivalence: Teaching with social media at a South African University: Technological ambivalence: Teaching with social media. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, *46*(3), 629–648. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.12159.

Reddick, C. G., Enriquez, R., Harris, R. J., & Sharma, B. (2020). Determinants of broadband access and affordability: An analysis of a community survey on the digital divide. *Cities*, *106*(November), 102904. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2020.102904.

Sheeran, N., & Cummings, D. J. (2018). An examination of the relationship between facebook groups attached to university courses and student engagement. *Higher Education*, *76*(6), 937–955.

Sobaih, A. E. E., Moustafa, M. A., Ghandforoush, P., & Khan, M. (2016). To use or not to use? Social Media in Higher Education in developing countries. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *58*, 296–305.

Stein, S., & de Oliveira Andreotti, V. (2017). Afterword: Provisional pedagogies toward imagining global mobilities otherwise. *Curriculum Inquiry*, *47*(1), 135–146.

Tur, G., & Marin, V. (2014). *"Student teachers" attitudes toward collaboration in EPortfolios built with web 2.0 Tools', 9.*

Turan, Z., Tinmaz, H., & Goktas, Y. (2013). The reasons for non-use of social networking websites by university students. *Comunicar*, *21*(41), 137–145. https://doi.org/10.3916/C41-2013-13.

Zhao, X. (2017). International students and social exclusion in the age of social media. *Transitions: Journal of Transient Migration*, *1*(2), 163–175. https://doi.org/10.1386/tjtm.1.2.163_1.