

Negotiating exclusion in a digital age: Everyday social media practices among Chinese student-migrants in Australia

Xinyu Zhao¹

¹School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Deakin University, Burwood, Victoria 3125, Australia
xzhao@deakin.edu.au

This paper proposes to scrutinise the changing nature of international students' experiences of social exclusion in Australia in the context of their increasing daily use of social media. Specifically, it firstly engages with the empirical literature on international students' lived experiences of social exclusion in Australia and points to the literature's excessive focus on the "problems" and "challenges" and its limited attention to the agency of international students themselves. This paper goes on to review the complexities of the concepts of "social exclusion" and "social inclusion" which remain implicit in these studies. In addition, an analysis of studies on international students' diversified use of social media suggests how the students' struggles with social exclusion can be entangled with their everyday social media practices. This paper, therefore, argues for a closer examination of the complex ways international students integrate social media into their everyday lives and the subsequent impacts on their experiences of social exclusion and inclusion in different aspects of life. This renewed focus helps us better conceptualise the lived experiences of international students in a digitised world. Methodologically, digital ethnographic methods are discussed to seek a holistic and nuanced understanding of the interactions between international students' everyday social media practices and their experiences and negotiations of social exclusion.

Keywords: digital ethnography; everyday life; international students; social exclusion; social inclusion; social media practices