HERE, THERE, AND EVERYWHERE

Deliberate Immigrants in London

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1. Introduction

1.1. Topic of interest

As the world is steadily becoming more interconnected through globalization, communication and contact between cultures have increased and, with them, the interest in multiculturalism. Much has already been written about cross-cultural communication, transnationalism, multicultural identities etc. This study deals with many of the same ideas as the research on these concepts, but in an effort to avoid vagueness and false presumptions, it will aim to look at the issue of multiculturalism in a practical, everyday, executable form. Although modern technologies and increasingly hybrid societies allow for plenty of direct and indirect intercultural experiences, this study will look at such experiences in the 'intensifying' context of migration.

There is something to be gained from migration. If these gains were limited to the benefits of being in a particular place of residence, then only the destination would warrant study. Although the destination clearly matters, how an individual responds to it is crucial for the post-migration experience and depends on more than just chance and external circumstances. If we do assume that there is something to be gained from migration itself, then logic implies that this gain would not be limited either to the new location or to the commonalities between one's life in different locations but would, instead, be tied to both: the novelties, the commonalities, and the interplay of the two. This study will explore both the gains from immigration and what is involved in getting them. In the effort to avoid the broad and often vague concepts such as nation, culture, identity, etc., the study will look for those gains in immigrants' interactions with places and people, as these are also arguably most directly impacted by migration.

Any immigrant is likely to benefit from such gain, in different forms and to different degrees, but this study will focus on individuals who decided to both immigrate to a place and stay there for clearly voluntary reasons. Such immigrants are likely to be more aware of, and to invest in, this gain as they were presumably driven by it in the first place. This study also aims to research immigrants separately from the many negative connotations that usually follow immigrant status, not only because such studies are relatively rare, but also because such an approach removes the necessity of focusing on the impact of strongly negative circumstances (including severe nostalgia).

Within this focus, a topic of special interest is the role of the media, primarily the internet. The internet is a rather recent technological development that is having a remarkable impact on the ways in which individuals can interact across borders, which is especially significant in the context of migration. This study will therefore pay special attention to the internet's role in and impact on immigrants' interactions with people and place. It will also look beyond the internet's function in 'keeping in touch' with the immigrants' previous place(s) of residence and explore ways in which the internet can impact adaptation to a new place of residence at a more local level as well as create connections between the distant and the local.

1.2. Preliminary research question

This study does not aim to be representative or answer a specific hypothesis. Instead, it is an exploration of the transformations that individuals' ties to places, people, and related activities undergo due to migration, with a focus on how experiences in previous place(s) of residence impact and inform this transformation and contribute to the individuals' increased satisfaction with life in London.

1.3. Relevance

As noted, cross-cultural interactions and multicultural identities and societies are becoming increasingly frequent and expanding our understanding of them is therefore gaining in importance. This is especially true in the case of immigration. One aim of this study is to advance the often overlooked notion that immigration is not always undertaken under circumstances of poverty, danger, or desperation. The study will also argue that ties to one's place of 'origin' need not hinder adaptation to a new place of residence and that past experiences can contribute to the development of new ties and overall satisfaction after migration. This connection may be more clear in the case of clearly voluntary immigrants, which makes it easier to study in that context, but it may be especially relevant in the context of what is seen as more problematic migration, where old ties are presumed to hamper 'integration.' Finally, the study's multifaceted focus on the uses of the internet in the context of migration is intended to explore and, consequently, promote ways in which new technological developments can further support this interplay between old and new ties and experiences, and help increase overall post-migration satisfaction.

1.4. Thesis structure

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. In Chapter 2, a review of existing literature in a number of relevant fields presents the most relevant insights from previous research and draws connections between them, providing a background for the theoretical and empirical explorations in this study. Chapter 3 reflects on the findings from the previous chapter, including both relevant insights and gaps in existing research, and in this context presents the focus of this study. Chapter 4 develops new theoretical concepts and models that will be used in the empirical analysis and presents the refined research question using these new concepts. The research design is outlined in Chapter 5, which includes details on the methods of data collection and data analysis and reflects on their relation to the research question. Chapter 6 consists of the individual case study analyses, while Chapter 7 summarizes the findings and reflects on their relevance and contribution to the current state of research.

2. Literature review

This thesis deals with several broad fields of study, which in themselves are often multidisciplinary. This review will therefore present the most directly relevant insights from previous research in each of these areas, while contextualizing them within their own fields and drawing connections between them.

2.1. Immigration

To a large extent, migration studies still focus primarily on post-colonial, guestworker, asylum, and illegal migrations (Favell, 2008), often leading to the impression that "a migrant is someone who is poor, uprooted, marginal and desperate" (King, 2002: 89). In addition, a large part of the research on international migration has focused on the effects of immigration on the receiving nations and on their responses to these effects (see, e.g., Hanson, 2008; Morawska, 2008; Massey, 2003). When the focus is turned towards the immigrants themselves, they are primarily studied in nation-based groups of immigrants settled within a single country or as transnational diasporas (see, e.g., Bauböck and Faist, 2010; Kivisto, 2005).

There is, consequently, little research on immigrants as individuals and on their negotiation of personal ties that reach across borders. While some studies work with concepts such as transnationalism, acclimation, integration, and hybridity, these concepts are primarily discussed with a focus on larger groups, often based on nationality, culture, or ethnicity. Berry's work on integration and multiculturalism (2005, 2011), for example, looks at different approaches that immigrants in general use to navigate connections to multiple (usually two) cultures: assimilation, separation, integration, marginalization. He also approaches cultures as distinct wholes that are often pitted against each other. Similarly, studies on transnational migration by definition focus on the nation-state. While, by its more broad definition, migrant transnationalism explores all ties between both people and institutions across borders (Vertovec, 2009), research often approaches transnational migration from a more narrow perspective of exploring immigrants' "embeddedness in more than one society" (Levitt and Jaworsky, 2007: 131; see also Faist, 2010; Bradatan, Popan, and Melton, 2010), where that society is defined through the nation.

Certain studies, however, sidestep this focus on immigrants as defined by nation and need. In his reassessment of migration research, King (2002) points out the flaws in prevalent dichotomies in migration studies (voluntary vs. forced immigrants, temporary vs. permanent, etc.). He argues that motivations for migration have become more complex in the past decades, since migration is increasingly motivated by "personal factors" and is sometimes "a desirable act" rather than simply a means to an end. King concludes that these less "problematic" types of motivation, such as "love" and "lifestyle" migrations, tend to be overlooked by researchers and he highlights the need for more research on such immigrant groups. For the purposes of this thesis, two types of migration are particularly important: lifestyle migration and highly skilled professional migration.

Lifestyle migration was made possible by a combination of factors: increased accessibility of distant locations, globalization, the spread of mass information and communication technologies, and the rise of individualization (Torkington, 2010). While there are some differences in definition, lifestyle immigrants are typically distinguished by their "affluence" and the search for a "significantly better quality of life," often in contrast with their unsatisfying pre-immigration lives (Benson and O'Reilly, 2009). As Benson and O'Reilly note, these migrations frequently take the form of "residential tourism" (primarily in warmer climates), a search for a "rural idyll" or for a "unique 'cultural' experience," and have primarily been researched in the context of retirement migration (see Casado-Diaz, 2006; Gustafson, 2008; Gustafson, 2002; King, Warnes and Williams, 1998). Employed individuals within this category are generally seen as using their work only as a way to fund their new lifestyles and, whether employed or not, their characterization as "affluent" implies a significantly wider array of opportunities based on special financial circumstances.

Lifestyle immigrants are contrasted with the other dominant group in studies on "affluent," i.e. non-problematic, migrants: highly skilled professional immigrants (see Fechter, 2007; Scott, 2006; Amit, 2002; Beaverstock, 2002). One group is defined by work and the other by dismissal of work from the list of priorities. While research on professional immigrants can be quite elaborate in its evaluation of different sub-types and motivations within that group, as in Iredale's typology of professional migrants (2001), the focus remains firmly on career-based motives. In addition, these studies often rely on the problematic concept of 'expatriates,' which is frequently left undefined

and seems to be used as a positive alternative to the word 'immigrant,' often with connotations of temporary immigration.

Although no single study approaches migration from the same angle as this thesis, many concepts and angles used in the following studies are especially relevant for this research due to their unique and complex take on migration.

Benson's study (2010) provides a broader understanding of lifestyle migration by looking beyond retirement migration (it includes family migrants and mid-life migrants) and arguing that migrant's lives before migration and their motivations surrounding migration continue impacting their life after migration. The study focuses on the different factors that influence the level of the migrants' social integration (defined as level of interaction with the local, French, population) and finds the dominant ones to be shared interests and activities (through hobbies, work, children) and motivation to interact with the locals. However, due to the broad definition of social integration, the study offers few specifics on the different roles that such interactions and connected activities play in the migrants' lives. Additionally, it still focuses on members of the "elite mobility" with a generally negative view of their life before migration (over-demanding working environments, bad treatment of the elderly, bad environment for children, and "decline of British society"), who approach work primarily as a means to support their new lifestyles. Finally, even the younger sub-categories focus on later stages in life (presumably because time is needed in order to reach the required levels of "affluence" and dissatisfaction with one's previous lifestyle), so that the category of lifestyle migration remains quite limited in scope.

Nowicka's study (2007) looks at how "chronically mobile" professionals construct a home for themselves. Her focus on individuals' perception of home as achievement of "security, stability and familiarity" though a set of relationships with specific people and objects puts the spotlight on the immigrants' individual experiences and, while profession holds a central place in the study participants' lives, the focus is on the migrants' overall experience. Although Nowicka looks at the construction of quite temporary homes, her approach to home-making as a dynamic process that is not tied to a specific location is a useful way to look beyond presumed ties at the national level and the home country-receiving country dichotomy.

At the same time, there are some marked differences between the focuses of this thesis and of Nowicka's study. The study participants' motivation for migrating is tied almost exclusively to specific professional and educational opportunities, which keep them on the move across various places of residence. Consequently, they neither have a particular interest nor the opportunity to explore the specificities of the places they live in, make ties to specific locations within them or even to specific people. Instead, as her definition of home implies, the focus is on familiarity and similarities between places: the mobile, largely pre-established, social ties and similar infrastructural features. Consequently, Nowicka does not study the benefits of exploring and making use of the specific characteristics of a new place of residence, which can play a significant role in the life of more settled immigrants.

Conradson and Latham's study (2005) is particularly interesting because it looks at "middling" migration in terms of "socio-economic and class position in a country of origin" (290), i.e. neither elite nor underprivileged. As they write:

> "World cities like London are home to large numbers of young, relatively well-educated migrants from other affluent countries [...] who are drawn to the city as much by what it offers them in lifestyle and personal experience terms as by any narrow economic calculus [...] Their particular embodiments of relative youth, mobility and middlingness [...] suggest a need to reconsider some of the established categories of individual and group mobility employed in the transnational migrant literatures. Furthermore, they require us to reconsider the role that places like London have in particular transnational imaginations." (290).

The study explores such middling temporary immigrants from New Zealand in London, whose motives for migration are related only loosely to economic factors (with migrants often maintaining their careers, rather than developing them) and are primarily tied to "self-experimentation, exploration, and development" (290) made possible both by the act of migration and by London as a destination. While the study explores only temporary migration and highlights its opportunities for experimentation, similar benefits could be gained from long term migration. The study also explores the significance of friendship in contemporary international mobility (as opposed to more frequently researched ties to family or neighbors). Finally, it should be noted that the complex motivations for migration described in the study are not limited to middling individuals from affluent countries.

Conradson and Latham's study also has a number of limiting factors in relation to the focus of this thesis. First of all, migration is approached as temporary and will

eventually end with a return to "real life." It is also seen as a "part of a project of self-fashioning" (290) - a long but, nevertheless, one-time experience, which inevitably results in different priorities, ties, and activities from those involved in more permanent migration. Finally, all of the participants in the study migrated within the context of established social relationships (friends who either came along to London or were already there), which influenced their decision to move and had a significant impact on their lives in London.

2.2. Immigration and media

Over two decades ago, Giddens (1990) argued that the "advent of modernity," which includes advances in communication technologies, makes space increasingly irrelevant since relations can be maintained at a distance. The development and spread of the internet only advanced this process, causing researchers to make arguments such as that the internet makes interactions between two people in the same building "indistinguishable" from those of people at large distances (Baym, 2002; see also Bargh and McKenna, 2004; Castells, 2000; Cairncross, 1997). In the context of migration, such developments become especially important, since they impact the ways in which individuals can maintain ties across large distances. As Scholte (2002) argues, the development of the internet is one of the main factors that allow us to experience "transworld simultaneity" and "transworld instantaneity," taking power away from distance and location.

Indeed, much research supports the notion that the internet plays a significant role in immigrants' lives (see Hepp, 2005; Elliott and Urry, 2010; Hiller and Franz, 2004; Macri, 2011; Gonzalez and Castro, 2007). While, for example, the spread of television channels across borders has been extensively researched for its impact on immigrant identities (Robins, 2003; Aksoy and Robins, 2003a; Tsagarousianou, 2001; Morley, 2000), the uniqueness of the internet is both in its interactivity (especially for interpersonal communication) and its ability to combine access to an almost endless variety of mass media (Domeyer, 2010). Indeed, research has suggested that many (especially younger) migrants primarily use internet for both accessing various forms of mass media and for interpersonal communication (Metykova, 2010).

As with both migration studies (Wimmer and Schiller, 2002) and media studies (Livingstone, 2003; Domeyer, 2010) in general, much of the focus in the exploration of

immigrants and media has been on the nation. This most frequently takes the form of explorations of diasporas (Metykova, 2010; see also Brinkerhoff, 2009; Androutsopoulos, 2006; Hiller & Franz, 2004; Parham, 2004), where, as Aksoy and Robins (2003b) write:

> "The general assumption [is] that migrants want to connect back to some 'homeland' – it is precisely the idea that migrants remain loyal to another state whose citizens they really are – and that new communications technologies now make such long-distance 'bonding' realizable. The belief seems to be that their ethnic identity is central to their lives, and that the consumption of transnational is ethnically motivated [...] The point that we are making is that 'diaspora' is a category par excellence of the national imaginary, a category that subordinates the social world to the national logic" (371).

A number of studies, however, actively avoided this approach and focused on the point of view of individual immigrants in an attempt to go beyond presumptions of nostalgia or dominant feelings of ethnic or national belonging. This includes the studies by Aksoy and Robins (2003b), Domeyer (2010), Metykova (2010) and Moores and Metykova (2009, 2010).

While the Aksoy and Robins study (2003b) focuses on immigrants' uses of transnational television, their general approach is very relevant for this study. They distanced themselves from discourses on ethnicity and diaspora and instead focused on "experience" as the main unit of observation in an effort to explore not the immigrant's "identities" but their "minds." Their goal was to find out how an understanding of these immigrant's unique experiences and consequent ways of thinking " might contribute to the enlargement and enrichment of meaning, for all of us" (385).

Domeyer's study (2010) describes a new methodological approach to transnational and transcultural communication, which would avoid the pitfalls of the majority of existing approaches: methodological nationalism, lack of connection between different relevant disciplines (intercultural communication, migration and diaspora studies, and media use research), and lack of focus on media users and their approaches a variety of media. Domeyer focuses on the media users' point of view as they cross cultural and national borders through their entire media "diet." While Domeyer puts her focus solely on media and is primarily interested in its influence on the individuals' development of feelings of "belonging," her approach has some more widely applicable characteristics. She argues for exploring how the individuals' media choices are interconnected and how

they, as a whole, "make sense" to the users. In this way, Domeyer avoids looking at individual media choices in isolation as well as the "divide" between media for mass and interpersonal communication. In addition, although she deals with the difficult to define concepts of culture and belonging, her starting point are specific "acts of relating" and the individuals' subjective understanding of such acts, which allows for a concretization of the vague terms.

The Metykova (2010) study is significant because of its focus on everyday life in an urban location. She argues that, as research of any kind involves "reduction of complexity," the type of reduction that results from a focus on "everyday lives and urban settings" provides a better understanding of lives of migrants than one that results from a nation-centric focus. She does not rely on studying immigrants from a specific nation, but instead looks at individuals from different, new EU member states. The study explores immigrants' uses of the internet for both mass media and interpersonal communication, and focuses on "attachments to (near and distant) family and friends, physical (and virtual) environments and various languages" (328-9). Notably, Metykova recognizes that interpersonal communication goes beyond just talking, and can includes sharing of files, articles, web links, etc.

Due to the combination of these characteristics, Metykova's study stands out from the majority of research on migration and media and is especially relevant for my research, although there are once again some significant differences. Metykova's study focuses largely on the way in which media use helps immigrants re-establish a sense of "normality" by maintaining their habits and routines, while migration itself is described as a "disruptive experience." She notes that the routines of the participants in the study were primarily tied to their country of origin, but points out that they also used media in connection to other locations or to their everyday lives in the UK (e.g. online shopping, emailing the local council etc.). There is, however, almost no discussion of such uses in the study. Similarly, while Metykova notes that certain circumstances could change the participants' media routines (e.g. if colleagues or flatmates talked about British television, some of the participants started to watch those programs), there is little further analysis of such situations. Ultimately, the focus remains firmly on (descriptions of) media use, and Metykova shows in great detail how the immigrants gained access to the internet, what devices and programs they use, when and how they use them etc. Finally, many of the characteristics of the immigrants chosen for the study are either

greatly varied or not described (e.g. why they moved, how long ago they moved, how long they plan to stay etc.).

As noted earlier, some researchers argue that, with the advent of the internet, there is little difference between communicating at a distance of a flight of stairs or a continent. At the same time, few would argue that there are no significant differences between face-to-face and online communication, and while this topic is relevant for any research on maintaining relations at a distance, it is not the focus of this study. The reader may look to a number of studies in this extensively researched area for further information (see, e.g., Rhoads, 2010; Mok, Wellman and Carrasco, 2008; Fox, 2004; Baym, 2002).

This study, instead, focuses on how online and offline interactions are interrelated. While online interactions appear to work in generally the same way regardless of the distance, online and offline interactions certainly differ and this study aims to look into the ways in which individual immigrants navigate these different type of interactions and how those interactions, to use Domeyer's words, "make sense" to them. In this way, the thesis is in line with Morley's call for "non-mediacentric media studies" (2009). Or, as Hepp (2010) writes: "Contextualising the media in relation to non-media-centric media and communication research might also leads us to conclude that media are far less central than one might have expected at the beginning of this research" (44). Hepp also notes that while the internet is generally an integral part of the immigrant experience, it may not be as dominant a feature in immigrants' lives as is often presumed.

2.3. Place attachment and related concepts

In an attempt to create such a "non-media-centric media and communication research" and search for a more complex, contextualized, complete picture, this study will pay close attention to the roles of both the internet and place in migration, both the online and the offline, and both the local and the distant. A pair of studies by Moores and Metykova (2009; 2010), based on the same set of empirical data as the previously mentioned Metykova study, offers a look at the 'offline' side of immigrants' adaptation to their new place of residence. As with Metykova's study, the focus is on migrants' individual points of view and on their everyday experiences based in a central, urban space. In these studies, however, the focus shifts to the individuals' "environmental experiences" and "place-making in daily living."

These studies are particularly interesting because they combine migration studies, media studies, and ties that individuals make with places. Nevertheless, the more specific focus of their empirical data analysis is quite different from the focus of this thesis. Moores and Metykova focus on the concept of "everyday environmental experience" and emotional ties to places based on familiarization, habit, and everyday routines, i.e. on routine, "taken for granted," interactions with places rather than on novelty, exploration, or significant interactions. In addition, the focus is on feelings that result from interactions with places rather than on the interactions themselves. As with the Metykova (2010) study, the stress is on "normalizing" rather than 'optimizing' or 'customizing.' The group of participants is also the same and these studies therefore also explore the initial experiences of transition to a new place. Finally, while the studies includes some reflections on internet use (primarily for news and communication) and travel, these are not explored in much depth nor connected to "place-making" in a systematic way.

Although the basic approach in these studies is very helpful, as it connects explorations of individuals' perceptions of, and interactions with, places and their social ties and media use, the Moores and Metykova studies primarily rely on phenomenological geography (see Seamon, 1979; Bachelard, 1969; Heidegger, 1971), while this thesis is more closely connected to the environmental psychology concept of place attachment. Although this concept will not be used as a part of the theoretical setup of this study, it is connected to a significant amount of relevant considerations and approaches.

The concept of place has been defined in numerous ways, as it is "one of the trickiest words in the English language, a suitcase so overfilled that one can never shut the lid" (Hayden, 1997: 112). The most useful perspective for the purposes of this study is that of places as meaningful spatial units (Gustafson, 2006) that can scale "from the smallest to the largest" (Canter, 1996:118; see also Gifford, 1998). Place attachment itself represents people's "affective, cognitive and behavioural bonds" with a place (Gustafson, 2001a; see also Altman and Low, 1992), among which the affective component is most often researched (Lewicka, 2008). It is a dynamic, ongoing process (Rubinstein and Parmelee, 1992) and can be achieved through both spontaneous and active development (Gustafson, 2001b). At the same time, places themselves are dynamic concepts, as their characteristics and broader "meanings" attached to them change over time (Gustafson, 2001b).

Gustafson did a significant amount of research in the area of place attachment and made some relevant theoretical arguments. He pointed out that places mean different things to different people and should therefore be approached from their "users'" point of view (2001b; see also Canter, 1977). He notes that place attachment is strongly related to specific past experiences, social ties, and potential for future interactions tied both to the place itself (e.g. traditions) and to one's skills (e.g. language) (Gustafson, 2001a; see also Kyle and Chick, 2007). Gustafson also argues that individuals attribute meanings to places based on (a combination of) " the three poles of self, others and environment" (2001b; see also Sixsmith, 1986, Relph, 1976). The "self" pole is based on personal meanings that people ascribe to places, which are tied primarily to past experiences connected to the place, but also to activities (e.g. work, leisure) associated with it. The "others" pole is based on social relations that individuals have with people who live in a certain place as well as on general perceptions of the inhabitants of that place. The "environment" pole is based on the (both natural and built) physical characteristics of the place as well as the "symbolic or historical" characteristics of the environment.

While Gustafson tripartite model is useful, it also has some shortcomings. The most important is the lack of specific acknowledgment of the importance of activities, although Gustafson does point out that places can be perceived as meaningful because they provide "opportunities to perform certain activities" (2001b: 11). Also, social relations that connect individuals to a specific place need not be limited to people who live in that area. Finally, the combining of physical and symbolic characteristics of a place into a single category is problematic.

Although Gustafson's empirical work primarily focuses on (seasonal) retirement migration, some of his findings are also applicable to more settled immigrants. In his study of Swedish retirees in Spain (2001a), he noted that place attachment of retired seasonal migrants generally involved the same "themes" in each residential location, while the specifics within these themes varied. While he does not mention the media involved, he notes that the migrants keep in touch with social relations in both countries and that this plays a role in maintaining their attachment to the different places of residence. Finally, he notes that his interviewees "usually expressed an attachment to both countries and regarded such dual place attachment as positive and desirable" (379). Additional research on migration and place attachment found that, while development of "place identity" is stronger among "natives" than "non-natives," place attachment

develops to comparable levels for both groups (Hernandez, Hidalgo, Salazar-Laplace, and Hess, 2007). However, place attachment seems to be under-researched in the context of (international) migration, where it generally focuses on "the intensity of longing for places that are lost" (Scannell and Gifford, 2009: 1).

As this thesis will focus on interactions as the source of ties with both people and places, research on the connection between place attachment and interactional potential (as distinct from past interactions) is especially relevant. Milligan (1998) developed an "interactionist-based theory of place attachment" founded on the idea that place attachment is based on the "interactional past" and "interactional potential" of a place. According to her study, place attachment also represents "an attachment to the patterns of activity known to have occurred there in the past and anticipated to occur there in the future" (17), and is proportional to how "meaningful" these interactions are to the individual. As Milligan writes:

> "Every interaction bestows some form of meaning on its stage, transforming that site into a known place, but when the interaction involves a higher degree of meaning, whether or not that meaning is perceived at the time, the place becomes the site of place attachment [...] In fact, virtually every aspect of social life is in some sense concerned with spatial attachments simply because human beings exist and interact in built environments" (28).

In her conclusion, Milligan argued that while interactions are becoming increasingly "homogenized" in what seems to be an increasingly "placeless" world, place attachment remains a significant concept. Even if more and more built environments appear to be interchangeable because of a "McDonalidization" of the world, Milligan noted that individuals' attachment is likely to be formed both with specific "types" of places and, within those, with specific settings that have individual meaning to them. This observation is closely tied to Brooks et al.'s (2006) research on people's attachments to a specific national park as compared to a "type" of national parks. They noted the distinction between attachments to places based on the "comparative standards model" where the "visitors have stable preconsumption expectations about an experience in their minds" (345) and those attachments that have become "committed relationships" where "meaning and emotion" play a significant role in satisfaction.

Brooks et al. point out that future research could look at the "differences between committed relationships with specific wildlands and those with the wilderness concept in general" (345), implying, like Milligan, that individuals can form and benefit from

such "committed relationships" with place types as well as specific places. This idea can be related to research that shows that people can become "dependent" on places that allow them to fulfill a particular goal or activity, either because it is superior to other alternatives or simply because it allows a particular kind of "experience" to be had in the first place (see Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Hammitt et al., 2004; Stokols and Shumaker, 1981; Kyle et al., 2004).

While Milligan's ineractionist theory and the mentioned related studies are central to the theoretical model developed in this thesis, especially because of their emphasis on activity and interaction, Scannell and Gifford's (2009) elaborate model of place attachment informed the model used in this study to the greatest extent (as will be noted in the Theory chapter).

The authors approach place attachment as "a multidimensional concept with person, psychological process, and place dimensions" (2). As they point out:

> "Given the complexity of person-place bonding, many threads tie individuals to their important places. Some are stronger or more salient than others, several are twisted together and seem inseparable, and few are apparent to outside observers. The tapestry that describes the nature of one's relationship to a place is unique for each individual" (5).

It should be noted, however, that the same can be said of the complexity of interpersonal bonding, whether at a group or an individual level. In fact, much of what the authors say about attachment to and interaction with places applies, in a similar way, to people. They argue, for example, that "place attachment is typified by proximity-maintaining behaviors" (4), which applies to attachments to people as well (where, notably, this proximity is often also maintained through the use of communication technology). The authors also support the idea that all places include a social element, whether through people's present or past, symbolic or direct, interactions with a place, and they point out that "people are attached to places that facilitate social relationships and group identity" (4). This thesis will argue that the boundary between attachment to places and people is often blurred, as the two are so often closely interconnected due to the close ties between "social and physical interactions" (Brooks et al., 2006) within a place.
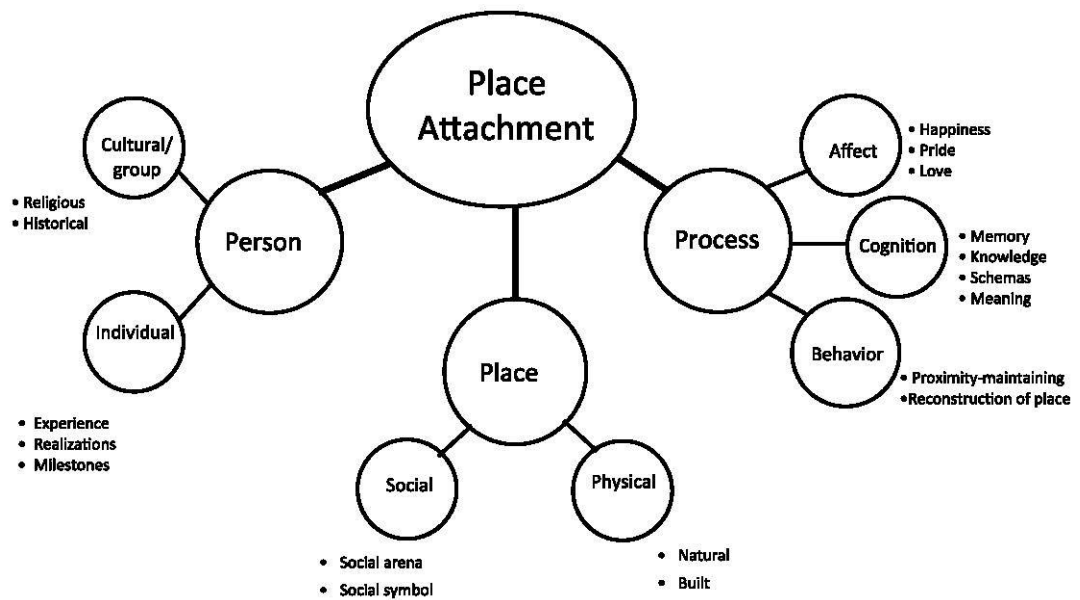
Figure 2.1. The tripartite model of place attachment (Source: Scannel and Gifford, 2009:2)

Scannell and Gifford aimed to create an understanding of the concept of place attachment by systematically organizing the existing research on the concept into a coherent theoretical model (Figure 2.1.). They separate place attachment into three main dimensions: actor/person, psychological process, and place characteristics. The person dimension consists of attachments at the individual level (from personally important experiences) and the group/cultural level (shared symbolic meanings, e.g. religious, historical), which may be interconnected. The psychological process dimension consists of affect (emotional connection), cognition (memories, beliefs, meaning, and knowledge related to the place), and behavior (primarily related to proximity maintenance). Finally, the place dimension is considered to be most important and consists of the social and physical dimensions.

While the Scannell and Gifford model was crucial in developing various elements of the theoretical model used in this thesis, it should be noted that the authors arrange the elements quite differently. This is in part because their focus is solely on place attachment, but also because rearranging and reconstructing the different categories within their model seemed to prove more informative overall. For example, there appear to be overlaps between the group/cultural level of personal attachment, the cognition dimension of the psychological process category, and the social dimension of the place category.

2.4. City and experience

This thesis' aims to avoid broad and inevitably vague concepts such as identity, culture, nation etc., and instead to focus on specific interactions whenever possible. Robins' (2001) paper on "thinking through the city" (77) provided crucial insight for such an approach. Robins writes that "national vision" creates significant limitations in exploring cultural life and cultural complexity. He points out that national vision is based on ideas of "unity," "integrity," "consensus," "commonality" etc. and as such "regards diversity, difference and complexity as a problem" (81) whereas these complexities are in fact precisely what makes life more interesting. Robins argues that a more fruitful approach would be to instead adopt a "counter-national" perspective and focus on the level of the city and in this way puts the focus squarely on experience, transformation, and self-definition:

> "One does not exist in the city in the same way that one exists as part of the nation. If the nation is fundamentally about belonging to an abstract community […] then the urban arena is about immersion in a world of multiplicity, and implicates us in the dimension of embodied cultural experience […] The nation, we may say, is a space of identification and identity, whilst the city is an existential and experiential space [...] Urban cultures and identities are more provisional, more transitory and negotiable - less constraining and less sustained than national ones [...] Cities might 'prompt the effort to define one's identity in terms of the acts that a person is capable of performing, rather than in terms of a given and pre-determined set of attributions and received traits'" (87-90).

As his starting point is culture in Britain, Robins argues that London in particular is an excellent starting point for such an approach, partially because it is a metropolis that never quite fitted into the British "national mould." As he writes: "From the perspective of London, there is a certain potential to think about culture differently, more openly, in more complicated ways" (87). One of the crucial distinctions of London is its multiculturalism, which results in the fact that, as Robins writes, "one can become a Londoner very quickly, and one can easily cease being a Londoner, too, if one wishes: one 'belongs' to the city in a very different sense from that in which one belongs to the nation" (89). As such, individuals' engagement with London is in many important ways determined by their own choices, rather than by those of a "community" around them.

3. Focus of the study

3.1. Deliberate immigrants

One of the main inspirations for this thesis was Aksoy and Robins' (2003b) idea of immigrants' actions and points of view as a source of "enlargement of meaning." In the attempt to select a group of immigrants that would be most likely to approach migration in a way that would lead to new perspectives, unique approaches, behaviors etc., two primary reasons led to the choice of focusing on the concept of deliberate immigrants. The first decision was to focus on personal motivations rather than on nationality, ethnicity, etc., because is would result in a sample of individuals' with (broadly) similar approaches and yet diverse backgrounds. Another goal was to avoid many of the negative associations that are often tied to migration and can lead to the impression that, in King's words, "a migrant is someone who is poor, uprooted, marginal and desperate" (2002:89). This decision was not based on the belief that such immigrants cannot lead to the enlargement of meaning, but on the decision to focus on the changes in individuals' lives that are primarily connected to their choice to change their country and place of residence, and not a result of much stronger external forces (such as danger or poverty) that could overwhelm any more personal wishes and aspirations, including the desire to return 'home.'

The concept of **deliberate immigrants** is defined by their motivations for moving to, and staying more permanently in, a new place of residence. Specifically, they did not feel forced, in any more or less direct way, to leave their previous place(s) and countr(ies) of residence and are satisfied with living in their current place of residence (i.e. they do not wish they could move somewhere else, including 'back home'). The term 'deliberate immigrant' was chosen because the decision to migrate was made deliberately and was not near the unclear border between voluntary and involuntary. At the same time, deliberate immigrants freely deliberated (in more or less obvious ways) over both their decision to leave their previous place of residence and their decision to stay in the current one, as they were free to stay in their previous place of residence without any overwhelmingly negative consequences for their lives. It should be noted that deliberate immigrants need not be immune to either nostalgia or considerations of different future alternatives regarding their place of residence. Instead, their defining characteristic is that they choose to stay in their current place of residence because they feel generally satisfied with it and not because they feel they have no real alternative.

Finally, this category is separate from the two somewhat similar categories of immigrants described in the previous chapter: lifestyle and professional migrants. As noted, lifestyle migrants are marked by affluence, dismissal of work from their list of priorities, and dissatisfaction with their life before migration. Professional migrants, on the other hand, are defined primarily by their career paths. Lastly, both categories are not defined in terms of length of stay in a place of residence or even the number of locations that the migrants reside in.

3.2. Internet and physical presence

As shown in the previous chapter, it is impossible to separate migration from media use, especially from the use of internet. While a study of deliberate immigrants' uses of all forms of media has interesting prospects, this would be outside the scope of this thesis. As a result, since the focus of this study will be on executed interactions rather than on (national, cultural etc.) identity or similar concepts, the internet's many interactional aspects become especially relevant and this study will therefore focus on this medium.

The approach of this thesis will be not on media itself, but on how media (specifically, the internet) fits into the overall context of individuals' adjustment to (and development of) life after migration. The main point of interest will be the connections between interactions and activities online and those based on physical presence (past, present or future), as well as the exploration of the different ways in which the internet affects immigrants' interactions and ties with both people and places, both locally and at a distance. The degree to which the internet plays a role in the deliberate immigrants' post-migration experiences will depend on the individuals themselves and, as such, this approach is directly tied to Morley's (2009) concept of non-mediacentric media studies.

3.3. Places, people, activities

In order to avoid the pitfalls of vague concepts, as discussed in the previous chapter, this study will focus on those things that are arguably most directly affected by migration: individuals' ties with people and places, and the activities that allow individuals to interact with them. As the previous chapter's section on place attachment showed, people, places, and activities are closely interconnected, and this study will explore those connections further and give them equal weight. Finally, the focus will be on

those ties and interactions that the individuals find relevant for their satisfaction in their current place of residence.

3.4. Interactions based in a city

Starting from Robins' (2001) argument for "thinking through the city," this thesis will focus on the city level as a starting point for exploring immigrants' everyday lives. London has been a focus of a number of studies discussed in Chapter 2 (e.g. Moores and Metykova, 2009, 2010; Metykova 2010; Conradson and Latham, 2005; Aksoy and Robins, 2003b) and it was deliberately chosen for this study for both practical and theoretical purposes in addition to those described in the previous chapter. Not only was focusing on a single city both manageable and affordable, it also allowed for an exploration of different individuals and their unique approaches on the same 'backdrop.' Two additional reasons were significant for choosing London. The first had to do with language, again both for practical reasons and because immigrants are likely to posses at least functional knowledge of the language from the start, which would provide them with many possibilities for interaction that they would not have without the knowledge of the local language. The second reason were London's close geographical and transportational ties to other countries, which allowed for an exploration of immigrants' approach to travel as a source of 'offline' interactions beyond their place of residence. Finally, as Aksoy and Robins (2003b) write in their study of immigrants in London:

> "In the new metropolitan context of London [and] in this changed space of migration, new social and cultural possibilities are made available; there is potential space for a certain degree, at least, of social and cultural renegotiation" (374-5).

In other words, London allows for much 'customizing' of one's experiences due to the increased possibilities for interaction but, as a result, it also requires the making of choices, both of which provide an especially interesting backdrop for this study. While the focus of the study will be on London as the "focal point" (Nowicka, 2006) of the immigrants' lives, it will also include relevant interactions that either take place in or are (primarily through the internet) connected to other locations, which is, again, connected to Aksoy and Robins' (2003b) research:

> "The society they see themselves living in does not stop at Dover or Heathrow; what is 'outside' is also part of their everyday experiential world. They insist,

that is to say, on the continuum between the British space and the space beyond. The demand is for a social paradigm in line with the reality of those who now 'live and think transnationally'" (384).

4. Theory

The goal of this study is to explore how deliberate immigrants adjust to life after migration in a way that maintains and increases their satisfaction with their choice of residence location and their life in it. The focus will be on specific and relevant interactions they have with people and places, both in London and outside of it. Since none of the existing theoretical models fit the focus of this study well enough, this chapter will present a new model developed around a number of key ideas from existing research. As this model aims to describe a network of all possible interactions that an individual can be involved in, some "reduction of complexity" (Metykova, 2010) was necessary, but the attempt was to create a functional model that could be useful for exploring the empirical data in this thesis and, potentially, in related studies.

4.1. Interactional network

The backbone of the model is the concept of an **interactional network** (from now on referred to simply as network). This network is meant to represents individuals' interactions with the people and places around them and its nodes, or **network elements**, are separated into two types: stage elements and activity elements. Based on the social and physical aspects of the place dimension in Scannell and Griffith's (2009) theoretical model, the **stage elements** are separated into the social stage and the physical stage. Since the focus of this study is on the overall network of interactions, the physical and social stage have equal weight in this model.
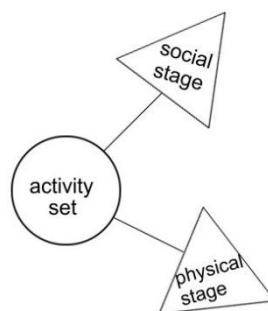
Figure 4.1. An interaction, involving (social and physical) stage and activity elements

The term "stage" is taken from Milligan's (1998) metaphor of place resembling a stage where the individual is an "actor." This study's approach to the stage as part of an interaction is, however, closer to Nowicka's idea of space "not as a natural, geographical background of human existence but as a condition for interaction in a society" (2006:73;

see also Simmel, 1958). If places are conditions for certain types of interactions, so are people, and the stage in this model is seen as a dynamic and often crucial part of an individual's interactions.

Both the physical and the social stage consist of different elements, but while individual elements of the social stage are easily defined (one person represents one element), physical elements are more vague. As pointed out in Chapter 2, places 'come' in different scales and there is no clear distinction between them, especially when looking at levels smaller than those of neighborhoods, cities, or nations. As a result, while the physical stage represents the (natural and built) physical and mediated[1] surroundings of an interaction, the specific elements are primarily defined by their importance to the actor and can vary in scope (e.g. from a specific table in a cafe to a whole part of town). Finally, while some stage elements are, indeed, conditions for certain interactions and will be the focus of this study, others (e.g. passers-by or irrelevant aspects of the environment) are primarily a part of the background.

Activity elements are, by definition, required for an interaction to take place, since interaction implies some type of action. As with physical elements, activity elements are hard to define precisely. Playing basketball, for example, could be separated into subsets of activities (running, jumping, throwing a ball) or seen as a bundle of athletics and additional activities (e.g. joking with friends). As before, an activity element is essentially defined by the person whose network it is a part of.

Activity elements are generally dependent on stage elements, since it is impossible to participate in an interaction outside of one's mind[2] without the context of a place and, often, of other people. In other words, **interactions** consist of activities 'performed' on and with a set of stages, and they allow the actor to interact with his or her surroundings (see Figure 4.1.). Finally, in the same way that activities cannot be clearly separated from each other and as one activity flows into the next, single interactions cannot be clearly demarcated and are also a somewhat fluid concept.

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[1] While the internet and cyberspace will be explored extensively in the study, the focus will be on mediated stages as enablers of other interactions (with physical and social elements).
[2] These kinds of self-contained interactions do play a significant role in the way individuals manage their networks, as will be explained in Section 4.4., but the activities they involve will not be discussed as network elements.
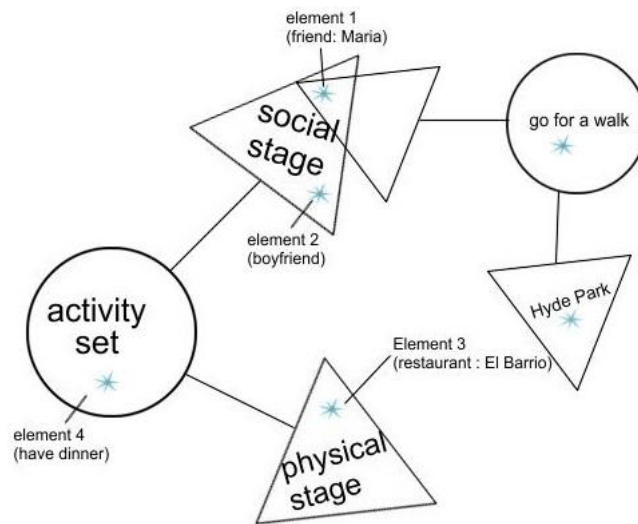
Figure 4.2. A section of an interactional network showing two overlapping interactions

Every individual has such a network of places, people, and activities. The network is dynamic and its elements depend on the interactions that the individual is involved in at any point in time. While a network, essentially, includes all present and past interactions (and will include all future ones), this study will refer to a network as a combination of social, physical, and activity elements that are, at a particular point in time, recurrent and relevant for the individual's satisfaction with his or her life in London. While no interaction is the same as any other, networks generally involve many such recurrent elements, and interactions that an individual is involved in will often have many overlapping elements (see Figure 4.2.).

4.1.1. Home base and distant elements

As noted before, this study will focus on the level of the city. In theoretical terms, such a location where an individual is usually situated will be referred to as a **home base**, i.e., essentially, an individual's place of residence. This concept was created in order to avoid terms such as 'home' and 'adopted home' as well as terms such as 'homeland' and 'host country,' because of their both vague and normative nature (see Metykova, 2010). Instead, the same term will be used for all locations where a person spent a longer period of time (for the purposes of this study, that period is defined as 4 months or longer, but this was simply because of the need for a cut-off line).

Each person's network is, therefore, based in their current home base and this is where the majority of their interactions is at least partially situated (internet, for example, can enable interactions with elements that are not in the same physical space as the actor),

and where a large part of their network elements is usually located (for physical elements) or based (for people). **Distant elements**, on the other hand, are those based or located outside of an individual's home base, and both internet and travel are relevant enablers of interactions with such elements.

4.1.2. Refined research question

One of the central assumptions of this thesis is that an individual's network is a continuously evolving entity and, as such, is always under the influence of both personal choices and external circumstances. Migration can be seen as a combination of the two and, while it causes a rather significant disruption in established network patterns, this thesis will argue that the resulting network still represents just another incarnation of that same dynamic entity and will be based on the following research question:

> This study will explore the development of deliberate immigrants' interactional networks after moving to London, with a focus on the impact of previous incarnations of those networks on the establishment and development of new ties as well as the maintenance and adaptation of old ties. Special attention will be paid to the role of the internet in these developments.

4.2. Interactions

As noted earlier, interactions represent activities performed in the context of physical and social stages. They consist of two different aspects: replicable and circumstantial. The **replicable aspect** of an interaction consists of the parts of that interaction that could, technically at least, be repeated. Essentially, the replicable aspect of an interaction is the sum of activities that were involved in an interaction and, as such, is connected to stage characteristics to varying degrees and is relevant for the present interaction and potential future interactions. The way that individuals generally navigate these replicable aspects is by sorting them into **categories[3]**. Categories include a specific (more or less precisely and broadly defined) subset of replicable aspects of different interactions, which are often associated with a combination of related characteristics of physical and/or stage elements. Consequently, both 'work' (the

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[3] This concept is related to "types" of places mentioned by Milligan (1998) and Brooks et al. (2006).

performance of an activity that results in a paycheck) and 'park' (a place with trees and benches where people are free to walk around) are examples of possible categories.

The **circumstantial aspect**, on the other hand, is what makes each interaction unique and unrepeatable, and it consists of the sum of internal and external circumstances relevant for that interaction. It is connected to the specific moods, beliefs, opinions, knowledge etc. of people involved and the specific state of the physical environment at the time of the interaction[4], all of which are based on what will be referred to as the **interactional past**. This term originally comes from Milligan's research, where she defines it as "the past experiences associated with a site" (1998: 2). For the purposes of this thesis, the definition has been refined and expanded to include all past interactions of an actor or a stage element, where different parts of that interactional past are relevant for different interactions. The circumstantial aspect is, to varying degrees, connected to every previous interaction the actor and each of the involved social and physical element took part in and, as the present interaction changes each of them for the future, no two interactions can be exactly the same.

Replicable and circumstantial aspects of an interaction are both connected to the concept of **interactional potential**. This term was also taken from Milligan's research, where she defines it as "the future experiences imagined or anticipated to be possible in a site" (1998:2). For the purposes of this thesis, this term has also been altered, in order to signify a more objective concept: the collection of all interactions possible with a specific combination of stage elements, at a specific time. It is separated into gross and net interactional potential, where **net interactional potential** is the sum of the replicable aspects of all interactions that a specific actor could engage in, given the stages and the point in time, while **gross interactional potential** is the sum of all net interactional potentials under those same circumstances (i.e. the sum of all interactions possible with each potential actor, real or imagined[5]). As this study will look at networks from individuals' personal points of view, net interactional potential will often be referred to simply as interactional potential. Finally, the **actual interaction** that takes place is determined by the intersection of the net international potential with the actor's choices.

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[4] The circumstantial aspect relates to a number of different elements from Scannell and Gifford's (2009) theoretical model: the person dimension as well as the affect and cognition elements of the psychological dimension.
[5] Within reason.

The net interactional potential and the actual interaction are both influenced by the actor's interactional past, especially by the related concepts of skills and choices. **Skills** are the less 'volatile' consequence of the interactional past and form part of the actor's contribution to the circumstantial aspect of interactions. They represent knowledge or abilities that allow a person to 'reach' (i.e. make available for themselves) certain replicable aspects within the gross interactional potential[6], e.g. knowing how to ski is a skill that opens up one's net interactional potential on a mountain and makes the replicable aspect of skiing available to them. Skills can also be more subtle, e.g. knowledge about a person or place that makes certain interactions with them possible. In addition to impacting the net interactional potential, skills impact the actual interaction by affecting the actor's choices. Choices are also closely related to the actor's interactional past but include more changeable factors such as moods and attitudes and are more dependent on the specifics of a situation. They are also very closely related to preferences and priorities, which will be discussed in Section 4.4.2..

4.3. Network dynamics

If we look at an actor's recurrent interactions with elements, as well as the overall interactions within his or her network, different determinants of interactional potential can be viewed from the 'micro' level of a single network element or at the 'macro' level of a part of or the overall network.

Bundles represent the co-presence of two or more elements within the same interaction (**micro bundles**) or within an actor's network (**macro bundles**) and, as such, are important at both the micro and macro levels of the network. The elements within the bundle (more and less directly) interact with each other and the rest of the elements within the interaction and/or network and can consequently both limit and expand interactional potential and the satisfaction gained from the interaction with any single element involved, as well as within the overall network.

At the micro network level, the interactional potential connected to a single network element is primarily determined by any skills and door openers connected to that element. **Door openers** and skills are related, in that they both allow for certain

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[6] The concept of skills is tied to the "knowledge" dimension of Scannell and Gifford's (2009) model, as well as to Loffland's (1985) "locational socializations," but is an expansion on both terms.

interactions with that network element to take place by making available certain replicable aspects within the gross interactional potential attached to a stage setup. However, while skills represent internal knowledge or abilities, door openers are external factors[7] that influence interactions through actively or spontaneously created bundles. Door openers can be involved in the interaction itself as part of a micro bundle (e.g. an individual spends time with the friend of a friend at a party) or can lead to a future interaction with an element through a macro bundle (e.g. being enrolled in a university program leads to job interviews; or, more indirectly, a job leads to money which opens a number of doors to activities etc.).

The interactional potential attached to an element is not static. Instead, it changes with time and circumstances, and as such can be **maintained**, **developed**, or **abandoned**. Maintaining a 'tie' with a network element involves keeping the interactional potential attached to that element available in roughly the same form, and is primarily connected to continuously engaging in interactions with the element in order to maintain familiarity and compatibility (this will be expanded on in Section 4.4.2.). Certain elements generally require less maintenance (e.g. natural environments) while others require more (e.g. romantic partners). Developing a tie with a network element involves expanding both the related available interactional potential and, usually, the satisfaction gained from it. It should be noted, though, that maintaining a tie to an element can also require developing that tie to a certain extent. Finally, abandoning a tie with a network element involves abandoning future interactions with that element, although such a tie can often be re-established.

At the macro level, the overall interactional potential within an actor's network is impacted by the '**space**' available within the network, as the simple fact of engaging in certain interactions means there is less time and possibly less energy left for others. Bundles also impact an actor's overall interactional potential in a number of ways, in addition to those already mentioned. Micro bundles can allow for the simultaneous maintenance and/or development of ties to several elements. Additionally, bundles can lead to **spin-offs**, i.e. the establishment of an independent tie with a new element: Through an interaction with an established network element (which can, but need not,

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[7] Bundles can be objects (e.g. money) , elements (especially persons), or bundles (e.g. a job or a University program). Although objects are not network elements and are therefore not the focus of this study, they can also influence interactions. Also, numerous door openers are both quite subtle and widely available, and these will also not be addressed in the study.

be acting as a door opener), the actor develops an interest in and, subsequently, an independent tie to another element that was a part of that interaction. Alternatively, a spin-off can occur without the 'use' of a bundle, when information received through an interaction[8] leads to interactions with another place, person, or activity. Finally, bundles can be more or less 'tight,' i.e. difficult to disband. As a result, interacting with one element may be impossible without the presence of other elements within a related micro bundle, while maintaining a tie with a certain element within a tight macro bundle could require the presence of another element within one's network.

4.4. Network management

The satisfaction gained from interactions with an element is offset by what is required to maintain, develop, and take advantage of the interactional potential that enables these interactions. Consequently, maintenance and development of ties to elements are connected to various 'investments' and 'gains.' It should be noted, however, that while these terms sound economically oriented, actors often do not think of them as such, especially in interactions with people. As Conradson and Latham (2005) write about friendship:

> "Especially because friendship is by definition a relationship founded upon choice, an individual's friendship networks are something that must be tended and nurtured. *This relational 'work' is not generally carried out on the basis of some utilitarian calculus of the material returns the friendship might generate at some later date*. Arguably more central are the affective dimensions of friendship; a sense of connection deriving from shared values and times together" (294-5; my emphasis).

These investments and gains, however, still exist and need to be managed, in more or less conscious or direct ways. In order to navigate these network dynamics, individuals create plans and approaches. **Plans** include elements that an individual would like to have or avoid in his or her network. Plans can be very dynamic, so that certain elements will be more central in the 'guiding,' macro plan, while others play more of a peripheral role and involvement with them is more dependent on circumstances. At the same time, the frequency of interaction with elements can vary depending on circumstances and the actor's preferences and priorities. **Approaches**, on the other hand, are sets of actions that are meant to lead to and then to maintain plans.

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[8] The interaction here may also be 'with' mass or other media.

4.4.1. Enacting and changing the plan and approach

Choosing both plans and approaches includes considerations of gains and investments involved at both the macro and the various micro levels. They can be more or less defined, and the actor can be more or less consciously aware of them. When plans and approaches are more clearly defined, they are often tied to active development and management of the network, or certain parts of it. Gustafson (2001b) provides such an example in his description of Swedish seasonal retirement migrants: "At times, the respondents take an active part in the process of giving places meaning. They try to make places `their own' by forging social relations (e.g. visiting neighbours), by acquiring knowledge about the place, or by physically shaping the place" (13).

Plans and approaches are first developed and, subsequently, enacted. They, however, often do not pan out the way the actor expected or the actor's priorities or circumstances simply change over time (in relation to or independently of the actor's past interactions). Consequently, there is a need for constant reconsidering, revising, and enacting of plans and approaches. While it is impossible to show these processes in all of their complexity, this study proposes a model that was developed to represent the main processes involved (see Figure 4.3.)[9].

The three main elements of this model are the reconsideration of plans and approaches, and the attainment and maintenance of a plan through the chosen approach (see Figure 4.4.). These reconsideration often result in only slight refinements of (macro and micro) plans or approaches, but sometimes they lead to significant changes.

These reconsiderations are based on the considerations of, and collection of further information about, the actor's existing **foundations** for potential plans and the (relevant) gross interactional potential. Foundations include interactional potential and **development tools** that are available to the actor, where development tools are elements or strategies that could lead to making more of the gross interactional potential available to the actor. While there are likely to be many more, the developmental tools that will be explored in this research due to their relevance are: door openers, (developing) skills, actively creating bundles, and building familiarity through repeated interactions. The

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[9] The model shows factors that can lead to the reconsideration of a plan and approach and the consequent changes in the approach or in both plan and approach. A reconsideration of plan and approach can also result in no changes to either plan or approach (i.e. no changes in action), but this option has not been included in the scheme in order to avoid cluttering.

plan and approach are finally shaped by the consideration of the actor's priorities and preferences (these are related to the individual's network style, as will be discussed in Section 4.4.2., along with familiarity and its benefits).
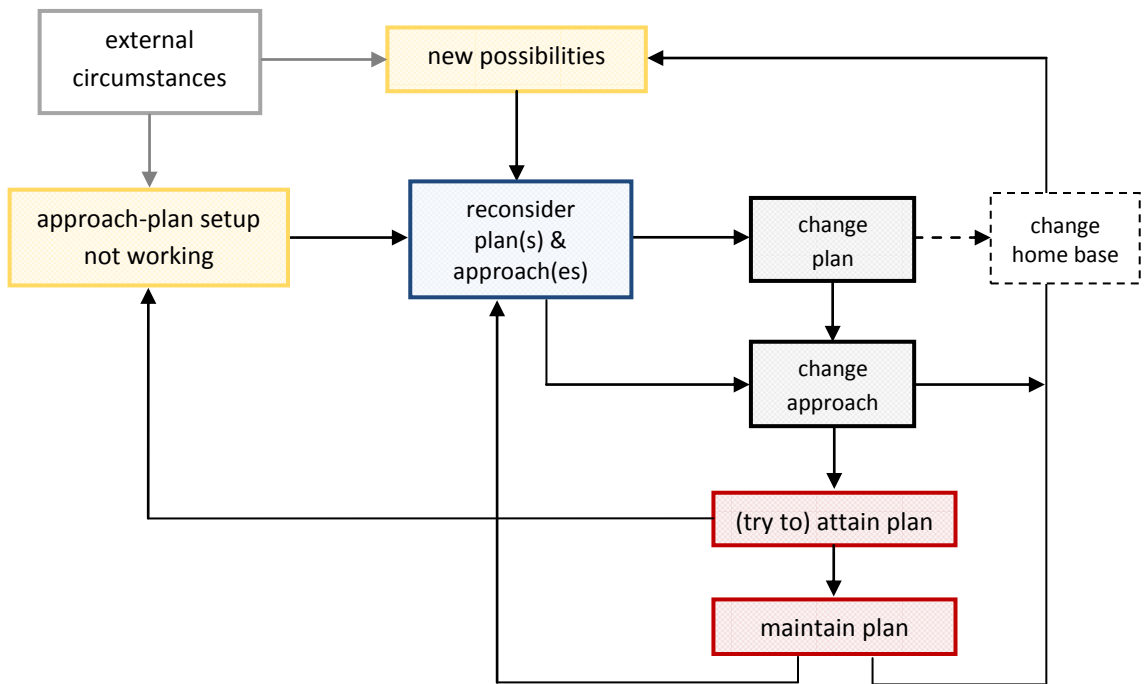
Figure 4.3. The network development model

Although an individual's network contains elements in different locations, the home base represents the focal point of the network and therefore has a significant influence on its interactional potential. As a result, when reconsidering plans and approaches, the considered gross interactional potential is approached as based in the actor's current home base. Actors occasionally consider home base alternatives, where their perspective changes in order to consider foundations and gross interactional potential as related to a different home base. If they decide that their priorities and preferences are better matched by the possibilities in the new home base, they may change home bases (this is, notably, what preceded the move to London for the participants in this study).

The enactment of a chosen approach in order to either attain or maintain a chosen plan follows the same pattern (see Figure 4.4.), whose two main components are the selection of the stage setup (and connected network elements and bundles) and the selection of development tools, both of which can be either familiar or newly explored or developed.
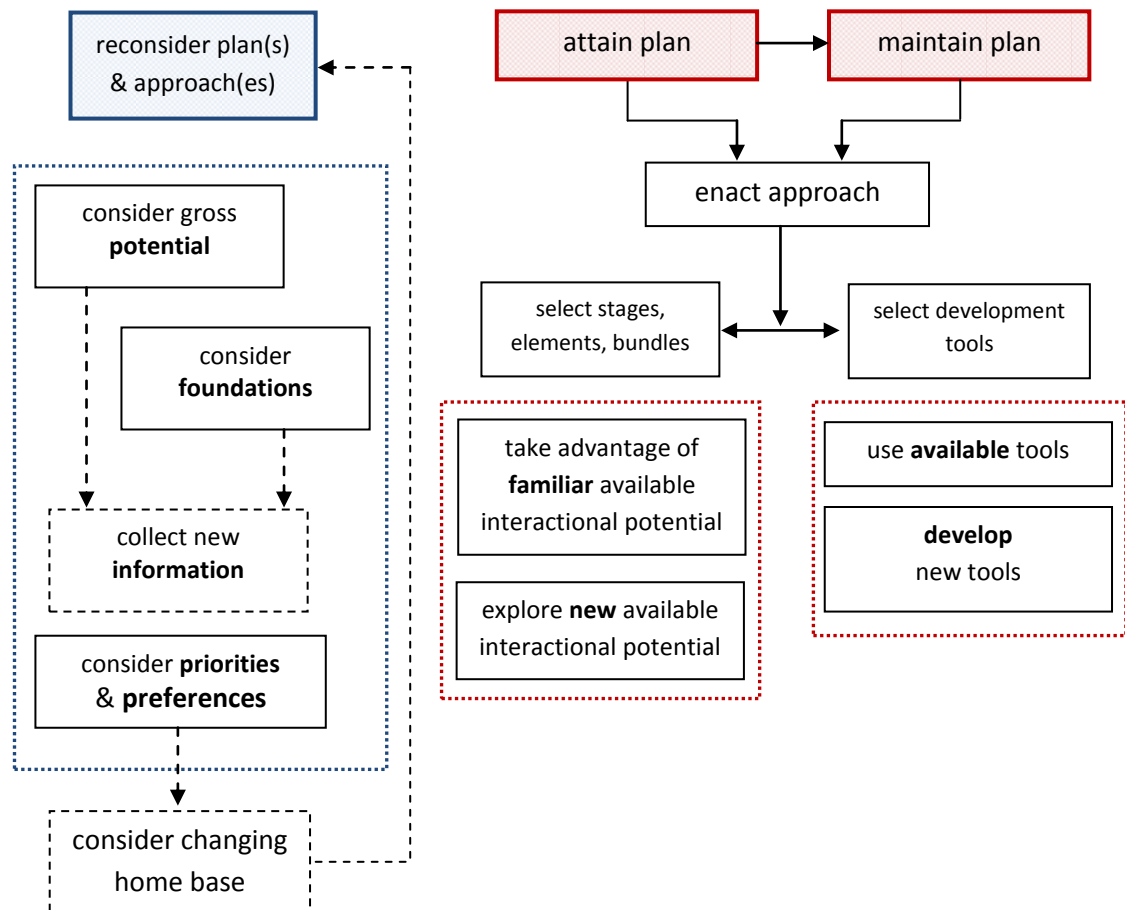
Figure 4.4. Detailed representation the three main parts of the network development model: 'reconsider plan(s) and approach(es),' 'attain plan,' and 'maintain plan'

Finally, the process of attaining or maintaining a plan can lead to the development of new possibilities (e.g. through a development of skills, network elements, door openers etc.), while a change in external circumstances can lead to both new possibilities and to a disruption between the approach and plan (see Figure 4.3.). The overall process of network development is closely related to Aksoy and Robins' (2003b) description: "Out of experience come decisions about what to retain or revitalize or revise or reject from the old, and about what to incorporate or refuse from the new.... Experience and thought negotiate between known and potential trajectories" (375).

4.4.2. Priorities, preferences, and network development style

When developing and choosing a plan and approach, an individual's **priorities** and **preferences** play a large role since they allow the individual to weigh the potential investments and gains involved and decide what choice is likely to have the most favorable outcome. While some needs and sources of satisfaction are essentially universal, many priorities and preferences are based on the individual's personal

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characteristics and contribute to the development of that individual's **network development style**. This style significantly influences one's network as well as the plans and approaches that guide its development, and it is comprised of many different components, e.g. openness to novelty, willingness to take risks, desire to explore possibilities etc. Among other things, it guides the individual's decisions regarding investment into exploring the home base and other locations, developing ties to specific network elements and letting go of others.

As the concept of network development style is complex enough to be the sole focus of extensive research, this thesis will only refer to those of its components that seem particularly relevant to the context of (deliberate) migration: values of familiarity vs. novelty and diversity (and the associated risks), willingness to adapt to new circumstances and environments, (absence or presence of) past experiences, awareness of alternatives, overall network satisfaction, and the 'space' an individual still has in his or her network in terms of time and energy. These different aspects of network development style will be explored further through the empirical data but, due to its importance for the process of post-migration network development, this section will look closer at the the values of familiarity vs. novelty and diversity.

Familiarity is based on the interactional past and contributes to the circumstantial aspect of interactions with a network element. Its benefits can include: established skills and door openers that are specifically aimed at and developed for a specific network element; awareness of various less obvious components of the replicable aspect in interactions with that network element (often tied to greater awareness of compatibility, i.e. matching preferences in mutual interactions); predictability of satisfaction from interactions; and a general sense of comfort and relaxedness. Novelty and diversity, on the other hand, provide greater variety of replicable aspects in interactions and can, as such, provide more varied satisfaction and be seen as more exciting, but they also lack the benefits of familiarity and involve more risk because the predictability of satisfaction is usually lower.

Although both familiarity and novelty/diversity can lead to an individual's satisfaction, most people likely lean more to one side or the other, although their preferences could vary across different network areas and over time. Preference of novelty or familiarity can be present at different levels so that, for example, some individuals may be drawn to

only a few categories of places, people, or activities, but prefer to interact with and explore many elements within those categories. Others might prefer maintaining high levels of familiarity with few specific network elements while exploring elements from many categories. In these ways, an individual can gain from both familiarity and novelty/diversity.

5. Methodology

The purpose of this study is to provide insight into the question of *how previous incarnations of an individual's network of ties to places, people, and activities can influence and contribute to the creation of a (more) satisfying network after migration to London.* To accomplish this goal, a research design was developed using a qualitative approach based mainly on semi-structured interviews and case study analysis.

5.1 Method of data collection

As this is an exploratory study, a qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth look into the research question and can provide an initial understanding of a complex issue. Data was collected through an introductory questionnaire followed by a semi-structured in-person interview, with follow-up interviews (by email or Skype) where needed. The questionnaire was designed to provide an initial overview of the participant's ties to people, places, and activities and was divided into the following sections: background information, transition to London, outside of London, in London, and internet (see appendix for complete list of questions). The interviews were based on the preliminary analysis of the questionnaire data but did not follow a strict structure. Instead, the participants were asked to expand on and/or clarify their answers from the questionnaire. During the interview, the most interesting threads of information were explored in more detail. Follow-up interviews were conducted with certain participants to gain more information on topics that were not explored in enough depth during the initial interview. Due to the continuous refining of the research focus, some of the questions and information from the questionnaire and interviews proved to not be sufficiently relevant to the final research and were not directly used in the final analysis.

The study used a strategic sample of eight individuals with the following characteristics:
- have been living in London for at least two years;
- made an independent decision to migrate;
- did not feel in any way forced to do migrate;
- are satisfied with living in London and do not feel they would rather be living elsewhere;
- have no definite plans for moving in the foreseeable future;
- are employed.

In defining the criteria, the goal was to find individuals who fit the definition of deliberate immigrants, have passed the initial period of adaptation to a new home base

(due to the need for a cut-off point, the minimum of two years in London was chosen), and are employed (e.g. students are often in a mostly transitional period and have not developed a professional network). Due to the scope of the study, the estimated optimal number of participants was between five and ten. Potential participants were recruited through personal contacts and eight of the respondents were chosen because they matched all criteria. Among the respondents who did not fully match the criteria, four filled out the questionnaire while three also participated in interviews, and their responses broadly informed this research. An initial, trial questionnaire was filled out by a course instructor who is a deliberate immigrant in Germany.

The participants are originally from South Africa, the United States, Italy, Serbia, and Bulgaria. Three had previously migrated with their families before the age of 18, two permanently (Matthew[10], from Serbia to South Africa[11], and Sarah, from Hong Kong to South Africa) and one temporarily (Lena, for short periods in early childhood, from the United States to Sweden and England). Five of the participants had independently moved abroad before settling in London. The participants were between the ages of 26 and 34, they had lived in London between two and eight years, five are female and three male, one is married, none have children, and they are employed in various fields (finance, media, academia, etc.).

5.2 Method of data analysis

The primary aim of the study was to explore the most interesting and informative developments in the process of adapting one's network to a new home base. Consequently, the focus of the data analysis were individual case studies, which also allowed for situating the specific findings in their individual context. Each case study was analyzed using the same data analysis model, but the focus of each individual analysis was on the aspects that were most insightful and added something new to the overall research. The findings showed both great variation and numerous parallels between the individual cases, as will be discussed in Chapter 7.

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[10] All names have been changed in order to preserve anonymity.
[11] Although Matthew's family left Serbia because of war, he spent most of his formative years in South Africa, has few strong ties to his first home base, and deliberately chose to migrate to UK as an adult.

5.2.1. Data analysis model

The data analysis model used in the individual case study analyses was developed with the aim to explain as many relevant aspects of the data as possible and was based on the theory explored in Chapter 4 and on an initial analysis of the empirical data. The empirical data from all participants was initially arranged into thematic categories, which in turn led to a refining of those categories and their organization into the final data analysis model separated into three chronological categories: before London, in London, and beyond London (see Figure 5.1.).

Before London Reasons for home base change	**In London** Old network foundations and new home base	**Beyond London** Considering potential home base alternatives
Why leave your old home base?	Building blocks: present and absent	A new move?
Why London?	From old home base to London	
	Here becomes there, there becomes here	
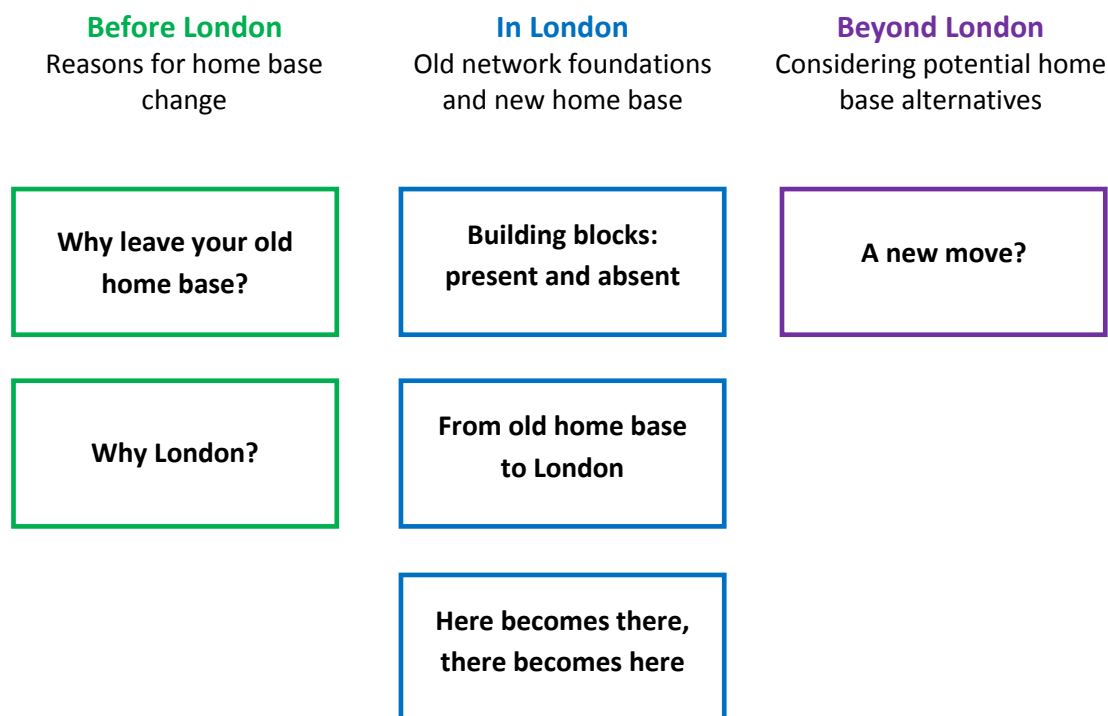
Figure 5.1. The data analysis model: main sections and categories

5.2.1.1. Before London: reasons for a home base change

This section consists of two categories that focus on different aspects of the motivation to migrate: the first section focuses on the reasons for leaving one's old home base while the second section is focused on the draw of London. Since the focus of the study is on network development within London, this section is essentially introductory and provides the background for the main analysis. (See Figure A.1. in Appendix for more detailed representation of this section).

This section deals with considering the gross interactional potential connected to one's home base in the context of one's main priorities[12]. Based on the empirical findings, the main motivations for choosing to leave a home base appear to be tied to: an incompatible 'way of life,' limited interactional potential, the desire to explore something new, and a change in 'life stage.' As will be shown in the case study analyses, several of these elements are often united into the overall reasons for wanting to leave one's home base.

Incompatibilities in the 'way of life' in one's old home base represent what the individual perceives as a discrepancy between his or her priorities and 'how things are done' in the home base (at a broader level or in connection to one's network). This is connected to how other people live but also, consequently, to the available possibilities for organizing one's own network, as a network is affected by the surrounding social stages, especially in the presence of tight bundles.

While the 'way of life' category is also connected to interactional potential, the second category more specifically deals with the individual's perception of how much one can do in the home base. The individual's conclusion is that the gross and/or net interactional potential in the home base is limited, usually by the place itself but also potentially by the setup of the individual's network in the home base. The individual is consequently looking for a home base that offers more interactional potential, often within a specific category or set of categories.

The 'desire to try something new' category in not necessarily connected to the home base itself, but to the individual's desire to have explored different options. The individuals are aware of the existence of different kinds of potential home bases (in broader or more specific terms) and want to 'try out' one of them, possibly in order to find out whether they prefer its network development possibilities to those available in their current home base.

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[12] The focus of this section is on the motivation behind leaving the home base that preceded London. In cases where the individual has several previous home bases, the motivations may cover reasons for leaving any or all of the previous home bases.

The last category has to do with migration that is partially motivated by a parallel change in 'life stage' (e.g., in the sample used in this study, leaving university seems to be a prevalent life stage change), as such a 'life stage' change results is significant changes within the network. The individual is put in the position of having to (often significantly) reconsider his or her plans. As the change in life stage often results in the loss of previously available foundations within the home base (in connection to available interactional potential, door openers, bundles etc.), the individual is more likely to consider such a large change as migration, especially if the foundations available in a new home base can rival those available in the current one.

> **Why London? :** considering a new home base

While the previous category dealt with the incompatibilities between the individuals' priorities and the interactional potential provided by their current home base, this category deals with the compatibilities between their priorities and London as a home base. The two main factors to consider are the individuals' overall foundations in London and their plans and approaches for the development of a London-based network. The foundations consist of relevant interactional potential and development tools that are available to the individual and are related to established ties with specific network elements and categories. These ties can be strong or weak, and direct or indirect (e.g. based on previous network interactions, on knowledge about an element, or on shared aspects of the interactional past [e.g. family members]). Finally, approaches and plans can either be similar to previously 'tried out' approaches and plans or they can be newly developed (often because they required a different life stage and/or home base for their enactment). These untried plans tend to be a significant part of the motivation for leaving one's current home base.

As will be explored Chapter 6, some participants were drawn specifically to London for different reasons, while others chose it primarily because it was the most convenient of a number of equally appealing options.

5.2.1.2. In London: old network foundations and a new home base

While the two categories in the previous section are interconnected, the categories in this section are even more so. The different parts of the three categories frequently interact and/or overlap. The main purpose of the categories, then, is to distinguish some

of the most commonly occurring themes found in the empirical data in order to show how they impact the changing and enacting of plans and approaches in the development of a London-based network. At the same time, each of the categories is closely connected to aspects of both London as a home base and the networks that the individuals' had developed before moving to London. (See Figure A.2. in Appendix for more detailed representation of this section).

Building blocks, present and absent: how (a lack of) ties influences network

'Building blocks' are simply the combination of foundations, plans, and approaches that an individual has upon coming to a new home base. The development of a network in a new home base starts from these building blocks and can be influenced and guided both by their presence and absence. Additionally, while some of these building blocks are closely tied to the pre-London network (e.g. old friends), others can be quite new (e.g. a distant relative living in London), while many have both familiar and unfamiliar characteristics (e.g. a new job in a familiar field). The fact that a certain network element becomes a building block through the act of migration can influence its ties to an individual in different ways. This is especially true in the early post-migration stage, because that network element may be seen in the context of the unique (and often temporary) priorities attached to an 'under-developed' London-based network - by the actor and, in case of social elements, by the 'building block' as well.

From old home base to London: the home base-based changes

While the whole 'In London' section deals with the changes from the previous home base to London, this section deals most specifically with the changes that arise from the home base change in itself and within that, from the change from a specific home base to London. The first two sub-categories within this category deal with the change in interactional potential due to the 'switch' to London, in terms of changes both in the specific elements within familiar categories and in the combination of replicable and circumstantial aspects of interactional potential within elements, categories, and bundles[13]. Finally, the fact that an individual has lived in (at least) two different home bases and is living away from the country he or she grew up in has an impact on network development, as it can manifest itself through unique points of view, an increased tendency towards comparison of experiences, bonds with others that have

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[13] This includes both the encountering of new types of bundles and the dismantling of old ones.

similar experiences etc. Such 'plurality of points of view' can also impact one's awareness of alternatives and, consequently, one's network development style and priorities, certain types of skills etc.

> **Here becomes there, there becomes here**: change in geography impacts potential

In addition to changing the home base itself, migration changes the orientation of the rest of the world relative to the individual's geographical situation. Possibly the most important change results from the fact that social ties that were once local now become distant. The two primary consequences that will be discussed in this study are the changes in interactions with those distant social ties and the impact that developing and maintaining those ties may have on network development in London. This study will most extensively explore the changes tied to the switch from interactions based on physical presence to predominantly online ones, the consequent diminishing of bundling possibilities involving those distant social ties, and the impact of these changes on London-based network development.

The geographical change also changes the relative position of other places to the current home base. Consequently, the individual's previous home base becomes a distant location, causing significant changes in interactional potential and actual interactions with the old home base, and often in the individual's attitudes towards it. Consequently, there is a change in uses and priorities related to traveling there or keeping 'in touch' with different non-social elements attached to the old home base, such as sports, politics etc.[14]. Travel patterns, as well as the uses of travel as a 'supplement' to the home base's interactional potential, are also likely to change, especially due to London's specific position in terms of geography as well as transport connections. Finally, the relation of online content to the home base changes, in more and less direct ways. Things that individuals once only read about online may now be something they directly interact with, and vice versa, impacting spin-off possibilities.

5.2.1.3. Beyond London: Future network development considerations

Deliberate immigrants are defined by their motivations for both moving to and staying in their current home base, and their decision to stay in London is tied to their lack of desire to move elsewhere (either 'back home' or to a different home base). This does not,

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[14] This study will only focus on these to the extent that they have a significant impact on the individual's network beyond, for example, just reading about them online.

however, mean that they never consider alternative home bases, especially when considering potential future changes in their preferences or circumstances. However, it should be noted that reasons not to 'move back home' are often different from the ones that made the individuals choose to leave in the first place, while reasons to stay in London are often significantly changed or even completely different from reasons to move there in the first place. These reasons to stay in London are often considered when thinking about potential alternative home bases . (See Figure A.3. in Appendix for more detailed representation of this section).

> **A new move? :** considerations of potential future home base changes

Like the 'Before London' section, the 'After London' section is based on the consideration of home base change as part of reconsidering plans and approaches. However, the first section deals with such considerations in the past, which resulted in an actual home base change, while this section deals with anticipated future considerations, as each of the participants is satisfied with their current situation and has no definite plans to leave London. Consequently, such consideration also involve considering potential changes in both preferences and circumstances. In addition, the starting point for these considerations involves a very different set of foundations and home base potentials. The individual's interactional past and priorities also differ from those before the individual's move to London.

With this in mind, and based on a preliminary analysis of the empirical data, four themes are seen as dominant in the consideration of potential future home base alternatives: potential reasons for the move, building blocks considered, the role of a 'safety net' (i.e. a foundation to 'fall back on,' in a different home base, if things go wrong), and the influence of (a lack of) past experiences on the attitude to future moves.

5.2.2. Case studies

The focus of the case study analyses will be on the 'In London' section of the data analysis model, which leaves the most room for overlap between the different categories and sub-categories. Consequently, the analyses in Chapter 6 will not follow the structure of the methodological model, but will instead be organized into sections that deal with the development of the, arguably, most important parts of a deliberate immigrant's network: the social (consisting of social elements), professional (consisting of elements

related to work), and activity ('free time' activity elements and related place elements) networks and distant ties (primarily, but not exclusively, elements established in previous home bases). Although these sub-networks are also interconnected, they provide a more clear and informative structure and each will, in turn, refer to relevant sub-categories from the 'In London' category.

As noted, the focus of each case study analysis is on the aspects of the data that provide the most (new) insight for the research and the case studies were, consequently, also analyzed to different levels of depth. The first two case studies were analyzed in most depth because they involved significant developments in each of the main network areas, while the rest increasingly focused on more specific (areas of) developments.

6. Case study analyses

6.1. William: age 28, from South Africa, in London for 5.5 years

6.1.1. Before London

For William, the decision to leave his home base combined all of the sub-categories in the methodology model and was also intertwined with his decision to move to London. He was finishing his university studies and could not think of an appealing plan to work towards in Cape Town, but he only started thinking about leaving the city once he was faced with the opportunity to go to London. When reflecting on his reasons for leaving, William mentions that he wanted to see more of the world through travel but also to experience a different way of life. He also wanted to expand his social network (especially in terms of meeting more women), because his social circle in Cape Town was very tight and left little room for new meetings.

While many different places could have offered William the main changes he was looking for (plurality, change of life style, travel possibilities, change in social network), London offered specific benefits both due to its general characteristics and due to William's specific circumstances. The idea of going to London originally came from a close friend who wanted to experience living away from his hometown, and William and another mutual close friend decided to join the plan to move to London for a while, work in temp jobs, and use the money to "travel on the weekends or, if we're lucky, save up and travel for a month or two." London seemed like a good place for this plan because William spoke the language, could easily get a working visa, and the city was conveniently situated for travel. In addition, William liked the idea of experiencing life in a big global city and he had enjoyed previous trips to London. Finally, he had a variety of social connections in the city. In addition to traveling with two close friends, he was quite close to his aunt's family who lived an hour and a half from London and he also had the contact information of a distant relative living in London. Finally, William was in an "on-off" long distance relationship with an American girl he had met during her semester in Cape Town and he "thought London would be a place where, maybe, we could explore that, because it is more in the middle," so she also made plans to move there. He stresses, however, that this was just a bonus and did not play a part in his decision to move to London.

6.1.2. In London

6.1.2.1. Social network

William had quite a diverse set of pre-existing social ties in and around London, which in turn had different effects on the development of his London-based network. He was quite familiar and compatible with his aunt's family (which includes three cousins around his age), but due to their distance from London they were not a frequent presence in his everyday life. They did, however, act as an excellent springboard as well as safety net as he could always stay with them and, additionally, William's uncle played a significant role as a door opener in his career in London, thus influencing his overall network development, as we will see in a later section. William had almost no direct ties with his relative in London (they had met once) and their large age difference meant that they were not very compatible for everyday activities, but she also played a significant door opener role in William's initial network development period as she let both him and one of his friends live in her basement for their first six months in London. In addition, her familiarity with London expanded William's own. Overall, however, due to their great levels of familiarity and compatibility, William's friends played the most significant role in his network development despite their own initially undeveloped local networks - both as a part of his London-based social network and as influences on its development.

William's plans do not include establishing new close friendships because his social priorities are met by his South African friends in London. In addition, actively trying to form such friendships would require significant investment and since, for William, the most significant and unique gain from his close friends is that he can comfortably turn to them on "bad days," he does not feel the need for more close friends than he already has. Over time, more of William's friends from South Africa, as well as his sister, moved to London, while several other close friends are planning to move soon, which only decreased William's need to make new social connections: "Of my five closest friends, all are probably going to be here by the end of this year."

Nevertheless, William's strong pre-established social network did not make him anti-social in other contexts. While he can be much more relaxed and selective about making friends, he is happy to engage in various activities (on his many "good days") with people he is less close to, since he gets much satisfaction out of it with little investment.

Most of William's new friends are from his work, due to 'exposure' and the ease of bundling, and he stresses that he is less close to them not because of a lack of compatibility, but because of a distance he maintains due to the fact that he must also "see them Monday to Friday in a work environment." He therefore assumes that he will become closer to them if he changes jobs in the future and so 'unbundles' them from a professional context. At the same time, his South African social group's openness to "blend[ing]" with others allows him to bundle together his close friends with his acquaintances, as well as to meet the friends of his friends, whose individual London-based social networks are also developing over time. Consequently, while William's 'imported' friends made it unnecessary for him to include new close friends into his plans, over time he spontaneously created a good foundation for attaining such a plan in a potential future (e.g. if some of his friends leave London) as well as for further spontaneous development of his social network.

William's only concrete social plan in London was to expand his 'access' to meeting women, as he thought this would be quite simple: "The three us did have big ideas in our heads of London being a big place, lots of young people, especially young women. We thought it would be nice, if we could." This plan was not so much about necessarily taking advantage of this interactional potential, since he was in an (admittedly "on-off") relationship at the time of moving to London. Instead, what seemed to be important is the availability of that interactional potential, which would remove any external limitations imposed by the home base in the case that he ever did include finding a new romantic partner into his plans. He found, however, that such access in London generally came bundled with a "party scene" that proved not to be to his taste, so he abandoned that part of his plan since the required investment was too high. He did, however, still get the chance to meet a variety of people through his friends and, some time after breaking up with his American girlfriend, he started a relationship with a girl he met this way. Interestingly, she was from Cape Town and they had not met there only due to circumstances.

6.1.2.2. Distant ties

The switch to primarily internet-based communication with friends from South Africa led William to make more deliberate choices about which internet tools to use and which people to keep in contact with. This is partially because online communication is customizable and largely self-driven and partially because it takes him away from

offline activities, which William believes bring more satisfaction due to their complexity, i.e. the bundles they come with. Consequently, he has very little contact with people from South Africa who he is not very close to because the kinds of casual conversations that he would have with them, usually while simultaneously engaging in another activity, do not hold up on their own. With them, he primarily maintains infrequent and indirect contact through Facebook, which he is still "conflicted" about using because of his dislike for unsolicited, one-sided information that is "hard to avoid [...] even if you look directly for a friend." As a result, Facebook is neither as customizable nor as personal and interactive as William wants his online communications to be. He uses Facebook primarily as a way of keeping track of people's contact information but also because he thinks it might prove to be somehow useful one day.

William is only willing to put in the effort for one-on-one online communication with close friends and family. At the same time, precisely because of their levels of familiarity, he does not need to invest much into maintaining those relationships, since the people he is closest to understand that his focus is on life in London, i.e. on 'offline' interactions.

Overall, William sees offline experiences as more fulfilling because of the many different elements bundled within any such interaction ("the way it smells, the way it looks, the colors, the other people there, whatever you eat that day, drink that day") in combination with the potential for unique, unexpected bundles such as "seeing some crazy guy juggling fireballs... it's that extra dimension that you may encounter. Even if you don't, it's the opportunity that was there which is valuable." As a result, and in combination with the fact that in-person experiences require "more money and time and effort" than the much more easily arranged online interactions, he always prioritized "live experiences," whether they involve close friends or acquaintances. He stresses, however, that this is precisely because he knows that he can schedule his online interactions around his offline ones - he knows that he does not have to choose.

William does not believe online communication can develop his friendship with someone he is not already close to or match the level of satisfaction that he can get from in-person interactions. However, he does believe that continuous, even when not frequent, online communication develops established friendships and is a "more than

adequate" way of maintaining a tie with friends and family: "With friends and family it never bothered me that I can't [have in-person interactions], with a girlfriend I think it would be a problem." William points out, however, that staying in touch with his ex-girlfriend over Skype not only allowed them to maintain their relationship before she moved to London but also developed it, precisely because they could not be 'distracted' by bundled activities: "It took away some of the excitement we'd had for six months, and we got to know each other [...] we took the time to have those conversations, it was rewarding to put that time in."

As a result of William's approach of prioritizing "live" experiences, keeping in touch does not in any way limit the development of his London-based network. At the same time, because his online contacts require little maintenance, William's significant distant ties remain at a satisfying level and even further develop through online contact, so that the two types of interactions and ties fit together well within his network.

6.1.2.3. Professional network: development and impact on macro plans

As William could not come up with a satisfying macro plan that would follow his university studies in Cape Town, he decided to adopt a temporary plan that required less commitment and used the change in home base as a novelty-based satisfaction booster. Although William did make some plans for London before the move, they were neither long term nor strict and were therefore quite open to change.

William's initial idea of working in temp jobs and traveling on the savings was thwarted because he found London to be an expensive city that often also required long working hours. This left him with few savings for travel and little energy to explore and enjoy much of London's interactional potential. Job satisfaction also had an impact on his overall network, because unsatisfying work made him look for reliable and low-investment sources of satisfaction in his free time, which he primarily spent in pubs with his old friends. As William was neither especially enjoying himself nor investing into a long-term plan, he was open to a change: "You could go on like that, I guess, for the rest of our lives, but none of us were like that." After about six months, one of the friends he came with decided to start a "proper" job and moved to a town in England where he found employment in his field. William decided to adopt a similar plan within London, in part influenced by the vibrant job market in his field of finance.

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Finding a job without door openers proved to be hard, so William took advantage of his building block connections, and his uncle helped him get an internship in his field. The internship did not lead to a job straight away and, during a two-month stay in Cape Town that followed the internship, William seriously considered whether staying in London was worth the effort. He decided, however, to keep trying to attain his new plan, partially because he had a solid foundation already built up (apartment, bank account, friends etc.) and partially because his time in London exposed him to enough of its gross interactional potential to make him believe that it would fit him well as a home base if he developed his existing foundation somewhat, primarily by finding a decent job. In addition, he still had no better home base alternative in mind. Soon after returning to London, he found a very satisfying, permanent position and so established enough of a foundation to guarantee both present satisfaction and allow for further refinement of his plan and network.

In combination with the change of the professional aspect of William's macro plan, the travel aspect transformed as well. Due to his new job, life in London became the central part of William's plan, in part because his current network in London was far more satisfying than its previous incarnation. Travel was no longer required as the central source of satisfaction, although it remained a part of the overall plan: "I don't see London as a place where I'll be a couple of years and travel, I think of it now as a place where I'll be always and still be able to travel and work and..." Travel became a part of William's long term plan, and he eventually stopped travelling "just to see" things, both because his curiosity was satisfied for the time being and because London provided many of the cultural aspects that he once travelled for. Instead, he started using the ease of travel as a long-term complement to his London home base by exploring different place-specific activities (e.g. skiing, a city marathon etc.) with different people in his social network.

6.1.2.4. Activity network

Three categories make up the majority of free-time activities in William's network: the pub, exercise, and entertainment (with theater as a significant sub-category). These broad preferences, with the exception of theater, were established before London, but the variety and quality within these categories in London is a significant source of satisfaction and has also led to William's exploratory approach. He not only knows that he can generally have "the best" of any   (sub-)category he chooses, if he is so

inclined, but also that there is much room for exploration within these categories: "It's unlikely I'd try something new beyond those themes, but they're very broad themes [...] I think I'm at the stage in life where I'm just exploring lots of different things [...] I think London's just given me the opportunity to do that. South Africa is a bit more narrow and I was a bit more in a comfort zone there."

Although he used to exercise regularly in Cape Town, William stopped the practice when he first came to London because he did not have the right foundation for it: he had little time, little money to spend, and not enough energy to make the effort. But once his network changed, primarily due to getting a good job, he decided to explore that past preference in his new home base. Instead of golf and tennis, he now primarily does biking and running, as he found London to be much better suited for these activities. It should be noted, however, that William's "exercise" category includes most interactions that include an element of physical activity and he frequently explores many new activities within it, especially with his friends. As noted before, William also started using travel from London as a way to practice new sports, such as skiing. Consequently, the exercise category covers a significant portion of his network, but while some sub-categories are more frequently repeated, others are a source of novelty and exploration for both the activities themselves and the bundles that are involved (with people, places, activities).

Theater has a significant influence on William's satisfaction because it is something he does frequently and enjoys very much, but it is an activity category that played almost no role in his life before London. He started going to plays with his current girlfriend, because she is very interested in theater and goes frequently. Over time, her approach to theater 'rubbed off' on William and he became more skilled at approaching plays as art, rather than just entertainment, and focusing on the plays themselves rather than the "social event" he used to bundle them with (dinner, drinks etc.). William points out that he would not have developed this interest in South Africa because the variety and quality of plays in London are far greater and allow theater to provide both a significant and reliable part of his network. This, in turn, develops his theater skills and makes theater-going an increasingly worthwhile endeavor in many ways: knowing how to approach plays, comparing them, choosing which ones to see etc. This is also a significant consideration for William's future in London, because London would allow him to take advantage of this theater scene into his old age, while also offering a variety

of similar but still unexplored categories (ballet, opera, classical music) that he feels he could "grow into" one day: "I think there's a lovely ability in London at all levels to satisfy your mind's curiosities. And that is appealing, from now until I'm 75 and not able to get there."

The change of home base had a significant impact on William's use of internet for non-communication purposes. He always used to follow sports news, but he would specifically follow sports-related content from a variety of sources. In London, he started reading several English newspapers in e-reader format because the culture of newspaper reading surrounded him and he found a "superb" quality of news that was not present in South Africa: "I think they're just such a big part of the national psyche here [...] articles from newspapers are talked about at work, friends talk about them at the pub, different articles, different sectors of science, environment, travel..." As a result, he started primarily reading the sports sections of those papers, which lead him to read about some of the same sports he used to follow (cricket, rugby) but in the context of English instead of South African teams. While he could have easily looked up South African sports news online, this would have not only taken additional time and effort but could also not be bundled with social activities, since people around him discuss English sports. Instead, he even started following English football to a lesser degree, although he dislikes it, simply because it is talked about so often that he wants to be able to be part of the conversations.

6.1.3. After London

For potential future moves, William is only considering Cape Town because he thinks that he might one day want a change in "lifestyle" (i.e. a bigger house, a more relaxed and "luxurious" way of life) that he believes it could provide for both him and, one day, his children. Interestingly, his developing preference for such a lifestyle was partially influenced by his current work, where he was exposed to "lifestyles that you couldn't even imagine, which I wouldn't have maybe come across in South Africa, which has broadened my mind a bit." He is not considering any other home base alternative, because they would involve either too much investment or not enough gain, given his satisfaction with life in London. Ultimately, he finds London to be his best "big city" option, while Cape Town is his best alternative to big city life. William realized that moving to Cape Town would limit his activity network but, while he would miss the ability to explore to the extent that he is able to in London, he believes that "as I move

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on it might well be a few things I settle on and want to play or engage with at a more serious level" and that Cape Town would provide him with enough interactional potential to do that.

William would only consider moving back to Cape Town after he gets a British passport, because it could act as a "safety net," providing him with the option to return to his life in London if things did not work out as planned. This is especially important to him because his plans for a satisfying network in Cape Town are based on his own past experiences, while the statistics about the country imply far less promising interactional potential: "South Africa has only ever been wonderful for me [but] detaching all the emotion and connection that I feel for South Africa, the numbers don't add up for me [...] So give me a British passport and I think that would give me the ability to go explore those numbers knowing that if they never added up - you can come back."

In addition to the passport, William would have a variety of significant foundations that he could 'take' with him from London and fit into his pre-established network elements in Cape Town: his career, a plural perspective from his experiences travelling and living abroad, and presumably his long term partner or family. Ultimately he believes that, in combinations with his connections in South Africa, it would be enough to let him "dip in and straightaway go to how I live now."

6.2. Christine: age 27, from United States, in London for 6.5 years

6.2.1. Before London

Christine's first longer experience abroad was a month in Oxford during high school, where she discovered that England "suited my personality a lot more than the American way of things." During university, she spent an exchange semester at a university in a smaller English city, which further confirmed her views about England. After graduating, Christine's two plans were to "move to a big city" and "become an adult," but England also kept its appeal - London in particular. This was in part because it fit her "big city" criteria with its "cosmopolitan opportunit[ies]" for art and culture, possibilities for developing "a more worldly view of things" and her "streets are paved with gold" notion of big city work opportunities. That broad appeal was boosted by the less tangible idea of "the romance [and] fantasy of living in London" that resulted from

Christine's many indirect interactions with London through literature and films. Finally, the Englishman she started seeing at university was also moving to London, which provided both additional motivation to move to London and an established tie there.

6.2.2. In London

6.2.2.1. Social network: the impact of an English husband

Christine married her English boyfriend shortly after moving to London[15] and, while he was not her main motivation for initially moving to London, he was arguably her most concrete tie in it. His presence had an important impact on the development of Christine's London-based network not only because, as her (future) husband, he interacted with a large part of it, but also in less direct but influential ways due to his established ties in England and London. His familiarity with English culture provided a shortcut to skills that aided interactions with (especially British) people in London: "I can't tell you how useful it is to have a British husband, who knows about British football, who forces you to watch it so you can at least talk about it in a work environment or a social environment." Christine also had much more personal contact with British people than she most likely would have without her husband as a door opener. She noticed an "'us and them' feeling" among the British and thinks she would have probably only become friends with foreigners if it were not for her husband and his many British friends. The social bundles her husband enabled, however, meant that Christine's social network in London was populated by many friends 'with limitations.' She was not able to talk with them about certain topics because of their pre-established ties with her husband and also found that those bundled ties did not easily spin off into an independent friendship despite the amount of time they spent together, due to their "traditional British reserve" and established social networks: "They had very long established friendships from childhood or university friendships and making new friends wasn't really on a lot of people's to do lists."

If she had been single when she moved, Christine believes that she would have probably "desperately tr[ied] to find somewhere to fit in." Instead, her approach to developing a social network was more relaxed and less active because she already "fit in with one person" and could also "rely" on her husband's friends. These ties, however, also created

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[15] She spent a short amount of time in the US after her 6-month visa expired, but then she returned permanently to London.

limitations because they left her with less time and 'space' in her network for independent development. Over time, however, she developed stronger ties with some of her husband's friends and eventually extended her social network significantly through work. Overall, while she wonders what her life would have been like if she had gone to London alone, she is very grateful she did not have to "do it on [her] own."

6.2.2.2. Professional network: development and impact on the overall network

Christine's main professional building block was a six-month paid internship, which she took because it would allow her to move to London and also work for a well-known (American) organization. It proved, however, both to be unrewarding (very hard work that led to no new skills) and not to lead to any spin-off development of her professional network. Christine hoped to find work in publishing but, after three months of unsuccessful searching, she looked into a broad variety of jobs, including recruitment positions, as she worked in this field at university. However, the combination of very little work experience in the UK and a degree from a university that is "very good" but not well-known outside of the US was not sufficient to guarantee her a job. She eventually found a recruitment job but, due to unfortunate circumstances (the person she was supposed to be working for had just quit), she again had too much work for little benefit, in combination with a "bull[ying]" supervisor who deprecated her performance.

Problems in Christine's professional network eventually rubbed off onto other parts of her network. She expected a blissful "honeymoon phase" in her marriage, but due to the stress of her plans not working out despite her efforts and to her feelings of social isolation, she found herself feeling very low and this also affected her relationship with her husband. After nine months at her job, Christine decided that this plan was not working, so she resigned and enrolled in law school. She did not actually want to be a lawyer, but she had the required foundations for this plan and presumed that it would open doors to a clear career path, which was an increasing priority for her. Although the British educational system was a challenge, she did well enough in her first year classes and planned to find a traineeship, when circumstance struck again and banks collapsed. Her working experience also proved to be a drawback, since "the majority of the large companies really want someone they can mold and shape into a clone, let's be honest." All of this severely undermined her law school approach's door opening abilities, so that this approach no fulfilled the priorities that led her to it in the first place. As the plan to

be a lawyer never fit her preferences to begin with, Christine decided to go back to the old approach of trying to find a job related to her previous working experience.

Christine's old approach finally proved successful and she found a recruiting job that she liked and where she could use her existing skills. This, in turn, significantly improved her personal life. She made great friends at work, which significantly developed her social network, while having a consistent salary meant that she could afford to do the many more things in the city. Overall, she felt that she could finally "appreciate London" because she was able to take advantage of much more of its interactional potential. As she points out, "London is so difficult to live in if you don't know anybody and are having a bad time." The lack of an established social network had left her without a strong foundation for either satisfaction or development and, while she believes that this would apply to any big city, she assumes that her CV would have at least made it possible to "[get] an interview" in the US.

Christine's initial professional wishes crystallized into the idea that being a literary agent would be her "dream job." Attaining that plan, however, would require "being in the right place at the right time" and, due to her experiences, she feels that she never is. Consequently, she is not actively pursuing that plan and "wouldn't hate [herself]" if she never attained it. In other words, while it is her top preference, it is not her central priority, and she is satisfied with her current carrier in recruiting.

6.2.2.3. Activity network: feeling at home

As mentioned previously, Christine felt that England and London suited her personality more than any potential American home bases (e.g. she enjoyed English "social mannerisms" and softspokenness). At the same time, factors connected to the "romance of living in London" contributed to her feeling 'at home' in the city. Reading about London in different contexts "improve[d] [her] view of the city" as she is amazed at "what survived [...] how society has changed and how it's evolved and people of the city have evolved [...] and being part of it." She enjoys feeling "ownership" of the traditions and the history both through her knowledge of them and her more or less direct participation in them (e.g. watching the Oxford-Cambridge race, knowing where Dickens lived etc.).

As for current events, Christine likes London-related news because "good or bad, it's exciting to be in the center of it, where things are happening." She was on the street when "Lehman brothers closed and everybody is walking out of their offices" and, after she found out what was going on through the media, her experiences created a direct connection to that news. Christine has lost much of her initial wonder at such events and, as she notes, has become "such a Londoner" that she primarily gets frustrated by the practical aspects involved. But while the actual interaction with such newsworthy events is not necessarily satisfying in itself, the interactional past it creates increases Christine's tie to the whole city and positively impacts her views of her network. For example, she notes that there is "all this construction" because of the Olympics preparations and being in the middle of the underground strikes is "miserable," but "history will show that there was a purpose to it all" and she will then feel that having lived through it is "really cool." In other words, she enjoys sharing an interactional past with London.

Another, more actively developed, way in which Christine increased her ties to London was through developing familiarity with places and activities either by creating new routines or 'importing' them from plans that she maintained in past home bases. She finds that familiarity-based connections with a place "can't [be] force[d]" and can also depend on circumstances. During her first two years in London, Christine and her husband moved a lot and, since such familiar places are often in one's neighborhood, the moves made familiarity-based ties difficult. Since they settled down in their current apartment, Christine has developed such a tie with a local pub. Although there are several pubs in her area, she and her husband moved in winter and that particular pub was especially cozy, so they kept going there for "date night[s]" and she now associates the place with "good times."

The one instance in which Christine developed such familiarity on purpose was tied to a continuing plan started by her family's routine of having breakfast at the same place every Saturday: "I really liked that, cause it was a routine, but we'd always have really good family talks." This plan continued in somewhat different forms at university with a Saturday brunch and, after she moved off-campus, with Sunday morning visits to a cafe. After moving to the new apartment, Christine suggested to her husband to start going for breakfast on weekends and they now go once or twice a month: "I think it starts the weekend off nicely. Even if we have different plans the rest of the weekend we kind of

catch up about the week. I think that I pulled that from my childhood as something that I valued [...] it's a stability."

Another 'imported' aspect of her old networks was initiated by her husband. He once went to see the projection of a US college football game with her in London and, since he had never before seen her "screaming and talking trash," he decided that he should learn about the sport both in order to understand her better and to bring something familiar into her life in that city. Christine notes that she very much enjoys being able to share what she sees an important part of her life with someone she is close to, although she notes that her husband's initially bundled interest took on a life of its own after a visit to the US and he now watches "*all* of the games."

6.2.2.4. Distant ties

Although keeping in touch with friends happened spontaneously, Christine's distant ties generally fit into three categories: people who are in some way in the same stage in life as her (one friend is also a young wife, another moved to England around the same time as she did) and are therefore uniquely compatible with her. These relationships are quite suitable for online communication, since they are primarily based on sharing experiences. The second category consists of two very close friends and their mutual love and understanding is not dependent on frequent interactions or on having much in common in their daily lives. The third group are her so-called "Facebook friends," or people she still cares about but no longer really keeps in touch with. Finally, she stays in frequent contact with her family and they are the only people she usually talks to over the phone, because the large time difference usually does not allow for spontaneity but her parents call her a lot. She notes that her mother is "kind of [her] best friend" but that they also "definitely" get along much better at a distance. At the same time, since they do not talk as often, they focus on the most important things and Christine also finds that she can talk with her mother about a lot of things over the phone that she would rather not talk about in person, so that the distance also helps develops their relationship.

Christine feels a particular sense of comfort when speaking with her old friends because they are "responding just to [her]," away from the associations she is generally 'bundled' with in London as her husband's wife or "the American." She also notes that her parents now see their old friends "more than ever because they're all empty nesters" and she

believes that such a plan would also be possible for her established friendships if the circumstances were right one day.

Christine's two main types of travel are for vacation purposes and for seeing her parents (approximately once a year). She usually meets up with her parents in the US but away from her home town, both because it is too isolated and because most of her friends from there have also moved out. Although she enjoys visiting the US both because of "nostalgi[a]" and because it reinforces her awareness of her preference for England, she would be happy to also meet her parents elsewhere, and they are making plans to visit Italy together. Because she travels with her husband and needs to take his satisfaction into consideration, and as time and money are limited, Christine only sees her friends in the US if they happen to be in the area. She mostly sees distant friends when they travel through London, but finds such experiences to be "hard" because those people are usually from her 'Facebook friends' group and they only stay long enough for her to remember how much she likes being around them. It is essentially a reminder of what is out of reach to her from her London home base, but Christine points out that none of her friends are living in the same place and so there is no single home base alternative that she could even consider for social reasons. While it is particularly hard for her to miss certain important events, such as a wedding of two friends, it would be impossible to include all of her preferred network elements and specific interactions into her everyday life, regardless of her home base. Consequently, she would "much rather live in the present than worry too much about staying connected to the past."

6.2.3. After London

Two main factors influence Christine's considerations regarding a potential home base change: future changes in priorities due to having children and preferences influenced by her initial home base experiences. Although a US home base is a possibility if it appears to be a better place to raise children, she is not enthusiastic about the idea because of her preference for and ties to England, so that moving to the US would not be "moving home." As she still has no good arguments for the US as a superior environment for children, Christine presumes that she and her husband will instead one day move somewhere outside of London.

Christine lived in a big house while growing up, with a garden and a dog, and she would like to have all three one day. She believes that everyone ultimately "wants what they

grew up with or more in terms of property or space" and this could be argued for any other network area as long as it is significant enough to the actor. But while her initial plan was to live in a big house in the center of London, over time her "expectations have been managed quite nicely."

Christine points out that, due to the very different bundles attached to different areas of London, "where you live in London determines what your life is like." While she loves her current neighborhood and is satisfied with living in an apartment for the time being, she presumes that this will change one day, especially if and when she has children: "It translates into the school system so if you want to raise children in London, you want to live somewhere nice." Getting a house in such an area, however, would require either an extremely well-paid job (or, even more likely, one that provides housing) or making a lot of sacrifices in other areas. At the same time, she "can't imagine raising a family in London ... trying to get on a bus with a buggy."

Christine is aware that she will need to adapt to changes in interactional potential if she moves out of London. While she would look for some similar things (walkability, liveliness) and would maintain ties with people in London, she realizes that her experiences would change significantly. She believes, however, that she could adapt by compensating for those losses with opportunities that the new home base would provide while allowing her to keeping many of the benefits of her London network. For example, while she could no longer see her friends during the week, she hopes that they could stay over at her house on weekends. At the same time, she would get to keep working in London and spend time there, which would keep much of its interactional potential available, if on a less frequent basis.

6.3. Mila: age 27, from Serbia, in London for 2 years

6.3.1. Before London

Before going to London, Mila had never travelled abroad and presumed that she would never consider changing her home base permanently, because she thought "you're supposed to live in the language and the culture you're born into." Her initial plan was to go abroad as a way of exploring the world and experiencing something new, and she thought that having international experience would also help her develop her professional network in Belgrade. Mila planned to attend graduate school in part

because it was the best way to secure a visa and in part because attending a British university would be a good experience in itself. English was her best foreign language and since she felt Australia was "too far away" and "didn't like" the US, she chose the UK. Mila only applied to programs in big cities because of the overall "broader opportunities" they would provide, and eventually got accepted into a program in London. In addition to never having travelled there, however, Mila had practically no indirect connections (through media etc.) to either London or England - even her interest in literature (her topic of study) never focused on England - and she was essentially 'going in blind.'

6.3.2. In London

Much of Mila's network development was influenced by her general lack of building blocks, which resulted in part from her shift in plans. She only realized that Belgrade and Serbia did not fit her preferences and priorities well enough after she moved to London and found it to be a viable home base alternative. Mila's unexpected decision to stay in London more permanently, in combination with her general lack of building blocks, created both obstacles and opportunities for her network development.

6.3.2.1. Activity and (temporary) professional networks: impact of financial restrictions

Mila noted that her general lack of experience with London and England made her "full of adrenaline" due to the surge of so much novelty, which significantly increased her satisfaction and helped her deal with many of the problems that her lack of building blocks caused. She was also prepared for the financial difficulties she would have and focused on dealing with them in any way possible. During her time at university, Mila worked in a number of low skill jobs and, although she found the overall experience "awful," she benefited from some resulting bundles and spin-offs. These were driven in part by her awareness that focusing on her goals and looking for development opportunities would help her motivation to maintain such 'imposed' door opener activities. Consequently, those jobs helped her to quickly improve her English skills and learn about English "mentality and way of life from various perspectives," including those of people with no university education - something that was new for her. She also bonded with "a very good friend" through their shared (bad) experiences at one of the jobs.

Mila's financial restrictions also led her to develop her involvement with activities that did not cost money: "I don't have money to buy bread, fair enough. Internet is free, I'm gonna look for all possible recipes and I'm going to make the best possible bread and be happy." She also found that she enjoys walking around the city, taking photographs of things that strike her as interesting, and emailing them to friends and family. She developed a whole range of activities around the notion of "park life" available in London: walking, picnicking, studying, going with friends or her boyfriend, going on nature "excursions" in some of the larger parks etc. While she could not afford to go out with her friends in the evenings, she was prepared for this and not "embarrassed" by it: "It was ok for me to say I can't afford it, and that's fine. Here no one really bothers by that." She had also already had plenty of experiences in that category because Belgrade has "an amazing night life," so she never felt like she was missing out on a relevant part of London's interactional potential. In general, Mila does not worry about not being able to explore activities out of her financial reach and focuses on the many things that are available to her in London. Nevertheless, a very important part of her plan for the future is to not have to worry about money in everyday life, in part because her family never had much money and she has been dealing with some financial restrictions all her life. Ultimately, her goal is to be able to act in a more spontaneous and relaxed way about money and one day be able to afford further travel and an apartment of her own.

6.3.2.2. Professional and social networks: impact of distant ties and changes in plans

As noted, Mila initially planned to stay in London for a limited period of time and then return permanently to Belgrade. After about six months, however, she found that "my life is [in London]." While the change in plans meant that she lacked a solid foundation for developing her professional network, her lack of social plans actually helped the development of her social network, whose foundations were established without her planning for it.

Because she did not plan to develop a professional network abroad until she was already attending graduate school, Mila had to deal with a lack of foundations for such a plan. Her excellent results from bachelors studies did not count for much in her CV, while her lack of professional experience (both due to her focus on her studies and the lack of working opportunities for students in Belgrade) posed a significant problem in her job

search. Her study of literature also connected to a less clear career path than many other studies would have. She was not aware that she could choose a different focus for her post graduate studies because this differed from the academic model in Serbia, but she she also felt that she should stick to a topic she knew she was good at and liked because the master's program was, essentially, her only building block in London.

After finishing her post-graduate degree, Mila decided to take advantage of her skills in Serbian and her love of linguistics and looked into teaching Serbian as a second language: "My friend did that, and we discussed it privately, but I never thought of it as a career, but now I'm seriously thinking about it [...] eventually I managed to find some students to give it a go." She found the experience "brilliant" and is developing a plan for a career in that field, although she would be happy to do any unrelated "amazing job" if she got the opportunity. She is also looking into the possibility of doing a PhD in that field if is unable to secure a more permanent working visa through other employment, although she would prefer to avoid this option because she is tired of academia for now.

A crucial factor in Mila's development of her London network was the "massive [emotional] support" she got from Belgrade through her boyfriend, best friend, and family. Their 'virtual' presence, even independently of her lack of plans to stay in London long term, made her feel very relaxed about developing a local social network. Mila notes that she had (and still has) no plans to "replace" her best friend from Belgrade and is very comfortable talking to her at a distance (through Skype, email, and chats) as they had already done much of that in Belgrade. She found that she is "good at" such mediated communication (email, for example, allows her to organize her thoughts nicely) and she assumed that having local close friends was not necessary for her satisfaction. Consequently, instead of actively developing her social network, Mila planed to "just be friends with people I'd normally be friends with." This approach was, interestingly, what helped her make very good friends in London. She only spent time with people she felt compatible with and found that there were a number of people like that in her course, primarily also foreigners, who shared both her experiences with migration and cross-cultural experiences, as well as her academic interests. It was only after she had already developed a strong social network in London that she realized how significant a role it plays in her life, and so she managed to attain a plan important for her long term satisfaction in London without planning for it.

6.3.2.3. Distant ties: making choices and dealing with plurality

Mila's ties to a "life" in Serbia[16] do not result from an inability to create a satisfying network in London, but from the single, specific social tie to her boyfriend who "wasn't ever interested in immigrating." As an only child, Mila is used to being "self-sufficient" and finds that she can 'revert' to a more independent approach as circumstances require it, so that she is quite happy on her own in London and does not need to be around her boyfriend at all times or even to be in a relationship. She is, however, very attached to her boyfriend, which leaves her situation "a bit paradoxical " for now. Mila's boyfriend also impacts her life in London because, without him, she would need "more energy from other people" and would be involved in her social network in London more actively. She would also be likely to get a 'local' boyfriend, which would significantly influence her ties in London through the many possible bundles.

Mila likes reading newspapers and, depending on her mood, alternates between *The Guardian* (a habit she picked up while preparing for her IELTS exam) and Serbian papers, both of which she reads online. However, she only follows the kinds of stories that are rarely connected to political developments or current events and have little connection to either developments in Serbia or her life in London. She maintains ties to her old home base primarily by maintaining ties with people who still live there and inform her of the most significant developments. To her surprise, Mila finds herself having stronger emotional reaction to political trouble in Serbia from the 'safe distance' that London provides, where she can more fully explore how she feels about what is happening instead of trying to find a way to navigate through and around the practical aspects of the situation: "I was talking to a friend of mine [on the evening of a violent protest in Belgrade] who said - that's just awful, but my baby's sleeping safely in the other room. And I said - I'd think the same, but from here I'm just crying." She also connects the intensified feelings to her personal experience of London as an alternative: "When you're in a different country and with another experienced outlook on your own, you think [...] this is not necessary."

A crucial gain from Mila's home base change is the way in which it opened her perspective about the world: "Being in a new country, environment, language is

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[16] i.e. to the idea of a Belgrade-based network as a potential future alternative, as opposed to simply maintaining distant ties in Serbia and "switch[ing]" completely to her London network as her chosen home base for the present and future.

something I desperately needed. I didn't know this until I came here, but I needed it. knowing that these varieties are not in literature alone." While her new perspective is "boosted" by London's multiculturalism, it is primarily a consequence of having two different home bases, cultures, and ways of life to consider. This made her aware of alternative ways of "treating [one's] own everydayness" and the implication that the way things are done in Serbia, or in London for that matter, are not the only option.

This plurality of perspective was initially a barrier to Mila's feeling like she fits into her new home base, because she felt that London and Belgrade, and England and Serbia, are too different and that the first was "perfect" while the second was, in contrast, quite bad. What made her change her perception of both countries was connected to her long-held interest in literature, as she sometimes finds it "much easier to get catharsis through literature than from real life." A story by a Bosnian writer in America "opened my eyes, especially towards England. The problems don't need to be the same ones we have in Serbia, or even similar, but they are equally difficult [...] I did know that in theory, but I didn't really feel it." Whereas she once felt a "huge distance" from England, she became able to approach it as a place that she could understand and become a part of. The comparison with Serbia also made her appreciate how the English actively deal with their problems instead of giving into "bohemian melancholy." At the same time, Mila benefits from the opposite comparison so that, for example, during a summer visit, she was the only person who enjoyed the extreme heat in Belgrade because she now primarily had access to London's colder weather. She also "love[s]" that being from Serbia lets her maintain a tolerance for "some things that would generally be considered annoying in Serbia, because I'm from there I find them... charming."

6.3.3. After London

Although Mila loved the experience of moving to a completely new home base and building up a network in London, this also makes her not want to do yet another big move. She already has the many benefits of developing a plural point of view and she feels that expanding it even further would make her feel too "schizophrenic." In addition, she has also developed her London network and local ties to a good extent and also feels that there is still much to explore and build on in the city. She points out, however, that she would not hesitate to drop everything and move to Belgrade if, for example, her mother was sick: "In those extreme cases it doesn't matter, my life is so not important." Her relationship with her boyfriend will ultimately be likely to affect

one of their home bases, but she does not have any set plans or predictions about this yet. There is also the matter of finding a way to prolong her visa and stay in the UK but, as noted, she is already developing an approach for achieving this plan.

6.4. Sarah: age 27, from South Africa (born in Hong Kong), in London for 6.5 years

6.4.1. Before London

Sarah wanted to change her home base for two main reasons. While the way of life in Cape Town is quite slow-paced and relaxed, Sarah "love[s] pace and running around." At the same time, through various media, she was exposed to information about interactional potential that was available in other parts of the world, especially in London (because of South Africa's ties to England), so that living in Cape Town felt like "hearing a party downstairs" but not being able to attend it. Her family moved to South Africa from Hong Kong when she was a child and, while she felt comfortable in Cape Town, she also felt that it "it has never really been ours," which made her feel more free to leave. Sarah also felt a strong pull from London, which she had visited a number of times with her family. She loved how independent she felt there, because it was much safer than Cape Town, while her mother, who had lived in London, showed her how to approach and fully enjoy it (as will be explored later). After university, Sarah applied to drama schools in London and went there for auditions. Although she did not get accepted, her parents' encouragement led her to stay in London and try to 'make a life' there.

6.4.2. In London

Sarah's network development in London is characterized by her overarching network development style, which is based on a number of ideas: recognizing that "life is what you can make it," being prepared to "absorb" unexpected things, and knowing "why you're in a place" (i.e. "If I [want to] sit in and watch television three weeks in a row I might as well do that somewhere nice and with a pool," but she also does not "require a modern art museum" in a South African village). She has a very active approach to network development and, while she is ready to adapt to circumstances, she also tries to take the most advantage of what is available to her. While she invests into developing

certain interests and ties, Sarah is also prepared to let go of others in an effort to create the most satisfying network overall.

6.4.2.1. Professional network

Although Sarah's original plan was to attend a drama school in London, she only applied to "top drama schools" because of her "all or nothing" style. After she was not accepted, she abandoned that plan altogether, since she knew that an acting career is very demanding and did not want to attempt to develop it without her preferred door opener. As Sarah's interests and skills are both quite wide-ranging, since she actively develops them, her plans were quite adaptable to circumstances and she reverted to her broader plan of attending graduate school. She found an art history program that she liked, where she expanded old interests and developed new ones. She also established both personal and professional contacts, which helped her develop her social and professional network[17]. She currently works for a large media company, where she has succeeded in "tailor[ing]" her assignments so that she can primarily work on topics related to art history and other personal interests.

6.4.2.2. Activity network: impact of social ties and existing plans and approaches

Sarah likes to make friends with "people who like to do things" and while the lack of shared experience with people in London initially caused her friend groups to be divided into relatively tight activity-based bundles ("you've got your party friends, then the people who like to do something else"), developing familiarity and discovering mutual compatibilities over time led to an establishment of a more stable yet varied group of friends, which also allowed for new bundles and spin-offs. In this way, Sarah attained her social plan inspired by the "sitcom notion of young life": "Big city life [is] glamourized in things like *Friends* [...] this idea of having a big group of friends all doing crazy things and coming in and out of each other's houses" or, more realistically, the "idea of a group of young people all doing exciting things, working together." Sarah "worked hard" to develop such a network and has created it through a combination of taking advantage of available activities in London, pursuing old and new interests, and creating bundles with similarly active room mates, classmates, colleagues, old and new friends etc. In line with her development style, this is a very dynamic plan, open to much change, development, and expansion as opportunities present themselves.

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[17] See transcript in Appendix for details.

As both South Africa in general and her family in particular are culturally quite closely connected to British culture, Sarah was already deeply rooted in many of the cultural references she comes across in London. At the same time, she is very happy to keep developing her familiarity with such references, both because she finds it enjoyable and because it expands her interactional potential with people (in London "everything is a reference to something else" and she enjoys being 'in the loop') and places (history is "on the street" and she can best take advantage of this by staying informed, e.g. "if you walk up Regent Street, the whole history of why the street looks that way, and it's also the root of regency style"). Sarah is a very active internet user, both because of her work in the media and her personal interests. She uses it to learn about existing interests and develop new ones, but also enjoys tying in what she reads online with her activities in the city, since London allows for many such spin-offs. If she reads a review of a newly published book, for example, she can most likely go to a reading by the author some time soon. In this way, she becomes aware "that these people are living people and these things are living things and they are changing all the time" and can follow their development, which gives these (initially) indirect ties a longer and a more dynamic 'shelf life.' Many things she reads about online will refer to things she has seen or done or will do in the future, which "amplifie[s]" her sense of "liv[ing] in the world." Finally, the "order" in which she gets involved in activities has transformed, so that instead of hearing about a specific event (e.g. a concert) happening and then including it in her plan, she now first thinks about "what you want to do [and] invariably you can do it here." Consequently, practically anything she reads about online is tied to the assumption that it can "manifest in real life and in my activities in London." This reversal is also tied to the fact that trying to choose what to do by first informing herself about what activities are available to her causes Sarah to "freak out" because she cannot possibly do all of the available activities that appeal to her.

Sarah also 'adopted' many of her mother's approaches to exploring and connecting to London. As she points out, London is a very large city and yet everyone seems to be trying to create a familiar, "villagey" atmosphere in it. Her mother's advice was to go "collecting treasures" among the many places and activities in London and "make things [her] own," e.g. by finding a favorite pub or a favorite corner of a favorite museum. This treasure hunting is simultaneously an enjoyable activity in itself and a development

tool for actively creating familiarity in order to make a large, extremely diverse, and changeable city seem more "manageable."

Sarah is still mostly involved in the same types of activities as before moving, but they are "amplified by about ten billion opportunities and ways to do stuff." She points out that the large amount of (often quite active and diverse) people in London can support a large amount of "quirkier" activities, so that it is possible to find a group that is interested in almost any combination of activities one can imagine (e.g. "people who like knitting and rock and roll and they go to live gigs and knit - who knows?"). Such bundled activities can consequently be developed further and are also made less exotic.

Sarah also points out "pub culture" as an example of a unique mix of familiar environments and activities. Pubs are a cross between staying at home with friends and going out to a night club, and as such create a whole new range of opportunities for interaction and network development: "[They are] a brilliant neutral space, so you can ask the guy you like to a pub, you can ask a colleague to the pub to talk about something, you can go with a bunch of people that you don't know that well [...] it's a really great way to meet people in a different environment, especially from work."

Finally, London allows Sarah to experience interactional potential that she associates with different home bases and include them into a single network. As she notes, as a result of her childhood in Hong Kong, Sarah is very drawn to Asian culture but, instead of needing to move to Asia in order to experience it directly, she feels that London makes enough interactional potential in that category available to her. This allows her not only to pursue and develop interests she developed in her first home base, but also to maintain some familiarity from years ago: the smell of "bazaars in Chinatown" transports her to Hong Kong and she also unexpectedly found herself reconnecting with a number of friends she knew in Hong Kong, who had also moved to London.

6.4.2.3. Distant ties: plurality, stability and change

When she first moved to London, Sarah limited her communication with her family to once a week because she was "frantic about doing it on my own." After the initial development period, however, she has increased her communication with them to approximately once a day simply because she finds it enjoyable. In general, her approach to keeping in touch with her family reflects her macro approach: she is willing

to invest in and take advantage of ties that are valuable to her, but she is willing to adapt to changes in circumstances. She notes: "I suppose I do talk to them every day and then sometimes not for 10 days, two weeks," depending on her mood and circumstances, and points out that "I could not speak to them at all, ever, if that's what it came to." But, as long as such drastic measures are not necessary, it is important to her to maintain "normality" in her relationship with her parents, so that seeing them or talking to them never becomes "a big deal," i.e. seem exotic or like a luxury. She ensures this by sharing both important and mundane details of her life with them. Her family's presence in her life makes her feel "secure," not only because they are a constant part of her dynamic network but also because they are her only "Facebook person[s] - you can be all things with those three people, cause they know all parts of you." Finally, while she is in many ways compatible with her family, she believes that the distance might be a reason that they "get on" so well, while it also creates a second 'home' for her wherever they are.

Sarah's attitude to keeping in touch with distant friends is similar to the one she has with her parents, as she only does it if it makes sense to her within the context of her network: "I miss people, but not in a debilitating way." She does not have a problem with letting go of people, since she knows and meets enough people to keep an active social network. As a result, she only maintains active ties with distant friends when she finds that it is worth the "bother" to do it 'properly,' i.e. in a way that requires investment but also provides significant satisfaction. She made a "conscious decision" not to use Facebook because she she believes that people adapt the way they behave to the person they are interacting with and the context they are in, which the "broadcast" posting on Facebook does not allow: "I think the main thing is - I can't be that many things to that many people [...] ask me any question and I'll probably tell you everything in depth, but if I think about the people that are on Facebook and I realize I have a choice from colleagues to friends to new acquaintances to business partners - I cannot put any information up there." Sarah realizes that not using Facebook may cause her to lose touch with some people and miss out on some opportunities, but is willing to accept that: "There's two things at play. One, if it's that hard, I shouldn't bother. The other is - I should bother. If we lose contact, it's because one of us is not putting in the required effort." She "work[s] very hard" at her friendships but she also counts on her friends to make enough of an effort to contact her for things such as party invitations: "if you want me to come, take the time."

Sarah quite enjoys both visiting and being visited. While visiting friends in distant locations where they have established ties allows her to "relax" with someone who knows more than she does about a place, so that insights and interactional potential are made available to her without her active effort, she also enjoys having visitors (or taking them to South Africa) because she gets to show them a different side of herself. As noted, she believes that people tend to act somewhat differently depending on the person they are with, and the same can be said of different stages. Consequently, her South African friends get to see the side of her that spends time in art galleries while her London friends can see her talking about tortoises at a natural reserve ("well, this is a huge part of it, but there's no tortoise for me to show you in London"). Finally, being foreign helps her make friends with other foreigners and learn about different ways of life: "You're all in London and you're all here for a reason [...] It's like there are new worlds opened up to me because we have something in common and then something majorly different."

Finally, being a South African in London automatically created benefits for Sarah because she avoids two different unwanted bundles: the burden of apartheid and the burden of English class. At the same time, she gets to actively use and build on her experiences from and knowledge about South Africa so that, for example, she looks into various stories related to South Africa and uses her unique insight into them to find the most interesting stories for her work and present them to the London audience.

6.4.3. After London

While she is quite satisfied with her life in London, Sarah feels "unfettered" regarding her choice of home base. In addition to her move to London, this approach is influenced by her home base change at an early age as well as her parents' international experiences and her consequent awareness of many different alternatives. Finally, she points out that this freedom to move goes "hand in hand" with knowing that people in different places provide a 'safety net' to fall back on in case things do not work out as planned. She presumes that she would primarily rely on people as building blocks, especially since she is not interested in furthering her studies and using school as a significant provider of building blocks, but she ultimately notes: "I'd live in any place that was exciting and if someone told me there was a reason for going there, I definitely would [...] I'm quite adventurous, I just haven't had the opportunity or the will to move again yet."

6.5. Lena: age 30, from United States, in London for 8 years

6.5.1. Before London

Before moving to London, Lena spent nine months in Norway (first in a small village where she studied Norwegian and then in Oslo), followed by three years at a conservatory in Liverpool where she received a bachelor's degree in acting. Her main reason for initially leaving the United States was to experience life outside of the country she grew up in. Before moving to London, however, she still felt that she had led "a very sheltered existence": she went to "good schools" and grew up in a town that was not "particularly multicultural" and where she was surrounded by highly educated people. Although she had lived in two cities before, she wanted to see if she would like living in a large, multicultural, "bustling" city. London was also a natural choice because she wanted to pursue acting and "that's where you went in England to do acting and that's where all my mates went from Uni."

6.5.2. In London

6.5.2.1. Activity and professional networks: developing preferences and changing priorities

Upon coming to London, Lena's plan was to make a career in acting. Trying to attain this plan required her to do various jobs on the side in order to support herself financially but, after two years, she was still unable to develop acting into a significant part of her professional network. Although London's gross interactional potential in terms of acting jobs is extensive, she found it was also bundled with a far greater amount of individuals interested in making some of this potential available to them. While she loved acting in the kinds of productions that were available to her before London, Lena found that "drama school is the best time of any actor's life [...] then you get into the real world and you're doing like a stupid commercial and then waiting six months and then you're doing a walk-on part in a play for a month." The combination of very few acting jobs and unskilled part time work left Lena with only enough money to support herself, which left much of London's interactional potential out of her reach. She consequently started reconsidering parts of her original plan and the subsequent changes she made spun off into a significantly different macro plan and network setup.

After two years in London, Lena decided to change her financial and professional situation by taking advantage of her existing skills. She had started practicing fitness in Liverpool in order to lose weight and, as she "started really liking it," activities in that category became an increasingly large part of her network. As a result, she decided to get a teaching certificate for fitness courses, as she had "no problem being in front of a group of people," the job paid better and was more enjoyable than her previous part-time work, and it allowed her to bundle her fitness activities with making a living. While she really enjoyed the work, Lena eventually found that it was not "stimulating [her] enough academically." She had always intended to "one day" get a master's degree in something other than acting and, as she was initially drawn to acting because she is "curious about people" and also found that she was "really passionate about fitness" but wanted "a more sophisticated understanding of it," she looked into psychology. She discovered that she could do a conversion degree in psychology in a year, thoroughly enjoyed the program, and developed an interest in health psychology and obesity management. As a result of both her newfound interests and the unpredictability and lack of satisfaction from her acting career, Lena changed her priorities and plans and now hopes to turn psychology into her main profession while hopefully keeping the acting "door open [and] do[ing] the odd acting job" as a source of satisfaction.

In terms of activities unrelated to her professional network, Lena's activity network in London is quite different from those in her previous home bases, but largely due to parallel life stage changes as well as her social network. Lena's one constant approach is to always "surround [her]self by people" who then have an impact on the choice of activities they do together. Consequently, while growing up in the US, she "did stuff teenagers do" and was a "couch potato" whereas, when she now visits her hometown, she engages in a lot of outdoor activities with her friends there who are now also "into" them. Similarly, when she lived in the village in Norway during the (very cold and dark) winter, she spent her free time indoors with friends and "hung out and drank [and] watched movies" while in drama school she was "just partying a lot and working really hard."

In London, Lena's circumstances again influenced her activity network, as she was initially "really poor and I couldn't really appreciate London for what it was." After the changes in her professional plans improved her financial situation significantly enough, she was able to go out more and now particularly enjoys London's multicultural

possibilities that allow her to combine learning about new cultures with people with activities. She likes being able to pick "a random cuisine," look up a restaurant, and "[go] and [try] what that is" or simply surround herself by people who come from different backgrounds. Lena also enjoys exploring the different sides of London itself, as one can have "a completely different experience" in different parts of the city although the activities and places involved often belong to the same category.

Due to her experiences in London and England, Lena finds that both her behavior and her preferences have changed and that she now feels more "at home" there than in her home town or the US in general. Some of these changes were actively pursued, such as surrounding herself with people with more "international" mindsets (although she notes that this may be possible in big cities in general). Some changes were spontaneous, so that London's dynamic way of life and her network in it (especially her many jobs) have made her unable to "sit still," and she believes she would now feel "very under-stimulated" in a less bustling home base. At the same time, her experiences with acting in London have made her reconsider her priorities, so that she would now "quite like to" try doing the kind of "provincial theater" that she once looked down on. Finally, some changes were essentially 'imposed' on, such as her increased level of "politeness." This is connected to the fact that she first lived in the much smaller and more "English" Liverpool, where most of her friends were English and reacted negatively to her American straightforwardness: "I got into a lot of trouble for being really blunt and I had to tone myself down majorly." While she initially found their reactions "really upsetting," she has now "acclimated" to such a degree that she feels less capable of smoothly interacting with strangers in the US because they now have less compatible ways of acting and communicating.

6.5.2.2. Distant ties

Lena notes that she is not very good at writing emails because she gets overwhelmed by trying to "compose a sort of essay replying to all their points and I'd rather just have it be free flowing conversation." However, the large time differences (to the US for friends and family, to China for her brother) make talking difficult, so that the degree to which she keeps in touch with distant social ties depends on both her determination to actively invest into them and on the circumstances of both herself and the person she is keeping in touch with. She ultimately finds that her ties with good friends and family are maintained regardless of the amount of contact and notices little change in their

interactions when they see each other. This is especially true with her brother whom she is very close to and finds their in-person interactions to be the same as ever, although they are quite bad at communicating at a distance: "I don't know why. I think it might just be cause he's a boy. Boys aren't very good at that."

6.5.3. After London

Lena considered leaving London a number of years ago, when the relationship she was in ended. She decided, however, that she had enough of her own ties in London and chose to stay. While her current boyfriend is "such a London boy" that he would probably never want to permanently leave London and she also feels that her "home is [in London] now," she is somewhat less decided on never moving. Her future plans and wishes, however, focus on either a temporary home base change or on creating stronger ties to a distant location. She would love to move to San Francisco with her boyfriend for about a year because she was born in Northern California and often visited her grandmother in the city and she "love[s] the place." Since it is a small city, Lena thinks that she would have a hard time adjusting to it long-term but that she would enjoy living there temporarily, as it also shares some significant qualities with London (open-mindedness, plenty of things to do etc.). She would also like to try acting there, as the environment would be far less competitive than in London.

Finally, Lena notes that the physical distance (and the consequent diminishing of interaction) between herself and her family is a "source of sadness" in her life and, while she now sees her parents frequently because they are currently living in Italy, this will change when they move back to America in two years. She also dislikes thinking about the possibility of one day having her children not know their grandparents "as well as I would like them to." She consequently plans to keep living in London but hopes to one day be able to spend time with her children in the US during summers, in the area she grew up in "with family and extended family [spending time in] the great outdoors."

6.6. Matthew: age 26, from South Africa (born in Serbia), in London for 3 years

6.6.1. Before London

Unlike for most participants in this study, Matthew's move to London did not coincide with a change of life stage. Instead, he was the only person in his social group in Cape

Town who had a job and the time constraints it imposed significantly limited his involvement in their group activities, causing a clash between his professional and social networks. At the same time, he felt that his social circle was too tight and pre-determined while the interactional potential in his home base was also quite limited. In the time he had spent in Cape Town[18], he had "been everywhere at least once" and felt that his network development was very limited: "The same places, the same plans, the same stories."

Matthew first considered moving to London while on vacation there. The friend he planed to stay with got injured so, as he decided that he liked the city, Matthew inquired at an employment agency about the possibility of working in London and left the meeting with several job interviews planned. He received job offers for a position in London and another one in Switzerland on the same day, but chose London because the city was bigger, looked more exciting, and he knew he liked it from experience.

6.6.2. In London

6.6.2.1. Activity, social, and professional networks: (de-)customizing and opening doors

Upon first coming to London, Matthew "had an idea of what it was like here, and what people are like [and] I wasn't convinced I was gonna like it." While he found that his presumptions about London were mostly true, he realized that the city is so big that he could quite successfully avoid the things he dislikes. In other words, the city's overall interactional potential is expansive and would not impose such unwanted bundles on him as long as he actively developed his network. An important part of this approach is choosing where to live, as the size of the city as well as the developed and unique stages and activity opportunities in each area result in him engaging in many activities in his neighborhood. Matthew takes an active approach by exploring different options and trying to find an apartment in the area he likes best and, although this process can be frustrating (he needs to unite affordability, preferences, awareness of alternatives, and circumstances), he is slowly "narrowing down" his perfect location.

Matthew's overall network development style is characterized by his preference for novelty and diversity. On coming to London, he planned to take advantage of the many

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[18] As noted before, Matthew had already moved countries once when he was 8 years old, from Belgrade to Johannesburg, and then to Cape Town for university, where he stayed until his move to London.

cultural and nightlife activities, especially the vibrant music scene in the city, as it was significantly more dynamic and diverse than in his previous home bases. The general availability of these activities had a kind of 'de-luxuriating' effect on each specific opportunity: whereas his activities in this area were dictated by circumstances in South Africa, he could now choose whether to take advantage of each opportunity based on his overall priorities. In South Africa "there may be one band a year that would come from Europe or America [...] bands I would try to buy tickets for months in advance [here] I'd kind of go – eh. I'd rather watch some TV today. Because there is so much more choice and they play so much more frequently here." This kind of increased customizing is also evident in the way that he navigates London's interactional potential. The sheer scope of opportunities leads him to websites like *Time Out London*, where he rushes through the hundreds of listed events and generally only looks at those that most closely match his current preferences. In a similar way, he notes that he is able to customize other activities to a very high degree, so that he can go to "the exact genre of music and the exact style of place, and the exact type of museum, in this area etc."

Matthew's active approach to developing his social network in London introduced some 'de-customizing' into his network. While Matthew was no longer a part of a tightly bundled social network in London, he also knew fewer people and was generally less compatible with them. Since he realized that he would need to actively work on developing his social network, he started from those social building blocks by creating some 'development bundles' (i.e. bundles aimed at network development rather than increased present satisfaction), and he would sometimes go somewhere "that's not your favorite place or with some people who are maybe not your number one choice of friends." Although the purpose of this approach was maintaining and establishing new social ties, Matthew notes that he "absolutely" finds himself surprised by unexpectedly liking a place or person in situations like this. Once Matthew's social network developed further, he did find that many of those initial social building blocks no longer played a large role in his network, since a greater 'selection' of developed ties allowed him to customize his network to fit his preferences more closely.

Matthew's work was the biggest source of new social ties, especially after the initial period. In London, he found an "unheard of" amount of socializing between colleagues and he assumes this has much to do with London's characteristics: the city is large and people generally commute to work, while the long hours mean colleagues spend much

time with each other so that they both get to know each other and have an interest in investing into the social ties because "it really isn't that pleasant [working long hours] if you don't get along with your colleagues." While this makes it much less easy to separate work and private life, it also opens a lot of space for social spin-offs from work, and Matthew finds this network setup quite satisfying: "On Wednesdays going out for drinks after work, on Thursday having dinner, colleagues coming over for dinner on weekends..."

Matthew points out that his professional network also puts limitations on both interactional potential and possibilities for customizing. A primary constraint are his long working hours which generally cause him to miss out on "all those gigs on a Tuesday." He is also only able to participate in daytime activities on Saturdays, when he also needs to run most of his errands. Another important factor is that, although London offers much interactional potential, there is also much interest in the most popular activities. In the case of live music events, which are the most important to Matthew, this led him to subscribe to websites that inform him when tickets go on sale but "if [tickets go on sale at 9am and] I happen to have a meeting from 8 to 10, I'm not gonna get tickets because if you don't buy it by 9:30 even for something that's in two months time, it's all sold out." He accepts this "tradeoff" of large available interactional potential and work as a limiting factor, since "the option's there, that's what's important." Ultimately, he *is* able to go to a Tuesday night gig if he chooses to and *can* do almost any daytime activity he chooses on Saturday, only the presence of these activities in his network is not as high as he might like.

Finally, Matthew notes that customizing to a high degree probably makes him miss out on many things he would enjoy, but that he does try to explore new things when he has the time and energy. He generally does this by choosing a new part of town (since the city is so large and changeable that it is impossible to be or stay familiar with all of it) and going with friends to explore the area. They "Google" a bar or some other place in that area that looks interesting, but only as a safety option since they usually "don't end up going to the place we Googled in the first place [...] we just end up going – wherever."

6.6.2.2. Distant ties: keeping in touch and the competing uses of travel

As previously mentioned, in most areas of Matthew's network development, novelty wins over familiarity. For example, while it can bother him when a place he likes in London closes, since neighborhoods can change over the course of a month, he also gets over it quite easily by finding a new place he likes - which will invariably be possible. Similarly, he does not tend to miss people and so he mostly uses Facebook to keep in touch with friends from South Africa, because it is the "lazy," low-investment option. With closer friends, he also uses Gchat and email, but says: "I'd like to think I kind of stay in touch, but as time goes on you still drift a little bit, even with technology and everything."

Matthew likes being able to easily travel to new places, both over weekends and for longer periods of time, as it expands the diversity of his network: "You don't have to live somewhere to go see it." Although he values seeing his family, he is not very attached to his old home bases and, for a number of reasons, prefers having his parents and sister visit. First, because of the distance, he finds that travel to South Africa takes too much time, effort, money, and vacation days for a place whose interactional potential he has already explored in depth and where staying at his parents house "feels a bit like 10 years ago" (i.e. comes with 'parenting' bundles). Having his parents visit London, on the other hand, has added benefits because he takes some days off work and gets to fully explore London's interactional potential without work-imposed time limits. He bundles being "on holiday" in London with spending time with his family. At the same time, he very much enjoys having his sister around (he would like her to move to London after university) both because they are compatible and because his sister is younger and has not seen so much of the world, so her enthusiasm for London reminds him of all the things he noticed and liked about it when he first came - essentially, she refreshes his plurality of perspectives.

6.6.3. After London

While he has no plans to leave London, Matthew is open to new possibilities. He notes that he would most likely have shorter working hours in many other places and this would be a significant draw. However, he would still want a home base that is "interesting" and "professional enough." His girlfriend, who he is living with, is his only real social concern as he thinks he would not miss specific people much if he moved.

He connects this to what he sees as two previous social "clean slates," since he did not keep in touch with people from Belgrade after moving and only somewhat kept in touch with friends from Johannesburg, but they were not a significant part of his network. It appears that his general approach to his social network is based on compatibility and proximity rather than familiarity, with the exception of his family (who he keeps in touch with from a distance) and his girlfriend, who would presumably move with him.

6.7. Vasil: age 34, from Bulgaria, in London for 8 years

6.7.1. Before London

Vasil's first experience living abroad was during his last year of high school, which he spent in Florida on an exchange program. Although he enjoyed seeing more of the world, the academic environment was not challenging enough for him and he returned to Bulgaria for his university studies. He decided to leave Bulgaria because it did not allow him to satisfyingly pursue his academic interests that "crystallized" after university and eventually chose a master's course in London because it most closely matched his preferences (although it also required him to work part-time during his studies, unlike some other available programs). Vasil's two moves after his master's program ended were motivated by the same reasoning: he worked for a year in Belgrade, Serbia in order to get more practical experience in his field of international security until he once again focused in on a specific topic of interest and returned to London to do a PhD at the same academic institution as before, where he is now still employed.

6.7.2. In London

Although Vasil's building blocks are always primarily based on pre-established professional elements, one of his main priorities is to constantly develop his professional network and his own academic interests. This is in part because much of the satisfaction he gains from his professional network is a result from the large overlap between his personal and professional networks and interests: "Academia allow[s] you to blur these public and private, your personal and professional interests very well." Vasil points out that his colleagues are also open to socializing and have flexible schedules, which makes it is easy to create social bundles. As a result, the distinction between his colleagues and friends is on a dynamic sliding scale, so that the "blurring"

between his professional and personal (social and activity) networks often leads to the development of both so that, for example, "you became very close friends [with people] during your studies and now they're a part of your professional network [and] you're inviting each other to conferences or you're part of various projects "

Vasil finds London, specifically, to be a very good place for developing such a personal-professional network because it is a significant academic center with two additional important characteristics: it has close ties to both the American and European academic communities and, due to its geographic location and transport connections, "everyone passes through." This makes it possible for him to meet practically anyone connected to his academic interests, whether they are based in London or anywhere else in the world. It also allows him to "sustain these [distant] relationships without having to plan a meeting for the purpose of meeting [...] we often get the benefit of someone else paying for us to meet," especially due to the lively conference circuit in London. While he keeps in contact with colleagues both in London and "all over the world" through the internet, Vasil points out that he is not always good at keeping in touch, but believes that this is not detrimental to his relevant ties: "If there was something that connected you to that person that was meaningful, it will be reclaimed even after a year if you get the chance to see each other again in person." The frequency and intensity of his online interactions vary from person to person and, while he has some very close friends and professional collaborators abroad (one of his "closest colleagues" lives in New York), he notes that each of his many distant ties was first established through an in-person meeting. Finally, being able to access his email at all times from his Blackberry allows him to maintain a very flexible schedule, since he is almost never required to be in his office but "the one thing I have to be able to do is be available both to my boss and my colleagues."

The blurring of Vasil's personal-professional network and interests, in combination with a very flexible academic schedule, make a variety of door openers, bundles, and spin-off possibilities available to him at all times and help him explore and take advantage of London's unique interactional potential.

While he points out that this was not part his reason for leaving Bulgaria, Vasil is "very comfortable" with the way London supports the creation of "communities of choice" rather than "communities of faith," which he had experienced in Bulgaria. He finds

London to be so international that it does not have a "local culture" that newcomers have to "adapt to." Instead, "what ends up shaping you is London itself," through its mixture of "cultures, ways of life, and people," where individuals can construct "overlapping communities" based on their interests, choice of place to live in, and people and activities they interact with. While Vasil notes that creating such communities requires investment (in Bulgaria, he could be friends with people he has known for years and would be surrounded by a tight family network), he points out that his master's program made such development much easier because "everybody [came] from somewhere [else] so everybody [needed] to reach out."

As Vasil's professional interests and those of many of his colleagues overlap with their personal interests, their compatibility is high and extends into different areas. In combination with the fact that London's academic community in his field is very vibrant and international, Vasil was able to quite spontaneously develop a very dynamic and culturally diverse social network. The main difference between his activity networks in London and his previous home bases is the combination of the "scale of opportunities and the richness of extracurricular life" and the diversity of his social ties that provide him with greater a connection to and insight into many activities. Vasil's friends are his main source of information about activities in London because he finds the city's interactional potential too overwhelming to manage without a "filter" and his friends are both familiar with his interests and provide that extra layer of meaning: "I have friends that are Brazilian, for example, and if there's an interesting Brazilian singer coming or a show, they'll alert me [...] It can be very different to see a Brazilian show if I had never left Bulgaria and watched it as something exotic." At the same time, his international background as well as his many international contacts allow him to do the same for his friends. Similarly, his friends (both local and distant) are a significant source and filter of news for Vasil, again providing him with both additional insight and a personal connection to stories tailored to his interests.

6.7.3. After London

Although he is very satisfied with his life in London, Vasil does not exclude the possibility of moving again one day, although he plans to stay in London for at least five more years since he had just started a five year research project. As with his previous moves, a potential new move would be motivated by a professional opportunity that would allow him to explore his academic interests in a way that he

would not be able to in London. Although he would be driven almost exclusively by professional interests, the great overlap between Vasil's professional and personal networks and his many international ties would essentially provide him with a premade social network in a new home base, since he would probably only move to a place where he "ha[s] connections." His main consideration would be whether a place has a well-developed but also a well-connected professional community, especially since, in academia, the jobs themselves "tend to be fairly similar": "For example Australia would be very difficult for me to consider for that reason. There is a good community of people working there, but it is so far that it becomes prohibitive to travel and maintain these other relationships and take part in interesting initiatives elsewhere."

6.8. Virginia: age 28, from Italy, in London for 2 years

6.8.1. Before London

Virginia first left her hometown in Italy because of an opportunity to spend a year at Cambridge finishing her Masters' thesis, which dealt in part with English literature. After finishing her thesis, she chose to stay in England for two main reasons. Her time at Cambridge helped her decide that she wanted to stay in academia and she felt that she would not be able to develop a career in her chosen field in Italy, primarily due to a lack of funds. Her "great experience" in Cambridge also made her realize that the way of life in England "in terms of mentality and life style" fit her better than the one in Italy. While she planned to apply to both Cambridge and London programs, timing only allowed her to apply for a London program, but ultimately she was happy to get the opportunity to explore life in London.

6.8.2. In London

6.8.2.1. Social and activity networks: adapting to London

Virginia's two plans when she came to London were to manage the demands of her PhD and to meet new people. She found social ties to be crucial to satisfaction in a new place and her initial development approach was very active. She would accept any invitation from "colleagues, neighbors, old friends, random acquaintances..." She used Facebook as an additional tool for developing her social network, because it let her maintain contact with new people and stay updated on what was going on. Over time, as her social network developed, it also became more customized. Virginia stopped using

Facebook for keeping in touch locally, as it was no longer necessary, but may use it more actively in the future as a way to develop her professional network, since Facebook is a recommended career development tool in her field.

Virginia found that developing a social network in London (and Cambridge) was very different from her experiences in Italy, because "everybody is alone in a sense," i.e. there are far fewer pre-established social bundles. She stresses, however, that this helped her form intense friendships in much less time and with fewer shared experiences. Because so many people were also (relatively) new to London, the joint lack of building blocks made them rely on each other more and created familiarity more quickly: "The same friendships you have cultivated in your native country in ten years time are possible in one year, two years, because everything is much more intense."

Due to the far greater size of the city, the academic community, and the interactional potential, Virginia found that managing bundles in London was much less straightforward than in Cambridge. Even with online resources, she finds it impossible to keep up with the goings on in London, while people's busy individual schedules require further planning when deciding where to meet up and what to do there, but Virginia points out that she likes planning far more than the average Italian. While this makes it hard for her to gather a larger group of friends, it also broadened Virginia's awareness of and access to interactional potential, since visiting friends in their London neighborhoods often gives her access to 'insider' information about the most interesting activities and places in that area. Finally, she notes that she enjoys both familiar and new places, depending on her mood. When she wants to relax, she will stay in her neighborhood and go to a place that she knows she likes and where she knows what to expect.

6.8.2.2. Distant ties

Virginia's uses of Facebook changed significantly over time, and while she first used it locally as a tool for developing her social networks in London and Cambridge, she now uses it far less actively, mostly to 'keep track' of people she likes but does not actively keep in touch with. Facebook became popular in Italy later than in England and Virginia was far more selective with accepting friend requests from people in her old home base because she did not feel the need to keep in touch with people who both lived in a different place and were not her (close) friends to begin with. As for her good friends in

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Italy, she uses a variety of more personal online tools for keeping in touch. She also frequently talks to her mother over Skype (primarily because of her mother's wishes, although she does not object), who then "spreads the word to other relatives," thus maintaining active, if less direct, ties to the rest of her family.

In her old home base, Virginia primarily keeps in touch with her two best friends from childhood. While they benefit from the many gains of such long familiarity (e.g. their 'skills' with each other mean that "there is no need to say more than you actually say, because they immediately understand what you mean"), Virginia's "need" to maintain a connection with them makes keeping in touch less a matter of choice than of course. She points out that, although she has made many other close friends, these two are like "adopted sisters. I think I wouldn't be able to do otherwise." Although she likes frequently keeping in touch with them, their ties seem to not depend on extensive interaction. Nevertheless, Virginia likes to get in touch often, even if only for "five minutes or two minutes," as a way of showing them that they are still important to her and because "it's a way to be present even if you're not there." In other words, she keeps her friends aware that their tie remains and that the related interactional potential is always available to them, even if it is not always taken advantage of to its full extent. Finally, she finds that these friends are unique in that they create a bridge between "who I was, who I am now, and how those two things can work together." This was especially evident when her two Italian friends visited her in London and consequently developed independent friendships with some of her London friends, thus creating a greater connection between different elements of her network as well as different aspects of herself .

In terms of Italy itself and her previous home base, Virginia notes that she especially misses the weather and the ocean (particularly on rainy days), as well as some types of experiences they allows for, such as lying in the sun and having drinks with friends. Although she is occasionally able to have similar experiences in London, this is "not that important" for her satisfaction because London fits her overall preferences and priorities much more completely and she adjusts to its interactional potential. In addition, Virginia's work allows her to visit her hometown frequently (on average three times a year), so that instead of having the choice of either trying to import some of the elements of her old home base into London or abandoning them, she can simply complement her experiences in London with those in Italy.

6.8.3. After London

Virginia would like to stay in London, but her decision will likely be connected to whether she is able to find new work in the city after her PhD program is over. She likes to "plan [her] life" but is also aware that her priorities and circumstances may change over time and influence her decision to stay or leave.

7. Conclusion

7.1. Case Studies Review

The case study analyses looked at deliberate immigrants' network development after migration, with a focus on the overlapping networks of social, professional, activity, and distant ties. The main processes driving this development were the development, attainment, and change of plans and approaches in line with changing circumstances, priorities, and preferences.

According to the theoretical presumptions of this study, these processes would underlie any network development, but the migration context of deliberate immigrants resulted in some additional developments. Experiences in previous home bases as well as maintaining and developing ties beyond London affected both overall network satisfaction and network developments within London, in a variety of ways. Similarly, the role of the internet was both significant and varied, and used for (at times overlapping) purposes ranging from maintaining distant social ties to developing a local activity network.

The participants shared a migration destination and, as deliberate immigrants, the general motivations for moving to and staying in London. Consequently, their resulting network developments showed parallels, but they also exhibited numerous variations and no network explored in the case studies closely resembles another. Such variations resulted primarily from the interaction of the different building blocks, development styles, and circumstances involved in each individual case (see Table 1.).

Table 1. Dominant themes and influences in network development, by participant

	Relevant building blocks, development styles, and circumstance
William	'Imported' social building blocks; activities and professional network adapt to what the home base has (and does not have) to offer.
Christine	English husband as an influential building block, combined with a lack of other social and professional building blocks; circumstances conflict with plans; indirect ties to London through literature and history.
Mila	General lack of building blocks directs development of network; plurality influences perception of old and new home base.

Sarah	Overarching style includes active approach to network development and openness to adaptation; direct and indirect experiences with London before the move impact plans.
Lena	Experiences in London influence preferences and priorities.
Matthew	Increased interactional potential is crossed with increased work limitations; drive towards novelty and customization.
Vasil	Crossing of academic life, personal interests, and London's interactional potential leads to the development of complex social-professional-activity network.
Virginia	Active approach to developing a social network is applied to the backdrop of London.

The 'Before London' and 'After London' sections, while insightful in themselves, were used primarily to create context for the 'In London' section of the case study analyses. Within this section, examples of each of the sub-categories of the data analysis model (Figure A.2. in Appendix) were present in almost every case study. While each sub-category interacted and, at times, overlapped with others, this was especially the case with the first category, 'presence and absence of building blocks,' which generally had a strong impact on the overall shape of the networks (see Table 2. for some of the most significant recurrent examples).

Table 2. Influence of building blocks on network development

	William	Christine	Mila	Sarah	Lena	Matthew	Vasil	Virginia
Lack of building blocks required for an initial plan leads to change of plan/approach to include use of available building blocks (and development of new preferences)		x	(x)	x	(x)			
Initial plan does not work out due to miscalculation and leads to change in plan by using available building blocks	x	x						
Experiences in London changes initial priorities and preferences		x	x		x			
Plan/approach in London is inspired or influenced by the plan/approach of	x	x		x	x		x	

		x	(x)	x		x			
established social ties									
Reliance on social building blocks and distant social ties leads to leads to spontaneous, low-investment social network development (OR creates some complications)	x	(x)	x		x			
Lack of social building blocks leads to active social (and activity) network development				(x)		x	x	x
Old activity network plans find new shape and develop in London	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	

In terms of the change from an old home base to London, examples of the three sub-categories show varied impact on the development of social, professional, and activity networks in London, as well as on distant ties. The most significant examples from each of the case studies are shown in Table 3., Table 4., and Table 5. Examples of each of the four mentioned (sub-)categories include what can be perceived as both 'positive' and 'negative' consequences on the individuals' networks (often a mix of both), but ultimately each influenced network development in larger or smaller ways.

Table 3. Examples of the first sub-category of the 'From old home base to London' category of the data analysis model, by participant

	Change of interactional potential within familiar categories due to element characteristics (quality, variety, quantity)
William	Develops interest in theater and explores new activities within familiar categories; job market helps decision to stay in London
Mila	'Park life'; interest in everydayness
Sarah	Makes an activity out of exploring London's interactional potential; changes order for activities by first choosing an interest and then finding a related activity
Lena	Activities in the same categories are diversified by culture, neighborhoods
Matthew	Increased customizing of activities
Vasil	Vibrant academic community - lots of conferences, ties to America and Europe, lots going on; vibrant cultural life (both are generally in combination with B2)
Virginia	Manages London's extensive interactional potential and social bundles by planning

Table 4. Examples of the second sub-category of the 'From old home base to London' category of the data analysis model, by participant

	Change in the 'mix' of replicable and/or circumstantial aspects of interactional potential (in elements, categories, bundles) affects network development[19]
William	[due to London] meeting girls and clubbing; [due to his network] bundles of old friends and new acquaintances
Christine	[London] activities are affected by London's history (i.e. interactional past); [network] many of her social connections are bundled with her husband as a door opener
Mila	[network and London] low skill jobs are bundled with learning about the language and the English culture
Sarah	[London] everything is a reference to something, which makes her pre-established skills more applicable and additionally warrants their development; pub culture; [network and London] can combine London's activities and active friends ('sitcom way of life')
Lena	[London] the amount of acting jobs is bundled with the amount of people applying for them
Matthew	[London and network] London's extensive interactional potential is contained by work restrictions
Vasil	[London] communities of choice; [network and London] combination of people from all over the world and large interactional potential leads to more satisfaction
Virginia	[London and network] combination of being new to London and being around other people who are new to it makes for faster development of intense friendships

Table 5. Examples of the third sub-category of the 'From old home base to London' category of the data analysis model, by participant

	Plurality of POV and/or foreignness affects network development
William	Changed the purpose of his travels because he has seen enough to satisfy him for now in combination with what London offers in terms of plurality
Christine	Traveling to England makes her realize that she fits there better than in US; plural home bases make her aware of elements that she can not

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[19] Often connected to change of interactional potential within familiar categories, i.e. first sub-category of 'From old home base to London.'

	have in London but also lead her to focus on the present and what is possible because no place would let her have it all
Mila	Lack of plural POV before migration causes an adrenaline rush and helps her deal with a lack of building blocks
Sarah	Foreignness makes it easier to make foreign friends and avoid bundles of apartheid and class
Lena	Would be happy to do smaller theater productions in previous or future home bases because of her experience in London
Matthew	Sister's visits refresh his plural POV and make him appreciate what London has to offer
Vasil	London's multiculturalism increases plural POV because international friends broaden his interests and provide new insight
Virginia	She misses some nice experiences (and weather) from Italy, but ultimately knows why she prefers London overall and so is not really bothered by this

The last category of the 'In London' section of the data analysis model is tied primarily to the influence of the internet and travel (and the 'moving' of distant location) on network development. Although certain uses of the internet were prevalent, especially as a tool for keeping in touch at a distance, the examples of its uses and their impact on individuals' networks were quite varied (Table 6.). Travel patterns and ties to distant locations also showed a variety of changes, as can be seen in Table 7.

Table 6. Influence of the internet on network development

Impact on:	Significant examples
Social network, distant	William (online contact is sufficient for friends and family; Skype benefited relationship); Christine (different categories of ties maintained online); Mila (with strong impact on local network through emotional support); Sarah (maintains stability and normality through communication with family, but dependent on circumstances); Lena (strong influence of schedules and time difference; not 'good' at communication at a distance with brother); Virginia (allows for bridging 'old' and 'new' self)
Social network, local	Sarah (uses internet to keep track of 'references'); Virginia (Facebook as tool for actively developing a local social network, used primarily in the initial network development phase)
Activity network,	William (local social network influenced internet uses: reading

local	newspapers, followings different sports and teams); Mila (internet as a free source of activities: baking, emailing photos); Sarah (numerous spin-offs from internet use to offline activities); Matthew (as tool for customizing and staying informed about opportunities; as 'backup' when exploring new areas); Vasil (gets news and information about local activities from local and distant friends)
Professional network, local and distant	Sarah (uses internet extensively for work, including getting information about interesting developments in South Africa); Vasil (internet allows for intense collaboration with distant professional ties; allows for a very flexible work schedule because mobile device makes him available at all times); Virginia (networking sites as potential tool for career development)

Table 7. Changes in travel patterns and distant ties due to change of home base

Development	Effects
Distant social ties travel to London	Christine (seeing 'Facebook friends' reminds her of what she can not have in her London network); Matthew (bundles family visits with a 'holiday' in London; sister refreshes his plurality of POV); Vasil (London as a hub for distant professional-personal ties)
Travel for activity and novelty	William (once novelty, now activity), Matthew (novelty, easy to travel often and to many places)
Travel to old home base	Sarah (traveling to South Africa with friends as a way to show them a different side of herself); Matthew (mainly tied to people - travel to South Africa as an inconvenience); Virginia (travel to Italy as a complement to London)
Change of attitude to old home base	Christine (no longer used to 'loudness' etc.); Lena (needs open-mindedness and a busy lifestyle)

This study aimed to discover as many ways as possible in which deliberate immigrants can create "possibilities for the enlargement and enrichment of meaning" (Aksoy and Robins, 2003b: 375) and, therefore, finding a variety of insightful examples within the theoretical and methodological framework was the main goal. It should be noted, however, that the many recurrent themes in the case studies can also provide new insights. For example, the study suggests that many individuals may not actively decide who to keep in touch with after immigrating and, instead, a variety of factors (time

differences, schedules and motivations of both individuals involved, online communication skills etc.) determines which ties will be maintained. While the 'switch' to primarily online communication can sever many social ties, it can also improve others, both in the long (e.g. Christine and Sarah's relations with their parents) and short term (e.g. William and his ex-girlfriend).

7.2. Contribution to the current state of research

One of the aims of this study was to contribute to the filling of a number of gaps in the existing research on migration and multiculturalism by uniting, and building on, insights from a number of different fields. The first gap was related to the generally skewed perception of immigrants, and this study's focus on deliberate immigrants sidestepped both negative connotations often attached to immigration and the narrow limitations of lifestyle and professional migrants. This study has aimed to contribute to the existing research that argues that a study of immigrants' experiences and points of view can contribute to our "enlargement of meaning" (Aksoy and Robins, 2003b), by exploring a variety of unique ways in which the deliberate immigrants' everyday experiences and development of ties are influenced by their 'plural' perspective. This study also attempted to counter the (often implicit) assumption, which underlies much research on migration, that ties to one's previous places of residence and experiences in them hamper immigrants' adaptation to a new country. The findings discussed in the previous section provide significant reasons to believe that experiences in previous places of residence can, in fact, positively impact the development of one's network of ties in a new home base and, consequently, overall satisfaction. The findings also show numerous examples of ways in which old and new ties can co-exist, develop, and complement each other within a single network.

Another goal of this study was to explore multiculturalism and transnationalism from a more concrete perspective, and this approach has led to findings that represent a varied picture of ways in which connections with and experiences in a number of countries and cultures can express themselves in everyday life through interactions and development of ties with places and people and related activities. This study has also built on existing research on place attachment and interactional potential and expanded it into a theoretical model that focuses on the creation and development of ties to people, places, and activities. The context of migration proved to be especially well suited for testing such a model because the many changes in social and physical surroundings threw those

ties into sharp relief. The theoretical model also benefited the exploration of the role of the internet after migration. The findings show a varied picture of the internet's uses and influences on different areas of network development in the context of migration, which contributes in a number of ways to the existing research, primarily in terms of exposing the internet's role in local network development post-migration and the different types of impact that primarily online communication can have on distant social ties. This study followed Morley's (2009) argument for "non-mediacentric media studies" in exploring the internet's role within the broader context of deliberate immigrants' networks of ties to people, places, and activities, and it found that both the impact and uses of the internet can indeed vary significantly based on the individuals' circumstances and preferences.

7.3. Reflections on theoretical and methodological approach

Each of the different personal stories analyzed in the case studies was described using the same theoretical and data analysis models, which subsequently led to findings related to the posed research question, implying that those models were overall successful. Some concerns, nevertheless, remain regarding the levels of vagueness in the definitions of certain theoretical concepts and methodological categories. While everyday life is arguably impossible to define in fully precise and clearly demarcated terms, one of the main goals of this study was to avoid vagueness wherever possible and, therefore, diminishing it further would be desirable.

The applied method of data collection proved very adequate and provided sufficient data for the creation of relevant findings. At the same time, the restrictions of time and money only allowed for one short trip to London, while several trips could have been useful for further refining posed questions and expanding on topics of most interest, especially in the later stages of data analysis. Within the scope of this study, however, the several follow-up interviews were sufficient for filling the most significant gaps in the available data. Overall, both the theoretical and the methodological approach seem to have worked quite well.

7.4. Future prospects

The data analysis model used in this study was, as noted, more than adequate for the purposes of this research, but it was also partially based on the specific set of empirical

data used for this study. Consequently, many additional approaches might be useful for exploring network development in the context of deliberate immigrants and in general. On this note, a large part of the data analysis model could be applicable to the study of immigrants in general, while the theoretical model may be applicable to individuals in general. As such, they could be used for studying a variety of topics related to individuals' ties to people, places, and activities and their development of interactional networks.

As this was an exploratory study, many of its findings can be seen as starting points for future research. They provide a new, highly interdisciplinary way of studying immigration and could be expanded in a number of directions, either by focusing on a single thread of discovery or by expanding on the overall findings through further theoretical and empirical analysis. In the case of studying the role of internet in migration, for example, future research could look more into when and why immigrants use the internet in the different ways listed in the Section 7.1.: locally and at a distance, and for different areas of network development. It would be especially interesting to look more into the influence of the fact that internet allows far less for the creation of bundles with people, places, and activities than in-person interactions do and, at the same time, explore how this is changing due to technological advances (e.g. group [video] chats, various new online activities and connections between online and offline activities such as Geocaching etc.).

As for expanding on the overall findings of this study, the sample used here was limited to individuals with a variety of similar characteristics. In future studies, the sample could be expanded to include different cities, age ranges, marital and family statuses, education levels, language skills, birthplaces etc. Future research could also use the approach from this study to look into first-time immigrants, immigrants who have previously lived in a number of countries, individuals who have returned to their country of birth after a longer period abroad (e.g. in order to see how they make use of their experiences in other countries for network development) etc.

This study has hoped to lead to a better understanding of migration as a concept, for both deliberate immigrants and in general, and as such could have applications beyond academia. Its line of reasoning could have practical application for both immigrants themselves and those working with migration issues. The case studies provide examples

of ways in which deliberate immigrants have dealt with different benefits and challenges related to the migration process and the previous section has attempted to classify those findings in a way that would present those developments in a less personal and therefore, potentially, more widely applicable context.

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A. Appendix

A.1. Supplementary figures

Before London: reasons for home base change
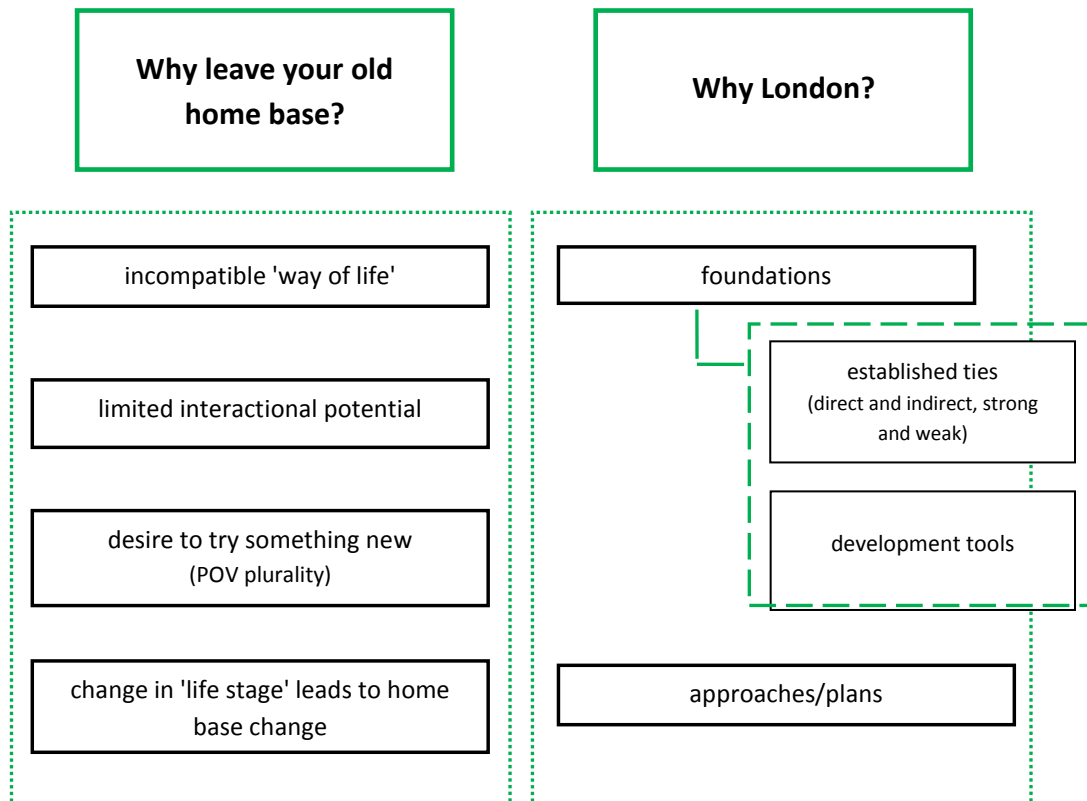
Figure A.1. 'Before London': first section of the data analysis model

In London: old network foundations and new home base

Building blocks: present and	From old home base to London	Here becomes there, there becomes here

change of int. potential within familiar categories (due to quality/variety/quantity of elements)

change in 'mix' of (replicable and circumstantial) aspects of int. potential (in elements/categories/bundles)

plurality of POV/foreignness affects interactional potential

local people become distant people

home base change influences interaction with distant social ties

interaction with distant social ties influences network development

location of distant places changes in relation to home base

old home base

travel patterns & uses change

relation of online content to home base changes

Figure A.2. 'In London': second section of the data analysis model

Beyond London: Future **network development** considerations
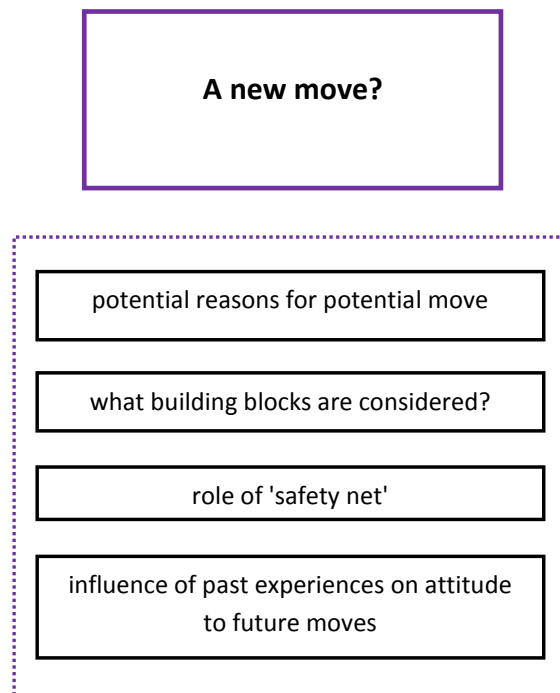
Figure A.3. 'Beyond London': third section of the data analysis model

A.2. Introductory questionnaire

Questionnaire

Thank you for participating in this study, I hope you enjoy it. Please do not worry about answering the questions 'properly' - try not to reflect too much, just write what first comes to mind. If you have the time and will, feel free to write as much as you'd like. You are sometimes asked to make a list: do not worry about completeness, only write what is significant to you and what you feel like sharing.

We will discuss many of these questions in more detail during the interview.

All answers will be made anonymous and only used for the academic purposes of this study.

A) Background
- Basic information
  - Nationality:
  - Gender:
  - Age:
  - Education (highest degree attained):
  - Job (current occupation and position):
  - Residence location:
  - How long have you been living in London? :

- o And in the UK? :
- o Languages:
- o Living with…:
- o Relationship status:
- o Children:
- Previous places of residence
  - o Where have you lived before London? (Note: only residences of 4 months or longer; Please list: country, town, year you moved, approx. length of stay, basic reason for moving/living there)

  - o Why did you move away from your home country for the first time?

B) Transition
- How/why did you decide to move to London?

- In making your decision to move to London, did you have a specific set of requirements that you wanted it to fulfill? If yes, please specify. (Examples could relate to work, family, location, etc.)

- What connections did you already have in London before the move? (Note: Can be specific people/places, but also things such as enjoying Dickens or *Love, Actually*. Whatever seemed significant to you.)

- What kinds of things did you look for/hope to find when you moved to London? (Note: write only what applies to you; feel free to leave fields empty)
  - o work (e.g. type of job, atmosphere)

  - o leisure and community activities (e.g. football team, local newspaper, art class)

  - o places (e.g. nice apartment, pub, theater, park)

  - o social contacts (e.g. friends, neighbors, co-workers, babysitter)

  - o (other)

C) Outside of London

- What friends/family/groups of people etc. living outside of London do you keep in touch with?
    - How do you know them?

    - Where do they live?

    - How do you keep in touch? (e.g. email, Skype, letters, visits)

    - How often?

    - Which are most important?

- Since you've moved to London, how much have you travelled outside of the city?
    - Trips in the UK? Trips outside of the UK?

    - What were the reasons for your trips? (e.g. work, family events, sightseeing, change of culture…)

    - Which trips were the most important to you?

    - Do you have an idea of what your future "for pleasure" (which does not exclude work travel, if you enjoy it) travelling will look like? (note: Just describe the basic idea – how often, where/what kind of place, what for?)

- Are there things you particularly miss since moving to London, in terms of people/places/activities?

    - Do you try to keep up with those people/places/activities through travel or the internet?

D) In London
- In London, what are the
    - places you go to

    - people you interact with

    - activities you engage in

on a daily/weekly/monthly/longer interval basis, that are the most significant to you personally? (Note: if you are not sure what category to place something in, don't worry – just pick one.)

- Are there any new things you do in London that you especially enjoy? (i.e. that are a new kind of experience for you, in relation to persons/places/activities)

  - o Do you think a similar experience could be possible in other places <u>you lived in</u>, or are they in some significant way tied to living in London?

- How 'settled' do you feel in London?
  - o Can you remember approximately when and how you decided you'd stay in London for a longer period of time?

  - o How long do you plan to definitely stay in London, and what are your thoughts about staying longer than that?

  - o Do you have any thoughts about other places you might move to?

  - o Can you imagine what would make you move?

E) Internet
- What are your basic patterns of internet use (only things you do for pleasure/your own benefit, not <u>just</u> out of obligation or necessity)?
  - o (Types of) websites you visit repeatedly;

  - o Most frequent online interactions with people you know (e.g. email, Facebook, Skype, IM); (Note: these can be with people you also see in person)

  - o Interactive activities online (e.g. games, forums);

  - o (Other);

- Do you see the internet as a significant tool for keeping and developing your attachments to people and places beyond London? If yes:
  - o Please provide some examples.

  - o Do you have any thoughts about the consequences of keeping in "cyber" (as opposed to physical) contact with these attachments?

Thank you very much for taking the time to answer this questionnaire, and I look forward to talking with you in person.

A.3. Interview transcripts

The transcripts accurately represent the participants' words, either directly or in parentheses({}), which were used to protect private information or provide the relevant information from a longer but largely irrelevant part of the interview. As noted, some of the sections of the interviews proved not to be relevant for the research and were therefore not transcribed here.

My questions to the participants are written inside brackets ([]). Some of the questions refer directly to the participants' answers from to the introductory questionnaire, but as all the relevant information was included in the interviews, this appendix does not include the questionnaire answers. The quotes used in the case study analyses have been underlined in the transcripts, for easier location.

A.3. 1. William

[You said you went traveling with friends first.]
That was the reason I left South Africa. *[Were you planning on moving somewhere more permanently?]* No, I think a running theme in my answers will be not having a plan. It was, finishing school and university in South Africa, and not, I didn't... I'm not sure if it was a conscious decision or just something that I let happen, but I didn't try to look for a job in South Africa. I don't know why I didn't try, I made no attempt, didn't draw up a CV, nothing. So I sort of think I knew I was going to leave. But I can't put a reason on why or if there was an event which made me decide I was going to leave. The first thing that came along was the opportunity to come to England with two friends. And we had a very hazy idea - cool, we'll get there, we'll work in a bar, and just <u>travel on the weekends or if we're lucky save up and travel for a month or two</u>. That was it. That was honestly all I thought would happen for a couple of years. *[What was the opportunity?]* They were coming. *[Just for vacation or...?]* No, all three of use wanted to come here. They more so. I think the two of them, one friend hadn't left home to go to university, he was still in Johannesburg, and I think he wanted the experience of being away from home, so he was the main driver. And then my best friend and I thought - well, ok, if he is doing it, we can go as well. *[And all three of you were friends?]* We're all very good friends from since we were small and we still are very good, they are all here now, so. So that's how it started, it was quite quick - finish university in December, went on holiday for a few weeks, so it was like - well, we better do something about this. We got a visa, which was easy to do at that time. Working visa it was called. I don't know if they even have it anymore, but you could get a two year visa. The thing was you had to work for one year and travel for another, which was sort of perfect for us. All three of us got that and we arrived here in February. *[Did you have any associations in London or was it mostly that they were...?]* For me it was easy. The two of them didn't have any. My aunt and uncle and my three cousins all lived here now, in England. An hour and a half on the train from London, so very accessible. And I also had the phone number of a woman who was.... I never quite got it right, she's a relative. So it's like a long link. And she lives in London, just down the road actually. *[And how close are you to your other relatives?]* To my cousins, and my aunt and uncle? Very close. We'd see each once a year. They'd lived here, but we'd always seen them, spoken to them on the phone, emailed. The cousins are my sort of age. We're all quite close in age, my sister's two years younger than me. It makes a big difference. I'd been here a few times before to visit... It wasn't a completely new place for me at all.

[So how did you end up staying?]

So what happened is, {one of the friends} was living with his aunt, oh he had an aunt as well. {The other friend} and I arrived and we went straight to stay with my cousins, and we were there for a week, just settling down, getting our bags packed. Then we came up to London, we phoned {the relative in London}, asked her if we could stay for a few nights while we found our feet and she said sure, she had a basement flat. We arrived with the intention of spending a few nights, finding our own flat and moving there. And we stayed with her, we shared that basement for six months. We couldn't find... this is where our plans started to change very quickly. We found getting work, any work, very difficult, and saving money with the intention of traveling almost impossible. At this stage we were just looking for cash, and we were living week to week. It was - got a job, five days of temp work, and we'd spend it on the weekend feeding ourselves and drinking. There was nothing being saved, six months we did it like that. And it was not sustainable, because we weren't achieving the goal of traveling, nor were we building any great savings, it was going nowhere. <u>You could go on like that, I guess, for the rest of our lives, but none of us were like that</u>. {One of my friends} is an engineer, he decided - this is ridiculous, need to do something <u>proper,</u> and started getting involved in trying to join the British army. And also moved out of London to a more suitable job. He'd studied engineering and was an engineer and found a job {in another town in England} building high pressure pumps, which was perfect for him, so he thought - rather than mess around with temp jobs - move out of town, get something more permanent. So that's how he sort of stayed, and then I was left in a position of sort of - should I do the same thing, should I make something of it. If he's doing that and he's gonna be here, maybe I should try to find a more finance-type job. *[Did you want to stay in London?]* By that stage I was thinking - you've spent six months finding your feet, you've managed to open a bank account, you know your little area - we had a couple of pubs nearby which we were going to, there were more friends arriving from South Africa. By this time it was people who'd looked for a job maybe in South Africa and hadn't found one and thought - ok, I might as well travel for a few years, so they were coming. So the group was growing, we were on the books of several agencies so we were getting more regular work, so it seemed a shame to have made this foundation and then to just pack it up and go home. So I got a CV. And tried to find some work and found that very difficult. Nothing. *[So until then you weren't actually trying to find...]* No, I was working temp work. *[You weren't trying to find a job in your field?]* No, exactly, then after six months I thought - let's see what happens. With my uncle's help I got a a six month internship and having a contract then locks you in a bit more, so I did that - put my head down and I got by on just doing that. And I think what happens is you get into a routine - you're going to work in the morning, and coming back, and you're meeting some people at work, and you're going out for drinks on Fridays, you're sleeping it off on the weekend. I find working does literally lock you down, cause you're tired on the weekend. You're not really in the mood to broaden yourself, to do other stuff. So you just get into that weekly thing - you're spending your money on, whatever, you buy yourself a new suit and you're drinking and eating, and things seem good but before you know it it's been a year - you've been here a year. So that's how my first year progressed.

[And why were you trying to go traveling - what was your idea?]

Coming from South Africa, it's like Australia, far away. {One of the friends} had never been out of the country before. And we all just wanted a taste of seeing some new places, new cities, new cultures.... it's quite fulfilling, I think. Not all of it's nice, but it really engages your mind, interpreting new people. We all wanted that, we all wanted to go to Rome and to Paris and things like that, <u>just to see</u> it. And spend a few nights there if we could, or more, but found being here oppressively expensive and not really the type of place which you could, without some effort, use as a springboard. *[Where are you now in terms of your attitude towards...]* I think, I'm in the same place, but I've made my base here more permanent, in my head it's more permanent. <u>I don't see London as a place where I'll be a couple of years and travel, I think of it now as a place where I'll be always and still be able to travel and work and...</u> I got drawn to thinking, because I did finance and economics at University and I enjoy that, and London's a good place for it obviously, it's a financial center and there's plenty of work, if you're

prepared to do it, in those fields, so that suits me. So after the internship I probably had my biggest wobble. End of the first year here, I went home without any work to come back to, I think I spent two months almost back in South Africa not doing anything, really thinking about - now where do I make a go of it?. I was all set up in England, I had all my accounts, I had a place to go back to, to my aunt's. My cousins were still here, more friends were in England at that stage. *[Friends from South Africa?]* Friends from South Africa. *[Any new friends?]* No. not really. *[Do you know why?]* I think meeting, any friends I did have were European, and they were more acquaintances, I'd say that, people I know from work and stuff like that. English people no, zero. With the exception of my cousins, I wasn't meeting any English people that I saw eye to eye with. *[And through your cousins?]* I wasn't seeing them regularly enough to make friends with any of their friends, and they were far away. And I think work-wise in the city most people are from everywhere anyway, it's not like they're mainly English and you're the outsider, it's mainly outsiders and there's some English people. It's a weird place. English people are in the minority in London, I think, especially in the big jobs, the professional firms and so on, people come from all over. *[And your European acquaintances come mostly from work, or...?]* From work, and I'd see them maybe for a beer or two. I wasn't making friends like I knew... I've got two levels – friend I made in high school, they're my best friends. And they're the ones I came here with, I'm very very close to them, and I've yet to meet people who I'm that close with. *[Do you know why?]* I think it's... lots of experiences from high school, which were very enjoyable and we are very close as a result of. I know them so well after so many years, and remain so close to them, that I haven't felt the need to invest that much time in new people. *[You know them from high school?]* In the case of {one of them}, our parents are friends. So in some ways we knew each other even before we were born. That's a hard question to answer, there's a real cultural background and history there. Our grandparents used to see each other for drinks. Even when I know guys at work now who I'd describe as friends, it's not the same level of friendship where I can just come back, like {that friend}, I could just see we'd get on straight away, it's hard to describe it. *[How many friends from South Africa ended up here?]* {One of the friends I came with} lives in {another city in England}, {the other one} is still in London, another very good friend just moved here this year, he's finished his studies. Of my five closest friends, all are probably going to be here by the end of this year. *[Are they coming partially because you guys are already here?]* I don't think so. I think for the two most recent arrivals, they have concerns about the way things are in South Africa. Also, {the two friends I came with} and I weren't tied down by professional studies, whereas the other two were studying to be doctor and lawyer and had to do articles and stuff like that. So they were always going to spend longer in South Africa. And they might say they are feeling the pressure to get out of South Africa and see some stuff, travel a bit.

[You said you had decided that you would stay here more permanently?]
After 2 months back home at the end of the first year I thought - I've done quite a lot of work then, I'd laid the foundation, I couldn't at that stage imagine going back to South Africa and looking for work and settling down. I was still feeling restless, I wanted to fulfill that original goal of seeing some of the continent, traveling a bit. By that stage I could see the potential in living in London. With a bit more work, I thought – you could travel... it's a good setup. I like what's available in London more than I like what I think I could get in South Africa. *[Were you considering any other options?]* No. By that stage not. You mean like America? *[Anywhere else.]* Anywhere else in the world, no, simply because of visas, I didn't even investigate it. I thought - it was so easy to go to England and work. The effort for America, or elsewhere, is not worth it. I guess the one thing I am neglecting in all this is the on-off relationship I was having with this American girl, and in some ways England was quite... it was the middle point between the two of us. *[Was she with you in London?]* Not yet, but it was... we weren't quite sure of each other at that stage. So rather than invest - I didn't really chuck everything in and invest it all and move to America and hope for the best, especially given how hard it would be to work. I thought London would be a place where, maybe, we could explore that, because it is more in the middle. And subsequently it did happen that we decided to give it a go and she moved to London as well. But my main reasons were what I said before - the opportunities here were better than I was going to have in South Africa. *[How*

much was the fact that your good friends were here...?] That helped tremendously, knowing that they were here was a safety blanket. *[In what way?]* Well, on <u>bad days</u>, there's someone to have a beer with. There's no risk of being... I understood that they could move at any time but to know that, certainly for the first few months at least, there'd be someone to go out and have a beer with, and to relax with. *[And on good days?]* On <u>good days</u>, you're fine by yourself, you go out, you meet people, you're having fun.

[I'm trying to work this out. I believe you also said in your questionnaire - "I wanted to meet people, girls especially"]
Like I said, the relationship was on-off. <u>The three us did have big ideas in our heads of London being a big place, lots of young people, especially young women. We thought it would be nice, if we could.</u> Never transpired that way. I don't think I'm programmed that way. {One of my friends} maybe more so, and he did have more luck. {The other friend} and I, we never really got involved in the <u>party scene</u>, the clubbing. Don't know why. I think that was something that we had in our young, male heads would be a bonus, and after some time you realize you're not really that way. It just didn't suit me. I found it too superficial. The whole scene, the fast cars, the expensive clothes, I just wasn't into it. *[And what was it, in South Africa - fewer people...?]* In South Africa, I was starting to feel like home was quite a small place. I'd been with the same sort of crowd, you can imagine, if I'm friends with people my parents were friends with. South Africa is a very protected place in some ways, certainly socially, I think. Everything you do goes around in the network. It doesn't have to, but... I just felt - I could have done that, it wasn't... I just wanted to be a bit further away. My parents were very supportive, which helped as well. They always encouraged us to spend some time away from South Africa and make up our own minds and so on. So that door was open, it wasn't clear to me but it was certainly ajar, and I poked my head around. That's the best way to describe coming to England. And then, basically, at the end of the first year - came back, found the job I'm in now, really liked it, liked the atmosphere, got a really good feeling and three months into the second year I knew that this is perfect, this suits me, I liked it. I closed the door behind me, stepped through. It's been, I've never looked back, after those two months of wobble. That was the main difference - coming back, with the foundation here - I'd cut my teeth, found a place to live, and found this job which I thought I could like - I could do this. And quite soon after my ex-girlfriend moved over, at the end of that second year. It didn't work out with the two of us. We lived together for a year, and it, well, we weren't meant to be. That's how you find these things out. [How did you meet?] She studied in South Africa. We kept it going for the last year of my university, and decided that there was something there which we should investigate but, sadly, it wasn't to be. So that was the end of the third year that that happened. And I was, see even at that time I didn't really think about moving home, I was happy in my job... which I think highlights again that my decision to be in England wasn't ever about her or for her, it was more... by that stage I was really comfortable with how things are progressing for me.

[Did you have any kind of blueprint or checklist for what you'd want to find in London if you were to stay?]
No. It was a comfort thing. I could probably draw up a checklist now of what makes me comfortable, but at the time it was – I'm eating, I've got enough money to buy a few beers, and by that stage I was able to do a few weekends a way and I was traveling, there were opportunities and so on. *[And if you did draw up a checklist now, what would it be?]* What would it be that helped me stay? Good job prospects, as it turned out, at the firm I joined. *[So - present and future possibilities?]* Yeah, if I look back now and say - three years ago, at the time I broke up with my ex-girlfriend, I can probably say I was thinking - my job opportunities were better than I would have in South Africa at this stage. I could see an opportunity to do well, certainly for the next ten years and achieve that thing I've always wanted to, which is to go traveling and to go overseas and to see a few new places. So it was as simple as that – no problem, I'll stay. *[Anything else?]* No. Of course, having your best friends here, it's not a big pull to *leave* for friends. In all this time, South Africa has never pulled me back that hard. *[It was always South Africa vs. London?]*

London, not England, it's an important distinction. If I was living {elsewhere} in England, I don't think I would have stayed this long. I think England is small place once you leave London. Provincial, I think. I think a lot of the people are very England-centric, and that's the way it is in any country once you move out into the suburbs, they're very safe, pleasant places. I've got nothing against that, but I'd rather stay in a safe, pleasant place in my own country. *[And you might as well explore new possibilities here?]* Yes, London offers that, and the job is good, so... It's a good question. So that's my story up to that stage, and then, I'd say, at end of my fourth year here I met my current girlfriend and then it just became so obvious. And also I'd spent enough time here to start thinking - I could get my British passport, and then that holds you back. I think even if you had a terrible experience and really wanted to move home, I think you'd still be able to stay –with a British passport in a year or two, I think I'll try to get that. Which is quite a South African attitude. I just think of it as a safety net. Having a British passport just allows you to, wherever you go in the world, just to know you can come back here. You can go forth with... it's like a safety line. I don't know how to describe it. And certainly, if I ever moved back to South Africa, which might be a possibility if I had children here and wasn't happy with the school, what I was able to provide them here, move back to South Africa, knowing that I had a British passport in the cupboard would be a nice feeling. I would feel like I had accomplished something in my time over here as well. Sometimes I thought of it as, like, you go to university so you get your diploma, your degree, that piece of paper. I always thought - if I spend five or six years in England and got a passport, it's not a bad tradeoff. It's like a life diploma. Like, I went somewhere and I came back with this passport. At that stage, I'm quite focused on trying to get my passport.

[If you moved back to South Africa: are there things you think you would miss from here, and what would be the most significant ones? And also, how much do you think you would have already waiting for you in South Africa as opposed to the kinds of things you would need to build up?]
Comparing the two places as they are now, if I intended to move back to South Africa, I'd miss the certainty that a life in England promises. Good schools, good universities are all here. Europe on the doorstep here, and a comfortable lifestyle, good healthcare, reasonably tolerable government. Those are things I'd miss immediately. *[And smaller things?]* And in terms of smaller things, everyday stuff, I like the culture in London. I mean you can wake up any day and decide I want to see this show I want to have that breakfast and although Cape Town and Johannesburg are able to offer that to some extent, I don't think quality is quite the same. The best restaurant you can imagine is there down the road, if you were that way inclined it would be there to go to. One of the things I've started enjoying more and more is theater. I go regularly enough to say that, I think. Cause I hear so often people are here - I wouldn't want to leave London because I wouldn't be able to go to the theater. I say - how often do you go? Once a year. Well, you can get over that. I go twice a month and I feel confident in saying I would miss that. *[Did you go in South Africa?]* No, not really. I don't think, there's not the same depth there, the same variety. There are theaters and there are one or two extremely good shows, but the variety... *[How did you get into it here?]* Through my current girlfriend, who really enjoys all these things. She's very literate, well read, and she drags me along and I was reluctant at first and now I enjoy it. There's also, I've never explored this, ballet, and classical music, opera. And I think those things are there to grow into, which wouldn't be there in South Africa. So, yeah, from an everyday point of view, I think there's a lovely ability in London at all levels to satisfy your mind's curiosities. And that is appealing, from now until I'm 75 and not able to get there. I just know, I can see that - you can go to the theater and see every generation there, from 10 years old, to Bobo who's 90. It's all there, and I think - you see, that's one thing which if you stay here you can do, which is much less evident in South Africa.

[Did you notice any change in terms of what you can do in terms of how much money you make?]
By the 4th year I was comfortable and able to save and even more comfortable to do nice things. It took of quite quickly, I'd say, once I'd set my mind to it. And I was very fortunate with the job I'm in, which was able to afford that. That wasn't necessarily ability, it was just luck, I think it often is. It's lucky that I'm at a nice place and met some nice people who are happy to have me and that it worked out in the

long term cause it doesn't always. *[Were you aware of the fact that once you get more money there'll be more opportunities?]* No, not really. It's not something you can bank on and I didn't let myself. That was never a goal - I never thought - if I really stick my head down, I can make some big bucks. In my experience that, it comes and goes. I think there's so much more luck involved than people would ever care to admit. *[And if it hadn't happened?] T*hen I think London's a very good place to be, because it is in some ways quite a socialist place - the healthcare is free, you can send your children to school for free if you have to. That would never be my goal... in fact, I'd actively work to avoid that. I'd work bloody hard to avoid using public education, but it's nice that it's there. I'd want more for my children. Now that's something that might be a very divisive thing, but I think it does give children a leg up. Especially in this country. *[Why especially in this country?]* I think England, in my experience, remains a very class obsessed country. ... It's not a perfect place, I don't think anywhere is, but it has more than enough for me.

[Why do you consider moving back to South Africa?]
Because I know in South Africa you can afford a very comfortable lifestyle, which is maybe just out of reach here, in terms of - large house, help, these are all luxuries. In South Africa one could afford a more <u>luxurious</u> <u>lifestyle</u>. That would be the decision, it would be quite a selfish decision, because the necessities would be covered in both places. It depends how well you want to live - South Africa would offer a better quality... [Is it because of children or by the time you want children you'll also want this lifestyle] at some stage... you can invest in both. I think the children would benefit. I don't see any harm in keeping a child sheltered for 10 of 15 years before unleashing them on the world. There is more than enough time to... *[Get unsheltered?]* Yes, get unsheltered. *[How was your experience growing up in South Africa?]* Very sheltered. Very sheltered, very comfortable and I was always happy that way. It changed a bit when I moved to London, certainly in the first few years. London is a bigger place - you come here and you see, the spectrum is just longer and larger. There's still poverty there, but on the other end there's huge amounts of wealth, and you're introduced to that a bit. {in my current job}, you meet, or even if you don't meet, you are aware of <u>lifestyles that you couldn't even imagine. Which I wouldn't have maybe come across in South Africa. Which has broadened my mind a bit</u>. *[Did you see positive sides to being less sheltered in London?] Y*es, I got here when I was nearly 22-23, and I was ready to... there was a whole world to see and I could explore it at my own pace, and 'unshelter' myself, as you put it, as much as I wanted to. And I felt confident and able to do that coming out of a very safe place.

[What role does a UK passport play as a guarantee that you can move back?]
I think it would certainly give me wings a bit more to really think about where I wanted to live ultimately. I think it would make South Africa a more inviting place again. I know there are so many south Africans that would just kill me for saying that, for me it's just the numbers - when I look at South Africa I take what I read and I say - those numbers don't make sense to me as a long term, I don't see how long term they work out. But - I love it, my experiences there have always been positive. [What kinds of numbers] the numbers of the job opportunities, service delivery, education, it doesn't currently add up, I think. The legal system. This is where it gets complicated for me. I say - South Africa has only ever been wonderful for me, it was a wonderful place to grow up, I met my best friends who continue to be my best friends, there. And the experiences that that country afforded me through my parents, through my friends, through my education, were wonderful, I'd never change them. but, the number side of me just looks at the current status - what's happening to the judicial system, the government, the current government and some of the noises they make, the poor service delivery, the number of unemployed... and detaching all the emotion and connection that I feel for South Africa, the numbers don't add up for me, it's not a future to invest in. so you've go those two forces, conflicting. So give me a British passport and I think that would give me the ability to go explore those numbers knowing that if they never added up... you can come back. *[Was it easier to explore the world coming from a sheltered life in South Africa and knowing there's a more 'cushiony' place to return to if it doesn't work out]*

Yes, that was.. I don't know how to ever say thank you to my parents for that. But I think that every healthy family, it is wonderful to know that my mom and dad were very supportive, so was my sister.

[How much is waiting for you in South Africa if you go back]
I think it'd be enough, to start a job, maybe a company, I think it'd be ok. I don't know how to describe it. I think I've got enough connections there that I could certainly find a place for myself quite quickly. I could dip in and straight away go to how I live now, so that wouldn't be hard. *[Which city would you move to]* Cape Town. I like Cape Town. If I moved back to South Africa it would be for the lifestyle and I feel Cape Town affords the best. As fond as I am of Johannesburg - it's a good big city, it's quite vibrant, there are so many big cities though. Whereas in Cape Town it's a beautiful, life-affirming place, I have always found it that way. nature, the sea, the people are lovely, there's a nice sort of casual scene I like - in terms of 'no shoes', if you don't want shoes. If you do, you can wear shoes, that type of casual, which appeals to me. Although the opportunity wouldn't be as great in Cape Town, if you're making a lifestyle move you might as well go all the way with the lifestyle move, and Cape Town would be it.

[You stay in touch with a lot of friends from home.]
Facebook is the reason. I probably wouldn't without Facebook. I tune in once a week, read some of the news feed, if there's been an event I comment - if someone's married or had a baby. [Mostly friends from South Africa?] Yes, friends from university. I spend most of my time not friending people or de-friending people. I'm quite private and there's certainly people who probably started out as a friend on Facebook who now I think - even if you came to town, I wouldn't visit you. You just think - we had a few beers together once upon a time, but I keep my circle quite tight I think. [How does Facebook work with that?] I'm very cautious with it, I'm quite conflicted about it. I'm not sure that a lot of people I follow on Facebook I'd even remember if Facebook didn't exist. It sounds horrible, but I think people aren't honest enough about how quickly you forget. ... {There are people} if Facebook had never come around, you would never have thought of them again. [Why use it?] At the beginning it was quite exciting, I was an early adapter. {then got concerned about safety issues} and as I come closer to thirty it's more of a sense of - Facebook has yet to replace the fact that when I really want to see a friend I phone them and we go out, and I don't think it ever will. *[And your close friends who will move here soon?]* We stay in touch mostly by email. Or the Facebook email, but not on the newsfeed, the wall. And if I share photos with friends and family, I'll pick them. My mom and dad can see that photo... I don't do the group share. I try to personalize the message and concentrate more. Now I'm not very good at staying in touch, definitely not. I'm lazy, a bit lazy. I'm quite sort of happy.... if I'm having a good day, I'll tend to just enjoy the good day. If I'm not missing, I don't push for it... I think my best friends understand that, the ones who know me the best don't expect me to reach out and say something, I don't know.

[How often do you go to South Africa?]
Once a year, maybe twice. *[Do you meet up with friends from Facebook?]* I see some of them sometimes, but recently less so. The ones I want to make an effort with I will phone or sms or email directly. And try share the things I hadn't put on Facebook then with them - have a chat, show them some photos. That for me is more appealing than the Facebook scene. {Doesn't like exhibitionism on Facebook} if a very good friend of mine's got a new car, and I see him next time, we can be excited about it together. Try it out or whatever. Whereas that type of information {on Facebook}, I don't want it in my life. I want more to know that that person's job's going well, and they're doing this interesting work, and that sounds cool... now that's appealing. But the new car, at the beach... I hate the constant updates, they're too much.... I think most of it's nonsense. *[And do you want this kind of everyday information from people in person?]* Yes. The ones I see daily and I phone and speak to, then it's exciting. The difference is the level of familiarity. if I'm familiar enough with you that I know your middle name, your last name, the day you were born, and I know that two days ago you were off work cause you were sick... if you're that familiar and I know how you might have been looking forward to getting the car, I know the background story so I'm able to sort of share in it a bit, then it's more of a sharing experience,

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whereas just being told about a new car, cause I haven't asked for that information... that's the difference. It's the interaction... and that's where I think Facebook and twitter are quite overwhelming unless you manage it quite carefully. *[So why do you use Facebook?]* Because everyone's on it. I think Facebook's at a level where if I had everyone's email address, I wouldn't use Facebook, but I don't. And I do try to cull, cut out the ones I'm not interested in. *[If it's only about having the contact information, do you feel the need to look at the updates?]* I don't, it's there. The updates are <u>hard to avoid</u> I think on Facebook. the newsfeed, I don't know why it is, but the way it's laid out <u>even if you look directly for a friend</u>, the first thing you're presented with is five of the most recent things they've been doing and it's hard to avoid. I turned off all the updates, I don't get any email. *[When do you log on?]* Once a week. The one thing I do get is a birthday reminder and I might log on to say happy birthday. And then for the friends that I do try and stay in contact with by email, I do log on to send a message. if I don't have their email or even sometimes if I do because it's an easy place to go to... one useful thing is - take a friend I want to email, go on Facebook, see that day they've done that, you can put that in the message, that's quite nice. I do feel quite conflicted about the whole thing that is Facebook, the concept.

[Does keeping in touch make a difference when you see those friends in person?]
For the friends that you do invest time in, to stay in touch with, yes it makes a difference. I think your friendship grows if you invest in communication while you're apart, I'm convinced of that. I know how much I appreciate getting emails or a letter or even an sms. It's just nice to know you've been in someone's thoughts. And it makes me value their input into my life more, cause I think they've probably meant it, they've taken the time to do that. Which is why I'm deeply suspicious of people who get in touch too often... I'm suspicious of anyone on Facebook who has 500 friends. Why are you doing that? I'm forced to conclude there's a bigger goal than just the friendship thing behind it. But then it's not really a tool for staying in touch with friends.... I do enjoy, and I do try to invest in people that I care for, because I think it's good for your relationship when you see each other again. *[If you move to South Africa, would you try to get in touch with people from Facebook or just the close friends?]* Just the close friends. There's not a relationship of mine that's grown because of Facebook. Facebook has never taken someone who's on my periphery and made them central. But what I would say is if I met someone once or twice and we start phoning each other and playing tennis together or something, then yes, then they can move into the inner circle. But there's no way someone can message me or poke me on Facebook and we suddenly become friends. There is something which isn't fulfilled from it, which I think is to do with interaction and sharing. When I'm genuinely interested in something... you've invested something together. Facebook's too much unasked for, unwanted information.

[Why Skype?]
Because it's beautiful. I love the way it works. The video is the difference. I love being able to see their face and the way they talk, especially with good friends, you know the emotions and I love it... Skype's more valuable than Facebook by miles, I think. In terms of satisfaction I know it's given me, the ability to live here and to see my parents daily if I want to - great. *[Did you have Skype when you moved?]* Yes, again, I was an early adapter. And one of the reasons was that my ex-girlfriend was living in America so we tried everything. *[How much difference do you think it made?]* It was great. We wouldn't have been together without Skype technology, we would have gone our separate ways so much earlier without it. And I'm glad we didn't. There was enough there to have a good relationship there for a short time. in fact, it was quite a good thing for our relationship, because <u>it took away some of the excitement we'd had for six months, and we got to know each other</u> - we spoke, talked, <u>we took the time to have those conversations, it was rewarding to put that time in</u>. not only did it keep us together when in a different era or age that would have been it, we also got quite a lot out of it. It was a real positive force, I think. *[Would you keep in touch with a family member or friend if you could just keep in touch through Skype and couldn't see each other in person often?]* No, always, Skype is great. Yes, I would, certainly. Yes I would stay in touch with people on Skype even if there wasn't an immediate chance to see them in a few months. *[Where do you think physical interaction comes into relationships with friends and family?]*

With friends and family it never bothered me that I can't, with a girlfriend I think it would be a problem. A long distance relationship is not something that can be sustained over Skype. But for friends and family, that's more than adequate. I'm not one that has to be in the same room as someone to count them as my friend. *[Do you get something extra from being in the same room with them from time to time?]* Yes, I do, occasionally. I do enjoy seeing my parents and it's... I don't know quite what it is. It's the familiarity, it's.... one thing you don't do on Skype is have the quiet time together, where you're not actually talking, where you're just together in the same room. And you're reading and that person is just on the other side. No technology I can think of right now can replace that. Cause that is a comfortable feeling, to be able to share a space with someone, without talking, without doing something together.

[How about things that you can't do online?]
Sports and such? Going into the pub? Forget it - I'd rather go out to a pub, every single time, or play tennis, or go to a game or something. Than Skype or Facebook. Cause that is an experience, I'm engaging in my world, I just like it. *[If you had a choice to talk to a good friend on Skype or play tennis with a not so good friend?]* Play tennis. Every time. *[And you wouldn't miss the close friend]* Oh, I'm assuming, when I answer that, that there would be a time to Skype them later. *[So you take the chance to do the in-person thing and you know that you can fit in the Skype...]* Later, yes. I wouldn't say - I can't Skype you ever again (laughs). given that immediate choice, always take the pub or... which is why I think sometimes I'm not good at staying in touch over these things, because if I wake up on a day and I've got the opportunity to do whatever, go to Wimbledon today, I'm not going to say - no, I've got to email my mom. I'm gonna go to Wimbledon and make my mom wait. *[How much is this to do with the fact that online communication is easier to organize?]* Oh, so much. To invest in a live experience takes more money and time and effort. And I believe you get more out of it. *[Do you know why?]* I think it's because of... the memory is deeper. I don't remember Skype chats the same way I would remember going to that pub with that friend. So many of the sensory experiences are satisfied when you are out somewhere. when you go to the beach somewhere there's so much more activating in your head, the way it smells, the way it looks, the colors, the other people there, whatever you eat that day, drink that day. Skype, no. I mean, Skype's one thing, you can see them and you can chat a bit, but I'm not being fulfilled by... I'm not seeing some crazy guy juggling fireballs like he might do at the beach. It's that extra dimension that you may encounter. Even if you don't, it's the opportunity that was there which is valuable.

[You said you now travel mostly for activities involved, not for the culture?]
I've moved away from traveling to a place to see the museums and I would rather spend a week or two weeks at a place where I could go for a walk. I think it's just because I've been in London now long enough where I'm getting enough of that and I want more of an outdoor-type experience because I don't get it that much. *[Do you travel for weather?]* The weather's never bothered me. I'm a fair skinned type and I don't even like so much days like this, hot, I like the weather in London... *[Do you still travel for culture?]* I think it's still there. If I had the opportunity to go to Paris for a few days, or... I'm going to Amsterdam in October for the marathon, I'm doing the marathon.... I would never turn down an opportunity, but it's not the reason I book the flight. The reason I book the flight is to run the marathon and fulfill myself like that, but not for two years now have I booked a flight to go somewhere to see a museum. *[Did you do it for museums before?]* The first time in Rome, certainly, to see Colosseum, to see the forum... So, 3-4 years ago to see those things, whereas now I'd book a holiday to go to Rome to just go to the restaurants... so that type of shift has happened. I'd like the occasion more than a destination, it's exactly the opportunity to eat in a new place, to try new things. [Is this linked to what London offers in terms of culture?] Yes, exactly. London offers enough of that. And I've been fortunate enough to, in 2-3 years, see.. So that my curiosity's been satisfied, at least for now.

[How much do you get information from the news etc. about what is going on in London?]

Absolutely none. I don't tune into any of the radio stations, I do not follow any of the London news. It's sometimes discussed at work, but that tends to only be if it affects someone at work, if someone's journey is affected because there's been a fire at the tube station, it might come up, but no one at work really seeks it out a lot. *[So do you read news etc. online in a similar way as before London?]* I like, the access to opinion pieces on interests of mine is brilliant and that would be my first thing that I use the internet for, and my second thing would be – you read about something that takes your fancy, and being able to Google it, explore it a bit more – awesome... *[Do you ever hear of something and Google to see if you can do it here?]* Yes, that type of thing, someone might come back from a weekend and say - I walked in this place, it was a wonderful walk. Google it and do it. It's incredible. Without having to buy a book... that information and having the ability to access it any time and so quickly is very powerful I think.

[In your spare time, do you usually do similar or different types of things?] Similar types of things. *[Do they fall into categories?]* Yeah, exercise. This year it has probably been my priority. Second would be the pub. Third would be movies and theater, if I think about time spent on each of those things. *[How does that compare to when you first moved here?]* When first I moved here it was just the pub. Exercise has been the biggest development. I've always exercised and did that a lot in South Africa, and then didn't when I moved - it wasn't immediately accessible, the facilities were not always there, or too far away or maybe expensive to use. I've probably gone past the level I was exercising in South Africa. Exercise is a good example of - didn't have it, had lots in South Africa, moved here, lost it all, and now I've replaced it. *[Have you replaced it in a similar way?]* No.. I do more of it. And I vary what I do more, I try different sports... *[Does that have anything to do with London?]* Yes, I think London is very well suited to running and cycling, which I wouldn't have done much in South Africa, whereas at home I played more tennis and golf. Golf's not easy to get into here, so I've had to substitute that with running and cycling. Fishing, can't do that here, I still haven't done that. *[Anything else?]* Although I didn't play it, I followed a rugby team closely, I don't follow them as much here. *[Do you follow any sports here?]* English sports? *[Any sports.]* I know what's going on with the cricket team. *[Did you use to follow it before?]* Yeah... I know more what's going on with the English cricket team more than what's going on with the South African cricket team, which is interesting because I used to follow the South Africa cricket team. They're still my team, but I know more... cause it's just in the news more, what's happening with the English team. Tennis I follow more here than I ever have followed... Sports news is great, I soak it up, and it's usually the English news and there's variety and so on. *[You said you follow the South African rugby team?]* Yeah, I've tried to but I don't keep up as much as I would in South Africa. It's not as well covered here. *[And you can't get the information online?]* I can, but.. because it's not something which is discussed when you go to the pub, it's not something I tend to tune into as much because it's not gonna to come up in conversation as much as it is when I'm back home. English cricket comes up in conversation, so... I've probably taken... and football, I've never followed it in South Africa. By football I mean soccer. And here I make an effort, and it is an effort cause I don't like it – I've watched one or two interesting games, but it's certainly not something which I think about much – and I make an effort to try and see some of the games, to try and read some of the articles, so that I can talk about it.

[In terms of controlling your boundaries with technology... what do you mean?]
I think it goes back to - I can't tell you whether Facebook or social media are a good or a bad thing. I'm still working out exactly what my stance on it is... Facebook does allow me to keep a link with people I once knew, which I don't know if it's useful or not yet, but I'm gonna bet that it might be. *[Allows you to sit on the fence until you decide if it's a good thing?]* Exactly. *[Do you have people in London on Facebook?]* Not really. No one I've met in London have I friended on Facebook. *[Is that a conscious decision?]* Yeah, because I'm happy to, with new friends and friends I see every day now, I don't need to be on Facebook to be their friend. *[Does it mean you also more actively filter who you want to be friends with?]* Exactly. Now that Facebook's has been around for a while, I don't just friend everyone I've come across, which I once did. Certainly for the ones I see at work, and I have met here... I know if I haven't

made the effort to speak to them or phone them, even though they're down the street, certainly no reason that I need to be their friend on Facebook. *[Do you think here – if I ever want to contact this person, I'll just walk down the hall?]* Exactly.

*Follow-up Skype interview

[What role do friends from South Africa now play in your life in London?]
That's quite relevant, yesterday I spent the whole day with most of my best friends. *[How many are there?]* There were three-four guys, friends from high school. So I saw three of them yesterday and we went clay pigeon shooting, bike racing, did a bunch of cool stuff yesterday. I guess the difference is between them and friends I've made from work - the people you know through work I tend to keep a little more arms length because of the work connection. And I think, as a rule, meeting people through work - until you maybe move onto something else in life and you stay in touch with them, I don't think you're ever going to... I won't ever go past that barrier. Sort of that arms length, we'll see each other Monday to Friday and we work together professionally so sometimes I won't be as silly with - I definitely won't be as silly with work colleagues, as open about personal matters with them as I am with friends from high school. *[So this doesn't necessarily mean you're no as compatible with them or don't like them enough?]* No, not at all. I don't think it's anything to do with that. It's just meeting people through work you're conscious that you have to <u>see them Monday to Friday in a work environment</u>, I think it means I keep them at more of an arm's length.

[What would happen if South Africa friends moved out?]
I think I'd stay. I think my life would change not significantly but it would be a big change. Like, I'd probably focus a bit more on finding new friends, not to replace them, but to fill that gap that would be left if I didn't have any of them here. [Do you have any idea how you would do that?] Hobbies would probably be the first thing, some or other sport. Probably tennis or golf, which are the ones I play the most , skiing, something like that, I'm sure I'd end up meeting a group that I could spend some time with. [Would you need to do something different than what you do now or do you already meet people now that way that you just don't try to take advantage of] I would probably have to be a bit different, I'd have to open myself up and put myself out there, invite people back, people I meet now and stuff like that, which I don't do now because I'm quite settled in my circle.

[You said you mostly do the same 'type' of things on a daily/weekly/monthly basis (exercise, pub, theater/cinema). But you also said that you would never pass up an opportunity to do something 'real' (e.g. go to Wimbledon) in order to talk to someone online. What kinds of 'opportunities' do you tend to take advantage of in terms of doing things in London? Where do they come from? And do they tend to fit into the exercise/pub/art categories or do they go beyond them?]
Wimbledon's a good example, two weeks ago with work I went to a country house, went horse riding, shooting, did some spa... There was a big sit down dinner. That kind of thing was a new thing, it was an uniquely English experience. I'm learning to ride a horse currently, that type of thing. It's more important to me that I try new things like that than spend time... Any new things I try would definitely fit into <u>exercise</u> or entertainment. <u>It's unlikely I'd try something new beyond those themes, but they're very broad themes</u>. That's probably fair - as a rule, I'm keen to try most things. I have a large range of hobbies and I'd definitely give most a go. I haven't, maybe I won't ever settle, but to date I've never settled on one thing which I tend to do more than something else. I think if you look through my cupboard you will find an endless inventory of hobbies I've tried. There's things I've got from flying, from snorkeling and scuba diving, from horse riding, golf, tennis, snooker... I don't know how long I want to go on for. I've tried most things and I tend to... cycling, of course. All these things I try to take to a level where I'm competent at it. I don't want to just start it, I want to be quite good at it. and I might move on once I reach that stage as I feel that later in life, whatever, where I'm in a situation where I get to do it again, I'll be very comfortable doing it. The ones I keep going back to are the ones I enjoy the most.

Currently that's still the sports - tennis, squash, golf. Definitely horse riding is going up the list, I'm really enjoying that at the moment. *[How do you get into these things?]* It tends to be that people around me do them. tennis I do, running the guys at work do so I got involved with that, cycling the guys at work, horse riding my girlfriend does, shooting and so on is also through friends taking an interest in it and wanting to try it, scuba diving and sailing it's from friends, school friends taking an interest in it and you being invited to come along and take part. I'd always... I very rarely turn down an invitation to something if I haven't done it before. Just for the reason that I hadn't done it before. I'd be more likely to accept an invitation if it's for something I haven't done before. I think I'm at the stage in life where I'm just exploring lots of different things. *[Did you not use to do that?]* No, I think London's just given me the opportunity to do that. South Africa is a bit more narrow and I was a bit more in a comfort zone there. I sort of had my niche and I was happy in that niche, whereas in London there's so many people who do so many different things... It's opened... I've plugged into that and there's so much more for me to try. *[If you consider going back to Cape Town at some point, do you think that would be once you've gotten it out of you system, the trying out of everything, or do you think you'll miss it?]* I will miss it but I think there's certainly a few things I'd be happy to take more seriously. At the time being I'm very content to just try as much as I can, but I imagine as I move on it might well be a few things I settle on and want to play or engage with at a more serious level. So that might be golf, might want to concentrate, play in a club, play in a league or something like that. I'm happy at this stage now to just try a number of different things but I imagine in time I'll just settle on a few things.

[What do you see as the greatest benefits of living in London, as opposed to Cape Town, for you personally? And if you move to South Africa, what influence do you think your time in London will have on your life there?]
You can tie it into the previous thing, the range of things which I can potentially look into at any one weekend, compared to Cape Town, is immense. *[If you choose to focus on a few things later in life, do you think there will be enough choice in Cape Town?]* Definitely, in Cape Town, it would allow me to explore. .. Even a few more things which I can't do here, so I wouldn't lose that if I ever moved back to Cape Town.

[Do you think you get something out of going to the theater regularly, in terms of getting something more or different out of it now - compared to when you first started going? And how did your girlfriend get you 'into' theater? Did it help that she was so familiar with that 'world'? And where did you meet girlfriend and where is she from?]
She is from Cape Town and I met her in London, through friends, we were set up together, friends from South Africa. We were always surprised we never met in South Africa. We must have been within one degree of each other at various stages, but we met here and it's been three years, a very happy three years. *[When did she move to London?]* A year after me. She'd been here about two years when we met. She's been here five. She's a bit more sort of academic than me, so her interests are reading, she reads a huge amount, and theater. We went to the theater last week to see a play which was horrific, all these things, we do try them. I go because she enjoys it a lot and as a result I've started to enjoy it as well. *[Did it help that she was so familiar with the 'theater world'?]* Yes it did. well it just... she goes not as a treat but, for her it's a hobby, not a treat, it's something she does regularly and often and she helped me appreciate that not everything you go to has to be good and to think for yourself about what you enjoy, what you don't enjoy, and so yes, it helps a lot that she was very familiar with it and helped me engage with it a bit more on a level which I hadn't previously. I get more out of it and something different than when I first started going, when I first started going I treated it as a sort of one-off event. I used to go and try and enjoy the whole scene and make a big thing of the dinner before, whereas now I'm far more engaged with the actual play as opposed to it as a social event.

[Did you always plan to get a finance job, or was it influenced by the fact that London was a financial center?] Yes, I'd intended to work in finance, it's from school and my father being a banker and {the rest

of the family doing similar jobs} and so on. It's just my background, a lot of family friends and so on work in finance, so I think that was very much an influence from growing up. The fact that London was a financial center was not so important, I'd say it was three or four on the list, it was more important that I had family here and that my friends were intending to be here as well. *[And when you decided to look for a more permanent job, do you think this was influenced by the fact London was a financial center?]* Yes, when I decided to make a better go of London, it definitely - in its favor was the fact that I thought it would be easier to find a job in London than elsewhere, also in Europe.

[You said that, in newspapers etc., you mostly read opinions pieces etc. Are you still reading them in the same news sources as before you came to London? And in terms of sports news, since you say you follow a lot of UK sports now, how has the source of your sport news changed? I'm especially interested since you said that you follow some UK sports teams partially because they are "covered better" - covered better where? Do you stick with one news source and then read what's in there? Because, obviously, you can Google most things nowadays]
I really didn't read many newspapers before I came to England. *[Why did you start?]* because the quality of the news in England's <u>superb</u>, especially the bigger publications, like the financial times, the economist, those didn't really come across my radar screen when I was still in south Africa, I was probably a bit young for those, but I think newspapers like the guardian, the times, and the telegraph, although they each tend to have their own agendas, a mix of them through the week is I think a very healthy influence, and the journalists in this country I think are excellent. *[How did you come across looking at them?]* <u>I think they're just such a big part of the national psyche here</u>. Newspapers are talked about, <u>articles from newspapers are talked about at work, friends talk about them at the pub, different articles, different sectors of the, science, environment, travel</u>, there's so much in the newspapers that I think the reading here... I should say as well that the tabloid news is horrific. And deservedly has the worst reputation in the world. But on the other side of that fence sits a very useful and mature media industry, which is fantastic. I think it's something I definitely enjoy about London, or about England, really.

[How has sports news source changed]
I tend to go to the newspapers now as opposed to just reading headlines. As a South African, it's very hard to read about South African sports when you live in the UK. It is online, but most of my news sources are UK papers. *[Do you read papers in paper format?]* No - tablet. So it tends to be a published paper, but on a tablet. There was a period where I Googled my news, I no longer do that. Most of the news comes from newspapers I've downloaded to my tablet. which is things like the economist, financial times, the times, all of which... being UK publications, the sports teams they refer to and cover are the UK ones. So I've let myself fall out of... I'm not as familiar with the South African papers as I was.

[About the relative he stayed with, did you have much other interactions besides living with her, esp. since she was quite familiar with London?]
Yes, that had an effect. She was a politician on the local council so she was quite familiar with the 'scene', she had lots of ideas about restaurants to try and bars to go to, and she'd often say things like - there's a bar that's giving us a lot of problems and we might go and have a drink there and see if it's as bad as everyone says it is. It certainly did help that she was very familiar with the area and had lots to say about different areas, we might not go somewhere if she'd say - oh, I wouldn't go there, I haven't heard nice things about that place. *[Are you still in touch?]* Yes, I try to see her once or twice a year. She's quite a bit older than me, she's probably about 65, not the same generation.

[One of the friends you came with moved out?]
He moved out of London, he's been all over the place. He now lives in {another city in England}, which is a very interesting experience, because he lives in England as opposed to London. Because I think I've explained to you, London is a bit different from England. And he works for an English company with a lot

of English people and also has an English girlfriend, so he and his base of friends is noticeably more diverse than mine. Cause he was out on his own, and didn't have the close support of a group of South Africans in London and he had to sort of go out and find his own people, which he's done so his group of friends now has expanded a lot and is a lot more mixed than mine. He's got people from work, he's got English and Irish friends, just noticeably different. *[How do you interact now that he lives farther away?]* I'd still describe him as my absolute best friend. *[Do you usually visit or call...?]* We phone. I talk to him on the phone when I need to, might phone for catch up chats and that sort of thing. He stayed here on Friday night, I probably saw him a month before that. Once a month would probably be a good thing. Quite regularly. *[Why? you said it's not necessary to see close friends in person]* Because it's not so hard to see him. Yeah, we go to the pub, might do something... yesterday we did the bike racing day. Just hanging out, maybe something nice to do with him. I'd say, with close friends, it doesn't really matter if I haven't seen them so regularly. The ones in South Africa, I still have one or two close friends at home, I might speak to them once or twice a year, but if I see them at Christmas time it'll be just like we'd seen each other every day. Maybe that's just a guy thing. I've known them a very long time.

[Do you notice any blending of people's social circle?]
There's a fair amount of blending. I like to think that the group I'm in <u>blends</u> more than other South African groups. We've tried harder, we haven't lived in the South African areas as much and we've made an effort with... I'd say it would not be hard for me now to phone friends and meet English people and see lots of different people. *[So you get to know them, you just don't see them quite as often as...]* Yeah, quite as often, or am not as familiar with them.

A.3. 2. Christine

[You said you had wanted to live in London for a long time, but you didn't study there for your semester abroad - why is that?] Something I didn't put in there, when I was 15 I went to study at Oxford for a month in the summer, on an independent program for international students. I had a really good experience, I absolutely loved it, and I went back to the US and all I could think was - I want to go back! It was wonderful and it felt comfortable for me. I think it <u>suited my personality a lot more than the American way of things</u>. I'm much more reserved in my <u>social mannerisms</u> than a lot of Americans are, and quieter. Also I think the Britishness of it all and the history, it's really engrained in society, traditions and stuff like that. You just don't have things like that in the US as much. You do have traditions such as college football and everything, and I like that, but it's not as deeply seeded. [What kinds of traditions?] I think Oxford's probably the extreme, you see the history on the streets, the buildings tell stories, you have all these plaques that say so and so lived here... as somebody who kind of lived in my books since my youth, it seemed fascinating to me that these people actually lived and you could see where they lived and how they lived, all of the traditions they took part in were still going on, things like the Oxford dinners... that still goes on. And there's a certain pride people have about that. It was a very foreign concept but something I was really drawn to as something that was different but good different. And I think just growing up when you read abut history growing up, and then you see it, you can't help being fascinated - and I think that's where my fascination came from. Because to be honest I didn't meet many English people when I was here when I was 15 and I just felt very comfortable and intrigued. Something I remember distinctly was when I came back when I was 15, and when I go back now, the first thing I notice when I get off the plane - it's so much louder. It's not a buzz, it's a roar. No matter what airport you fly into. As someone who hasn't been there for such a long time, it's really hard to get used to, and I think what I liked when I first came over was that it wasn't loud. Everybody has a private life and they like to keep it, at least in a public venue, private. When you're having a conversation, you're not announcing the fact that - hey, I'm going to the bathroom. I don't think you'd here somebody in most places in Europe, to be honest, do that. For some reason, I can't quite put a finger on it, there was a value to that. Quality over volume, or something.

[How did that influence meeting people - them being more private?]
When I moved over for university - to answer your question about {why not London} - I had the option of Oxford, London, or {the university I went to} - I thought Oxford was brilliant, but I wanted to go somewhere new. And I kind of wanted a more genuine English experience and I knew that London was like New York, it's a big city, it's got its own personality and it's not necessarily English or British by nature because it's so international. But - meeting people, it's very hard to get to know people, in London in particular I think. Because of that traditional British reserve and the desire to kind of keep a close-knit group of friends, and it's hard to break into that, and I definitely found that, when I moved over here somewhat permanently after graduation. I met all of my then boyfriend, now husband's, friends, and they were very nice so I could have a good chat with them but they had very long established friendships from childhood or university friendships and making new friends wasn't really on a lot of people's to do lists. I've been here for 7 years now and I can't say I have a lot of friends, but I have some very good friends. Most of those are either friends of my husband that I've gotten to know better over the years or people I've worked with and got to know that way. I've been very lucky in that I've made some very very good friends from specific jobs I've been in, but it did take a long time to make friendships that stayed. Because the other thing about London is - everybody's moving all the time and it's so international that you might make a friend who's French... so you make some good friends and then they run off to Strasbourg, and you're just like - ah, man. So now I have friends who live everywhere, which is great, but I don't get to see them often.

[How much did it matter that you had a husband who is English? Is he from London?]
No, he is from about an hour outside of London. It helped a lot. When I first moved in with him, we lived with three other guys who were all British, and the four of them were all friends. It was really quite nice because I knew those guys are reliable. And I've stayed very very good friends with one of them, one of them moved {outside of the country}, and the last one I'm not that close to. But I knew I could at least rely on people when I first moved over here. And then I think the fact that he was British helped me meet other British people, because otherwise I think it's very likely the only other people I would have made friends with would have been other foreigners, be they Americans or Europeans from other countries or other places. but in London there's definitely an 'us and them' feeling about the Brits, and then everyone from Australia and New Zealand and all the other places where they come over for a few years but the ultimate goal is to go home eventually, and I think it's easier to make friends with other people who are foreigners. *[Do you think the fact your husband helped you meet other British people had to do with his established connections or just the fact that he is British?]* I think it helped me understand the culture with him being British. We speak the same language, but it's totally different. Silly things like - learning about football players. I can't tell you how useful it is to have a British husband, who knows about British football, who forces you to watch it so you can at least talk about it in a work environment or a social environment. I think that definitely helped in icebreaking type of conversations. and also things like slang, certain words that are used in the UK that just mean different things... having someone for whom that's normal helps because it's easier for me to have conversations with new people and not have that awkward moment where you have to stop and explain something, it makes conversation flow better.

[Why did you choose London specifically?]
I think the fantasy that exists of London in literature and movies... everything from Sherlock Holmes to Charles dickens, Dickensian London, and Shakespeare- my degree focused a lot on Shakespeare. I went to the globe when I was 16 and it had a huge impact. I think the romance of it, the fantasy of living in London and all that goes with that... and even things like *Love Actually* - you mentioned that as an example. I just remember thinking - oh, it's London, I've been there, I know where that is and where that is.... so I think that was part of it. It was also the idea of moving to a big city, because I always wanted to move to a large city when I graduated. *[You'd never done that before?]* No, I've lived in a city that's big, but it doesn't feel big - you're not living on top of your neighbors. and I think the idea of moving to a

place like new York or Chicago or London or Paris, it really appealed to me, the <u>cosmopolitan opportunity</u> of it - the arts, the culture that exists in the larger cities, that you do get, but you just don't get as much of in smaller cities. And opportunity - the '<u>streets are paved with gold'</u> idea. And I had that kind of dream - some would say naiveté - and I think that was the big picture of it. and on the more specific scale, as I got older and learned more abut things I think what I really liked about London was the fact that there were people from every part of the world who live in London. It's so international. You hear every language spoken on the tube. Some days I'll go from east to west London and I won't hear English spoken on the tube. And I think that's fascinating, and sometimes it can be really frustrating too but, that idea of this big society where everyone can coexist... *[Why does that appeal to you?]* Because I grew up in a place that is not like that at all. It was not prejudiced or anything but, at least my experience of it, was all the same - there were no other languages spoken really, except for maybe Somali and a little bit of Spanish. But, you know, learning a new language in that sort of environment is like - why would I need to? Because nobody speaks a second or a third or a fourth language. And I thought it was all very provincial. not that I was above it but I wanted more, <u>a more worldly view of things</u> and London gives you that, I would argue, more than most large cities - it gives you that multi-ethnic experience. Maybe New York is a close runner up, but you don't also have a huge European population in New York...

[What do you still enjoy in London after the initial period?]
I love the fact that just down the street from where we're sitting is one of the oldest bridges in the city and it's where the Oxford and Cambridge race starts every year, I love that Richmond park still has deer in it... and you know that that land was given, taken, given by Henry VIII and is still under the Crown's lands and is for people to enjoy. All those kind of fairy tale aspects, things that I first liked I like even more and they're part of my city - there's a certain <u>ownership</u> to that that is quite nice. Things like knowing when I go around with friends that visit that dickens lived in a particular house. I think the perfect example is - I was reading a book that's set during the Crimean war, and I'm reading through this book that's historically accurate, and I'm reading about this estate and we are quite clearly living on the land of this estate - and I think that's cool. *[Do you feel that this changes your perception of the book, or of the place, or both?]* Both. I think it changes the way you read literature, especially with historical fiction and non-fiction, it brings it to life. But it also really improves my <u>view of the city</u> and makes it more impressive because you think <u>what survived</u> - and the fact that a hundred years ago you wouldn't be able to see someone who's Indian walking down the street, they wouldn't be able to own a shop. and down there we've got a corner shop and the Indian guy at the counter is waving every morning,... <u>you see how society has changed and how it's evolved</u> and people of the city have evolved. And I'm sure some people would argue that's not a good thing, but I think it's great. <u>And being part of it</u>, being able to say - even if I move out of London - being able to say I spent a large portion of my life here, it changes you, for the better and the worse. But having access to art like you really do - free museums - and in a city of this size, it's amazing. and admittedly I don't go as much as I probably should because I like it but sometimes on the weekends the last thing you want to do is get on the tube and go all the way into town but it's there and you know it's there and not just art museums, but natural history museum, science museum... you've got these places that have treasures in them and they relate directly to the history of this city. And it's humbling to be a part of that legacy, I guess.

[How do you react to art or news etc. that is about the city you're in?]
I like it. <u>Good or bad</u>. <u>It's exciting to be in the center of it, where things are happening</u>. Like the Olympics, for example... but being where things are really happening and being talked about. The financial crisis - people are talking about London and the bankers and everything. Well - I was there the day <u>Lehman brothers closed and everybody is walking out of their offices</u> and I'm just standing there thinking - what is going on? Because I hadn't watched the new. And being in the middle of that, being able to say - I was there - that's pretty cool. *[How much do you feel directly impacted by London being a world center, on an everyday level?]* I don't think I notice it on an everyday basis, I think it's something

that you have to step back and realize that you're part of it and maybe later in hindsight things come through. Stuff like the Olympics, I was here when we got the bid - I'll use that as an example. Personally, I thought that was cool. But as a Londoner - god, I am such a Londoner. Because the overwhelming feeling is - god, all this construction. And it's gonna cost so much. And the transport - they're trying to improve the transport but it's taking years and it's in my nature now to be a Londoner and complain about everything. And so as it's happening - you think this is such a hassle. But I think hindsight will prove, actually, it's really cool.... also, the tube strikes, being in the middle of that is just miserable. But I think history will show that there was a purpose to it all.

[You said you do property searches online - you are looking for a house?]
It's an English thing - you want property, but it's too expensive. Being at the right place at the right time... *[On a tangent - being in London, how much does money affect you?]* Everything is so freakin' expensive in London, particularly property. And where you live in London determines what your life is like. *[In what way?]* Different neighborhoods have different vibes, and there's a social strata to where you live. I think everybody wants to move up that social strata. And I love where I live right now, but we live in a flat and I really want a house. There's no way we could afford a house where we live. A lot of people would pay almost their entire salary to have a tiny little flat on the river. It's not personally what I would want but it translates into the school system so if you want to raise children in London, you want to live somewhere nice. And if you want to live somewhere nice, you have to be able to afford it and I think a lot of people make a lot of sacrifices to buy or rent property that is out of their means. and then arguably - this is me being a little bit bitter - you've got bankers who are transferred from the US and they don't have to pay for housing, and they are given these gorgeous flats, in Notting Hill, that are paid for by their companies. And they probably had a pretty good lifestyle in the US but they don't realize that when they get to London they are living in the upper echelon and there's people who get paid a lot of money but don't' have the advantage of having their housing paid for or getting a bonus and... That's like anywhere, but I think it impacts you a lot more because the prices are a lot higher here. If you work in a sector where there are no bonuses you are automatically at a disadvantage. I'm not saying that's just a London thing, but there's a lot of hardworking, well-paid people who can't actually afford to live in London, which is why there is a commuter belt. If you want to have a house you have to move outside of London.... people will move out of the city because they won't be able to get the quality of life that they have worked very hard for. *[What does it mean to you - quality of life? You said you had a dream of a big house in London.]* My expectations have been managed quite nicely. I grew up with a four bedroom house and a backyard, it was all very upper middle class, and I think everybody wants what they grew up with or more in terms of property or space. even though in the short term I'm more than happy to live in a smaller place, because there's a benefit - you're closer to what's going on, but what I would see as important for a good quality of life is being able to have a modest house, a tiny garden, and a dog. And being able to have a child. And feel safe where you are. And support your family. That kind of... it sounds very idyllic, but... *[Not so strange?]* No. I think that was never what I wanted, I never wanted - I think everybody admits it would be very nice to live in this massive six bedroom palace in Kensington, but I never wanted that. I like the idea of Victorian properties, I always wanted a fireplace and all that, and it's not that I couldn't have that, I lived in a flat that had that. Now, the reality of that, and the upkeep of that... is something that isn't expected. But I know that I can easily have that, but probably not in central London. Because in reality where we are right now - a two bedroom Victorian property with a small garden would probably cost half a million pounds. And that seems a bit ridiculous. Especially when I hear about friends at home who just got married, they are both teachers so they don't earn tons of money, just bought a three bedroom house with a half an acre of land and have two cars. I think - no! Don't say that. (laughs) I get jealous.

[How do you feel about living somewhere decently central in London vs. having a house?]
I think it's timing. right now it is just me and my husband and where we live right now it's a big two bedroom flat, we love the location, we have a gorgeous park across the street, great pubs, great... we

like where we live. The grocery store is nearby, all these things. We have one car, we don't need more than that. And we talk about it almost every weekend that we want to move out of London, we want more, but right now there's no need for it. I think as soon as children come into the mix and as soon as we want to have kids the game will change completely. And I'd be more than happy to sacrifice location and convenience of this to move somewhere quieter and move somewhere further out. I really want a dog. That's my current desire. And you can't have a dog in a flat, because that's just mean on the dog. Even if there's parks around everywhere, something rubs me the wrong way about that. And so that would come into play once we got a house of some kind. But there's a lot of sacrifices. And for example a lot of our friends are nearby and if they are moving outside of London, a lot of people move back to where they're from and I think that's what's going to be difficult. We talk about moving back to the US because of all the advantages - just more for your money. Maybe not in New York, but we'd probably move outside of Chicago or San Francisco. Not in a mansion, but we'd find some place we like. *[And how would you feel about, essentially, leaving the life you've set up here?]* I'm so torn about it. I'm always asked by Americans mostly who've just moved over - are you planning on <u>moving home</u>. And my response is - I am home. If I move to the US, it would.. It does feel foreign when I visit. Because I lived my entire adult life here. I've never paid taxed in the US except for a small job, my dad did my taxed for me. I've never had to deal with healthcare, I've never bought a car in the US, I've never owned property, I've never lived on my own in the US, I've never had a full-time job in the US. So to me moving back would be moving back to where I grew up, not moving back home. And that adjustment - it doesn't sit well with me. I wouldn't be excited about moving back. I think it'd have to be a very good reason. Either if my parents, god forbid, were ill or maybe either my husband or I got a really good job opportunity, or a combination of that, or we really weighed our options and we said - the school system and the opportunities for a family are better in the US. But I don't know if that's true. Because there's so many pros and cons about both societies. London in particular - I <u>can't imagine raising a family in London</u> - just too crowded. <u>Trying to get on a bus with a buggy</u>... all that kind of stuff. I could do it. I don't know if I want to, though. And if I had the option, I don't think I'd really want to do that, hence moving outside of London. And that would be the choice. and then family - my husband's family wouldn't be able to afford to visit us really more than once every few years, and that would factor into it as well, whereas my family can come visit. I try to avoid thinking about it but as I get older it's become more and more of a realistic question to ask. And I have no definitive answers. But there are reasons for both. I don't know if I like the US enough to move back, which is horrible (laughs). It is nothing to do with the people. It is more certain institutions and politics. And that's not really what makes your day to day life, but it is a part of it.

[You said you'd still want to work in London if you moved outside of London. So you're not really considering moving to a smaller city?]
Well... I wouldn't count it out, but the truth is... we would both need to find jobs. In theory, my {husband's job would let him move anywhere in the UK}. I work at a university, technically I could go work at any other university, or go into a different sector altogether. So I wouldn't tie myself to London explicitly, however if we did move away I think it would take us further away from friends and family and I don't know... there's just so much, salaries are just so much higher in London, that if you live somewhere cheaper and commute in, it's worth it. *[If you moved outside of London, how much would you try to keep the 'setup' you have now in terms of places you go to, people you see etc.?]* I think the people we'd probably definitely try to stay in touch with, but we'd have to admit that it would be for a weekend at a time, not an evening at a time. The assumption would be - you have more room so they can come stay with you, and I think that's very standard around here. Places - we'd try to find new places. *[Do you have some kind of blueprint for the kinds of places you'd like to have around?]* Yeah, that's it, we are looking for a property very slowly and we have a very specific idea of the type of place we want to live and that involves having green space and having good transport links, but unfortunately, I think, most people who commute to London have all the same requirements. Ours are slightly more specific, I think - we'd really like somewhere where you can walk around quite a bit, whereas some

people wouldn't mind driving everywhere. I think we value the ability to walk into the pub, pop into a shop. But everyone I talk to who's moved outside of London says you just adjust, like everywhere else. You adjust to the non-city life, village life as they call it. And you adapt, make sacrifices and adjust your expectations and I think that's really the crux of it.

[How much have you 'kept' from the way you lived in the US?]
I was lucky in that I had just graduated from university so I knew no matter what my life was gonna change. My blueprint consisted of - <u>move to a big city</u>. that was what I wanted - I was ready for adventure and change and was gonna become the next famous writer or I don't know - I don't even remember what I wanted when I graduated. But my goal was to <u>become an adult</u> - to live independently and all that. And that definitely carried over, but I think the main difference really would have been, if I had stayed in the US, it really would have been my choice, I would have said - pick a city where I find a job. I'm guessing it would have been Chicago, because I liked Chicago. But I really wanted to move to London and I knew someone in London who I was madly in love with. and I kind of had that additional thing pulling me to London in particular and in some ways I'm curious of how I would have developed and how my view of London would have been different if I had been solo the entire time. If I'd been independently finding my way through London's murky corridors... but I'm very thankful that I didn't have to <u>do it on my own</u>. *[Do you have any guesses about what would have been different?]* I think I would have lived in a house with lots and lots of people because I wouldn't have a very good paying job, but I was able to piggyback off of {my husband's} early success. And yeah, we lived with people, but I think I would have probably lived with a lot more people. It would have just been so different. And I think it would have been a lot harder to meet people, to really get a feeling of community. But then again, when you're on your own, I think people... I know I'm much more willing to go out and meet people, cause there's that desperate need to find... meet somebody. Whereas I was perfectly happy, I didn't try quite as hard. *[You think you more just let things happen?]* Exactly. It wouldn't be... I think we all did that, your first week at university you meet about hundred people and you remember two. And I think my post-university experience would have been a lot more like that. <u>Desperately trying to find somewhere to fit in</u>, whereas I thankfully already <u>fit in with one person</u> and I was comfortable with that. but I think... my experience was so shaped by that that I do look back and kind of wish I had that no floor feeling where you've really got to sink or swim, because I haven't had that. And it's taken a few years to really be like - no, I would have been fine, and the feeling that if I had to, I could do that now. Whereas I think a lot of people deal with that their first year out of university, when they move to another city or a new country. They have that really scary stage. I think I've worked through that in different ways and maybe I do it more in different environments as opposed to all at once, so I'm a bit delayed but it happens, eventually.

[How do you decide who to keep in touch with outside of London?]
I don't think it's so much a decision, it's just what happens. *[How does it happen?]* I was lucky in that when I moved was the time when everybody else was moving, so my closest friends from university kind of spread throughout the universe. I only know one person who went with someone else to a city, and even that only happens usually for about a year and they kind of went their own ways as well. I think it's more a case of who you feel might identify with what you're going through. For me it was a very strong reason to keep in touch with a few people. There were a few people who studied abroad, so when I moved over here there were a few people who went to Oxford that I knew and I actually became very very close with one of the people who went to Oxford who graduated the same year as I did. We were friends before we left university but we are still very very good friends. We don't talk all the time, he's in New York now, but we became really good friends because he is the only person who actually met me after I moved, that first year when I was trying to adjust. and he knew my husband and he met the people I was living with and the fact that he saw me in that context and he was able to talk to me while I was having my adjustment time, I guess, that has strengthened our friendship. another one of my very good friends, almost the opposite - she traveled a lot growing up and she's very kind of international

herself, but she also got married very young, just like I did. and in that way I think we are able to connect on a very different level compared to some of my other friends... there is something about being married in your early twenties that people don't get, so to have somebody else who lives in the US, is one of my closest friends from university - though she has two kids now, so I can't even fathom that, but who knew me in that context but also can identify as a wife and as someone who has removed themselves from a traditional root - you know, we don't talk that often, we chat online quite a bit because of the time difference more than anything, and because she has two little children running around. but the two of them I think it's an identity thing, really - in weird ways we've grown in parallel and kind of get each other. And then the other group, I would argue, are friends who are like my sisters - we've seen each other at our worst, our best. Those things - it doesn't matter if you don't talk all the time. You still care about the other person and want them to know how you're doing and other stuff... *[Is it because of the shared experiences?]* Yeah, and an understanding - you have your own life. We don't have a lot in common in out daily lives anymore but that's ok. And I don't have to talk to you every night for you to get me, because fundamentally you're really the same once you've developed into a person - you recognize each other's values. And I think... there's not a sense of obligation there, it's a trust. And for me that's the most important. I know that if I needed to I could just pick up the phone and say - I need to talk to you. These are the people I'd talk to if something happened to my mom or dad. Those are the two people that were at my wedding - we had 12 people at our wedding. so staying in touch with them is important - maybe it's just my point of view, but I feel like I don't have to tell them about everything in my life or I resent them if I don't know what's going on in their life. *[It's not based on sharing everyday experiences?]* No, it's based on love. It sounds really cheesy, but... those are the people I really value. And then there's that outside circle - the Facebook friends, as I like to call them. people that you maybe send a message to on Facebook every few months, and you want to know what's going on with them and make sure they stalk you on Facebook as well... you care. You understand that they're really not the kind of person you write a really long, heartfelt email to, or pick up the phone and be - I love you, man! (laughs) It's not that kind of friendship - and maybe it was at one point, but for better or worse it's not anymore. And it's hard, I find it quite hard because there's certain people I was very close to during university and I was invited to their wedding and I couldn't go. I said I'd go to {one 'love' friend's} wedding and I couldn't fly twice. Money-wise and time-wise. and it broke my heart that I couldn't see those people, they meant a lot to me, but at the same time it's the fact that they sent me an invitation and hadn't seen me in two years? I think that says something. I know I'm one of those people who says - oh, we should stay in touch - and I just don't. But I think it's more because I would much rather live in the present than worry too much about... staying connected to the past. Because I see my mom's friends from university. they talked maybe once a year, if that... but now they see each other all the time and I think she and my dad are having a 'late life crisis' because they're travelling everywhere with their best friends, and they see each other now more than ever because they're all empty nesters. But this is after years of barely talking to each other. And I think in a weird way that's a very good example of how I would model the important friendships. They're the people that are just there, and even if you don't see them, they know they mean something to you and vice versa. But yeah, Gmail, chat is great once in a while, emails. I'm not really a phone person... *[Why not?]* Time difference, I think. It's too much effort to be like - can I call them? You can't just pick up the phone. I talk to my parents all the time on the phone *[Why?]* Because my mom calls a lot (laughs). I'm really close with my folks. *[And not on Skype?]* Well, I used to Skype when my husband and I were dating, but this was pre-good Skype, and I think it just really ruined my Skype experience. And I don't think it adds something, seeing people while you talk. The other thing is, I like laying down while I talk. Because, with the time difference, usually it's at night when I'm talking to my parents and I can lay on the sofa... I love the idea of Skype, I use it at work, and maybe that's exactly why I don't use it at home... I find phones classic, timeless... My mom's on Facebook and stalks me constantly and I don't mind it cause I'm an only child... and I love my mom, she's kind of my best friend. But we definitely get along much better at a distance. With my mom, she in some ways is so much like me that she drives me insane. In other ways she just drives me insane. But over the phone we can talk about a lot of stuff that I'd rather not talk about in

person, I think. Which is kind of weird, so we have gotten much closer. I think distance forces you, when you talk to friends and family, because you don't talk all the time, it forces you to talk about the important stuff only. So you're not talking about something that bothered you at work unless it really bothered you and you need advice or something. You talk about stuff that, at some level, is really important, even if you don't consciously say - well, this is important. Whatever you end up discussing is at the core of what's important to you at the time. And I think that's the same with friends, the group of friends that I stay close with, I talk about the really big stuff, not petty stuff. I will talk to them about that. and it's absolutely fine because obviously if you are talking at all it's important, whereas I think the closer you are the more you talk about... there's good things about small talk, but you talk about everyday stuff or so and so said this... *[Do you think it makes you talk less about important things or is it that they are just diluted in the talks about everyday things?]* Yeah, I think it's diluted. I think it's... I don't know. My friends who are over here are not quite as... I'm not quite as comfortable around all of them, some of them I am, but because a lot of my long distance friends knew me for years just as me and not as someone's wife or <u>the American</u> or whatever, there's a certain comfort level there to - they're <u>responding just to me</u>. Sometimes it feels like, if I'm talking to friends that I've developed through my husband, I can't talk about certain things because it's a bit weird. Or same with people at work - I know I've become close with someone when they go - oh my god, Americans drive me nuts. Oh, but you don't count! - And that's how I know we're good. But I just got a new job recently and I don't feel that I can socially open up.

[What about visits? Do they come here, do you go there?]
Family-wise, both. Usually mom and dad will come here on average once a year and then we'll go there on average once a year. But usually when we go to the US we usually meet up somewhere, we don't necessarily go to my home town. And when they come here usually they come to London and we'll do a day trip somewhere. *[Do you not feel the need to go to your home town often?]* It's hard to get there - it's more expensive. All my friends from there, bar two, don't live there anymore. Going there is nice - you go to the ice cream shop, you see familiar things, it is nice, but there's always a connection and there's nothing to see nearby. so if you're going to the US you're going to be there probably for two weeks to make it worth the cost so you might as well go someplace where you can do touristy stuff as well, cause two weeks in my home town is just... well, that's nice, but... We're trying to convince my parents to meet us in Italy next year, because they'd love it and they've never been there. And we've been there but would love to go there. And thankfully they've got the money that they can do that, but it's more the timing and making sure everything is sorted. But I like going back to the US, it kind of... reminds me of why I left. But at the same time it's sometimes nice seeing things that are <u>nostalgic</u>. *[And friends?]* And with friends it's so hard. I see people if they're in Europe, usually, because a lot of them fly in and out of London so they'll stay at our house for a night. It's great to see them but it's always for such a short time. Or they'll do a tour of Europe and they'll stay at our house for three days. And it's really <u>hard</u> because these are usually the people who maybe I don't keep in touch with but I really like and you realize just how much you like them - and then they go away. And it's so frustrating, and you don't stay in touch with them really, because you both get on with your lives... there are times when it becomes bittersweet. But at the same time it's not like I would necessarily live near them if we both lived in the US. And seeing people in the US it really boils down to if they're in the same area. *[And there are many areas?]* Yeah, and that's the problem. And you just really value that time, but to be honest, I have not really visited. {One of the good friends} lives in a little faraway town and if I went to visit her it would be for two weeks. But usually I want to go on holiday with my husband, and there's about 2000 people in the town... it's so small. And it's making those choices... and living abroad has made it... I've had to make very big choices about my friendships, and sacrifices, I think, that other people... even if you don't live in the same area in the US, you don't have to make those choices quite as often. I could go to someone's wedding if I really wanted to - it wouldn't be flying 8 hours to get there. It's a very bittersweet situation. {Especially not being able to go to the wedding was important because it was in

the city she went to university in and with a lot of university friends, although it made it easier that she could technically afford to go to the wedding, so it was her own decision ultimately not to go.}

[How did your career develop? you originally wanted to do something related to drama?]
I moved here permanently in 2006, after we got married - that was for good. Before that I worked for 6 months {at an American organization} at an internship, on a 6 month visa, and then I got engaged and we got married and then I got my marriage visa and it became a permanent move. To be honest, I really hated it - it was the worst job, it paid minimum wage. It was essentially working all the work in the office for a boss who was maybe there four hours a day. It was not a good job. I worked with some nice people indirectly, but I didn't learn any skills. It felt like I was biding my time. I took the job because the company had a good name, and because it was in London, and I got the job. So that ended and I didn't find a new job. We got married in the US, moved to the UK soon after that, and I couldn't find a job to save my life. Being unemployed is awful for anybody, it's a horrible situation. I didn't have a job. We moved into this tiny little flat a few months later, because we had to move to our own place, obviously. So for three months I didn't have a job - I started looking for a job in publishing, that was kind of the dream sector {because of my interests and university degree}. The problem is, with a US qualification from a university that is <u>very good</u> but no one's really heard of over here and with very little UK experience on your CV, the response from most of them was - well we need someone who knows the UK market. *[Was this surprising?]* I expected it to be difficult, but I'd always been quite successful at finding positions and I worked at the career center at my university and I knew how to interview, but interviews were different in the UK - every country has their own style. So basically it was almost six months of not having a job. *[Were you only looking in publishing?]* It was mainly publishing, but after about three months of applying to every publishing job I could think of - and not even getting responses most of the time - I just decided to widen my options so, because I had experience at the career center, I started going for {related} positions in large companies and any kind of administrative job, just anything. I didn't care what I'd do. And the problem was I didn't have any bar experience so I couldn't work in a bar - so I thought - for Christ's sake, seriously? Rejection set in quite quickly after about three months. I was miserable. I didn't have any of my own friends, and at that stage I didn't know any of my husband's friends well, and things just got worse. then I got a recruitment job after almost 6 months, at a big company - it was actually a great job, paid really well, I was thrilled to have a full time job at a big company, it was what I've always wanted - only I was an assistant to nobody. The manager had quit the day I was hired. I had no idea what I was doing, I had never done that kind of a job before. And I was essentially doing the work of two people, me and the manager. So you take someone who desperately wants a job, wants to do well, has always really been praised for doing well and being a hard worker, and within the first month I was told I was terrible. That I didn't know what I was doing. She <u>bullied</u> me and I didn't realize it. so let's just say it got worse, and feeling very alone and isolated in a very large city where I'd had these hopes and dreams of graduating, get a job, become a career woman.... add on top of that - you're married and you have this idea of the <u>honeymoon phase</u>, and it was the exact opposite {because of all those things}... It was horrible, so I quit that job after nine months and went to law school. I decided I'd become a lawyer, which seemed like a very good idea because it was a career and it had a very clear career path... though, I didn't really want to be a lawyer. And to be honest, I spend year doing the law school thing, and I did alright, I wasn't a horrible student, but I was used to being a really good student, but the exam system is so different. You're basically fitting in three years of an undergraduate degree into one year.. And then you have seven exams at the end. And I did that and then tried to get a training position. Well, this is when the banks and everything started to go awry. Could not find a job, barely got an interview because I didn't go to a UK university, I had job experience and <u>the majority of the large companies really want someone they can mold and shape into a clone, let's be honest</u>. But I was so naive... that didn't work out. I said screw this - I'm not gonna say I'm gonna be a lawyer for the rest of my life, when it's not really a passion of mine. I think I could be a good lawyer if given the opportunity but... *[It wasn't worth what you had to do to get it?]* Yeah. I mean, I couldn't go another 6 months not having a job. It was ridiculous. So I kind of took my time that I'd done doing

recruitment work and applied {to jobs like that} and then I got a job {at another big company}. So I could use those skills... so I did that for two years and made some amazing friends at that job. And that was when things started, personally, finally working and I could appreciate London for the good bits. I think a lot of people get very... I can appreciate London for the good and the bad now, because I know what it's like when it's bad. London is so difficult to live in if you don't know anybody and are having a bad time. *[Do you think it would have been easier somewhere else, if you were looking for a job?]* I think it would have been easier if I had been in the US. *[Why?]* Because a US degree means something in the US and people know the universities better, so I can't say I would have gotten a job but I'm fairly certain I could have gotten an interview. But you don't know... I think what was difficult was I worked a temporary job when I was in the US before I moved, and I got offered a job with the place where I was temping, and I didn't take it cause I was moving here. And I think that really ate away at me for a long time, because it was a bit of a dream job... you know, when things are really hard where you are and when you know there was at least an opportunity... I'm still trying to make it up to my husband, because I know I put him through a bad time, it was really difficult.

[You said you wanted to live in a place where you'd have an awareness of the world and wouldn't become sheltered - sheltered in what way?] I grew up... when I came over to Oxford it opened my eyes to a lot of things - things are not the same everywhere. I think that really influenced my perspective. and I had two more full years of high school left and I was just... everybody around me just 'didn't get it' and there was so much more out there, and it was essential that I get out there and see more and be around other people who had different experiences. *[Do you feel you get that here?]* I do...

[You said that before you came to London you had some ideas about wanting to work in theater or journalism. Do you still have these idea?] I think the dream is still somehow to do journalism. To be honest, I love my job right now. I get to travel, it's a very strategic role so I get more power... but I do like journalism, I do like writing... my dream job would be being a literary agent basically. Being able to read a bunch of manuscripts and be like - that one! That one will sell, that one is good. That would be my dream job. And I've been to a few - this is a London thing, definitely - seminar-type sessions where writers and people in the publishing industry talk about what they do and how to get into it. And it's all nice and good but the response is always - it's really about being tenacious and working hard and being in the right place at the right time. And I was like - it's not what I want to hear, cause I'm never at the right place at the right time. but at the same time I heard this woman talk about it and she was specifically talking to and for writers and she was saying that if you want to get a book deal, and I thought - this is really fascinating. And I like writing, but at the end of the day I'm not really a writer - I'm a reader. So... I still have that dream. I don't know how one would become a literary agent, I think you have to do stuff in publishing to get into that... I think it's really, I wouldn't hate myself if I didn't get to do it but it would still be really cool if I could. And theater - I love the theater, but I was never an actress, I never did it at university, I did it before university... I think it's more just something I like being involved with. I love the idea of the West End and that whole culture... *[Do you go to plays?]* Not as often as I'd want. Because it costs money and it's an investment, but I actually go to the ballet quite a bit. Here and there... I don't think I ever wanted a job in theater, but I think I wanted a job where maybe I was exposed to theater.

[You said that the things you miss from home are attached to memories and experiences and so on - do you ever try to create those kinds of backgrounds, because everything was new when you came here, or did you feel it happening spontaneously...?]
I wanted to but I think the challenge of that is you can't force those kinds of things, they develop on their own. I've got a favorite pub, and if you give me any kind of choice that's where I'll want to go. same with - everything somehow reverts back to food - as far as places to go, I associate particular places with good times and they're not really the places you go to to party, it's the places you keep going back to repeatedly. *[Did this happens naturally or did you plan to keep going to one particular place?]* I did that

with one place, it's a breakfast-type place. Something I really liked from growing up and also from university - I grew up going out for breakfast with my parents when I was younger, because my mom just didn't want to cook every day. So we ended up going to the same place every Saturday morning. I really liked that, cause it was a routine, but we'd always have really good family talks. Oddly enough, when I got to university, even my first year, going for Saturday brunch was one of the highlights of the week cause everybody gets together and talks about Friday night and so that was really important, and when I moved off campus I'd go out with the same person every single Sunday morning to a coffee shop - it's something I'd never thought about but it carried on, and I wanted it to be part of my life still. And I didn't have it for about two years, but then it's developed - not into every weekend, but into something where it's once or twice a month on the weekend. *[How did it develop?]* I actually had to say - I really want to go out for breakfast. It forces us to get out of the flat, I won't have to do the dishes, nobody will have to cook - let's just do this. And so, we drove by a place, said - oh that looks quite nice, let's try that. We both liked it and... *[With your husband?]* Yeah, just me and my husband. Because it's fairly nearby... *[How did you pick the place?]* It just felt really comfortable, and they have really good breakfast, and people bring their dogs in - today I was drooling over one particularly gorgeous dog. People bring in their papers and there's sofas... it's a really comfortable, very neighborly place, people know each other. It's such a relaxing place to go. It's nice. And I think it starts the weekend off nicely. Even if we have different plans the rest of the weekend we kind of catch up about the week. I think that I pulled that from my childhood as something that I valued - not for the food aspect, but for the stress-free aspect... it's a stability, I think, but that said it's not like it's always been a part of my experience here. We were moving so much around at first, you don't - you find a place and then you move. We've been in the same apartment for three, four years. It takes time to, kind of, have that. *[And the rest, your favorite pub and so on, just happened?]* It was just... we were near two different nice places and this particular place is great because we moved in the winter and... It was cozy. And it's a very neighborly place. It became... we kind of had to instill a date night rule because we got to a point where we never went out for a while, so we said - we're going out. And it just became the place we went for most of our dates.

[How did you get your husband interested in American football?]
Let's see... a part of that is my dad. When I first moved over here, I decided I wanted to watch my hometown team, so I took him to a sports cafe for the big game, and forced him to watch the whole game. The entire place was full of {American fans} and he had never seen me in that way - I was yelling and screaming and talking trash. And he'd never seen me like this - he thought, maybe I should get interested in this if I want to be a part of this woman's life. And then he came to visit my home town and saw the fanaticism... it kind of grew from there and evolved into this whole thing. I mean, partly, it's sports, and he's a guy, but also I think it was his way of trying to bring something familiar into our lives, for me. I do think he knows that it wasn't easy for me to move here and he didn't have to make sacrifices in the same way, and I think it pretty much is one of the ways, initially, that he was like - I need to get into this for her sake. And then it took on a life of its own. I'm like - oh no, you're not supposed to watch all of the games. *[Does it matter to you that you have someone to share it with?]* Yeah, it really does. It's something I grew up with, it's something that means a lot to me and my family... when it's so deeply instilled in your life... now he's like - I have to go to a game. Problem is, we're never in the US that time of year, unless we go specifically for the game. *[And you've been to a game?]* Yeah, I went to a few, growing up.

A.3. 3. Mila

[How did you decide to move here?]
I kind of just wanted to, basically, but I kind of always wanted to do a masters or to live there for a year, or two, or ten. I never really thought of permanent migration. I just thought you're supposed to live in the language and the culture you're born into, it's identity related and... Because my parents already immigrated from Montenegro and I've always had that kind of split identity in national terms. and then I

thought I thought - if I now immigrate to Australia, I'm gonna be one third Montenegrin, one third Serbian, one third Australian and I'm just going to be confused. And I honestly thought about that. I remember when I first came here my cousin emailed me saying - you're going to stay there forever. And I said no, my life is in Serbia. But little did I know... after only about 6 months I was saying - my life is here. The moving decision was really attached to Uni and to post-graduate studies because I thought that's an amazing experience. I've lived in Serbia for 25 years and been a part of the Serbian education system that is just ancient and old and makes you learn so many things that aren't useful and it's not career-related at all and I thought - ok, let's just finish Uni and immigrate. But from this perspective, of 27-28 years old, I definitely think that it would be better if I had come here much earlier, maybe started Uni abroad, started getting work experience... *[In terms of what?]* In terms of... financial-wise, experience-wise, and career-wise. You would start working earlier, you'd start getting experience working earlier. In Serbia it's really difficult to manage, if you want to be a good student. And my parents wanted me to focus on studying - they didn't want me to be a waitress. I didn't even realize how the world is... I didn't realize how important the money is, I just studied something I liked. And I'm happy I did that, though I think it's not as clever to spend 6 years on a degree you like... and to have nothing from that. It's not nothing, but it's not much. I didn't know much about the English educational system. I excluded oxford and Cambridge because I wanted to study in the city. I thought it would be easier... I wasn't really thinking of a job, I just wanted to live in a city. I thought if you live on a campus you'll be a bit isolated and living in a city just gives you broader opportunities, not only career-wise. *[Were you also thinking of that in terms of experiencing what London is like or...]* Definitely. *[Do you think if you had thought you wanted to stay here longer you would have considered oxford or Cambridge because you could move here afterwards?]* Not really. I wasn't interested in that at all. plus I was kind of deciding on my course on the basis of degrees I studied before and I didn't know that in England you could do one degree in investment banking and then the next one in biology - I didn't realize how flexible things are and that it's better to switch or do something that is directly related to something you want to do afterwards. I just chose a course that is a continuation of what I did so far. I also did it because I was kind of afraid of - what if I don't like it. This was a secure way to continue my studies. Something I already feel safe with... I wasn't really up to experimenting because I thought to myself - this is a big enough experiment, completely changing my surroundings and my life, and what if I don't like molecular biology or whatever. Plus I was afraid because the degrees are ridiculously expensive and what if I waste that money on something that I don't even understand and don't even like... I just chose the safer option. I don't mind risk, I just think that... *[You need to calculate it?]* Yeah. I'm happy I did it, but I'm just waiting for the moment when I'll be 100% sure that it made sense career-wise and my life-wise. I learned a ton of things but the actual degree didn't get me anything I can rely on now after one year. Basically, it's not one of those degrees that would get you an internship or this or that. That would connect your studies to what you could possibly do. And our teachers encouraged us to be as academic as possible, so we were still deep inside academia. Pretty much most of us just wanted to work, to use that degree as a good step towards something, a career. *[You didn't consider doing a PhD?]* I am and I'm not. It's a difficult question. First of all - I'm sick of academia. Because my degree in Serbia lasted for ages, although I graduated within time limits and did everything that I should. The problem was it was humongous, it was just too much. And after that I just had 2-3 months break and then immersed into a new degree in a completely different language. My English was fluent, but it just wasn't good enough. I'd never studied in English. I thought I was so eloquent in Serbian and suddenly... I couldn't express my actual thinking. But the point is - for the first 10 months I was just still speaking Serbian but with English words, but a Serbian syntax. And no one believed me because I spoke so fluently but... I was basically sick of all this academia because it was altogether 7 years and I thought - 3 additional years, no way. But now I'm thinking of a PhD because it's basically the only way of getting a visa. I now have a post-studies visa, you get that one quite easily but you can't extend it. it's for two years, and then you need to get a job that is sponsored, and that is very difficult unless you're in IT or an engineer... there is a PhD as an option but now I know what I would want to do - I'd want to do Serbian as a foreign language. Basically, I would want to do a PhD that is related to that , because that is my new ideal profession that I

discovered... I always thought of that at the back of my head but never considered it as a profession. But now I'm teaching {Serbian as a second language} classes and I'm enjoying that... I want to do something related to that. It's something that relates to my knowledge and something that I like.

[How did you decide you want to do this?]
Basically, that came out as one of the options, what can you do with your native language while you're in a foreign country. *[And you wanted to do something with Serbian?]* Yes and no. if I just found an amazing job, I wouldn't bother. But then I thought, ok, let's just do something with skills I already have because I was just depressed by the amount of skills they are always asking for and I'm not offering. Then I thought - which skills do I have? Language skills - I'm good at it and I like it... my friend did that, and we discussed it privately, but I never thought of it as a career, but now I'm seriously thinking about it... I started inquiring, asking some people, getting some feedback, and then eventually I managed to find some students to give it a go. When I first started that I thought - this is brilliant. It's doing something I love, it's teaching, I love it. I'd love to be a teacher but was never interested in working in primary and secondary schools, so this was one of those alternative teachings I had in mind. I wanted to work outside of the common school system... I would have just wanted to work at Uni but I never knew how to get myself very high up in the eyes of my teacher who could then possibly offer me some kind of tiny little jobs that would eventually expand into... I just thought that that's just very fake, pretending in front of people who are your possible employers. I always thought - if my knowledge is enough, employ me. If it's not, I'm not gonna make you coffee. When I see some of my good friends talking to teachers... I think it's embarrassing. I don't think they're doing anything wrong, I just couldn't do that. I was one of the best students on my course, but no one ever offered me anything, and I think it's because I was too proud to go around asking for things. It's a career that I would like to follow, but then I would like to follow anything else that would give me a normal life, as long as it's interesting enough. There's no point in being absolutely picky but then there's no point in just getting anything you can. It's a pity if you waste your skills. That's why I chose to study something I was interested in... I was thrilled at the lectures. And I thought - it's precisely because of this that I chose this. *[Do you think that if you got your career started etc., would you want to go back more towards your literature focus?]* I love linguistics, that is why I chose the degree in Belgrade {that is a mix of the two}, because I enjoy literature, but I like both and career-wise literature is not realistic. I'm not interested in literary criticism, I just enjoying immersing myself into it. It's very important to me - I lived for many years just by reading for 10 hours a day. It is very important to me and I read still. it's to me not just a book but a parallel world that taught me as much as this one has and to me that's very important, but as a career, I'd rather.... there aren't many options for someone who is interested in literature - they're mostly publishing, which I'm not interested in, writing - I'm not talented for it, and teaching - it's the only one, but then I prefer language teaching because it's more challenging, it's amazing.

[Why is traveling important to you?] For 25 years I hadn't been anywhere, I hadn't even seen Greece. When I came to England I realize how important that is. For me, that's still - wow. Travelling is a fixation I have precisely because I didn't have it. *[How do you feel about where you want to live and what does it depend on?]* At the moment it's really paradoxical because my boyfriend lives in Serbia and my future is very attached to him. on the other hand he's very young - 25, that's young for a guy - and he's not thinking, and I'm not thinking, of having a family tomorrow so we're pretty much still having a teenage relationship - the most important thing is to be together, or to go on holiday. But we are considering as a far future, say, moving in together. plus my parents adore him... so, in a way, he's the reasons that I'm kind of still thinking in the back of my head of Serbia... and he is important, but then my life is building up here more and more.... and his job is quite related to language, and he wasn't ever interested in immigrating... it's a bit paradoxical. my life is building up here and I'm quite happy... and if I didn't have him, I'd probably just... switch to here. he's kind of a fatalist, he's like - we're meant to be and it doesn't matter if you're in Madagascar... but it's difficult to decide, because if I had to choose I'd probably just stay here... *[Do you know why? what does it mean to you that you're building up a life here?]* here I've

started working, plus I got a complete shakeup of my personality because I was already formed as a personality at the age of 25, then when I came here I was shaken up completely, mentally... I was always open-minded but... I just encountered something I never even thought of. it's a different way of life, different people, how humongous the world is, how little important are the things you thought were massive, when you thought before - no way I'm going to leave my parents, my best friend... no, you find new friends, a new life. Life has this amazing way to recover itself. You can think you're really happy but you're not - when I came here I realized I really wanted to run away from Serbia because I was... claustrophobic. Lack of traveling and of those international experiences. I just thought that a foreign language is limited, but it's not. I thought you couldn't get angry in a foreign language. No way they can argue, fight, this, that. I thought of foreign nations in general, rough ways - it's all black or white. No thought about how life is the same everywhere and how it doesn't matter where you're born. my mind just got this new amazing quality of realizing how big and amazing the world is and how limited we are in just our own culture if we don't get experiences with other people... you think your whole life is this, but it's not. I'm becoming mature in a more subtle way, by getting a more mature outlook on life and how the world functions. *[Do you think this is to do with just going to a new country, or to London?]* I think it's largely the first thing. It's probably just <u>boosted</u> by London because it's just an international conglomeration of the world. And it's a good experience because if I had gone to an English village I don't know what I would thing about England and the world. I think it's good that those two came together, it helped me learn new ways of thinking and judging and... When I came here I started having a completely different view of myself and my country. Not that I hate it, now I moved far and everything is different from a distance, I think that's the case, not just loving or hating. I'm not nostalgic - I don't have those typical feelings... I thought it would be difficult, identity-wise, but all those additional experiences just enrich you as a person. <u>Being in a new country, environment, language... is something I desperately needed. I didn't know this until I came here, but I needed it. Knowing that these varieties are not in literature alone.</u> Not just being always surrounded by people you know, friends, family. Here I didn't know anyone - I had some family friends who never contacted me and I was too proud to contact them first. I also wanted to give it a go on my own... what can I do. If I didn't like it I would just pack my things and come back. But when I came back after 3 months I was so different... I was just so <u>full of adrenaline.</u> It wasn't really that amazing, it was difficult, but I was just so happy, it was literally just adrenaline from a massive change in your life and at a mature stage in your personality. I had a chance to talk to people who immigrated at an earlier age and I think that's a completely different experience. I would never even want to think of <u>replacing</u> my best friend - she's my best friend for life. But that doesn't mean I'm not going to have amazing friends here - that opened a big amazing world. The tube? I never had the chance to use the tube. Seeing lunch boxes. I just started noticing the details. I was thinking - they have everything for everything, while {in Serbia} we just do things the most difficult way. I just needed to see the world and myself from this perspective. *[Do you still notice those things?]* Yes, all the time. *[Do you feel a change in how you notice it now?]* When I first came I was just fascinated. I would go into a shop and I would just look at things that did not exist in Belgrade. Because Belgrade is... there is pretty much everything, but then it would be very interesting to me the way people treat everyday life. For example, those lunch boxes. Kettles. If they have a kettle broken, they can't just put a pan and water and boil water, they have to go to a shop and buy a new kettle. How they are <u>treating their own everydayness</u>... and now... I adopted quite a few things. I didn't have a preparatory period, I just came and started living. I came and had to throw out my trash. I didn't have time to be a tourist. So I did adopt quite a few things... including the lunch box (laughs). But I'm still noticing them, because I'm still deeply rooted in Serbian culture and I always have to compare things with Belgrade. Everything from daily things to the way the transport, the administration, the bank functions. But it's... I am in a way amazed by British, or probably German or any other way of how you can make your life easier if you invest some money in transport and enable your citizens to have a 24h bus service. That's my favorite thing in London. It's one of the things I particularly miss in Belgrade. Something that does really help you live easier, you don't have to save money for a taxi... {Many immigrants get frustrated by the change when they go back} <u>some things that would generally be considered annoying in Serbia, because I'm</u>

from there I find them.... charming. Although things like poor customer service - that's just not charming. I understand that from a western perspective that is just bizarre and no one would tolerate that, but I'm still happy to have this ability to be tolerant. I love that.

[You said you are your best self here because of these different points of view...]
Yeah, but it also has to do with the fact that I have massive support in Serbia and I get an emotional injection on a daily basis from my parents, my boyfriend, and a few other people.. That was massive, especially in the beginning. I was happy here, but without them... *[Do you think you then get the best of both worlds?]* I think at one point I will have to choose. *[Mostly because of the boyfriend?]* It's mostly a family thing. {Because parents might get sick} I'm the only thing they have... and at the end of the day they are the ultimate reason... I mean, I wouldn't come back to Serbia because of them, I want to be close to them... but having a mom who is older is just different and it made my whole life... we are not close as friends, we've never been like that... she's just 40 years older than I am. But - she's my mommy, and I can't stand being separated from her... I mean, I'm fine not talking to her for a week, but just the idea that I'm in Australia and my mother is in Serbia is just so frightening for me. *[So if this is ok, why are do you think you'll have to make a different choice?]* Because basically, you asked me boyfriend-wise, the thing is to be honest no matter how much I love him, I'm the first one to myself. It's never someone else. *[So where do parents come in?]* Well... I wouldn't go back to Serbia only because of them because that's pointless. I'm always telling my boyfriend there's no point in having me there if I'm frustrated and not happy, it's the same with my parents. And my parents would support me always, wherever I chose to live, but proximity to them is very important. It's only in case my mother is ill or something like that, I'd go to Serbia tomorrow. In those extreme cases it doesn't matter, my life is so not important. That's the thing... there are not many important things that could bring me back to Serbia, and my family is one of them. My boyfriend, he *is* important... and I do think of him in a way as family... but since I got here, I am sometimes so self-sufficient. It doesn't mean I don't love him... *[In what way?]* I'm the only child and I don't feel lonely... I came here without knowing anyone and I was happy from day one. *[Do you know why?]* I wondered. But I think that the massive thing is that I kind of came to the stage in my life where I really needed a change. Especially career-related. And broadening my intellectual grasp, that was my imperative I think. And I was never even thinking - what if I don't find a friend. It didn't even occur to me. Probably a combination of my temperament, the fact that I'm a child of older parents, I'm the only child and you have two kinds - one that is anti-social and the ones that are very social. I'm quite social, not amazingly, but very - and sometimes I'm just self-sufficient. I can't explain that - I'm never lonely. *[Were you not worried about friends because you were sure you'd make them...?]* No. *[Or you thought you'd be ok if it never happens?]* Yeah. The second thing more. I wasn't absolutely sure that I would make... I was sure I'd make acquaintances, because it's very easy - hi, how are you, should we go for a coffee. I'm very talkative and extroverted, that was never an issue for me. That's quite easy. But - I don't just go around asking for phone numbers. I would just ask a number if I really liked someone. I wasn't really desperate to find... *[To fill this category?]* Yeah, not at all. I was just worried about so many other things, so I {didn't worry about this}. I was worried about the money, because I lost my scholarship and so on... I was late for it. I came into this country with 120 pounds and money for the first rent. And my social was at the very last point of things to worry about. A funny thing happened - on my course most of the students were international. it's funny, in Belgrade loads of people were studying literature and with only few of them I managed to find... they were very different in their interests from me, which I found a bit disappointing, especially at the beginning. I didn't really fit in, especially at first. While here, from literally the first day, there was this one group of international students that we pretty much realized we have so much in common, and they were from all these different parts of the world. Maybe you're in a different county and you get closer to people who... I don't know, various factors. It was a funny thing, one of those girls is Greek and we kind of liked each other from the beginning, and I told her afterwards, she's now my best friend in London, I told her I really wanted to be friends with you but I didn't want to be pushy about it and she said the same thing. *[Why not?]* I just thought I didn't know her and it was different and she'd lived here for a few years and I just came and I didn't want... I don't

really know anyone, let's just see what happens, I'm not gonna go around and push everyone - let's be friends. I just thought people were different 'in the west' and if you're being too Serbian about it they'd feel awkward. *[Do you think it helped you that you weren't worried about making friends]* Yeah, definitely. I'm actually now happy for it, because I'm very random and very spontaneous and for those things that {approach} was amazing... {made some very good friends} and I never really thought about how important it actually is to, when you come to a new place, to have at least one base you can count on. I never even thought of that - I thought - oh, my base is in Serbia and if I manage to find some... and I didn't know anything about western mentality. I just thought they were cold westerners... I honestly thought that. But afterwards I realized I had who to call, 24 hours a day, I could call someone, it didn't matter if that person lives in Serbia or... I only recall this afterwards.

[You said you didn't travel before coming to London - how about any secondary information about London or England - from books, magazines, news... did you have any idea formed in your head about life here?] I didn't really know much about England. The only thing I truly liked was one series from TV... that was the only thing. Apart from that... even English literature, I was never amazed by it. I loved Russian literature, Kafka, Thomas Mann... *[So Jane Austen wasn't your life?]* Not at all! Not even Shakespeare! ... I knew so little of England. *[Did it bother you in any way that you essentially came from a place where you spent the first 25 years of your life, building up a past, and then came to a place you had no connection with?]* No, I loved that. It was the best experience ever. *[Are you building up connections now to places and people and so on?]* I definitely do. Sometimes I think - what would I do if someone offered me a job in Dusseldorf. Would I just leave everything here and say I'm just going to have this <u>amazing job</u>... or I'm attached to London. and normally I come to the conclusion that I am very attached to London and it would be a really big decision... it would be much easier if that kind of job-related and financially-related thing would be within England, because I started appreciating the English mentality and way of life. Not that I think I wouldn't like any other... I just think it would be too <u>schizophrenic</u> at this point in my life to switch to Madagascar now after having such a massive change. I do feel settled here to a very high extent. *[How so?]* I don't know, living-wise, way of life, job-wise, even though I don't have a proper job. I like it here and I'd like to stay for a while, here. On the other hand I am open for other opportunities - I do like London very much, and I was never even thinking I'd love it so much. And if you ask me why... it's definitely not because of the weather. I looooved it in Belgrade because it was so warm, boiling, and I was the only one happy. I just think it would be a big change, because for me this was a massive change even though I'm happy with it - it's massive but not traumatic. But I think another massive change, say going to Indonesia from here.... I don't feel that I've been here long enough to... I don't feel I've experienced, fulfilled all of the potential... I just feel that I just arrived here. Career-wise, money-wise, meeting more and more different people and experiences...

[You say you like going to parks and markets... those are the kinds of things you don't need money for. how do you think not having much money influenced what you did in London - did it make you actively search for things you can do without money? and what kinds of changes do you expect once you have more money - are you looking forward to something specific?]
It does change things, when you have no money, first you learn to cook. And I already knew how to cook, but I got some skills to perfection, like kneading bread. *[Because you wanted to or because of repetition?]* I did, I enjoyed it. I'm a happy character, <u>I don't have money to buy bread, fair enough - internet is free, I'm gonna look for all possible recipes and I'm going to make the best possible bread and be happy</u>. I am affected by money but I'm not sad because of it. and I am frustrated obviously because I just don't think it's fair to be poor when you don't have to be, but I'm not money-obsessed... I'm not interested in being rich... I'm just thinking of money as a means to getting some other things. Like functioning on a daily basis - not being worried if you're going to spend 10 pounds if you want to eat out. *[Being more relaxed about everyday existence?]* Exactly. *[You said you like 'park life'?]* There is this Blur song <u>'park life'</u>, I love it. Basically the fact that London has these two humongous parks and I lived near Regent's park when I moved here and it's just so nice - it's like a micro world. You can lie on the

grass, in Belgrade that's forbidden. Park is just such an amazing thing and when my boyfriend was here in July it was so cold and it wasn't for having a picnic outside and I was just obsessed with it - having a pick nick and just lying on the grass. And English parks are huge! In Belgrade, it's just so crowded, you can't really ride a bike because there are all these little babies... but here they're so humongous, and regent's park has its own theater! I thought that was amazing. Park is like a micro-world of... you can have your cigarette, your walk, you can be very sporty... just a variety of things. you can have your lunch, no one's really going to look at you, you can kiss your boyfriend, no one will really pay attention.... you can just read all those little marks on the benches. That's amazing. And it's so clean and the fact that the parks get locked in the evening - I just thought that's brilliant. Parks are really different from the Serbian ones. I remember when I was growing up, you don't go to Kalemegdan {the big park in Belgrade} - you go there to drink, it's crazy. Later on when they maybe made it prettier... it's just different. *[Does it make you appreciate the London parks more?]* Yeah, of course. But I always loved Belgrade parks, but I think it's just so much more varied here and people enjoy it more here, they go more. *[Did it influence you that other people were doing it so much?]* Definitely. But also I love nature and I love those oases of nature in the city. I love cities, I don't want to live in a village, but I love nature. When you're lying in the park you can forget you're in London... you can put your feet in the lake. It's like a small <u>excursion</u> in the center of the city. And {my boyfriend} likes it, so when he's here we're in the parks all the time - last time I was studying, so we spent a lot of time there - just read, put a blanket in the grass... it was an enjoyable experience. *[Do you think this was at all influenced by the fact that you had fewer other option because of your financial situation?]* Probably, but I wasn't really bothered. But I have to say I wasn't really aware of that - you kind of think, this is what I have and this is the best. You don't think of the things you don't have because you don't really experience them. I was here for months when I first went for clubbing. *[Was it because it was not on your 'menu']* Yeah, I couldn't afford it! *[So what was on your menu?]* Not many things (laughs). But I was prepared for that. I was like - let's focus on Uni, on paying the fees, let's focus on graduating, and let's focus on career things. It's not that I missed going out because I went out so many times in Belgrade, and Belgrade has <u>an amazing night life</u>. I never really thought that I was missing out on something. It was a bit - my friends would go out and I'd say, sorry guys, I can't afford it. Plus, when I'm in that kind of a situation I'm not in the mood. Why would I go out and then be all frustrated by the fact that someone else is paying me a drink because I can't afford it. I'm not <u>embarrassed</u> - <u>it was ok for me to say I can't afford it, and that's fine. Here no one really bothers by that</u>. *[So you didn't feel that you had to find out what you can do without money?]* Yeah - I would just walk around with my camera and take a photo of everything and email it to my friends and family.

[It seems like you had quite a few side jobs - how was that?]
<u>Awful</u>. every time I'd go to work I'd just think - I just hope I would have enough money so that my child wouldn't have to do low skilled job. I don't see a point. The only good thing was that my language skills improved drastically and that I had a kind of faster lane for getting to know English <u>mentality and way of life from various perspectives</u>. *[Did it help with going through those jobs that you knew your language could get better through it?]* Yeah. While I was doing it, there were loads of international students who were doing these jobs, and they'd just complain - I'm made for big things. But it never really occurs to me... or very rarely, only when I was really tired or pissed. Mostly I just saw pounds on my account and nothing else. Or I would just see a cheeseburger. I would just think of... everything that I did... the worst was this shop. I didn't have a problem with the job itself, just with the management. It was my first really encounter with people who worked for 10 years in retail and are my age and have never been to Uni. I'm aware that in Belgrade there's this whole world of sales assistants that I've never really encountered... you're the customer. And I never really wanted it and I would never do that if I didn't have to, and I don't think that helped me a lot, but it was ok. That's also my character that I'm grateful - I'm not going to go around and complain all the time. Of course, I would complain to my boyfriend... but from that shop I have <u>a very good friend</u>. We both had very bad experiences with middle-management. That's the first time I realized how people who do not have university experience at all are different. I

literally wasn't aware of that. I wasn't aware of so many things. *[So if you look at this kind of a bad job as a way to also get these new experiences and points of view - do you think it is worth the trouble of working there?]* Just to work there, no. but in combination with... *[The other things you got from it?]* Yeah. All experiences are worth for something, it just depends how you're going to interpret them. I'm always trying to interpret them to try to find some benefits from them. *[Does it help you get those benefits?]* Yeah. Because you have to comfort yourself at the end of the day. I'll just face myself with it and try to get the best that I can. Otherwise I couldn't do it - 14 hours in a row, I have to find the motivation for that....

[What are your feelings on Facebook?] I don't like Facebook, it's really weird to on the internet a lot and not to use Facebook, and loads of people are asking me about it, but I just don't like it. It's just the fact that things can get out of your control so easily... and half of us are voyeurs, the other half are exhibitioners. And I'm both of that, but not either in the extreme. And they're not even aware that Facebook even owns the right to their pictures, from their bed... and to me that's ridiculous. ... And even to my closest friends I would write a different email because I just have a different kind of... Identity. I'm not the same, I talk differently, I don't want parents of my students to see my pictures when I'm drunk. My mother does know that I smoke but she doesn't have to see me with a whiskey and a cigarette... Email I like. You can just talk about things... I don't want to read where they are, I want them to tell me. ... Email is a way of communication I really like. it is virtual but it's also really nice because it's written and it's, you know, you can put your thoughts... conversation's pretty random, and when you write you can read, you can change, you can edit. I'm not very good at writing but for emails - I think I'm talented (laughs). I read old emails and it's precious. *[Did you email before you moved?]* Yes, of course! With everyone. And mostly Google chat. I figured out with my best friend, I was recently going through these chats, I said to her we don't have other parts of our life documented. We just thought it was fun - experiencing different levels of communication. *[Has the way you chat online with friends from Belgrade changed since you moved?]* Yes and no. now I'm also chatting with friends who don't have Skype or can't really talk on Skype because they live with someone... and emails with all the others. And sometimes your daily schedules are so different it's just easier to just write an email. But I love emails. And then you can attach pictures....*[What about news?]* I switch in phases between England and Serbia. {She switches between a Serbian newspaper website, because she likes its layout, and the guardian online, because it was recommended for IELTS and she got used to it.} It's usually some kind of journalism rather than current affairs, I prefer reading a report on something or research. I just read random things. It'll happen to me I have no clue what is happening in the world politically but I do know who's performing in what theater, in London or in Belgrade. *[Do you notice a difference between reading news from London, because it is related to what is going on around you, and in Belgrade - or are they mostly stories that aren't really related to everyday life?]* It's mostly stories. But a funny thing I noticed was when it was one of those protests in Belgrade, either the gay one or the Kosovo one, I can't even remember - I was crying. I remember talking to my friend who was saying - oh yeah, it's a mess in the city center, I'm just here making pancakes - and I was crying. When I was in Belgrade and there was a massive protest, I was bothered by it, and mom would say - oh, don't go out - but, you know, I didn't experience that emotionally. While I remember that day when I saw those pictures {in the online paper} and I remember it was the same day as those miners in Chile and my housemate was watching that and was also crying and I said - look, this is happening in my city. And she went - %@^#. But she was equally affected by Chile and that. And I couldn't stand Chile - I thought - look what's happening in Belgrade. Because I know each bin on that street. *[Do you know why it affected you more in London?]* Because having a kind of distance helps you see that differently and you do realize from Serbia how pointless, stupid, and idiotic that is. But <u>when you're in a different country and with another experienced outlook on your own, you think</u> - the thought that was in my head was - <u>this is not necessary</u>, why is this happening all over again?... <u>I was talking to a friend of mine that evening who said - that's just awful, but my baby's sleeping safely in the other room. And I said - I'd think the same, but from here I'm just crying.</u>

[You said you started appreciating English mentality and a way of life]

My new fascination is Aleksandar Hemon, a Bosnian writer. He writes in English, but his world is really... if you ask me, I'd classify him as a Serbian writer, because he writes with his Serbian, Bosnian, whatever, half-Ukrainian brain, but he writes in English. He is just so brilliant. That is my first encounter with such an immigration experience that is so close to my own because it comes from my tradition. It is obviously quite different, because he is and isn't a refugee, he graduated English in Bosnia, then shortly before the siege of Sarajevo he went to an English language/culture course in the US and he was there when the siege began. And then the States wouldn't let him come back, even though he wanted to go back - he only had one suitcase, he came for 6 months. So he stayed there and now he's been there for 20 years. And then he started working all these bad jobs, even though he was proficient in English, and he just immersed himself in this new culture. And then he also, I kind of identify with that, because I came here willingly but I didn't have any support, I didn't know anyone, like him. and there is this one story, it's fiction... there is this one sentence where he says - in my first two years of living in the States, I somehow thought, even though I knew the English language, that I'm lying all the time. That my thoughts are so much more fun and better and nicer that I'm not actually telling the truth. That's how I kind of felt. It's just so funny. So first there was that. this whole thing about him getting to function in a new language, it's something I really identified with... at some point, in a story, due to this job that he never intended to do... he basically discovers completely randomly - he has this distance from the states still, and he thinks - this is a big, huge, successful country and my country is falling apart. Look at all these successful people and this wealth and they have these jobs and this money and cars and homes... and then at one point he gets into conversation with this American guy who starts getting all his frustrations out, and it's either a bad relationship with his son or a gay matter or something like that. So something that'd be considered 'dirty laundry' and then the main character realizes that behind the closed doors of the lovely little house, there's a mess. And that kind of mess is a universal thing. And this is really cliché, but that's the first time when I experienced - I actually started loving England when I realized that this country's not <u>perfect</u>. That this country is not the perfect opposition to my {quite bad} one. that this place is just different, but that it's just so universal... and what I really appreciate about English mentality is that, yeah, they are messed up, but then they wake up at 5 am to make this humongous city function perfectly, starting from transport, to going to work, to doing this and that... while in Serbia, I'm generalizing, but you'd just get into this <u>bohemian melancholy</u> about how difficult life is. While here you have, in my experience, this kind of - yeah, I'll just close my door, put my tie on... it's not terrible, it's not amazing, but we'll just go out and have a life. And it's so much more difficult for people who are more reserved, like the English are, to get all those negative emotions out, and when I saw that I realized we're essentially the same. Until you realize you just feel a <u>huge distance</u> between your previous and your new home. I do appreciate so many things and I do think so many things are better, but that doesn't also mean that my country is no good for everything. Some things are definitely better here, but it was just so difficult to identify myself with this place until I realize they also have their own problems, so... ok. Now I'm more relaxed. Now that big distance between me and the rest of the world, especially the English... I don't know. When I read that story, I was shivering. It has to do with the fact that I'm just so affected by literature and sometimes for me it's just so <u>much easier to get catharsis through literature than from real life</u>, and that story opened my eyes, especially towards England. The problems don't need to be the same ones we have in Serbia, or even similar, but they are equally difficult. I didn't know that. I mean - I did know that in theory, but I didn't really feel it. Literature helps me make an example of what I'm feeling.

*Follow-up emails

[You said that you can get great catharsis from reading books, and you learned a whole new way of looking at the English and England after reading Aleksandar Hemon. Have you had a similar experience to the Hemon one, before or after your move to London, where something you read changed the way you live your own life?]

The big thing about this is my huge love for books and the world of literature that I used to literally live in for 7 years intensively. In other words - I could never identify with music 'movements' and similar sect-like identity generators. Not that I didn't like them or followed them to a certain extent, but I never truly embraced them. Especially not the English i.e. British ones. I loved British pop - but never too much so that that could inspire me to move to Britain. but, and here comes the Hemon thing - when I moved and started building a new, emigrant identity - I've found a guy that is wonderfully describing what I was going through - in a new language (I mean in a different language because he writes in English) but within the type of imagination that is sort of pre-incorporated in my consciousness , i.e. in my 'native imagination' (because the guy is Serbian - or whatever he is:) ps. I hope this makes sense? yea and also what I'm trying to say is (this is actually the key thing) - Hemon's experience doesn't have anything to do with England/Britain/London in particular, but with the emigration in general - so I found something to relate to in a different way than say - oh I had a crush on Liam Gallagher and I thought that London is so cool cause Camden is so cool and so on - it's far from that! Or to put it like this - Hemon is writing about America - and no matter how much I enjoy his writing and drive my catharsis from it - that doesn't even slightly inspire me to love anything American. Second question - yeah, books have shaped my identity as much as reality did. I'm not even joking :) I'm a proper book worm or I used to be at least.

[You said that your boyfriend is the main reason you haven't detached yourself from your life in Serbia more, since you found out that building up your life in a new place is much more possible than you thought. Do you know what this more 'detached' version of yourself would look like - what would be different in your ties to Serbia?]
My ties to my parents and friends in Serbia would stay the same but my life would be greatly different if I was single in England. I would be more sort of focused on people here because I would depend on them in a way. My friends are warning me about loneliness but I never thought of that. It's takes a lot for me to get lonely and I would never stay with someone just for the sake of company

[Do you remember what reason you were consciously aware of, when you decided to leave Serbia?]
it is a bit ambiguous, but I'll try to be as clear as I can - 2 main reasons I decided to emigrate were 1) I felt claustrophobic and frustrated due to the lack of travelling and 2) I couldn't stand being poor and depending on my parents any more. I've seen emigration as a good solution to that. But when I moved out of my home country I didn't consider myself as an emigrant. I somehow still didn't realize that I've crossed the border. I thought that my identity is in Serbia. The categories 'here' and 'there' I realized only when I became a part of this society, technically and emotionally. And I also realized that you take your identity with you, meaning that the identity is more broad than the nation and even the language. And also - I did feel claustrophobic anyway but that was quite abstract feeling at a time - only when I moved out I realized how actually claustrophobic I was.

*Follow-up Skype interview

[You said in one of the emails that one of the reasons you left Serbia was that you were tired of being poor, but you don't have a lot of money in London.] So... when I said I was poor that was an exaggeration, obviously. My family always had what to eat, but it was always a kind of basic life, and you're aware of this especially as a teenager. It's a bit of that kind of - feeling of a lack of money. At some point it got pretty annoying, and the economic situation reflects on your daily life. I did work for three months right before London and then I waited to be paid for three months, and it was 400 euro in total. So when I say I was tired of being poor, I mean that. I didn't see a perspective in financial terms. Although it's my fault, partially, because I did humanities. But I wasn't prepared to just study economy or something else. and then I thought if I could come to England to only work and not study, I'd do that, so a masters wasn't really a priority, to study was one of the roots to get the visa. I did apply for a scholarship and I wasn't granted it apparently because I was late for it... *[But you didn't think that'd be a solution to the money issues?]* Not at all. *[So how were London and money connected? Did you think the*

time in London would help you later, when you planned to move back to Serbia] Yeah. I thought it would open some new perspectives for me and no matter what you do you boost your language abilities, experience, you have more contacts. And I was thinking I'd come back definitely. I always wanted to go but I never thought of myself as an immigrant. And I was really surprised when I realize - that's me now. I just thought that living in another country for a while is amazing, it just gives you more opportunities. And obviously, the lack of travel, I was curious. I can't pretend to be an intellectual without leaving the country ever.

[When did you decide to move to London? Did you ever consider doing something else after graduation?] I decided to do a master my second year of Uni and then I had this dream about going to France because it's famous for comparative literature, and I thought France was amazing and Paris was cool. And then within the same week there was a scholarship at my Uni for comparative literature, and I thought - ok, there are chances. And then I started learning French (laughs). I did a miracle in 3 months, I had an amazing teacher. But then it was a bit of a difficult year in my private life, and I thought - I'll mess up the university. So I thought - I need to focus on that, it's too early to think about post-graduate studies. And I kept studying at home for a while with my mom, who speaks some French... then in my last year of Uni, I was really ready to leave. I thought I ought to find a job but I had no idea what I wanted to do. I didn't want to work at a school. I had a chance to work at my high school and... I love teaching, but not primary, secondary school... I didn't know what to do and I did want to do a master, but before England my priority was to work and be able to live on that... but I wanted to immigrate, so then the decision was made. I said no to Australia because it was <u>too far away</u> and no to the states because I <u>didn't like</u> it. and at my last year of Uni I thought - I can't be bothered to learn a new language and it's important for me to work there, too, and I wanted to go somewhere where I could fit in easily, and I thought language was important for that. So I thought of England... I'd never been there, it's close to Serbia. So I said - England, fine. And I started researching the courses. I thought London or Edinburgh - I love big cities, but then eventually I didn't send the application for Edinburgh. *[Because you chose London or you liked the program better?]* Both. *[Did you get accepted to one place only?]* Yes, because the other Uni didn't verify my recommendations because they weren't on headed paper, and I kept saying we don't have that... so it didn't get processed. *[What did you think you'd do if you didn't get into the program?]* I didn't consider it. I thought it would work. I thought at least one of the two would accept me because I had good grades.

[How did you mean you'd be 'more focused on people in London because you'd rely on them more' if you weren't in a relationship?] Basically I came up with that conclusion on a comparative basis because I realized that people who are here on their own are just so anxious to get new friends while I'm not at all. I came here having a boyfriend, a best friend, a complete social life set up - I was happy to meet new people , but I wasn't anxious. I would be less selective {without this}... I thought I'd <u>just be friends with people I'd normally be friends with</u>... and I had this big emotional injection from Serbia every day... in a way, my emotional boost was there. And then after a while I started having good friends here because as a foreigner you get closet to people much more quickly, it's all a bit condensed - you need people and after about three weeks you're friends already. so that's what I was trying to say - if I didn't have a boyfriend, first of all, it's your love life, so it'd definitely be a bit different. I didn't go out in the first year and I didn't miss that. When you go out, you dance, you flirt - those kinds of things, I thought - I'm over it, I don't really need that. While if I wasn't in a relationship I don't think I could avoid that. *[Do you know why?]* Because you probably need <u>more energy from other people</u>. Having a boyfriend already fills a massive part of your life, and when you're single first of all you have more time for other people and want to meet more other people. Although I'm happy when I'm single - I'm not chasing a husband - that's just natural, you spend time with a variety of people. That's my conclusion solely on a comparative basis, seeing what people around me are doing. And I have loads of friends here and they're lovely people - but it's because I'm being selective, I'm not just friends with everyone. [you said you'd still be selective if you were single, but would just be more active. but do you think being less

'active' also had to do with the fact that you thought you were going to move back to Serbia?] No. it didn't matter. Because you're not even aware how quickly you start up a life somewhere....

A.3. 4. Sarah

[*Due to a temporary problem with the recording device, I was not able to record the first part of the interview and took notes instead]

At university, Sarah studied English, philosophy, and "by mistake" art history, since she ended up taking a number of modern and contemporary art history classes. She thought the degree was a "good mix of everything." In London, she notes that "you can see the art" that she only studied in school before. South Africa is "very connected to Europe, we know about everything."

She first came to London to audition for drama schools. He mom was her drama teacher. After the auditions, because of her parents' encouragement, she ended up staying in London even thought she didn't get into any of the schools. "I can't believe I did that. I was 20!" She stayed with old family friends. Through them, she got a job writing advertizing copy and instruction manuals, and eventually enrolled in an art history masters course (her family helped her with money). She became good friends with her flatmates from the course. During the program, "someone would come to do a talk" that she found interesting and she would talk to them and got several internships this way, where she also made some close friends.

She only applied to "top drama schools" in London, which is the "center of contemporary theater," and since she is "all or nothing about stuff" she "turned off" the acting plan after she didn't get accepted since she thinks acting is also "so difficult, you can't do anything about it. And it's a neurotic profession." As she was "capable of doing many other things," she decided to do something else and fond the art history masters program that she liked. After doing the different internships she joined a temping agency for a while because she was financially "independent most of that time". She didn't know exactly what she wanted to do because "there is no 'catalogue' of jobs", so she selected a number of big companies that she knew she liked and "just applied there" for different kinds of jobs. She didn't get a permanent job for a while and thought she "needed to branch out beyond the creative industries" because it was hard to find work there, but she ended up rejecting an offer to work in consulting. Eventually, she got a media-related job offer at one of the original companies she wanted to work for. She was feeling "underutilized" there, but eventually found ways to "tailor my assignments" so that she now works mostly on art history, but still feels like she is "on an elastic" and has to "go back to 'home base'" repeatedly because of the limitations of the job. She now feels like she knows what she wants to do, but is being kept from it somewhat by "bureaucracy."

Sarah was "bored in Cape Town", because she felt like she was "in my bedroom and hearing a party downstairs." She "love[s] Cape Town" but "people have different priorities." South Africa is "very tied to London culture" and art and bands etc. "don't go to South Africa because it's too far away" whereas in London "everything is so immediate. What they're advertizing in magazines, you can get in the store," and she still finds that "exciting."

Her parents lived in a number of different places, including Amsterdam and London (her mother). "The things they did influenced my interests." They are very interested in art and when Sarah was little she was interested in biology, but her parents' attitude was: "That's nice, dear, that you like puppies but have you seen this book?"

London suits her because "I love pace and running around." She keeps having to go "here and there" and can "incorporate" all of that into one day. She felt that her life in Cape Town " gets repetitive and

smaller." "In Cape Town, everyone sits down, goes to the movies on Tuesday nights... and you see everyone there. It feels like living in a holiday." Cape Town is also "dangerous" and "crime is prevalent," so that she felt "incapable of feeling independent. In London "you can get a drink {at night} and get on a bus and go home. Public transport is brilliant." Also, "I don't live with a massive past injustice (apartheid) that I can't solve."

She moved to Cape Town when she was seven. She and her family have "a huge history in Cape Town, but it has never really been ours" and she "missed out on seven years of history" there. At the same time, "if Mandela is on TV, of course I'm gonna cry." She still has a bedroom in Cape Town in her parents' house and "I feel secure in knowing part of me is there, and I can go back" and she does go back approximately twice a year. At the same time, "so many friends come to London."

In terms of distant friends, she is a "big shower and teller" and "I love getting that from people, too." She likes "sharing experiences and having a shared history." "I miss people, but not in a debilitating way." When she visits, she fits back into her "tight knit group" of friends, and she also stays in touch with them through online communication.

* Beginning of transcript

You meet people sort of as independent individual. Unless you're going to study here or work here, which are the two things I did, where I met most of the people I know, unless you're going to do those things it is quite hard I think. Because nobody has shared experience. Because this is a city of 7 million people who are technically all kind of possibly like you. Obviously it's hugely varied... but in Cape Town, it's 4 million people, but there's just so many divisions that you don't feel there's 4 million every day. In London you feel there's 7 million. There are, like, a million on the tube. It's huge. And so everyone is particularly individual and independent so you're not going to necessarily have a shared experience by default. So meeting people and then incorporating them into your life. You've got often groups of friends, of people you do certain things with - so you've got your party friends, then the people who like to do something else. It's quite divided until a certain point when you realize I've actually got my friends who I like. *[Where does that come from?]* I think it's about time spent. Also, a lot of my friends are English and a lot of them aren't. some of my friends, one from the states and one from Italy, have come back to Cape Town with me, because I find it so important that my parents know what I'm doing. I don't know, it sort of intensifies and you just end up doing more stuff together and feeling some kind of mutual dependence. Whereas otherwise a lot of people come and go. Also because it's quite a transient town so people arrive and leave. *[What do you mean by mutual dependence - does it come from having shared experiences?]* There's that. There's also realizing that you're going to have the same reaction in the same environment. I think that's quite important as well. *[So this is from developing a kind of familiarity with them?]* Yeah.

[You said you went to London a lot with your mom and that she knew how to enjoy London, so that that rubbed off on you. How did she enjoy London?]
If you think I'm sort of small and speak quickly and quite energetic... I think we're very similar. She also likes to show and tell. So we'd land and every time we'd land we'd get a Time Out and we'd find out things we want to do. And she introduced me to so many things. As did dad when we come as a family. We used to live here and she'd recommend the theater we should go and see and it got to the point where she said - you look and you tell me what you like the look of. She passed over the way to do things and enjoyment in certain things, there's as much fun in finding a really cute little coffee shop as there is in finding the greatest museum. And also in making things your own. It's to look at a lot of things and then really think about and isolate what you enjoy. In the V&A museum there are these rooms in the back and my mom just loves them. She makes a pilgrimage, every time we're here she has to go. She's obviously been up and down the V&A and she's decided that's the thing she likes best. and it's true

all around London - I have these nuggets, things I like best, I've got my favorite coffee shop in this place and my favorite staircase that I really like and there's a beautiful pedestrian bridge, and everything's half-way hidden but it's the joy of finding these things as well and then when people come - showing them. So that's what I mean about finding those things you like. It's like collecting treasures. *[Do you feel it intensifies it or changes it in some way if you go to a place you like a number of times?]* Absolutely, I think there's lots of things in London as well - you do try to make something grand and impossible and try to wrestle it down and make it something manageable and villagey. London is such a big city and everyone's after villagey cuteness - it's very strange. Everyone wants to know the guy who makes their coffee, everyone wants to chase this familiarity. It's a city of 7 million people. And I have the same 'disease'. Now I live in a part of town which is... a whole other story. and you do, you try to make your own little village of the area you live in. so often finding those little treasures is about making something seem cute and manageable in a city that is obviously vast and incomprehensible. *[Do you focus on your area or do you also 'sprinkle it out'?]* I definitely sprinkle it out. I think that where you live in London says so many things about you... they put you into a million boxes the moment you answer that question... then there's also, and I think this is pervasive and it's a thing I absolutely hate about England and in London, I think class is tied a lot into where you choose to live. *[That's even if you're not from here?]* Well, what's brilliant, and I say this often, is I love not being from here. Because people are completely bamboozled by me and they don't know how to make any kind of assumption. I didn't go to a posh boarding school, but I don't sound like, I don't have an accent of somebody who they'd perceive to be low class. I don't have to play any games and it's a relief. I watch people struggle with this daily because class is not even about money here, it's about breeding, which is completely indefinable. I think it's insidious. And that manifests in the place you choose to live. And I live in one of the dodgiest places in London but it's also one of those 'up and coming' places. But I also live on the cusp of another, very posh area. Lots of cute little houses and organic cheese shops. It's all very cute, but we literally live between the two.

[Do you still have the same accent as in South Africa?] I probably absorbed a bit of the British one. Friends say when I go to South Africa and come back I sound more South African. *[Can people tell you're not from here?]* A lot of people can, some people can't, but then they're not listening. I definitely have a South Africa accent albeit a weird one cause I also had a bit of an expat accent when I moved when I was 7. And I think I enjoyed being different so maybe I chose to keep it. Also I think a lot of accent comes with slang and if you don't use the slang from your home the accent is lost... because no one would understand what you're talking about.

[How do you feel about things you actually do and the number of things you do on a daily basis vs. knowing how much is possible. e.g. one day if you decide you want to take pottery lessons, you can do that. how important is this?] It freaks me out. I used to buy time out because I wanted to know what was going on, and I'd hyperventilate because there were so many things going on that I wanted to do and I knew it was impossible to actually do them all. But literally I wigged out - I actually can't do this. So now I know where to look for things I want to do. *[Where do you?]* I still buy time out occasionally and I know if there's something I feel like... what's amazing is the order in which you do things. In Cape Town if a band is coming to Cape Town you know it and you say - I want to see that band. And you buy a ticket. Here I think - I really like this band, I wonder if they're playing. And invariably they are, because it's London. But it's backwards - thinking about what you want to do, first, and invariably you can do it here. Money is a huge factor as well - you can do anything here and some things cost more than others. For me it's money well spent and I also know every cheap trick in the book. So you make it work for you. But you've also got to validate why you're in London, I find, often. I've got a lot of people who are like - it's too noisy, I'm going to live somewhere outside of London. and I'm like - if I don't live in the center of London, I'm gonna go to Cape Town or somewhere else. But I don't necessarily want that to be the way it works out. So every day you've got to validate your life in London. So if I sit in and watch television three weeks in a row I might as well do that somewhere nice and with a pool. You live in this city and

you've got to make use of it. but as much as I love London, I've been here 6 years, and I suppose I consider myself a Londoner, I'm also aware that I'm not and I'm quite proud of that. I like to live in it still like a tourist. *[To try to take more advantage of it that way?]* Totally. Because also it's part of my job and I'm permanently thinking of things and otherwise - what is the point. It is a marriage of that freaking out and also trying to do as much as possible.

[You say you use a lot of internet. How does that overlap with the things you do 'offline'?] I use the internet a huge amount. It's almost like, I'd say it's a hobby or activity of mine. I read a huge amount. And often it's one of the ways that I do find out what's going on or what the topic are. Often big international debates that I'm reading about on different blogs, those are debates amongst people like me. And if you're reading a lot about rights issues or whatever, then you see some place in London is probably hosting a talk on it. You make those kinds of connections. The internet, I think, is a source of interest for me. The things that are being discussed I often find interesting and that often manifests in real life and in my activities in London. *[Do you think this has changed since you've come to London?]* Absolutely, they don't know how to use the internet in Cape Town. Because it's too slow, so there's no instant gratification. I watch a million YouTube videos a day and you try to find something that's funny and you find an animation and you realize you studied about the animator and you go to find a screening of his work and that's sort of come to life for you. In Cape Town - YouTube doesn't load. You've got to wait for the whole clip to load, and it takes away so much instantaneity. The moment I need to know where something is, I'll Google it. But the internet is so slow there, I'd rather use the telephone book. The internet here is an alive thing and in Cape Town it feels half-dead. That's a problem. They don't know the fun stuff it can do and the way it can link communities and build that. That's what I feel, at least. The internet is like a living stream of consciousness in the 21st century. But the idea of something coming out of the internet and entering normal life is not as thorough there as it is here.

[You say you don't use Facebook - can you explain, because it seems like a conscious decision.]
It's a very conscious decision. I think the main thing is - I can't be that many things to that many people. Every time you meet somebody, it's not fake, but you change who you are and you bring out what you need to bring out, it's just the way it is. And everyone does it. And there's no one element of my life that I want to tell everyone I know. and I don't mean that I'm secretive, and ask me any question and I'll probably tell you everything in depth, but if I think about the people that are on Facebook and I realize I have a choice from colleagues to friends to new acquaintances to business partners - I cannot put any information up there, not one thing I'd want all of them to know. So even if it's a picture of me home by the pool, I need to be there to explain that image. If I'm with somebody who's never met me before I need to say - yes I have a pool but in cape town everyone has a pool and please don't think I'm this and please don't think I'm that. And I think we spend enough time curating ourselves every morning when we go out, every garment we put on today actually comes with a huge amount of psychology behind it whether we want to admit it or not, it defines who we are. And every word that we say comes from a place where you're also trying to define who you are. I cannot manage my profile online as well - it's too stressful. That's the main reason. The second thing is - I need to communicate with people one on one. Broadcast communication I'm not very good at. So I don't... if I need to tell somebody something, I'll tell them. If I need to tell ten people something, I'll write an email to ten people. But to aimlessly shoot information into the void I don't think is necessarily filled with usefulness. And lastly I would definitely use it as a kind of 'stalker' tool - everybody does. who's going out with whom, that person looks like they look fat... and I don't want to open that side of myself because I think it's a waste of time and unnecessary. If people want to tell me something they'll tell me and I'm quite, sort of, militant about that. Especially when it comes to party invites. don't just broadcast - if you want me to come, take the time to, even, put my name in the email invite list. And then also what I think is important, especially among friends - we gossip. And gossip is great and gossip is fine and what gossiping with a friend also allows is for somebody to put a halt to what you do or say. If you're saying bad things about somebody

and someone says - oh, I think you've gone too far or don't worry about it. Alone at Facebook looking at what other people are doing is like mindless, one-way gossip. With actually no feedback and no derived use. I think that's quite terrifying. Those are my reasons I'm not on Facebook, and I have many arguments, and I've also almost done it many times but for the moment... *[Do you ever feel like you then have trouble keeping up with people from other places, if you don't go visit them...?]* Yeah, but if I do, there's two things at play. One, if it's that hard, I shouldn't bother. The other is - I should bother. If we lose contact, it's because one of us is not putting in the required effort. And I know so many people, you don't need to hold onto things that aren't necessarily there. I work very hard at my relationships and my friendships, I think. So I can't have one just by default... I don't mind losing some. I think it's brilliant and genius, it's just not for me.

[Why do you travel to Norway often?]
 I genuinely go to Norway a lot. My aunt {lives there now}. I go and visit. *[Are you very close?]* Yeah. So I visit 2-3 times a year. *[Does she come here?]* Yeah, sometimes. *[How do you feel about visiting people vs. them visiting you vs. meeting up somewhere else?]* Oh, I love it, I love meeting friends in places I don't know. I love travelling with friends. I don't do it as often as you'd expect, I guess, but I love it. All of my friends... I like to make friends with people who like to do things. But then I also love it when people come to London because I love showing people around and I feel like I built everything. It's the same in Cape Town - I get disproportionately proud of everything. But likewise - I love love love being shown around. I love being with somebody who knows more than me and to relax and just have them show me what they know. That's a real holiday for me. Also I love insider knowledge. The supermarket in Norway is still my favorite outing because it's the most mundane thing... I also travel on my own. But my alone time, and I cherish it greatly, I do in London. And like I said - I'm fiercely independent here. I just go to a film or see an exhibition - it's like traveling, cause it's always changing, but it's alone. I also go with people because I visit them - these aren't necessarily random things or random places. It's cause I know somebody there or... I like to have a reason to go. Actually, the real travel and exploration happens with my family because we do family trips where we all meet up and go somewhere else. Actually the three of them are my favorite travel companions. Because we're all on the same page and we all get hungry at the same times, and then we get adventurous and we do fun stuff like that.

[You miss your parents and brother the most. How come?]
They're quite nice (laughs). We've all moved around quite a bit and everything and one of the things I think that's made me feel most secure about myself and all the choices I make is - I'm very close to my family and that we all, even if we don't belong wherever we are cause we're all a bit strange - we're not like proper crazy hippie nomads, but we do things a little differently than, say, the convention. And my parents make it easy for us to do that without feeling bad about it. I miss them because that's the one place you can do that, it's like your Facebook person - you can be all things with those three people, cause they know all parts of you. *[Because of a lot of exposure?]* Exactly. But I think that's family, I don't think that's my family. It's one of those things. Plus I find them bloody entertaining. *[Would you like any or all of them to live in London, or just close enough or...?]* I don't know. The way we've got it at the moment it's one of those things where I can't find the solution. Because I don't... I'd love them to live in the same city with me, to a certain extent, but at the same time I love going to visit them. I love the way they live there and I love going to visit them there. And I like the distance, the distance I think is why we get on - I think they'd drive me nuts if we lived... and I can't work it out. And it does freak me out, because they're getting older and - they're not that old, but they will be. I suppose I'm gonna have to reassess that. but it's funny, every time I go back my dad gets so sad, especially a couple of days before I leave, he goes - I don't want you to go, but then I don't want you to stay. They don't enjoy the way I live in Cape Town either. So this is the way it is. *[Would you feel you have less of a place of your own in Cape Town if they weren't there?]* Yeah, I'd definitely have less of a reason to be there. I think that probably would probably be where my parents were. If they moved - the house there would be my house. *[Do you still feel a connection to Hong Kong?]* Sometimes. I was little, but sometimes. You know, it's bizarre

but I hang out with a couple of people here that I know from growing up there. It's very strange. So... but I think also part of it is part of my DNA. My dad always jokes I'm half sushi and half MacDonald's. You know how some people gravitate or have a wanderlust for certain places or certain cultures? And mine is definitely Asian in general. In terms of food, in terms of esthetic, in terms of products and creativity... *[And how does that fit into living here?]* Well, you know, you get bits of everything here. And that's the point - London is not England. Just like Cape Town is not Africa. so everything is a mix here, there's Chinatown... but, it's amazing the things that make an impression on you when you're little, but even walking down the <u>bazaars in Chinatown</u> I'm like - that smell is so familiar. And the way things look and I gravitate towards - that's exactly it. *[So it started from growing up in Hong Kong?]* Yeah, absolutely. And also my parents , we live in places. As much as... we were also not really a part of the expat community there. The expat community would be getting flown out to work at a bank or whatever it is. My dad had got a job working there and that was the reason for relocation. But once we got there he started his own company there anyway. So we used to go to the markets and get involved and travel around there....

[How do you keep in touch online?]
Skype. *[With your parents?]* Yeah. And also whatsapp {with friends, family} - it's like chat but on your phone. Basically, with my parents, I talk on Skype and whatsapp and I'm contact with both of them in some way every day. We don't really make appointments. when I first moved here Skype was new so I didn't have it and I definitely didn't have a smartphone and I was <u>frantic about doing it on my own</u> so I made a rule - we'll speak once a week on Friday. I'm not needy. And that stayed for quite a while. And now I'm just like - pff. It's important for me that they know what's going on and that I know what's going on. again, it's not a neediness thing, but I don't ever want to sit and talk to my parents like they're strangers. *[Did you do it as a trial period to make sure you're ok not talking to them?]* Well, no... I've never really had a problem with that. ever since I was little I'm happy to sleep out, I've spent months away from them, I don't really miss them. I don't *miss* them. I just like them. And so I've always been quite comfortable about not seeing them. The once a week call was more for them than for me. I was like - <u>I could not speak to them at all, ever, if that's what it came to</u>. But now if I'm on Skype I'll just talk to them. *[So if you don't need to talk to them, what made you start doing it more often again?]* It doesn't really matter. And then, <u>I suppose I do talk to them every day and then sometimes not for 10 days, two weeks</u>. *[Just based on how you feel at the moment?]* Totally. But it's also that it's not <u>a big deal</u>. I think everything I try to do is so that it's not a big deal. The nice thing about going home twice a year is that it's not a big fanfare when I go back. 'Sarah is back from her voyages abroad' - I can't deal with it. I'm just back. I'm just gonna sit home in my pants. It's all about maintaining <u>normality</u>. I can't bear speaking to them like they're strangers or telling them something they've not heard that's been huge in my life for ages. *[Keeping them updated?]* Yeah. But even with mundane details. *[Would you contact each other over whatsapp, on your phone, as well if you lived in Cape Town?]* That's the thing, I've never had an adult life in Cape Town. And I also never went through the actual process of moving away. I came to London for two weeks. No one really thought about it also, I guess, cause London is not that foreign for people. What I also... I did have jobs as a waitress or in a shop, but I never had 'gainful employment' when I was in Cape Town, I never lived anywhere other than my parents' house. I never moved out. It's not like I moved into an apartment down the road from them - I have no idea what living in the same city as my parents would be like. So I didn't leave home - I just changed the continent.

[You said you feel you're not isolated from the world here and that you feel in the center of things and things impact you. so how does this reflect on your everyday life?]
I absolutely do {feel it in specific things} - I just feel so much more informed about things. If I read a text, I remember reading a book on philosophy in school - I've met the author a bunch of times now {through the job}! and just the idea that he's a real person is still something that's quite important, you don't realize <u>that these people are living people and these things are living things and they are changing all the time</u>. So it's not just that you read this book by this author one time and then you put it down and

forget everything. It's that that author might come up with another book and you'll be at the forefront of that. Or he'll be giving a talk and you'll actually see this person think and you can ask him a question and then suddenly you're involved with the world you're reading about. And it's that - the world is going on and it's a way to be involved in it. My mom will say - did you read, I read this very interesting article, they're apparently doing this new development... I'll be like - I've been there! I've seen it. That's the point - to <u>live in the world</u>, and I think that's what's <u>amplified</u> by living here. In Cape Town we definitely do things our own way and it's a magnificent way of life but it's apart.

[Do you try to keep up with news from Cape Town or is it more spontaneous, e.g. if it shows up in the paper...?]
Yeah, it's probably about that, it's more about recognition. I do, I try to keep up with culture in Cape Town, so I read some of the culture blogs and I read some of the lifestyle blogs, because those are the things I'm interested in.. And also for work I've done something about a South African band. I keep an eye out for what I can pitch at work because of my knowledge on South Africa. *[Do you try to catch up on it in person when you go there?]* Absolutely. When I go I like to know if there's a new band, go see it... and I rely on my friends to tell me about this stuff... *[Do you think your knowledge about art or culture and so on in South Africa helps you find these interesting things that are happening]* ...I enjoy thinking deeply about stuff and the way it comes about. But I don't go back as an anthropological exercise back to Cape Town.... *[Let me explain better - you say you like reading about these different things. so why African culture, why South African culture?]* It's definitely because I'm putting my own experience and knowledge into things. I know the connotations, the history... *[Does it help you unlock things?]* Oh yeah, definitely. I can't even begin to fathom, say, South American origami, because I have no idea that's going on and I have no idea from which side to access that information.

[You said you feel the sense of history in London - how?]
You feel it because, for example, in *Pride and Prejudice* when Jane is staying with her aunt and uncle, who's in trade, and they're staying in Cheapside, in Gracechurch Street - which is there (points). And when Shakespeare had his plays performed, it's down the street, that's the actual site of it. So that's just really cool. *[In what way?]* Again, it's brining those things that seem so far away that much closer. He's almost mythical, it's very far away, but then to look at something and go - he might have touched this, suddenly he becomes more real. It, again, like being 'at the party'. So I do like that and also because - if I am told to picture a wedding, I imagine a woman in a white fluffy gown and a church and a priest. I'm Jewish - I've never been to a church wedding in my life. But the reason that's my default is because of the other influences. And I've been influenced so often by things that are outside - from American films to British literature and all these sorts of things. They seem far away, but when you see something like district 9 and suddenly you're watching a film you know something about, and they're filming in a street I know, that suddenly connects. So I'm reverse engineering that for myself and trying to connect with things that before have seemed very far away. *[Do you get a different experience, then, of reading Shakespeare or of London or both things?]* It's both things. Also it's like filling in the gaps. It's sort of like having the sign without having the material thing behind it. For example that Gracechurch Street thing, I can always imagine what it's like and know the connotations. But to go see it is to put an actual thing to put behind my imagination - to reinforce it. It's fun - like doing a jigsaw puzzle and put the pieces together. You can read about a painting till you're blue in the face but go see it - it's a completely different experience. *[You said history in London is accessible - what do you mean by that?]* Oh, <u>it's on the street</u>. We're sitting in front of the national theater, it's an iconic piece of British architecture. it used to be... people when it was built condemned it and it evolved into beauty, then people hated it again, and it really went into disrepair but it still inside had the best theater in the world, and now it's kind of had this rejuvenation, whatever it is. But this is a major bit of world history - I knew about it long before I ever visited it. If you just crane your neck it's London bridge - the one that fell down and got rebuilt, literally. Until you know what it is it's a hollow thing. It's bizarre when you find this stuff out. And it's accessible because even <u>if you walk up Regent Street, the whole history of why the street looks that</u>

way, and it's also the root of regency style... Loads of stuff kind of ties in. You can't help but come across it.

[You said you'd live in Amsterdam maybe, and maybe go to Hong Kong. Why? Also, would you maybe come back or...? And how would you feel about building up your life in a different place?]
I don't know, the thing is I obviously think very hard about these things and then not at all as well. Which is a bit weird. Because I'm sort of wary of predicting the future. I love London, I love living here, and I make the best of it, and I like to make it feel mine but it's not mine - I'm not English. I'm quite proudly not English. *[Do you think it would make it yours if you were English?]* I don't know, maybe I'd feel the same way about London as I feel about Cape Town - it'd be too familiar and boring. So maybe I'd want to change it. If I left London I wouldn't want to stay in England. This is what they keep saying at work - would you be interested in going to Manchester - I'm like, I genuinely know more people in Sri Lanka than I do in Manchester. Why would I go to Manchester. So nothing is as important to me as the place to live. But no, I'd live in any place that was exciting and if someone told me there was a reason for going there, I definitely would. If someone told me I was going to Cambodia, I would go like a shot. I'm so... unfettered to something. *[Does that go hand in hand with knowing that you already know a few places so that if it turns out you don't like Cambodia you can always come back?]* Absolutely. This is the thing - it goes hand in hand with that, and that I can also always go back to Cape Town. I mean, I've got enough people who will keep me safe if something isn't the way I want it to be. I'm quite adventurous, I just haven't had the opportunity or the will to move again yet, but... if I met the man of my dreams and he happened to live in Norway, then sure, why not. ...although I don't want to live in Norway. I say that from experience. The reason I said Amsterdam and Hong Kong is because I know some people there. And I've been to Amsterdam and really like it. Cause Amsterdam's got that thing where it's a very small big city. So it's international and big things happen there and it's got a great dance company and if stuff is released in Europe then Amsterdam is very much a part of that, but at the same time it's so small and dinky and manageable and sweet. *[And if you were to choose something to connect you to a place you'd move to, would people be...]* People's a big one I suppose. *[Why?]* It's a way in. I suppose people is a big one, but that's because I haven't actually thought... I can't imagine studying anymore, so it's not like I'd be going and then have this immediate environment. if I didn't have that, it'd be nice to know somebody, but I'm quite adventurous and I just wouldn't understand why I'd necessarily go. Unless there's something I wanted to see and I don't know what that is just yet. Because I'd happily go anywhere and just make a go of it. I think I've done madder things.

[You say in London you go to plays, exhibitions and so on. Are those similar kinds of things you would have done in Cape Town?]
Well, yes. They are amplified by about 10 billion opportunities and ways to do stuff. Plus there's a lot more quirkier activities. There's one thing in Cape Town - if there's a new coffee shop in town and it's really cute and really nice, then all the hip kids are there and you suddenly recognize everyone's face and obviously that's the new place to go. Here the city is too big for stuff like that. There's lots of choice and there's more quirky activities. Also you realize that London's so big that any kind of minority in it - if you're interested in knitting, you could find about eight knitting groups. There'd be, like, hipster knitting groups, people who like knitting and rock and roll and they go to live gigs and knit - who knows? But that exists. And in Cape Town everything's a novelty because there's not enough people to support any of it. so I definitely do the same things - I still like eating out and I still like hanging out with friends and I still like films and I do all those things there and here. Here there's just much more of it to do. And in Cape Town we'll supplement it by doing other things - we'd go the beach or for picnics, and I do less of that here - because there's no beach, and weather and... That's purely a landscape issue, it's just different. It's that kind of stuff, but I think I'm 'me' in all the cities. At the same time I know what to expect from where, so I'm not going to go to some small village near Cape Town and require a modern art museum. You've got to know why you're in a place.

[You said you were influenced by the '<u>sitcom notion of young life</u>'. What does that mean to you?]
I think part of the point of growing up is realizing that your <u>life is really what you can make it</u>. I don't mean that like on the back of a sugar packet - it's not like 'reach your dreams'. Really, it's that - if you want to have a kettle in your room, you can put a kettle in your room because you're a grownup, you can do whatever the hell you want. And I think that I do love big cities and <u>big city life</u> was always idolized and <u>glamorized in things like *Friends*</u>... I hate 'sex and the city' and I barely watched 20 minutes of it and that does not resonate with me at all, but <u>this idea of having a big group of friends all doing crazy things and coming in and out of each other's houses</u>. That's exaggerating, but it's still the kind of thing I find exciting - this <u>idea of a group of young people all doing exciting things, working together</u> - and it's totally what I have. you know, my flatmate, I'll be editing some stuff {for work} and she'll be writing some article or she'll be commissioning an art work and we'll go to our friend's house and he's a music producer... just fun stuff going on and I think that's what I wanted in my life and that's what I <u>worked hard</u> to get into. Which is probably just a distilled version of just wanting people who are passionate about what they do, having them around you. *[Do you find yourself doing a lot of things because you first had the idea that they were possible first and then tried to get them?]* Absolutely. But the thing is I've also learned that you don't have to... I think a lot of people live out the life they feel they should be living, without enjoying it. That's the wrong end of the same kind of visualization, people who say - I definitely want a house and two kids.... I don't believe in fulfilling an empty idea. I do just think it's quite fun to realize you can kind of do whatever you want. And I don't know why, but a lot of people don't know that.

[You say you love '<u>pub culture</u>' - did you know about this, is it something...]
Yeah, everyone knows about it, and everyone talks about the way Brits drink, but pub culture itself is something you don't know until you experience it. Which is - you have a hard day's work and someone's just- yeah? Let's just go to the pub. The bits of advice my mom gave me when I came to London were - remember that the clothes you put on in the morning will be what you wear all day. You dress for work and then after work you go for a drink, and after drink you may go for dinner and after dinner you might go to a club, you don't come home in the middle, so bear that in mind. The second thing she said was - if you leave the cereal in the bowl in the morning, it'll be as hard as cement. But, in Cape Town to go out, you either go for a coffee during the day or at night you go to a club or a bar or whatever, so there's thumping music and you're suddenly out. Here there's this brilliant intermediate place called the pub, where you go and you sit around and you have some drinks. And there's still a little bit of a reason to dress up, if a guy you like is there, and there's still some fun things to talk about, and it can lead to a bigger night but this idea of sitting around and talking to your friends, as an activity, is brilliant. We do that in Cape Town obviously, but we either do it at a friend's house or... it's slightly different. And here it's also such a <u>brilliant neutral space. so you can ask the guy you like to a pub, you can ask a colleague to the pub to talk about something, you can go with a bunch of people that you don't know that well</u> but if you're invited to a pub that's a good way in. <u>it's a really great way to meet people in a different environment, especially from work</u> - and that's I think why people have friends from work and people have friends from such things, because it's that culture of - seeing as we're here, let's go somewhere. So I really enjoy it.

[You said the humor and reference points and so on are similar here as growing up - what is the difference here and there?]
It's a way in, I think, to have the same reference points. It's a way into what's already going on. But it's funny - I think the world is divided by a line of sorts, and South Africa is very aligned with Europe and somewhere like Israel or France even aligns itself more with American things. Obviously, everyone's influenced by American culture, but lots of South Africans will know about Monty Python. I think there's more of it here, and it's also the stuff I like, it's the same tone and humor. There's a great tradition of cynicism, which is good and bad - cause I get quite irritable with it sometimes. And also a friend of mine left London, he was here for a couple of years and left. He said - I'm just exhausted, everything here is

an in-joke. <u>Everything is a reference to something else</u>, everything is cute, everything is a pun... he's like -it's exhausting. And I think that's so interesting cause he's right - everything is a reference point and I consciously make an effort to learn those. Because I have to, also, for my job. I've had to Wikipedia so much stuff... and that's it, about learning those cultural markers - there are so many people who are happy not knowing them, but I'm just not, I just like to be involved. *[Because it opens things up?]* Yeah. I like to get the joke. Also, for me, humor and understanding is <u>a big deal</u>. I like to be quite precise and I like to nail things, to get things right. And so, anything that will help, really.

{in connection to the idea of life in different places complementing or clashing} this is it, again, it's like the Facebook thing, it's about being a different person in a different place. And I think in the core of me it's still me, obviously - I still make the same jokes here as I do there. There's an interesting thing, my friend who came to Cape Town to one of the nature reserves and I stopped the car and got out and I showed her certain leaves of a plant and I showed her this tortoise and she was silent for ages, and she said - I've never seen you talk like this. Because of course, with her, here, we spend our lives going to museums or going to an opening. And she's like - I've never seen you rugged. And I'm like - <u>well, this is a huge part of it, but there's no tortoise for me to show you in London</u>. This is a very rare opportunity for me to talk to you about tortoises! it's that - you've got to be whatever you are wherever you are.... the other thing is, my flatmate, who's one of my best friends, she's American, so we're both here, and this I have with a lot of people, we're all here and not originally from here and have no reason to be here, necessarily. So you meet on that level of all being here, so there's something in common cause <u>you're all in London and you're all here for a reason</u>. But then also, I learned so much from my friends here. which is not to say I don't learn from my friends back home, but <u>it's like there are new worlds opened up to me because we have something in common and then something majorly different.</u> So we sit and we talk and I talk about South Africa because she doesn't know those things and she talks about the US because I don't know those things, and that's the way the meeting happened. but it's because neither of us are from here.... that's the way I think - I'm quite driven, and quite ambitious and quite motivated but don't necessarily know the direction in which that is. Because what I've learned more and more is that stuff happens that you never even imagined, stuff exists that you've never even known about, and you've got to be prepared to <u>absorb</u> that and sort of run with it in whatever direction. And only through this migration do you suddenly realize that there are these things that you don't know. Which is good.

A.3. 5. Lena

[Why did you think you'd like living in a big city]
I'm not sure I thought I would like it, I just wanted to try it out. I Felt I had led <u>a very sheltered existence</u>, I grew up in a place that was very white middleclass, I've gone to <u>good schools</u> - I lived in a place where there was really good education. My town wasn't <u>particularly multicultural</u>, everybody's parents were highly educated, and I fancied something a bit different. I did make a couple of stops before London, I live in a tiny village in Norway and then a little bit in Oslo after that, and Oslo is a city, but it's not very <u>bustling</u>. Then I went to Liverpool, which is also a city but a small city. So I guess there was a gradation towards living in London. I wanted to try it out. There is kind of an allure to travelling on the tube and things like that when you first get here. Going to different neighborhoods, sort of, every night of the week if you want to go to bars and restaurants if you want to do that kind of thing. Of course I had absolutely no money when I first came to London so I couldn't do any of that anyway. but I think I was more not necessarily that I thought I'd like it, but I wanted to see if I did. *[What happened?]* I like it, a lot. *[Do you know why? More specifically?]* I really appreciate the multicultural aspect of London. I just feel like there are so many different people from all over the world, who speak different languages, who practice different religions, who come from different economic backgrounds... I just find that kind of exciting. I love doing things like picking <u>a random cuisine</u> and finding a - finding a Serbian restaurant and <u>going and trying what that is</u>. And finding out about cultures. I love the fact that I've got friends who practice and were brought up with different religions, things like that. some of London can be quite

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segregated, though it's multicultural... from my psychology degree, I'm pretty sure that's human nature, but at the same time I think it makes for an overall more open-minded city. The open-mindedness I like a lot. I mean, the place that I come from is very... though it's very white and middle class, it's also very liberal - very liberal, by American standards, not socialist. So I knew that I would always want to be somewhere that was quite liberal but open-minded, and London fits the bill as far as that goes. I also think there's a lot of, there's just a lot to do here. This kind of goes sort of along with the multiculturalism, but there's a lot of diversity as far as areas that you can go to. You can have a different experience in one part of the city and then a completely different experience somewhere else. *[In terms of what?]* In terms of the vibe of the place, I suppose. If you go to bars in East End it will be completely different to bars in Chelsea... *[So you can do the same type of activity and have it feel very different?]* Yeah, that's what I mean.

[You got a drama degree in Liverpool - did you notice differences between living here and there - because they are both England, but...]
They're very different. I don't think London really feels like England, in a way. Inevitably in Liverpool in every shop I went into, in every cafe I went into, people would be like - oh, you're American. I was kind of a foreigner there. I don't feel like a foreigner in London. I mean, now and then... but people in a cafe would never say anything to you. A guy in a bar talking to me will go - oh, you're American. But that's one thing I think, I just realized, I really like about London, I don't feel 'special' (laughs). And in Liverpool I was very special and everybody wanted to tell me that their uncle lived in Chicago, and I've never been to Chicago, it's so far away from what I know... *[What do you like about ...]* being anonymous? I don't know, I just don't like getting attention from random people - I could never be famous (laughs). *[Does it make you feel more like you've 'made a home' here, because people don't single you out?]* Yeah. Yes, exactly. It makes me feel more like I belong here. And now when I go back to the states I don't feel like I belong, I feel like a foreigner. *[You said you don't feel 'at home' anymore in the US - how did that happen?]* I kind of feel at home in my home town, well - my family aren't there anymore, but when I'm with my friends... but I actually find it hard to communicate with people - not people I know, but people out and about. I do realize that I kind of speak a bit differently and approach people differently, they think I'm a bit strange. Not strange, but people in my home town often ask me - where are you from? Not that I have an accent but the way that I ask questions in a store or something is very English. *[In terms of phrases you use?]* The phrases, politeness... *[Do you think you're more polite now?]* Oh yeah. Definitely. When I first came here I got into a lot of trouble for being really blunt and I had to tone myself down majorly. *[Did you mind that?]* Oh yeah, it was really upsetting at first. Because people were telling me I was offending them, and I was like - I'm really sorry, I don't want to hurt anyone's feelings. There's a different way people relate. People who are - now this is very English and as I said, London - I have more a variety of friends from different countries here. But in Liverpool all my friends were English. There were lots of Norwegians, randomly, at my school, but mainly English, and I found that the English relate to people they're close to, friends, in a much more polite way than Americans do. So thought Americans, to strangers, say please and thank you, they don't really do it to each other, so I wouldn't say, if you are my mate, I wouldn't say - please pass me that pen. I would just go - pass me the pen. But that was rude here. And people would be like - hey! Also, phone conversations. Totally different, and still to this day my friends always say - I think you're angry with me when you hang up the phone. I'm like - ok, I'll meet you there, ok, and bye. Whereas they go - bye bye bye bye bye bye bye! Ok! Yeah! See you! Bye! Bye! Bye! And their voices go way high. And I just go - bye. People still say - I always think you're cross with me when I hang up. I'm never gonna get into that - bye! Bye! Bye! *[But this change in the way you talk, it isn't something you thought was so great and so you wanted to do it?]* No, not at all, I've just acclimated.

[Do you then think if you did move back to the US, you could switch back to the 'American' way of doing things and feel more American, or is there some other reason that you don't really feel like going back to the US?]

I feel that in terms of that I probably would eventually slide into it. It would be a major adjustment, seriously, reverse culture shock. *[Do you think more so than when you came here and had to adjust?]* I think probably equally, I don't know if more. *[And you don't feel like doing that again?]* Maybe it's that I don't feel like doing that again. maybe, if I'm honest, I think that it's that I feel, in some way - this is quite arrogant, actually - but I feel in some way that I've experienced more and have a broader view of life because of where I've lived and if I moved back to the States I would be surrounded by people who haven't had those experiences and so I wouldn't be able to relate to them. *[And here you have more people who have had similar experiences?]* I guess you do, but then not all of my friends have. A lot of my friends grew up in London - for example, my boyfriend, he grew up here and lives here. I mean, his parents are from other countries, but he's 'English'. *[Is it that you feel the English who grew up here are not that international but are at least from a different country?]* No, I think actually, as far as Londoners go, even if they're English, they do feel way more <u>international</u> to me. For example, than my friends at home. who I love deeply, by the way, and who I get along with really well, but as far as other people who I might be introduced to... part of that is - I don't come from new York. I think probably people that grew up in New York are... I don't know, a little more 'street' and savvy and maybe that's it about being in London, that's the difference. Not just having lived abroad. Although I do think that that opens your mind quite a lot. But also just having lived in a big city and all that brings with it. I think I would probably feel deeply unhappy living anywhere that wasn't quite as bustling, quite as multicultural. *[You said you would feel "<u>very under-stimulated</u>" if you lived somewhere else. what does that mean?]* I think just less to do... it's not just less to do, it's just... one thing that's probably a negative effect that London has had on me is just that I can't relax, I can not <u>sit still</u>, I'm constantly running around and my life is like - brrrrrrr! Also cause I work freelance and lots of different things. And I feel like that's my natural state now, whereas actually if I look back at the way I used to be it hasn't always been this way. I think London's kind of done this to me, and my job - jobs. so I feel like when I go home - it's like when you go on holiday and you just can't really... the idea of lying on the beach is like - I can't do that! I've got so much to do! I've become incredibly industrious living in this city and I manage to squeeze in lots of stuff in small amounts of time, I'm constantly travelling all around within the city parameters, and it's like - I wouldn't sit on any public transport without getting something done while I'm doing it, you know what I mean? Friends at home just have much more relaxed ways of life. really, they go for a long run in the morning, and then they go to work, and then they kind of chill in the evening... they get in their cars, they drive fifteen minutes to work, they work, then they drive fifteen minutes home. *[So you think London was a negative influence on you or...?]* I think it's both. I don't by any means think myself luckier than they. In fact, they probably have a better 'quality of life,' in quotes, but I think it would be a really hard adjustment. then, if I lived in an American city, it probably would be more stimulating.

[You said you have a dream of living in San Francisco for a year - why?]
Because I just <u>love the place</u>. I was actually born in that area, and my grandmother lived there my whole life, and we would always go to visit, I've been there lots of times. Most recently two or three times in the last five years or so. It's the city that I find.. It's not like London, but it's a city where I feel - I can live here. it's really open-minded, it's really cool, there's lots of things to do, they've got a thriving art scene, there's museums, there's good theater, there's good night life, amazing food, and it's in this amazing place - northern California is paradise as far as a place to go visit - and it's a city. It's a really small city, I actually think I'd probably find it quite small and have a hard time adjusting, but at the same time I really want to go there for a year. *[So you're really thinking of it in terms of a year - a longer period, but limited?]* Yeah. Part of the reason is because the plan is to do it with my boyfriend, who is <u>such a London boy</u> that he is... to get him to go there for six months is a big thing. If I say - let's go to try it out and see if we stay forever, he just wouldn't be up for it. So that's part of it. But also that I do feel my <u>home is here now</u>. I think we could handle going to San Francisco for a short period of time, six months, a year, something like that. But I think it would be very hard, for a couple, if you both don't know anyone there. We both have our own social lives here, I think that's really healthy. *[Do you think it would be harder for a couple than for an individual?]* No, probably not.

[You have several different, part time jobs. and you said when you came here you wanted to do acting - so how did you branch out? Part of it is tied to your psychology degree, part of it is acting, part of it is fitness...]

When I got my acting degree, I came down to London. I talk about the 'pull of the city' and everything but, basically, the main reason I came here was cause that's where you went in England to do acting and that's where all my mates went from Uni, so we all just came here, there was never really a question of going anywhere else in the UK. And I would not want to live anywhere else in the UK. So we all came down and I did the classing acting thing of working in bar, did acting jobs when they came up, and did reception-kind of thing. Had absolutely no money and didn't feel like an actor anyway because I was only doing a job every few months and it was just really bad. So then I decided, I was really into fitness, I was going to the gym all the time, and I thought - why not try to teach and get paid for it. So I did my training in that, which is relatively short, and I started picking up freelance work which went much better with acting and is just so much better than sitting behind a desk doing reception work, and it paid better as well. so I got into that and I really like it, but eventually I started really feeling like it wasn't stimulating me enough academically and I always thought I would do a masters degree, I always thought one day I'll do one on something else, not acting. And I've never made a living in acting, I've always had to supplement it with something else. and I started thinking - I'm really passionate about fitness, but I want to have a more sophisticated understanding of it, plus with acting the main reason I wanted to do it is cause I'm so curious about people and what makes them tick and how they work and everything. So I looked into psychology and found out I could do a conversion degree, which, if you have a first degree, you can in one year convert it to a psychology degree, so that's what I did last year. Loved it and now I'm working, within psychology, doing two non-paid internships. Still doing fitness work, still doing acting. In fact, I'm going to New York next year to do a film, and kind of leaving my life very open. And I'm going to {do a post-grad degree} in health psychology so that sort of ties in fitness and psychology... I want to specialize in obesity management, so that's the plan now, starting in September. *[So you're planning to turn psychology more into a job, even though you're not getting paid now?]* Yes. That's really what I'd like to do. *[Do you think you'll still be doing fitness as a job?]* I think I'll do it for a while. when I start my masters there's not really much time to do extra work, but I'm gonna keep on a few classes... but I don't see myself being an aerobics teacher when I'm 40. *[Do you still exercise on your own or just combine it with work?]* I pretty much just use that as my workout. It's killing two birds with one stone - it's making money and it's fun. That's why originally I was like - I can do this. I have no problem being in front of a group of people, obviously, I'm an actor. And I can just teach spinning classes, just like going to spinning classes, and make money out of it.

[How much do you keep in touch with people from places you've lived in before?]

I only really keep in contact with one person from my Norway days and, from home - I mean, there's 'keep in touch with' and then there's Facebook 'keep in touch with.' but I'm talking about people who I keep in more than Facebook contact with. there's three people from my hometown, one person in Norway, and then my friends from college, from my first degree in Liverpool, are all over the UK now and so I keeps in touch with quite a few of them. *[Do you mostly visit?]* Let's see, most of them are in London, the two I visit - one's in Oxford, one's in Newcastle, and I visit them. *[Do you communicate with them online less than with people you can visit less often?]* Yes. I talk to them on phone and visit them, I don't really email or Facebook with them. Friends at home, I Skype and emails. *[You said it 'goes up and down', how good you are at keeping in touch. what does that depend on?]* It depends just on me making a decision 'I'm going to do it', and then I'm good for a while and then it kind of peters off. the girl at home that I talk to the most, and we Skype a lot, she works at home and so the time difference means that actually often she's at home in the mornings, on her computer, and I'm home in the evenings, and it's as simple as that. My other really good friend works 9-5 and we're never free to talk at the same time, so we don't talk very often at all. My weekends are pretty... I don't have like a standard weekend, I work at the weekends usually, they're just pretty full. I don't really have time to call them at the

weekends. It honestly kind of depends on that. Time difference is hard. My brother lives in china and we barely talk cause the time difference is so weird. *[You prefer talking to email?]* Yeah. I don't have time to send a long email. And also I find it kind of overwhelming if I get a long email from a friend - this is what's going on in my life. I'm like - oh, god, I have to reply to this now. Not that I don't... I really want to know what's going on with them, but feel like I then have to compose a sort of essay replying to all their points and I'd rather just have it be free flowing conversation. When I do talk with friends I usually have a long chat, an hour, an hour and a half, and then it's like a real catch up on what's happened over the last three months or whatever. *[If you haven't talked to them for a while and then you talk again, do you notice there's been a break]* No. Not with those three, it's never.... *[How do you decide to 'keep' these specific friends in your life?]* I think, it just doesn't seem fathomable to me - I see myself being 70 and being friends with these three people still. I still call them my 'best friends' even though I left 12-13 years ago. And actually, the way that we know each other, we kind of know each other's teenage selves way more than we know each other's adult selves. which actually can be... sometimes we have a little bit of friction when we do meet up an spend a lot of time together, cause at times they tend to be like - 'oh, but you're really like that' 'I'm not like that! I was like that when I was 16!' but it never is that detrimental. It's probably because I spent my formative years with them, and you grow so much in that time. actually, I'm closer to probably my three best friends from Uni, they 'know' me more, I'm closer to them, I see them more... but those three are still, like, my best friends. They're like family. *[So keeping in touch with them is not something you'd give up on?]* No. *[You say you miss your brother and your parents the most. is that for a similar reason - they've seen you in your formative years, or...?]* Well, they're family... *[That means different things to different people]* Absolutely.... it's a similar feeling, I guess, that's in not really fathomable that I ever won't be really close to them. And my brother and I are terrible at talking but it's like - sometimes I get really sad about that, but then it's like - it doesn't really matter. *[Talking at a distance or at all?]* At a distance. In the same place, we're just... a very close brother and sister, we're like really good friends, but we also get in fights with each other and act like children and all that. But we're just really bad at talking on the phone. We're bad at making the time to do it and then when we're on the phone it's not the same as talking to a friend, I don't know why. I think it might just be cause he's a boy. Boys aren't very good at that. Yeah, I miss my brother the most, and if I think about one sort of source of sadness in my life, it's the distance that I've created between myself and my family by coming over here. My brother, my parents. My parents are in Italy now so I see them actually a lot, but they're moving back to the States in two years and just the thought of them being so far away again... I don't really like to think about that, especially when I'm thinking about having children at some point and them not knowing their grandparents as well as I would like them to...

[You said you want to have a bigger connection to the US in the future - what does that mean to you? what kind of connection and why?]
What I'd really like is to have a life - I'd have to have money to do this - I'd like to live here and I'd like to spend time in the States, sort of spend some time in the summer in the States. I see myself having a family over for the summer, part of the summer, not just in America but where I come from - in Colorado, California... the great outdoors, basically. My family have a cabin in the mountains, you know, spending some time there and being in the wide open air and going fishing and being with family and extended family as well, cousins... that's a little fantasy I have. *[Is it because these are the places that are important to you personally or because you know you enjoy the kinds of things you can do there, or both?]* It's a mix of the two, but I think they are places that are important because of the people and also because I really - probably the major thing I miss living in London is the outdoor life. I grew up in the mountains. It's not even being outdoors in the sense of hiking and skiing, it's just actually being outside as well. My life growing up was outside - you ate outside for half a year. Cause why would you eat inside, it's lovely outside. If you met someone in a coffee shop you would never sit inside. And in the winter I find myself here, I want to get from building to building. It's partly the weather, for that kind of stuff, but also there's not... as far as being outside and hiking and being by the river, you can't do it here. There are really nice parks in London but it's a bit different and my lifestyle doesn't afford that as much,

taking a day off and walking around Hampstead Heath. I do do it from time to time but not as much as I would like to.

[Are the types of things you do in your free time similar in the different places you've lived in?]
It has changed a lot but I think that's probably how I've changed. It's just different stages in my life. When I was a teenager I didn't really being out and about, I was not into exercising at all, I was a total couch potato. I started exercising when I left Colorado, which is the most perfect place to run and hike and swim... then I was a couch potato in Norway as well. Then when I was around 20 I started exercising, just because I wanted to lose weight, not because I liked it, and then I <u>started really liking it</u>. so when I was home {in US} I <u>did stuff teenagers do</u>, I went to parties and I was really heavily into theater and choir in high school and I just did things like that, went to parties with friends and drove around different fast food chains in the middle of the night and met boys. And when I was in Norway I just didn't do anything - we just locked ourselves inside and just <u>hung out and drank</u>, basically. It was through the winter and there was like no light and it's very very cold and something about being in a tiny little village as well, you just sat and <u>watched movies</u>. And when I went to Liverpool, I was at Uni so I was <u>just partying a lot and working really hard</u>. *[And since coming here?]* Again, it's really changed, because when I first came I was <u>really poor and I couldn't really appreciate London for what it was</u>, because I was just working a lot. I'm still poor but can I afford to go out to dinner sometimes, go out with friends more. I think the only common thing is that I've always spent time with friends, I <u>surround myself by people</u> and I have very little alone time. *[But you do different things depending on where you are?]* I think so. When I go back to Colorado now I do loads of outdoors stuff and I do loads or running and hiking and whatever. And that's what my friends do, that's what they're <u>into</u>. But I would never go to a museum or play when I'm there.

[Why do you visit your parents so often now - because they're your parents, or because they're nearby or because they're in a pretty place in Italy?]
It's not cause they're in a pretty Italian place. When I go visit them now I don't do anything there, I just hang out with them. We might go to a museum, but I've been there quite a few times now... but I don't sort of go to be a tourist, I just go because they're my parents. And it's a lot easier - you can go see them for three days, you don't go to Colorado for three days. *[If your family and your old friends were living in the same place, would it be more of a pull to want to live there as well?]* I think when my parents move back to Colorado I will definitely visit more often. I don't visit that often now, every two years or something.

[You said you wanted to make a career and a living in acting and it never happened - do you think it won't ever happen?]
I have sort of decided that I don't want to make a career in acting and make money in acting anymore. It's not a lifestyle that I want to keep living. But I want to, kind of in the way that I do now, keep that <u>door open</u>, <u>do the odd acting job</u>, that'd be great. And I hope I can sustain that. But it's not gonna happen for me to be on the stage in West End or the national theater. I will be on the stage again, I'll definitely do theater. Theater is my real passion - I like film as well, but I prefer doing plays. And I will, but more like smaller scale stuff. *[Is there a big difference between doing theater at the university and as work?]* Yes. Doing it as a career is completely different from studying it. When you're studying it you're always going from show to show and you're constantly working, but as a career you're just doing a job and then you're not working for months or a year, then you get another job.. Whereas you're being constantly stimulated, <u>drama school is the best time of any actor's life</u> - I bet you any actor would tell you that. You just do - show show show, and they're all brilliant and you get a brilliant role in them all. And <u>then you get into the real world and you're doing like a stupid commercial and then waiting six months and then you're doing a walk-on part in a play for a month</u>. It's not quite the same. *[Do you think there's anything about doing theater in London that would be different from doing it in San Francisco for example?]* Oh yeah. It's something I'd like to if I ever go out to San Francisco, I'd quite like to put the

feelers out and try to do some theater work there. It's a much smaller scale and I think it might be... London, the acting scene is just so huge and you kind of get swallowed up... in that there's way too few jobs for way too many actors. You're going to an audition with the other blond girls who look like you, you know, and you're like - why would they choose me? What's special about me? Sometimes you get chosen... there's way more competition than there is in smaller cities. I used to sort of turn my nose up to doing 'provincial theater', doing something in smaller towns. I don't anymore, I would quite like to... do it in San Francisco - I'd even do it in my home town, there's a dinner theater there and they do pretty good show. I'd do that. *[So as long as the quality of the show is good enough...]* Yeah.

A.3. 6. Matthew

[You said you wanted to move to London to "broaden your horizons". Did you have any specific ideas about what that was or did you feel you were missing something?]
Option two, definitely. South Africa was nice, but when I started working in Cape Town - working in a holiday destination is not the same as being on holiday in a holiday destination. It was pretty boring. *[Did you have any ideas about what kinds of things you wanted to do or anything new?]* Mainly things like live music, cultural type stuff. My first holiday ever that I took with my own money I went to New York and the next one went to London and they were both far cooler than I was kind of expecting. *[Why London and not NY?]* Ease of getting papers sorting out and jobs, because apparently I'm 'highly skilled' so I got a highly skilled visa, which made things much easier. *[You said you organized a few interviews - was it a spur of the moment thing or were you planning it?]* Half-half, it was in the back of my mind. What actually happened was - the friends I was going to stay with here had an accident while I was flying and when I landed his sister met me and said he's gonna be in hospital for two weeks, sorry. So I had to completely re-set my holiday plan - I had two weeks here by myself instead of with my friend. That kind of made me think a bit more about doing other things like looking for jobs. *[How did you find interviews so quickly?]* Recruitment agency. I popped by to have a chat about what it would be like to look for jobs here and ended up staying for, like, two and a half hours there discussing everything with the guy and kind of one thing led to another. He was very good. *[When you got the job offer - did you think the job was very good, or thought you could start from that?]* Well, in the mean time I'd applied for another one in Switzerland and literally on the same day I got both offers and a raise, so it was a really good day. And I had to just think about it for a week and ended up picking this one because I thought - well, the other one was probably a better job, but it was in a really small town and I'd rather try something big. *[How come you only applied in these two places?]* {The Swiss job} just came by, I got an email. I thought - it sounds cool, let's try that. Things just happened that year.

[Did you think about future possibilities in London, in terms of career etc.?]
Well, I thought I'd sort of stay for a bit, it'd be a good experience, and then kind of see what happens. *[What happened?]* I stayed a bit longer. (laughs) *[Do you know why?]* A few reasons probably. I do like it here, genuinely. It's really easy to travel, which helps a lot because then you don't have to live somewhere to go see it. You can just go on the weekend to most of Europe. And work is going really well, and also now I live with my girlfriend so that's an additional factor. *[What about other everyday things - places you go to etc.?]* To be honest, lately, I've probably been missing out a little bit because of work - work's really tough. the nice thing is that when you do have the time it's really really easy to find cool things to do or... restaurants, bars, pubs, whatever - or travel. Unfortunately, the tradeoff is there isn't that much time. *[Why tradeoff?]* I don't know, often I feel I'm missing out because I'm at work all day. *[Do you think you'd be working less if you were in South Africa?]* Absolutely. *[Is it just in comparison to South Africa or also Switzerland or elsewhere?]* That's a good question... I know my friends in New York work much longer, I don't know how they do it. Probably a little less, I think, somewhere else in Europe, definitely less if I was in South Africa. *[Would working hour be a consideration if looking for new place to live?]* Absolutely. *[What else would you look for?]* Just interesting things. My girlfriend used to live in {a city in Germany} for six months, it's really cool there. It's a very different lifestyle but still

professional enough at work so you can have a career. On the other hand, when I went to Barcelona I thought - I could never work here. *[Too much sunshine?]* Exactly. So, I don't know, so far so good. *[What was it like to travel to visit you girlfriend as someone who is actually living in that other place?]* For about six months I'd say every two weekends I'd fly there and she came this way the other weekends. It's not quite the same {as traveling with friends and for fun}. It's like a quite expensive, slightly stressful commute, cause I had to make sure to live work by 5.30 on Friday, which is not so easy, so I could {get to the airport}, fly for an hour, get the train in Germany, and because of the hour time difference I'd be there at ten. After doing it for the tenth time even a 30 minute delay would get - 'am I there yet?'. [Did you get to see the place] Yeah, I really... I even drove around a little bit.

[The cultural life and nightlife you wanted to experience in London - were those the same types of things you did in South Africa?]
It wasn't so similar, actually, because there's a relatively limited amount of things you can do there. After sort of 8 years in Cape Town, I'm pretty sure I've been everywhere at least once – bars, restaurants, the beach, stuff like that. It's very slow paced, there's the usual 'new local place', that's it. Which is nice but.... Whereas here even in my own area, if I don't go out for a month, one restaurant is gone, something new's come up, there's a new shop or.... *[Does it happen that you find a place you really like and then it disappears?]* Yeah, exactly. *[Does this bother you?]* Yeah, a little bit, but it's easy to get over it, because you just find somewhere else, that's cool. *[Would you rather choose a very vibrant, changing place over having a few places you really like and know well?]* Yeah, for sure. *[Did this make it easier to move?]* Yeah, that was probably one of the main reasons.

[You said you had friends in London when you came - how much did you interact with them?]
It made things a lot easier. It's a big city, if you don't know anyone – people are friendly, but it's not, like, America friendly. It just made the initial finding a house, figuring out how trains work, opening a bank account – it made those things a lot easier. I just asked someone. After a while, you kind of start thinking, when you actually start finding out what there is to do, maybe you start realizing – ok, I don't like the exact same things, or whatever, but certainly in the beginning it makes life a whole lot easier. *[Did your social network progress mainly from those first contacts, or did you have many independent 'sources' of social contacts?]* If anything, I probably see a bit less of those friends I knew originally. Just because, work is the easiest one probably, because there are many people my age, and then the after-work 'scene ' is pretty good, people kind of socialize after work, which I quite like, cause I haven't really seen that in other places. Definitely not at this kind of level. Also, my girlfriend is not South African, so that's probably the other major source of new friends. *[You meet her friends?]* Exactly. *[Is she from the UK?]* She's from Scotland. *[How long has she been in London?]* After Germany she moved to London. A bit less than me, actually. It's a funny story - we met here through mutual friend from South Africa, he was studying here and so was she. Then very soon afterwards she moved {to continental Europe}, then came back to London. *[To what 'extent' does the after work socializing happen?]* The frequency and the length of going out after work with your colleagues, I think, is like – definitely in places I've grown up in – is unheard of. The only other place I've sort of seen something like it is maybe in America. Even now it's a little bit weird. On Wednesdays going out for drinks after work, on Thursday having dinner, colleagues coming over for dinner on weekends, that kind of stuff. *[Do you think that's to do with your job, London, England?]* Maybe with London, actually. Cause it's kind of – you really do spend a lot of time working, and I think it really isn't that pleasant if you don't get along with your colleagues. Whereas I think in a lot of other places probably you could just get away with doing the 9-5 or 8-4 and then... . Like, for example, I have some family in Italy, and they never... all their friends are your friends from your region that have same Italian accent and you'd never really socialize with any colleagues. In South Africa it's pretty much the same thing, actually. I guess here, there are a lot of foreign people, at work especially, and it's a big city. Also I think the commute's pretty long for most people, so you can't go home and then go out afterwards, definitely not during week. I guess that maybe sways it a bit to having drinks or whatever

straightaway and then going home. *[Do you mix up people from work and, for example, also see your girlfriend there?]* Yeah, totally. *[So it gets blended?]* To some extent, obviously.

[You said you were hoping to enjoy a 'more advanced' music scene - did you have specific bands or something else?]
Kind of. In South Africa, for example, there may be one band a year that would come from Europe or America, and here the choice is so big you actually kind of have to be careful what you go to and what you don't go to. In first few months I think I spent all my money... The way I saw it was – bands I would try to buy tickets for months in advance in South Africa, here I'd kind of go – eh. I'd rather watch some TV today. Because there is so much more choice and they play so much more frequently here. *[Does the amount of choice ever stress you out?]* The one thing that does stress me out is that, even with so much choice, there's still so much people interested in this stuff, you still have to book a long time in advance. now I've subscribed to all the websites that let you know – at 9am, tickets are going on sale etc. and if I happen to have a meeting from 8 to 10, I'm not gonna get tickets because if you don't buy it by 9:30 even for something that's in two months time, it's all sold out. It's a little bit stressful like that, but at least the option's there. *[Have you been interested in music a long time?]* Yeah. Again, work kind of limits it – all those gigs on a Tuesday. But still, the option's there, that's what's important.

[You said you wanted to meet new people – was it b/c didn't have best friends here, or b/c wanted new kind of people?]
It's a bit of both. It was more in relation to friends in South Africa, b/c it really was like the same circle since school and university. It just became really repetitive. Really really repetitive. The same places, the same plans, the same stories. Also a little bit frustrating, because I was the only one who, at the time at least - a lot of them were still studying. Quite quickly work was becoming a real drain on my social life. *[What about keeping in touch with friends not in London?]* Probably Facebook. That's the less intimate one, and probably emails or Gchat for my closer friends. I only really Skype with family *[Why?]* it's not such a spontaneous thing, you need to plan it a little bit, in the sense that you need to be at the computer, get the headset plugged in, turn the TV down, you know. Maybe I haven't been using it as much as I should, but... I'd like to think I kind of stay in touch, but as time goes on you still drift a little bit, even with technology and everything. But one thing it's really good for – when I do go back for holiday, it's very easy to round everyone up, you just have to send one message to everyone and that's it. *[Is it also easier to get back into hang of things because you keep up with information on Facebook?]* Yeah, sure. *[And why Facebook?]* Again, it's easy... because you can snoop around. Not actually send a message but still kind of get a feel for what's going on. Cause I guess email made phone calls easier, and Facebook's sort of easier email. You can get information with zero effort, absolutely. Digital information, as well – you can see photos. *[Prefers photos to text?]* Yeah. *[Why?]* Thousand words, right? It's easy. It's just laziness, I think. To be honest, if it disappeared, I'd sort of go 'ah' for two days and then send an email. It's not the end of the world. *[If you moved, do you think there'd be a specific set of people you'd miss or would you think, e.g., as long as I have my girlfriend I can make a new set of friends?]* Yeah, it'd probably be that, I think so. *[Do you actively try to make a social network or do you think it will come on its own?]* As much as I'd like it to come on its own, I think it does need a little bit of effort, especially in a big place like this. *[What kind of effort?]* You do actually need to be prepared to, maybe, every now and then go somewhere you're not that keen for, that's not your favorite place, or with some people who are maybe not your number one choice of friends. Or just try... I don't want to say 'new things' but things that even if you know – ok, I could have more fun than this here, but I'm still gonna go to this thing, just for the sake of keeping friendships and meeting new people and things like that. *[Do you find yourself surprised that you like a place you didn't think you'd like?]* Absolutely. *[Where do you get ideas for what activities to do?]* Probably three sources: other than word of mouth and friends, internet is a pretty good source - I probably quite heavily rely on things like time out online, and when I go to a place that I likes, I try to remember what it was and go on their websites and follow what's happening, and things like that. Actually, mainly online.

[Does being in London change the way you look at news online, because it's more connected to what is going on around you?]
In some ways it's a little bit trickier, because there's so much information. For example, if you just go on time out to see what's happening this weekend, there's 480 pages of results, and I guarantee that 470 is things you don't want to do. In that sense it's made it pretty tricky and it's made me a lot less patient, so you just kind of go – next, next, next, next... I wonder how many things I've missed that are pretty cool. On the other hand it's very easy to be very picky. Because you can go to <u>the exact genre of music and the exact style of place, and the exact type of museum, in this area etc</u>. *[How often do you do things you're not sure you'll like?]* I'd like to say – as often as I can. It does depend a lot on what the week's been like. Sometimes on Saturday I just want to go to my favorite place. But probably when it's nice weather like this, chances are very good that we'll go somewhere – it's a big city, there's still loads of places I haven't been to, so... I would just try out a whole area. *[How?]* There's loads of areas I haven't been to yet. Take the tube there and see what's up. Or, like, I kind of see a couple of places to have some 'place to go,' but you kind of meander your way, and look around, and see what's up, and so on. *[What about streets, parks, places that are not so 'interactive'?]* I think part of exploring an area is walking around small streets and have a look at what's happening. Most of the time we <u>don't end up going to the place we Googled in the first place, to be honest, because there's like a million distractions and, yeah, we're done, we just end up going – wherever</u>.

[You said your friends are relatively spread out - where are they from?]
They went from South Africa, one or two from travels. *[Do you go visit?]* Yes. *[When you travel do you usually go with friends, or to visit friends?]* I think normally, say, if I'm going for seven days, if I have friends there I'd spend a day or two with them, maybe it's like insurance policy – I have my own time, but then there's at least a guarantee of - good time, catch up. On the one hand I don't want to spend the whole time just catching up, I guess. But at the same time, if your friend is, I don't know, in NY or something, it doesn't make sense to not see them on purpose. *[How do you choose where to travel? Do you try to go to places different from London?]* Normally I try to go somewhere new, but with a couple of disclaimers – sometimes it's weather-driven, sometimes visas come into consideration, and also leave from work and things like that. If it's for weekends I try to go somewhere new, probably in Europe, or somewhere with friends but then I try to make sure we go somewhere new. *[And for longer period of time?]* Definitely try somewhere new. Like this year - I'm hoping to go for 2 weeks {to the US}, just driving around, looking at stuff - I've never been to {that part of US}. *[And weather – you want some sunshine?]* Exactly. *[And your trips to Scotland?]* My girlfriend's from there. *[And you go to see her family?]* Exactly. *[Do you prefer going to places that are far away if you have the chance?]* Yeah. *[Do you know why?]* Well, there's a bit of an additional thing. It's 11 hours to fly to South Africa, so I'm kind of getting really annoyed, every time I go visit my family, thinking – do you know how many other places I could have gone to in this length flight – everywhere from Japan to Hawaii. So just because I've done that trip so many times, I'm now thinking – it's time to... *[Does it make you think – if I've traveled that long to South Africa, I might as well go somewhere else that's also far?]* Exactly.

[What is your main reason for going to South Africa?]
Family. My parents live there, my sister's there. *[Do they come visit?]* Yeah. *[What's the difference?]* I prefer it when they come here. My sister's a little bit younger than me, so that's really cool. I can show her around and all that. She's a few years younger, actually, so it's a good time. My parents, well.. I don't know. When you go back to their house it <u>feels a bit like 10 years ago</u> – what are you doing, where are you going...? The food's good, but it's a long way to go for a meal. I prefer it when they come. So this year I've organized it so that my sister's coming for Christmas, my parents are going to come in April next year, so I'm free to go. *[Why do you enjoy so much showing things to you sister – how is it different from going out with friends?]* She kind of notices all the things I like about it here, and pretty much all the reasons I moved in the first place. It's nice, it's like a reminder of things I like. *[Is she considering*

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moving somewhere?] I think so. It depends on where she gets in for post-grad. *[Is she considering London?]* She's probably a bit more focused on the USouth Africa, but I'm obviously trying to 'sway' her this way. *[You would prefer it if she was here?]* Yeah, totally.

[In London, do you prefer spending free time in your neighborhood?]
Yeah. I think it's cool. *[Is that why you're living there?]* Yes, absolutely. *[You said you like restaurants, bars, social eating and drinking etc. Is food a significant activity?]* A little bit, yeah. *[And you like to mix it in with people?]* Absolutely. I'm just kind of saying that because I guess realistically it's not as easy to have daytime fun with the job, so that's relegated to just Saturday and Sunday, weather pending. So, unfortunately what that means is that – galleries, museums, all that, realistically it's limited to one day a week, which kind of sucks cause there's so many good versions of that here. as far as doing stuff in the evenings as well, that's kind of where that falls in. But to be honest, I really do try to cash in on the cultural side when I can on the weekends, but, you know, when you've done the weekly food shopping, the dry cleaning... there's not so much time left for spending the whole day at the British Museum or whatever. Now that I think about it, the last time I was at the National Gallery, it was for dinner. (laughs) *[So part of it is that it fits into other activities?]* I make an effort, we try {to do non-food activities}, but it's definitely not like if I was here <u>on holiday</u>. *[Do you ever consider taking a week off work to be 'on holiday' in London?]* That's actually why I really like it when my family comes to visit, because that's exactly what I do, and I show them around, but actually I'm kind of also showing myself around. *[It is a good excuse to take time to enjoy the city?]* Go to the Tate or whatever, yeah, that's cool.

[You said you decided really soon you'd stay in London because your expectations were met. What expectations?]
It was just really cool. Everything from the things you can do to... even on the work side, my expectations were met. I thought everything was just really cool. I liked it a lot because the first time I came here I had a few ideas of what it would be like, <u>I wasn't convinced I was gonna like it</u>. *[Why?]* I just <u>had an idea of what it was like here, and what people are like</u> and things like that. And then after two weeks of holiday here, I kind of realized – yes, there is that, but there's also so much more. And it's a big enough city for you to kind of never see the stuff you don't like - maybe that sounds bad – and only ever see the stuff you like. If you're, I don't know, living in the area that has the stuff you like and... You know – it's very easy to customize. Actually, that exactly why, I think. Literally, after two weeks, I was very convinced. *[Do you still have a similar idea about the city?]* Probably the trickiest thing was finding the right area to live in and I have a feeling that might change as well over time. *[Why was it tricky?]* Just because it's a big city, and I think what I like was one step ahead of where I was living. As I move somewhere, I'll be like – ah!, this other place has actually got the shops and the museums, and whatever, that I like. *[But you couldn't afford to live there?]* Partly that, partly that it's just hard to find... there's such a high demand. And also there's the commute to work – you don't want to live somewhere that's an hour each way. I don't like spending my life on trains. But I think, slowly but surely I've been <u>narrowing it down</u>.

[Do you think moving around before L influenced the ease you feel about moving to new places?]
I think so. I've sort of cut a <u>clean slate</u> a few times, moving from Belgrade, I basically lost touch with pretty much everyone. *[Do you have any connections there still?]* Funnily enough, only now, because of Facebook - people from first grade and stuff like that, but it's kind of irrelevant. And some family. But in terms of friends, it was a totally clean slate. Even just moving from Johannesburg to Cape Town was also another clean slate, pretty much – the distance is like from L to Rome, a two hour flight. *[So was it a clean slate?]* Yeah, pretty much. In the sense that I still stay in touch with people, but they wouldn't be there on a day to day basis. *[Did your parents move with you to Cape Town?]* No. I went for university. *[Did you travel to Johannesburg to visit them?]* Twice a year, maybe. *[So not much more than now?]* Maybe twice as much, if I go once a year now. *[Do you ever go to Cape Town?]* Probably a bit less, but yeah - my sister's there. She's studying.

A.3. 7. Vasil

[You spend a year in Belgrade - what were you doing there?]
I was working, I went to Belgrade to do a research internship. I was awarded a scholarship, I went to Belgrade and worked at a {local} organization. I ended up staying on board and working with them for another six months before I came back to London to do a PhD. *[Did you have any dilemma about whether to go back to London or stay in Belgrade or go somewhere else?]* At the end of my masters I was invited by my adviser, she gave me an open invitation and said - I'd be very interested if you want to come back and do a PhD at some point. And I told her that I definitely wanted to work for a year first but that I'd get back to her. Actually, she suggested the {organization} in Belgrade. In the course of my work in Belgrade my ideas for a PhD crystallized and I went back. I wanted to see if I would identify a question that would be very interesting for me and for others to pursue and that came out of my work in Belgrade. *[Did it help to know you could go back to London?]* Yes and no. I became so involved in {the work in Belgrade} and they were putting a lot of pressure on me to stay. so yes, the fact that I had the option of returning was definitely something that allowed me to be more relaxed about what sorts of jobs I do that year, but at the same time - once you start working with an organization and build relationships, it becomes very difficult to leave. However I did say on the executive board and I remain quite engaged with the {organization in Belgrade} so I feel the link hasn't been severed.

[You said work mostly determines where you live. Did you have any other considerations?]
No, it was where I thought it would be most exciting, either an academic program to pursue or an opportunity like that internship. I'm fortunate that my field is such that it usually takes me to interesting places. When I applied to a masters I was accepted to {a diplomatic school in Geneva} with a full scholarship. It was much harder to do {the program in London}, I had to work part-time throughout my studies, it was expensive, I only got some money from my school at the end, but I made those choices based on what would be the most interesting place in terms of allowing me to pursue things I'm interested in. and it's not just work - when you're in that environment, either in the human rights field on the NGO side or in academia, the reason why you are there is that, sort of, your personal and professional interests are blurred. And so I wouldn't say that I had to compromise for the other. I think that's the reason people stay in academia, it allows them to pursue what they're really interested in rather than go for a job and try to strike a work/life balance. *[If you had a good opportunity you could pursue in a different place or a different country, do you know what kinds of things you'd consider?]* For me the biggest consideration is to make sure that I have an intellectual community within that institution and within that city. In London, there is a huge number of scholars and practitioners working on these issues. So in a way London is a real hub for my particular interests. So I think the key would be the professional environment rather than just the job itself, because jobs <u>tend to be fairly similar</u> - either doing research with some teaching or you're doing mostly teaching with some research. But for the moment, at least for the next five years, I see myself staying here because of great opportunities that there are. *[Why 5 years?]* Because we just started a project that we received funding for, which is a five year project, and I'm about to sign a five year contract.

[Where do you see the role of this intellectual community in your specific interactions here?]
They are not necessarily in London, but for example I've started working on Afghanistan and a lot of it involves interaction with colleagues or people who are working with this issue, and in Belgrade I by now know most of the people who are working on these issues. Other relationships are more transatlantic, because British academia is more connected in a way to American academia than the continental European one and there is another hub for these issues in New York. One of my <u>closest colleagues</u> is {in New York} and that's sort of an ongoing interaction. London being in the middle between Europe and sort of the Balkans on one side and the US and that academic community allows you to reach out in both directions. *[Since a lot of these people are not in London - does it make a difference that you are*

here?] I think so, I think being in London definitely helps because <u>everyone passes through</u> London at some point. So often you are able to sustain these relationships without having to plan a meeting for the purpose of meeting, people come through all the time. It's both in the middle of airplane routes and in the middle of networks, so definitely I feel London is a very good base for me in that sense. *[How do you communicate with people in other countries who you collaborate with, besides meeting in person?]* Through all sorts of means of communication. Email, some of my closer colleagues are on my blackberry instant messenger. Most of my colleagues have blackberries, because it allows you to be on top of your email all the time. The biggest divide is IPhone vs. Blackberry (laughs). And I think Blackberry... because I don't have to be in the office 80 or 90 percent of the time, <u>the one thing I have to be able to do is be available both to my boss and my colleagues</u>. So the blackberry allows you to do that, it's a really great thing. *[And you use it to communicate with people in London as well as...]* <u>All over the world</u>. *[What role does meeting face-to-face play?]* I'd say it's very important. All these relationships were initially built through physical interactions. And also the good thing about academia is conferences, there are constantly conferences we invite each other to, the conferences we organize, or alert each other for opportunities for conferences or seminars or workshops that might fit our research, so <u>we often get the benefit of someone else paying for us to meet</u> in these venues. It's like in every field - once you're on the inside you get to know everyone and then the opportunities are easy to seize because people invite you or alert you about anything interesting happening anywhere. So I think in that sense it's much easier to stay in touch professionally with colleagues all over the world. *[So is this international community and conference circuit something you'd also consider if you were to move somewhere new?]* Absolutely, <u>for example Australia would be very difficult for me to consider for that reason. There is a good community of people working there, but it is so far that it becomes prohibitive to travel and maintain these other relationships and take part in interesting initiatives elsewhere.</u> In London you can get access to most people in the field, because they either come through or come specifically for something. It's a real hub in that sense.

[How did you decide to leave the country for the first time?]
I {first spent a year in Florida during high school, on exchange and then enrolled in University studies in Bulgaria}. When I finished university studies, I felt it was time to pursue a masters abroad because there was nothing in the region that I thought was fitting my interests for my masters. I worked in Sofia for a year and my interests <u>crystallized</u>. *[How difficult or easy was it to decide to move to a new county again?]* It wasn't at all difficult because that year in Florida showed me, maybe misleadingly, that one can sort of make it anywhere. And the university in Bulgaria was very good, we had a fund for conferences so we kept traveling to student conferences all over Europe. I also worked for a summer in the States doing a work and travel program, so I was very comfortable both traveling internationally, living abroad, as long as it's English-speaking - I felt very very comfortable. So it was never a question of, you know, moving to a new country being something... I've always wanted to explore, that's why I felt in high school.

[You said you liked the 'vibe' of London when you first came here for a conference. What does that mean?] I just felt very comfortable with the environment, that it's so diverse. I think that's what first struck me about London and that's still maybe what I find the most appealing aspect of London. It is so diverse and so international that you have the feeling that it's the whole world compressed, that the whole world has come to London and you don't have to go explore it elsewhere. And because it is so international, unlike maybe other global cities that are big but still very national cities, you don't really get the feeling that you have to <u>adapt to a local culture</u>, so you can be however you self-define in terms of your nationality, ethnicity, whatever, and fit without any effort on your side, and that's very rare, at least from my experience. Even New York feels like a very diverse American city. London is just an international city. That's a very big difference. That was the appeal. It was very exciting for me to see this diversity. It was also the kind of boom before the bust, and the city was so dynamic and growing and exciting in every way. *[You said there isn't a culture you have to fit into, but do you feel that living here*

has somehow influenced you?] Absolutely, but <u>what ends up shaping you is London itself</u>, and London itself it a <u>mixture of all these cultures, ways of life, and people</u> here. I do think that there's a kind of London identity that people develop that shapes you very strongly if that's what you want, you then adopt that identity. But that identity itself is sort of the product of the people and the cultures and the interactions that are taking place daily. I think a lot of people who live in London develop a very strong sense of what it is to be a Londoner, and I think that is that you start creating a community within the city and I think it's probably the same even for British people because a lot of them come from smaller places or even from places like Edinburgh, it's seen as a rite of passage almost. *[What kind of community?]* That's the good thing - it's a community of choice rather than what they call communities of faith. Communities of faith is the nation you're born in, the ethnic group, the city you're born in, your family - you don't have a ton of choice, it's what you're born into. And here you're sort of able to construct your community based on your interests, your choice of place to live, your choice of places you visit in your spare time. And so you can start that community, it does emerge as a community, I don't think that just because we live in London we're these unsettled, not embedded in any community, free-floating individuals. I think you do construct a sort of community, but it's a different community because it's a community of choice. It's based on your choices, and the people that you like, and the interests that you have rather than simply being born into it. It does require a lot more... because it doesn't come to you. You have to sort of construct it. I have friends who hate London for that reason - you have to construct in a way your own community or these <u>overlapping communities</u> you're a part of. And it's very different from simply being born in... you know, If I was in Sofia, I have my friends from kindergarten on, I have my tightly knit family community, it's very easy, you don't have to make an effort to be part of things. Here you have to reach out yourself in order to identify those groups or individuals and build your own... I don't think it's one community you're a part of. As everywhere, it's overlapping communities and groups. *[Would you say that having experience with communities of faith made you realize you're more comfortable with communities of choice?]* It wasn't the reason for me to come here, but once here I was definitely <u>very comfortable</u> in a situation where it's <u>communities of choice</u> rather than <u>communities of faith</u>. *[Do you think it had to do with the fact that you knew what it was like to be in a community of faith?]* I think so, but also the fact that I was at {my University in London} , because everybody there, I think at the masters level we have maybe five percent British, and out of them probably 0.1 Londoners. So <u>everybody here comes from somewhere. So everybody here needs to reach out</u> and sort of needs to construct these communities. And that makes it very easy, sort of, because everyone is very open and looking to reach out in same way in which you are, and the fact that I returned there again for my PhD, in that environment, it's very easy to construct friendships and relationships. And I think the way in which my life turned... where my base was in London is also something that helped a lot. *[How would you describe these communities that you created or belong to in London?]* A lot are the people that have emerged from my experience at the university, and a lot of the people I became close to during my studies ended up staying as well. And so the bond in constructed then, but then it also evolves. We're all now in situations where we are into jobs, you sort of construct that bond very easily during your student years. That's one aspect. The other one of course is the professional - I've been at this university for almost eight years and there is a whole group of colleagues who were mentors or people I've worked with in one way or the other over the years, who are feel are sort of my professional community within the school. And then, as I said, I'm part of a network of people within greater London who work on similar issues, so that's another overlapping... *[Is there an overlap between your social and professional communities?]* Absolutely. Also because the environment is very relaxed, academics love going for drinks after a conference, people's schedules allow for a lot more social interaction. Some people you are more professionally tied to, others are also friends. Or <u>you became very close friends during your studies and now they're a part of your professional network</u>, because you're working professionally on these issues, <u>and you're inviting each other to conferences or you're part of various projects</u>, but the origin of the relationship is really a friendship. These are very dynamic, <u>blurred</u> relationships... *[Do you like the blurring?]* I love the blurring. I think ultimately that's the reason why most of us in academia chose to stay in <u>academia because it</u>

does allow you to blur these public and private, your personal and professional interests very well. *[Is this why, if you were to move somewhere else, you'd try to find a good professional community and then your social community would also be taken care of?]* If I moved somewhere else, it would be probably to places where I already have connections, which are these overlapping connections.

[Once you move to a new place, do you find yourself missing the familiarity of being in a place for a long time?] Maybe I've moved to places that are quite 'rich' and they offer you a lot to explore and that seems to have been the focus rather than necessarily wanting to reconstruct something that you had. You just... I've been fortunate to live in places that are very vibrant - Belgrade, London - and they offer so much, sometimes it's too much to take, rather than feeling that it's insufficient or you're missing something. *[Do you tend to do similar types of things in different places you've lived in or not?]* The restaurants, cafes, these things are everywhere. I think here what's different is that there's a much richer cultural life that you can reach out to. It doesn't happen often to me that I browse what's on - I have friends that are Brazilian, for example, and if there's an interesting Brazilian singer coming or a show, they'll alert me. I think what's different about London is just the scale of opportunities and the richness of extracurricular life that one has, but it comes in a different way as well because of the diversity of people. You feel a connection to these places or things you're seeing through personal relationships. And you can get an insight into it by someone explaining it to you and that's the difference. It can be very different to see a Brazilian show if I had never left Bulgaria and watched it as something exotic. *[So you don't search out these things, you get information from friends?]* I would say so. I initiate things as well, if I see something that is really good, a colleague of mine also recommended a play that was excellent and they had seen in the States, then it came here and I initiated going to it with others... also, because of time constraints and there is so much going on, you need a filter. And that filter is your colleagues, friends, people you know. *[Did you not do so many of these kinds of things before London because you didn't have Brazilian friends, for example?]* Well, no, they were not also available. I loved, for example, going to the theater in Bulgaria - like all of Eastern Europe, that was the art where some sort of dissidence could be expressed. And my family were all members, and got season tickets. But it was 99% Bulgarian, local stuff. In that sense London is qualitatively as well as quantitatively different.

[How do you decide who to stay in touch with at a distance?] Well, it becomes natural, sort of, what the distance does is it sort of decides for you, because some relationships just prove to be more resilient and they are constantly -energized either through joint reactions to certain things or people just reach out personally, or professional relationships that are maintained because of opportunities to explore things. So there is no process of decision-making, but some become more.. I wouldn't say that you necessarily lose these relationships, but some are maintained more intensely through interaction. But I have a lot of situations where I go to a place where I haven't gone or they haven't contacted me for a year, and I see that person, and it would be as if we'd never stopped communicating. So I don't feel you need to always make an effort to maintain it. If there are things that emerge on either side and trigger you into communication, that's fine. If not, I think people realize that everyone is very busy. But if there was something that connected you to that person that was meaningful, it will be reclaimed even after a year if you get the chance to see each other again in person. *[So would you say that how much you keep in touch with someone also has to do with how well the online interactions work out, and not so much whether you will still be friends if you see each other?]* Yeah, and also by the other person. There are some people that are much more willing to spend the time to keep in touch. Some relationships evolve also, people wanting to share things rather than simply... so it's very heard for me to conceptualize it because it's very individual in a way. With each person it's very very different. I'm known for being horrible with email, but I sort of assume if the other person has something important that they want to share, then they will, and I'll do the same usually... and partly the reason is that all of these relationships have started with one-on-one interaction, so you don't need to sort of maintain them artificially, you

know that there is a core that remains whether you communicate daily or not and that is reclaimed once there is an opportunity to see each other.

[Where do you get your news from, and what kind of news?]
I'd have to say my news reading has been sort of limited to 90% online stuff. {Mostly reads big international stories, in part because it relates to work} And then the second, sort of, tier would be stuff that people send me. because I work these specific regions and I have friends and professional relationships all around the world, for example in the past few days I've been getting - I have a couple of very close Burmese friends, there is sort of flaring up of violence again in Burma. What they do, they go online in the morning and pick out what are the most interesting stories, whether it's the New York Times or an Asian-based outlet, it can be a website, that captures something interesting going on there, and then they share with their networks. *[Do you ask for this kind of information?]* No, you don't ask for it, you're just sort of on their mailing lists or they know that you work on issues of security and that you're interested in violence, say, in Burma, and they will forward it to you. Which is very useful because you also get a lot of local information. And then the third layer is, I'm also very interested in more local news, in the sense of England and the UK and London in particular. It's normal, it's important to know whether the tube will work tomorrow or not, to plan your day.... So there is sort of this local stuff, and then, because so many of us are so international and have various connections and interests that are global, then there is this other completely transnational layer. *[Has the way you read the news changed since coming to London?]* I think, coming to London, both professionally your interest open up much more and also because of these personal connections you develop an interest in places you were never interested in before. And so definitely that, sort of, gluttony for information and the way information is fed to you changes dramatically, also because this personalized view, people forwarding you stuff about what's happening in all these places where they are of they are from, that was very much not there before.

A.3. 8. Virginia

[How did you decide to stay in London?]
My first experience with the UK in Cambridge two years ago. I won this scholarship while I was finishing my master in Italy. And I was supposed to do my MA thesis in Cambridge. And once there I decided I would love to do a PhD, and by chance, there were actually a number of factors. I first applied to Cambridge and in London but I was late... there were some logistic problems, and finally I found this scholarship in London and I was happy in a sense because I had already had my experience in Cambridge and I was happier in a sense to move to London, to try new things and to see how life is here. I'm now doing this PhD, it's my second year. *[Do you know if you want to stay here?]* I do like living in London, I do like the English culture and so on. If it is possible I would like to stay here. Unfortunately the academic life is quite difficult, especially in this period. Once I have finished my doctorate, I don't know whether it will be possible to work here. I'm also considering to go somewhere else. I love to kind of plan my life, on the other hand I think things just happen.... so once I'm finished, I will see. *[Is this mostly connected to opportunities for work?]* Yes, actually, everything depends on how my luck will be in the next year. My plan now is to go on with the academic career, so basically my final decision just depends on if I will be able to find another position. on the other hand, I don't know, if there is something more important... it's so important to make me stay here or to make me move, I don't know, back to my family in Italy, I will just see. But fingers crossed I'll be able to find something here.

 [You said you had an experience of making intense friendships?]
Yes, because my experience in Cambridge was my very first one abroad without my family for a very long period. So I was a bit scared at the beginning. I was really lucky to meet a number of people that were actually my new family. because you know, it is the first time you live something of this kind, and you get to realize that the same friendships you have cultivated in your native country in ten years time

are possible in one year, two years, <u>because everything is much more intense</u>, because <u>everybody is alone in a sense</u>, so finding people that match with you is something completely different from what I had experienced before coming to the UK. that's very easy to make in Cambridge, because apart from the fact that the place is much smaller than London and then there is all this college network and you can easily get to know new people, it's easier to select the people you want to establish true friendship with. In London it's a bit more difficult, but nevertheless I think if you're motivated to this cause you can do it anyway. It's more difficult because the city is huge and apart from the fact that most of the time you live on one side of the city and your friend lives on hour away from you, everything becomes much more complicated. On the other hand, everybody is always very busy and we don't actually have time to... you have to find the time to dedicate to your friends because there are so many things going on. *[Just work, or also in London?]* During the working week, usually just work-related things, apart from 19.30 when you can start relaxing. Not always if you work in university - there you just rely on yourself. You have to plan your time. But yeah, usually also during the weekend you may have planned it upfront, this time at this place, and afterwards... you know. it is something perhaps new to me because I come from a very small town in Italy, you can walk across my home town in 30 minutes, and here you are always trying to organize everything and that's maybe seen as a limit, but as I said, on the other hand, if you really want to create a new network you must, in a sense, as soon as you arrive... *[In what way?]* In what way... I remember, as soon as I arrived here, I was simply in all the time - whoever invited me out or whatever. It might have been a colleague of mine, friend of a friend, met someone by chance at a party - that doesn't even matter. the important thing was to try to create... my two main goals during my first year in London were to understand what I was supposed to do for my PhD in this new country, and then my academic background is slightly different from what I'm doing now... to improve my language, there were different skills to... and the second goal was to get to know as many people as I could. because I think that's just fundamental when you are in a new place, to not be alone or frustrated, and to enjoy the city, because it's a fantastic city... in the beginning I thought - even if I'm alone, there are so many opportunities here, it's not as bad as it may seem. But on the other hand if you're not alone, it's even better.

[How much do you do things you like vs. explore new things in London?]
London gives you lots of opportunities. But despite the websites, it's quite difficult to have under control all the situations. sometimes, yes, I just discovered new worlds, new realities, because perhaps I was out with people, but different apparently from me, and I could enjoy evenings in places on the other side of the city... in London you have to plan sometimes weeks in advance just in order to be all available, all there, to find the very best place to meet up. *[Do you think this is because of the size of London?]* I think it's a very important aspect. *[Also the fact that there are more places and events to choose from?]* Also. I mean, that's something very good. because you can find out new places which you would have never visited otherwise because your friend is living in a different part of London and invited me for an evening in that particular pub with local people who know that every last Sunday there is this concert... you know, at a place that's very unknown. But, yeah, that's a limit but that's also a plus of the city. *[Do you have places you would like to keep going to because you are familiar with it, or it's your favorite spot?]* Yeah, yeah. Usually, for instance when friends from Italy are visiting, I usually bring them to my favorite places which are usually very different. We may have the poshest evening I've ever had and the following day the most underground evening. But I usually bring them where I think it's worth going, my favorite places. And also I know very well the places near where I live and where I work. Now, after two years, I can say I do know quite well most of the area and the places. *[Do you feel this makes a difference for how much you like those places? the history with the places?]* I actually don't care that much... there is my favorite pub, it's 5 minutes walking from where I live, when I can I go there. It has become a safe place where to go, I know more or less people working around there, so yeah... In Italy, the situation was completely different. I was living in a much much smaller town where there were probably three bars and one pub. I did know everything very well. Here there's just plenty of choices... I think it first depends very much on my mood. So if I just want to relax, I would surely opt for something close to

where I live... *[Is it because it's close to where you live, or also because you know how it works and so on?]* I know how it works. if I'm tired and just want to relax, I'll be probably not going somewhere on the other side of the city, I do prefer to go to that traditional pub, but I know it's a good place, where they make good food, it's very easygoing. I can go there in my pajamas, in a sense, and no one will complain about my....

[Do you ever miss places or activities from Italy?]
Yes. I live near the sea, and it's a particular area of Italy where especially in the summer period you can enjoy the seaside, there are lots of clubs, I do miss that a lot. because, you know, it's part of my life, my customs, my childhood, and it's something I miss because I'm Italian, I love warm weather and I love lying in the sunshine to get tanned with my friends, have drinks afterwards. It's something which here, it's possible to have three times, you know, in three summer months. I did experience something similar last year, it was quite fun actually, we had this kind of Sunday happy hour in the park, so we stayed there all day long before going to the pub around 9 in the evening. But it was somehow similar.... *[Did you wish to have something like that every year because it is like what you had in Italy?]* I mean, I was happy last year when I could do that, but at the same time I think - thank god, so far, I'm a PhD student, so I can basically plan... I mean, we have officially a period of time we can decide to go on holiday or stay abroad, and I know for sure at least two or three weeks in the summer I can stay at my home town and go to the seaside and whatever. *[Do you then still miss it?]* Yeah, I mean, it's more a matter of... it's Sunday, and it's bloody raining - if I was in Italy I would be on the beach. But it's something <u>not that important</u>. So I think - ok, on the other hand I'm in London, I can go... I can go to the Tate modern and enjoy it. Because, I mean, I really like this place. I used to like Italy, of course, there I have my family, all my friends, my past in a sense. but it's more exciting here, and I think... the way people in English culture, at least the culture dominating in these two places where I've lived {in the UK}, it's really... cool. So why go back? I mean, I can always go back for a week...

[What do you mean by "English culture"?]
I mean, English culture, in a sense I really mean English culture. It's just a matter of, I think, character. I'm quite organized, I tend to plan whatever I do, and this is something that doesn't correspond exactly to the Italian style. Italian people, I'm not generalizing of course, but in a sense, let's say Italian people are quite relaxed while I do love the fact of being strict as most English people are, to be respectful of other people, or to observe particular rules, which in the beginning were quite weird to me, as an Italian. But I remember the first month in Cambridge, there's queues everywhere and it was something.... but then you realize they can manage very well this way. And when you're back in Italy and you're in the supermarket and twenty people try to... it is quite difficult to accept. The same was in the states. Ok, American people are perhaps more easygoing than the English are, but... I feel... there are particular parts of English behavior that I do like.

[How much, and how, do you keep in touch with friends who don't live in London?]
Actually, my mom calls me even more than once a day. But thank god there is Skype calls, it's not as expensive. And just with my mom, actually, because then she <u>spreads the word to other relatives</u>. With my friends, I would say weekly or even twice, three times a week. Of course everything depends on the period. *[Why do you keep in touch?]* I mean, particularly with two friends. They've been my best friends since I was, I think, ten. We shared so many things, they know me as a sister. So <u>there is no need to say more than you actually say, because they immediately understand what you mean</u> and yeah, I think it's still important to keep this kind of continuity with them. But just because, you know, they've been my best friends since always. It would be odd to me... despite the fact that I of course met and found other very valuable friends, they're just my <u>adopted sisters</u>. <u>I think I wouldn't be able to do otherwise</u>. I kind of <u>need</u> to stay in contact with them at least weekly. *[Do you think it makes a difference that you can keep in touch so often?]* Well, I mean... probably the fact of doing it almost weekly is just a routine now. Probably even if I didn't do it, for instance if I couldn't do it for over a month.. It's just in order to feel

that the other person's still there. It might be also <u>five minutes or two minutes</u>, it doesn't matter, just to be present even if you're not there. I know for instance that my best friend in Italy suffered a lot when I left. Of course, she accepted it, but... <u>it's a way to be present even if you're not there</u>. And I think that when you are very affectionate to your family it also important to yourself to go on with this kind of, at least in my case... I would feel kind of guilty to just disappear or to stay in contact with them, I don't know, every two or three months. I mean, of course, they wouldn't be... they could understand anyway when I have felt over the period of time that we didn't stay in contact, but also it's a way to demonstrate that they are still important to me. I'm not there and I can't share everything with them, but I'm still there in a sense, so... *[And you said you made very intense friendship with other foreign people. what's the difference between those intense friendships and the ones with your childhood friends?]* Well, you know, when I first got to the UK, I could experience this kind of friendship which was absolutely new to me. I would say the newest part was exactly the friendship becoming as important as my previous ones, but in a much shorter time. I don't know why, I think the main reason was that everyone is in the same situation. Everyone, I think, is quite sad when lonely, alone. And so you can actually build new friendships in a much shorter time but in the same intense way. I don't know, with these friends in Italy I think we got to this level of friendship... in perhaps 10-15 years. *[So you think now they're at the same level of intimacy?]* Yes, definitely, I don't see any difference, other than the fact that with my Italian friends I did share many more experiences... but it's not a matter of value. My memories go farther... with these people it's just more recent experiences. Again it's not a matter of value, they are equally valuable, it's just a matter on the way in which they have been developed. *[Do you tend to talk about these older shared experiences or...?]* Yeah, they come up sometimes by talking. recently this weekend I was visited by my two friends from Italy and my sister and my flatmate here is one of my best friends here and she's Italian... and now, another friend from Cambridge... now, they're also friends, because they've met a couple of times through me, and they are also in contact even when I'm not there. And it's nice to me, they are my friends and are friends among each other independently. But of course it is something I think natural. I was talking to my Italian friends and thinking about what we did ten years ago when we were in high school and about ex-boyfriends.... *[So is it some kind of a connection to 'who you were'...?]* Yes, <u>who I was, who I am now, and how those two things can work together</u>. ... And they are now friends among themselves I think it's something which can work perfectly.

 [What are your thoughts about Facebook?]
Now I'm quite a passive user. I don't know when I first opened my account but it might have been three, four years ago, when in Italy it wasn't very popular. in the beginning I was really attracted, when I got to Cambridge, I was meeting lots of people and it was very important to stay in touch with them and that was a very important platform... on the other hand when the phenomenon started in Italy, there was this huge amount of people, people you have seen once in your life... you may know them since you were a child but with whom you've never actually shared anything in your life. And so starting from that point I started to be a bit more selective. I still have lots of contacts... just because recently I've started... I wouldn't say I've given up on Facebook, because lots of people still contact me that way... but I'm not really active and I'm not really looking for... perhaps it's just taste, I may change my mind in a couple of months, or use it for a different purpose. In the beginning it was really a way to stay in touch with the new people I was meeting. Now it may be useful... for networking purposes. recently I've been more attracted by these different... because, of course, you never stop meeting new people, but let's say the majority of the new people I came to know over the last years are already all my friends on Facebook. of course... it gives you the possibility to not miss people you may have known in the past and you may have shared a lot things and suddenly your lives go in different directions and that's perfectly normal... and of course, if I've got friends and I really want to stay in touch with them, I'm not using Facebook. And I've been recently trying to... I was completely unaware of how to, but recently I've been to a couple of conferences, just for people doing my type of job and new, in a sense, to the academic environment and they were kind of suggesting new ways to... if you are a PhD student and you want to make your career in academia, you must have your contact on these these and these websites, including

Facebook, because it's apparently such an important network nowadays that... I think that the first practical goal is that by Googling your name it comes up and it also provides your professional details... [So it gets you in contact with people here and then you interact with them in person?] Yes, and then you may get some contact with people who may share your interests and if you write it down on your profile... it might be another way...

*Follow-up emails

[Why did you leave Italy for the first time?]
The first time that I left Italy was over the course of my 2-year masters (bologna university), when I was awarded a visiting scholarship at the university of Cambridge to do some research for my final thesis. At that time, I was studying comparative literature, with a particular focus on feminist theory and women's writing. Since my dissertation dealt, among the others, with {an English writer}, Cambridge was just the perfect place where to develop my work. <u>Great experience</u>, which made me understand two fundamental things: 1. I did want to go on studying after my second degree, and thus doing a PhD; 2. I wanted to do it in the UK, as it was love at first sight with this place!

[Why did you choose to stay in the UK?]
There are a number of reasons for my 'UK choice'. As I said, I was in love with this country: <u>in terms of mentality and life style</u>, I would say I feel much more British than Italian, and this was crucial. Besides, as you may know, nowadays to make an academic career in Italy - especially in my field - is almost impossible, basically because there is no money. On the contrary, the UK in 2009 (when I got my PhD position) was one of the best places where to develop my current research: best universities in Europe, and very good grants.

[Could you tell me a little more about the way you developed your social network in London?]
As I said, when I arrived in London, I had two priorities: 1. my PhD; 2. social networking. As for the last aspect, I initially tried to take advantage of any kind of situation which would have enabled me to know new people. So, any invitation either from <u>colleagues, neighbors, old friends, random acquaintances</u>, was always most welcome. Little by little my network of friends has yet become 'more selective', and I would say that my first current references: are my flatmate, my 'favorite' colleagues and neighbors, and some friends from my hometown who currently live in London.

[How much did you stay in touch with friends you made in Cambridge and where do they 'fit' into this social network now that you live in London?]
Yes, I'm still in touch with many people in Cambridge - one of my very best friends is also still there - although the kind of relationship I currently have with them is inevitably different from the one I had when physically with them. I am contact daily (or weekly) with *some* of these people - either via sms, Skype, email - and also meet them quite regularly. Most of the time they reach me in London, but I also visit them in Cambridge, at least on a trimestral base. With other mates, instead, contacts are less frequent, and nonetheless we still love each other. Since 2008, when I lived there, life has considerably changed almost for everybody: somebody has left, somebody hasn't but meanwhile has got married, and his/her routine has accordingly modified... but I think that's the way things work when time passes, so it's fine!

[You said you made some very intense friends quickly because you had to rely on each other etc. Was this in London or Cambridge or both? And were they also newly moved to England or Cambridge/London?]
Yes, in both cases (first Cambridge, then London) I experienced the same situation, and that was always with people that - like me - had moved to the place at some point in his/her life. Again, I find it a very typical human behavior, since it mirrors a fundamental need of - I would say - any human being: the desire to not feeling alone.

A.3. Theory chapter structure

<u>Network structure</u>:

- element types
    - stage elements (people, places) & stages (social, physical)
    - activity elements & interactions
- location of elements: home base & distant elements

<u>Interactions</u>:

- aspects of interactions
    - replicable aspect
        - categories
    - circumstantial aspect
        - interactional past
- interactional potential
    - gross interactional potential
    - net interactional potential
    - actual interaction
    - skills

<u>Network dynamics:</u>

- at micro level of a network element
    - door openers, skills, bundles
    - maintenance, development, abandonment of ties
- at macro level of network
    - network space, bundles, door openers, spin-offs

<u>Network management</u>

- (active) network development drivers [at micro/macro level]
    - plan
    - approach
- enacting and changing plans & approaches
    - foundations
        - development tools
- network development style

Statutory Declaration

I, Marina Peneva, hereby declare on oath, that I authored this thesis independently and that I did not use any sources other than the ones cited in the list of references – especially not any other Internet sources that have not been mentioned.

The thesis has not been submitted to any other board of examiners before and has not been published yet.

The printed hard copy is consistent with the electronic version.

Direct or indirect quotes from other works are clearly marked, indicating the source. I hereby agree that my thesis is made available for later inspection.

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Place & Date   Signature